

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England: A Study of Kingston upon Hull
from 1836 to 1866**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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To Sarah

I am so glad there is always you beyond my scope,
Something that stands over,
Something I shall never be,
That I shall always wonder over, and wait for,
Look for like the breath of life as long as I live,
Still waiting for you, however old you are, and I am,
I shall always wonder over you, and look for you.

And you will always be with me.
I shall never cease to be filled with newness,
Having you near me.

D. H. Lawrence, *Wedlock*

And in Memory of my Grandfather,
Leonard Arthur Welsh, 1919-1981.

CONTENTS

	List of Tables and Figures	v
	Acknowledgements	viii
	List of Abbreviations	ix
	Introduction	1
1	Hull in the Nineteenth Century	32
	Economy	32
	Society	54
	Politics	61
2	Hull's Old Police and the Formation of the New Police in 1836	72
	The Old Police	72
	Reform Plans	82
	Achievements	92
3	The Control and Operation of the Hull Police Part I, 1836 to 1866	115
	The Watch Committee	115
	Police Organization	129
	Manpower and Government Inspection	143
	Discipline and Dismissals	168
	Perceptions of the Police	186
	The Career of Andrew McManus	202

4	The Control and Operation of the Hull Police Part II, 1836 to 1866	219
	The Crime Statistics	219
	Combating Crime	248
	Public Order	275
	Policing the Docks	287
	The Police Strike of 1853	299
	Superannuation	316
5	Police Ancillary Services and the Police Stations 1836 to 1866	333
	Firefighting	333
	The Blanket Row Fire of 1857	338
	Police Stations	348
6	The Careers of Hull Policemen 1836 to 1866	357
	Policemen's Health	357
	The Early Policemen	366
	Conclusion	376
	Appendices	390
	1. Hull Policemen Receiving Superannuation for Long Service and on Medical Grounds from May 1851 to May 1866	390
	2. The Police Budget of Hull Corporation 1836-1866	393
	Bibliography	395

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

1.1 Population of Hull (including Sculcoates) 1801-1901	55
2.1 Approximate Ages of the Hull, Myton and Sculcoates Watchmen in 1836	76
2.2 Proposed Sections and Beats of the New Police	85
2.3 Initial Estimated Cost of the New Police	87
2.4 Revised Estimated Cost of the New Police	105
3.1a Length of Membership of the Watch Committee and Number of Members 1836-1866	121
3.1b Length of Membership of the Watch Committee and Percentage of Members 1836-1866	122
3.2 Hull Policemen with Long Service 1836-1847	138
3.3 Returns of Police Manpower in Selected Urban Areas Given to the Watch Committee in 1857	149
3.4 The Police Establishment of Hull 1857-1866	161
3.5 Police to Population Ratios in Hull 1836-1865	162
3.6 Population of, and Policemen in, Several Large Towns and Cities (published in 1849)	167
3.7 A Comparison of Public Houses per capita in Several Towns and Cities (published in 1849)	167
3.8 Turnover of Men in the Hull Police in 1836	173
3.9 Dismissals from, and Appointments to, the Hull Police 1836-1866	176
4.1 Committals to Hull Quarter Sessions 1824-1835	226
4.2 Comparative Crime Figures for Hull 1837-1865	228
4.3 Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865	229
4.4 Comparative Crime Figures for Hull for the Following Offences 1842-1865	232

4.5 Comparative Crime Figures for Hull for the Following Offences per 100,000 People 1842-1865	233
4.6 Houses in Which Prostitutes are Kept 1853-1865	241
4.7 Houses of Accommodation to Which Prostitutes Resort 1853-1865	241
4.8 Number of Prostitutes in Hull 1854-1865	241
4.9 Age of Prostitutes in Hull 1854-1865	245
6.1 Number of Cases of Sickness per Month 1857-1859	359
6.2 Most Common Illnesses Affecting Hull Policemen 1857-1859	359
6.3 Twelve Most Serious Causes of Illness or Injury 1858-1859	361
6.4 Number of Policemen Unaffected by Illness 1857-1859	362
6.5 Illnesses, Injuries and Wounds of Policemen 1857-1858	363
6.6 Illnesses, Injuries and Wounds of Policemen 1858-1859	365

Figures

3.1 Police to Population Ratios in Hull 1836-1865	164
3.2 Dismissals from, and Appointments to, the Hull Police 1836-1866	177
4.1 Committals to Hull Quarter Sessions 1824-1835	227
4.2a Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865	230
4.2b Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865	231
4.3a Assaults in Hull 1842-1865	234
4.3b Larcenies and Reputed Thieves in Hull 1842-1865	236
4.3c Disorderly Characters, Disorderly Prostitutes and Drunkenness in Hull 1842- 1865	237
4.3d Smuggling in Hull 1842-1865	238
4.3e Vagrancy in Hull 1842-1865	239
4.4 Number and Class of Prostitute Houses 1853-1865	242
4.5 Number of Accommodation Houses Used by Prostitutes 1853-1865	242
4.6 Total Number of Prostitute Houses 1853-1865	243

4.7 Total Number of Accommodation Houses Used by Prostitutes 1853-1865	243
4.8 Number of Prostitutes by Class of House 1854-1865	244
4.9a Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1854	246
4.9b Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1856	246
4.9c Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1861	246
4.9d Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1864	247
4.9e Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1865	247

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ABBREVIATIONS

BJL	Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull
CYRO	City of York Record Office
EYRO	East Yorkshire Record Office
<i>HA</i>	<i>Hull Advertizer</i>
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
<i>HP</i>	<i>Hull Packet</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>Hull Times</i>
KHPL	Kingston upon Hull Public Library
KHRO	Kingston upon Hull Record Office
LPL	Lincoln Public Library
<i>LC</i>	<i>Lincolnshire Chronicle</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>Northern Star</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
PRO	Public Record Office

INTRODUCTION

The state in the sense of national, county and municipal jurisdiction defined the modern English policeman, employed him and empowered him to enforce laws and by-laws.¹ Until relatively recently, the history of the English policeman was dominated by a Whig interpretation which equated every event in his evolution as a rational advance, a visionary solution to problems of escalating crime, challenges to the social order and the local particularisms and capriciousness of 'policing' before the police. Central to this argument was the belief that the police was created and nurtured to guard the respectable, law-abiding citizen from the criminal and disorderly sub-section of society. Nineteenth century police reform, it is argued, represented progress and the spread of consensus throughout Victorian society. Implicit to this view is the assumption that society is based on consensus and there is harmony between the state, the police and the people, because the impartial laws of the former are enforced by a disinterested police with the help of a supportive public. This kind of history, which prevailed largely unchallenged until the 1970s, was (and still is) written mainly by men who were intimately linked with English policing: Home Office officials, journalists, or the policemen themselves (whether employed or retired). However, even the writings of respected academics such as Sir Leon Radzinowicz could be decidedly whiggish.² These historians, concurring with the police reformers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, thought that the old parochial and watch systems could not cope with the large increase in crime and disorder in this period and could not be improved through reform. A

¹ For a more detailed explanation of some of the themes and arguments addressed in this section see Robert Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, 2nd edn (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), Ch. 1; Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), Introduction.

² Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 2-4. The standard Whig histories are: Charles Reith, *The Police Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938); idem, *British Police and the Democratic Ideal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943); idem, *A Short History of the Police* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948); idem, *The Blind Eye of History* (London: Faber, 1952); T. A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, 2nd edn (London: Constable, 1978); David, Ascoli, *The Queen's Peace: The Origins and Development of the Metropolitan Police 1829-1979* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979); Sir Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law*, 4 vols (London: Stevens, 1948-68). For a summary and criticism of this work see Cyril D. Robinson, 'Ideology as History: a look at the way some English Police Historians look at the Police', *Police Studies*, 2 (1979), 35-49. There is a short Whig history of the Hull Police written by one of its retired officers. See A. A. Clarke, *The Policemen of Hull: The Story of Hull Police Force 1836 to 1974* (Cherry Burton, Beverley: Hutton Press, 1992).

totally new system of policing was needed and this was inaugurated (various minor reforms having been introduced since the middle of the eighteenth century) by the creation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, the first 'modern' police force for an urban, industrial society. According to the traditional argument this model was extended to the boroughs in 1836; counties were given the option to create equivalent rural forces in 1839 and then the recalcitrant counties and boroughs which had stupidly, obstinately and archaically refused to adopt the model were compelled to do so in 1856.³ The legislation establishing these different police forces effectively created the pattern of English policing which survived for more than a hundred years, until the second half of the twentieth century. These successes were only possible because of the heroism of great, visionary individuals such as Sir Robert Peel, Sir Edwin Chadwick and the first two Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, Colonel Charles Rowan and Sir Richard Mayne.⁴

This argument is narrowly teleological and open to serious criticism. The first historian to challenge the Whig view was Allan Silver in a pioneering essay published in the 1960s but some of the themes raised by Silver were developed more thoroughly by Robert Storch in two seminal articles (and other work) published in the next decade.⁵ Storch's work will be discussed in more detail below but first it is necessary to explain Silver's contribution. Silver argues that urban men of property became less prepared to accept the unruly nature of society because they had to expose themselves to risks and dangers by serving as temporary policemen. They demanded a more ordered society and the new police was created as a result of this growing demand for order. However, the ruling classes in general - the rural aristocracy and gentry and the urban middle class - saw itself:

³ The four pieces of legislation responsible for the creation of the new police were the Metropolitan Police Act 1829 (10 Geo. IV c. 44), the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 (5 & 6 Will IV c. 76), the Rural Constabulary Act 1839 (2 & 3 Vict. c. 93) and the County and Borough Police Act 1856 (19 & 20 Vict. c. 69).

⁴ Emsley, *English Police*, p. 5.

⁵ Allan Silver, 'The Demand for Order in Civil Society: A Review of some Themes in the History of Urban Crime, Police and Riot', in *The Police: Six Sociological Essays* ed. by David J. Bordua (New York: Wiley, 1967); Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57', *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), 61-90; idem, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880', *Journal of Social History*, 9 (1976), 481-509.

as threatened by agglomerations of the criminal, vicious and violent - the rapidly multiplying poor of cities whose size had no precedent in Western history. It was more than a question of annoyance, indignation, or personal insecurity; the social order itself was threatened by an entity whose characteristic name reflects the fears of the time - the 'dangerous classes'.⁶

Some later historians have modified his argument, restricting the concept of order to fear of riot and revolution, but have maintained its central tenet. Nevertheless, Silver's argument is more persuasive because he emphasizes the nature of gradual, piecemeal advances and does not place too much emphasis on individual riots acting as significant turning-points or catalysts. The concerns of men of property can be traced as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century and they found expression in the most important writing of the era. The author of *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, asserted that while a labouring man resided in a country village:

his conduct may be attended to, and he may be obliged to attend to it himself. In this situation[...]he may have what is called a character to lose. But as soon as he comes into a great city, he is sunk in obscurity and darkness. His conduct is observed and attended to by nobody, and he is therefore very likely to neglect it himself, and to abandon himself to every low profligacy and vice.⁷

The more radical interpretation which Storch and others espouse exerts a tremendous effect on police historiography. The creation of the new police (who were variously nicknamed 'blue locusts', 'blue drones' and 'raw lobsters' by the working class) was identified with the needs of the expanding industrial towns and cities. The history of the new police is studied in the context of urban improvement and administrative reform. Storch emphasizes the gradual assertion of control over the daily activities of working people (drinking, trading, gambling and so on). His early work was written at a time when the concept of 'social control' and an interest in class relationships were central to historians' analytical concerns. Yet Storch

⁶ Silver, 'Demand for Order', p. 3.

⁷ For this and similar quotations see Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreation in English Society 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 95-97 & 161.

shows that class bargaining was more characteristic of relationships than 'control', for he identifies considerable independence and resistance on the part of working people, who in some communities actively resisted the imposition of the new police in a variety of ways, including by rioting.⁸ The urban landscape was the arena for a series of interlocking initiatives formulated by middle class elites to influence popular culture. The ratepayer-elected corporations and their new police forces were one conduit for these endeavours but such activities later spread beyond large urban environments to smaller towns and rural areas via county police forces. The orders which the Victorian policeman received from above, and his uncertain relationship with the working class community which he policed, encouraged him to accept authoritarian principles and codes of respectability which were alien to that class. Paradoxically, to achieve some operational success in his allotted role he had to negotiate with this community in a way which contradicted some of the laws he was charged to uphold and some of the rules by which he was supposed to abide. The beat policeman could only learn this negotiation and the social norms it produced through trial and error, through experience, and then transmit this knowledge to the next generation of PCs serving their apprenticeship. The negotiation with the public was unrecorded, as were the rules of the contest with them, but the unwritten law on the streets was real. Senior officers may have disapproved but there was little they could do to stop negotiation, bargaining and compromise taking place; the most realistic among them would have regarded it as a necessary expedient.⁹

The radical interpretation emphasizes the importance of class conflict in English history since the middle of the eighteenth century and the monumental economic, social and political changes which transformed British society over the next one hundred and fifty years. The spread of industrialization and urbanization, whilst providing great wealth for the ruling classes, also threatened their dominant position as traditional rural society disintegrated and a new urban working class was born which challenged the

⁸ Storch describes a number of anti-police riots in the northern counties, mostly dating from the period 1839 to 1844. However, he stresses that disturbances also occurred on a smaller scale in West Yorkshire in the late 1850s following the introduction of a county police force in 1856-57. See Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', pp. 72-87.

⁹ V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, authority and the policeman-state', in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, 3 vols, ed. by F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) III, 243-310 (p. 272).

maldistribution of economic and political power. The ruling classes were themselves undergoing a process of change during this period due to the development of an urban middle class which could rival landed society in terms of wealth and economic strength (if not yet social prestige and political influence) and which had to be absorbed into the nexus of power. This reconstituted ruling class had to find a way of maintaining social order and discipline in a time of tumultuous change. The solution which was eventually found to this problem was the new police. The police would impose elite perceptions of order and discipline upon a hostile working class, using force if necessary. Therefore the new police was created as a response to class demand and, while police reformers and politicians were important at crucial times, they principally acted as advocates for their class. Certainly the Metropolitan Police would not have been formed in 1829 had it not been for Peel's central role; but he was expressing the view of the ruling majority that the current level of disorder and crime was unacceptable and in need of remedial control.

Some of these elite perceptions of order and discipline did not even insist that codes of behaviour should apply equally to all classes. There could, quite literally, be one law for the rich and another for the poor, according to the reasoning of *Fraser's Magazine* in 1837:

Idleness and drunkenness are completely ruinous to the private economy of a mechanic and tradesman, while to the opulent, however personally degrading, they are comparatively innoxious. On this principle it may be urged that low gaming ought to be rigorously suppressed. Time and money are alike valuable to the industrious classes; neither can be wasted without detriment to their business and domestic comforts.¹⁰

On this basis it would therefore be permissible for the police to take action against unruly working class gambling dens and drinking places while completely ignoring those of wealthy gentlemen. Storch argues that the new police in the industrial areas of northern England acted as 'domestic missionaries', imposing a middle class concept of law and order and new norms of public behaviour on the urban working class:

¹⁰ Quoted in Clive Emsley, *Policing and its Context 1750-1870* (London: MacMillan, 1983), p. 137.

The police had a broader mission in the nineteenth century, however - to act as an all-purpose lever of urban discipline. The imposition of the police brought the arm of municipal and state authority directly to bear upon key institutions of daily life in working-class neighbourhoods, touching off a running battle with local custom and popular culture which lasted at least until the end of the century.¹¹

Commanding the police to perform a domestic missionary role was a reflection of the profound social changes which had taken place in society and an acknowledgement that there was a widening gulf between the classes, a threatening 'rupture' in class relations. The creation of a free labour market had, as a corollary, disintegrated the social bonds between the working class and their social superiors, producing a variety of free leisure forms for the urban poor, especially once the working day was complete. The governing classes feared that forms of working class leisure had become too independent and too socially and morally damaging for their partakers. There were grave worries about what the working class were doing once they escaped from the relatively disciplined environment of the workplace. Later in the century many of these fears subsided as the ruling classes began to differentiate between sections of the working class, distinguishing between a 'respectable' majority and a 'dangerous' minority who became the 'residuum' of the late nineteenth century and were selected for special treatment. In the first two-thirds of the century, however, these fears about working class forms of leisure, although out of proportion, were sincerely believed.¹²

The police's domestic missionary function accompanied efforts by middle class elites to influence working class behaviour through a variety of campaigns, including temperance, educational, sabbath and recreational initiatives. The police's attempts to impose new levels of order and decorum on the streets came into direct conflict with the culture of the working class: 'Crowded and cramped living conditions meant that such communities often sought their pleasure in the street: they might buy their food from street traders whose carts and barrows congested narrow roadways; their public houses could be

¹¹ Storch, 'Domestic Missionary', p. 481.

¹² Storch, 'Domestic Missionary' p. 495.

boisterous and the back rooms could be used for betting.¹³ The culture of the Irish, for example, could make them a particular object of police attention, since the regularity with which they engaged in faction fighting and animal husbandry in urban areas elicited the disapproval of the authorities. In mid-nineteenth century England though all casual poor and their dependents could be categorised by their social superiors as members of a criminal class and thus in need of police supervision. Gentlemen and ladies could, and frequently did, believe that the working class needed as much civilizing as the tribes of Africa. It was class prejudice which perceived of the policeman as a domestic missionary given the task of instilling order, decorum and civilization in the territories of the working class tribes, with the weapons at his disposal - his legal powers and his truncheon (and very occasionally a cutlass or revolver).

Revisionist histories of policing have multiplied over the last twenty years, many of which challenge key aspects of Storch's argument.¹⁴ While accepting that the law was biased in favour of the rich to protect privilege, property and profit, and there was some popular resistance to the police's enforcement of it, the revisionists point out that such an analysis does not go far enough in terms of its sophistication. According to the revisionism which has emerged in the social history of crime, policing and law since the late 1970s the historical reality was more 'complex and pluralistic'. However, V. A. C. Gatrell is wrong to imply that Storch's work conforms to a 'one-dimensional and crude' 'adversarial view'.¹⁵ Storch's analysis is not an unrefined application of social control theories; it is more subtle and sophisticated than this, for the reasons which have already been outlined. The revisionists do not deny that policemen were alienated from the working class in various ways: by the nighttime nature of much of their work, the discipline of their job, the curtailment of their leisure opportunities, the restrictions on their residency, and so forth. Nevertheless,

¹³ Emsley, *English Police*, p. 70.

¹⁴ There is not enough space here to unravel the intricacies of the different revisionist arguments but some of the more stimulating ones (for the nineteenth century) are as follows: David Philips, *Crime and Authority in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1977); Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Roger Swift, *Police Reform in Early Victorian York, 1835-1856* (York: University of York Borthwick Papers, 1988); idem, 'Urban Policing in Victorian England, 1835-56: A Reappraisal', *History*, 73 (1988), 211-37 and the works by Emsley already cited, *Policing and its Context* and *The English Police*, and also by Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state'. It is fair to comment that some of the above historians are less revisionist than others and might not accept the term being applied to their work.

¹⁵ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', pp. 281-82. See pp. 281-87 for more detail on the following discussion.

not only do they argue that it is impossible to say quite how much alienation there was, they also quote evidence of police-community collaboration. The job of the policeman was to impose order but, there were many working class people who agreed with this principle, and a sizeable number were politically radical too. For example, rough sports and rowdy behaviour were part of working class culture in the mid-century period but encouraging them would clearly not be in the interests of those members of the working class who saw advancement arising from the campaigns for political reforms, organization of trade unions, development of co-operative ventures, encouragement of the temperance movement and improvement of elementary education. They subscribed to a form of self-improvement which was similar to that propounded by the middle class, although the latter espoused the credo of liberal individualism rather than the collective solutions which were favoured by the working class radicals. It is argued that the working class radicals were prepared to work with the police to achieve some goals, for example by encouraging rational recreation and sport, in much the same way that they would work with sympathetic members of the middle class to achieve political and economic ends.

Revisionists stress that members of the working class were the most numerous victims of crime. Since petty crimes, such as thefts and minor assaults, overwhelmingly dominate the police statistics for the period, working class people clearly suffered most from crime. Enough working class victims were prepared to prosecute or act as witnesses (especially when they no longer lost out financially by doing so) to suggest that they had some faith in the police and the legal system, as Robert Reiner notes:

There is strong evidence here that many working class people accepted the basic legitimacy of the laws protecting property, and the agents who enforced them[...]The working class attitude to the law and its enforcement was clearly complex and ambivalent, and varied between different times and places. But there seems to have been in many areas as early as the 1850s a large measure of working class assent to the basic legitimacy of the legal order, based not on ideological manipulation but on the use of its coercive aspects by working class victims against offenders.¹⁶

¹⁶ Reiner, *Politics of the Police*, p. 49.

For example, as policemen improved their performance as thief-catchers and thief-prosecutors they offered a service to the working class which became increasingly difficult for them to shun. Certainly by the middle of the nineteenth century a large section of the working class, but not the very poorest, perceived the law as a 'multiple-use right'. The term 'multiple-use right' is a clumsy one but it presents the law as being accessible to nearly all the different elements of Victorian society. For example, in the Black Country in the early to mid-nineteenth century unskilled and skilled working class prosecutors at quarter sessions comprised never less than 28 per cent of all prosecutors and as much as 50 per cent in 1836. Moreover, many of the cases coming before stipendiary magistrates in London in the second half of the nineteenth century were brought by working class people who prosecuted others of their class for a variety of minor offences.¹⁷ According to Gatrell 'it is not now in question that the credibility of the rule of law and of the policeman enforcing it was constructed effectively through these devices and this accessibility.'¹⁸ Emsley notes that 'In class and productive relations the police were probably felt principally as a pressure by the nineteenth century working class; but as citizens and possessors, which they were increasingly becoming, the working class gradually also perceived the police as protectors.'¹⁹ Some communities, however, were clearly reluctant to turn to the police if they were affected by crime, especially if they regarded themselves as the target of police persecution, such as Irish communities in many English towns and cities. Moreover, Gatrell admits (less forcefully than he might given his earlier work on the history of crime statistics, see Chapter 4) that this revisionist perspective on the relative openness of the law 'would be unobjectionable were it not for its unduly comforting though perhaps *unintended effects*. It serves dominant mythologies well.'²⁰

¹⁷ For the Black Country see Philips, *Crime and Authority* pp. 123-29; for London see Jennifer Davis, "'A Poor Man's System of Justice": Stipendiary Magistrates' Courts and the Working Class in London in the Later Nineteenth Century', *Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), 309-36. For elsewhere see Emsley, *Policing*, pp. 157-60.

¹⁸ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 283.

¹⁹ Emsley, *Policing*, p. 160.

²⁰ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 283. Emphasis added to original. Were these really unintended effects of the revisionist work?

The fundamental objective of the criminal justice system was the protection of property, especially private property, and offences were defined as crimes against 'things' rather than people. The system maintained the appearance of being impartial whereas, in fact, it protected the interests of those who had the most to lose, namely the wealthiest property owners. The appearance of impartiality was maintained because the system could be used to protect everyone's property; but in any society where the division of property is very substantially unequal any legal system will really favour the rich. The revisionist perspective relegates the issue of how the law's working process is the medium connecting a hierarchy of social power. Furthermore, it obscures the attitudes of a sizeable minority who had already been stigmatized as the targets of the police and the law - and banished beyond the boundary of social policy. In this strata of society 'respect' for the police consisted of nothing more than a 'sullen acceptance of *de facto* power' and notions of the law as a 'multiple-use right' were ridiculed.²¹ Of course, what the revisionists demonstrate about the working class as victims of crime is correct but some revisionist histories, in their rush to find examples of police-community harmony and co-operation, are in real danger of depreciating the reality of class antagonism and conflict which conditioned the working class's relationship with the police. Manifestly, this was not universal but in the towns and cities directly affected by the Industrial Revolution - of which Hull was one - such antagonism and conflict were genuine. The problem with some of the research which regards the law as a 'multiple-use right' is that it has not confronted the range of working class views themselves, which were 'complex and pluralistic' (if one may turn the language of the revisionists back on themselves), even contradictory at times.

If one disregards the 'residuum', who clearly remained hostile to the police throughout the nineteenth century, working class attitudes towards law-enforcement varied across time and space, from community to community, from individual to individual and even, paradoxically, within the same individual. The Sabbatarian, teetotal, working-class trade unionist would probably support police action to enforce the Sunday trading and licensing laws but not intervention in industrial disputes. Thus the individual's current perception of policing might depend upon their most recent experience of it as a result of

²¹ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 283-84. Emphasis included in original.

a serial encounter with one of its functions: public service, political or strike-breaking. It could be determined by a conflict between a necessary concept of policing in the abstract and a practical experience of its ineffectual, coercive, violent or venal nature.²² Arguably the working class who had economic, political and social stakes in the new society based on industrial capitalism also had the most to lose from the activities of their criminal neighbours; not just personally in terms of status and respectability but also in terms of the image of their community. So it was in the interests of the 'stakeholders' to establish and maintain a new detente with the law-enforcement agencies. Whether they liked it or not they had to use the existing forces of law and order because for them there was no viable alternative form of protection. Crucially, it suited the interests of the propertied classes even more that this condition should exist and be perpetuated. As for the residuum, it remained marginalised but coerced into accepting the permanence of a social order from which it benefited least.²³

Further discrediting the early Whig histories, some of the most recent research has discovered that the old parochial and watch systems were not universally awful. There were islands of effective police practice, utilizing variants of the old model, both before and after the passage of the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act, in fact up to the passage of the County and Borough Police Act of 1856. Reformers in the provinces were trying to improve the old system in a variety of ways rather than accept the imposition of the Metropolitan model, or a close variant.²⁴ Linked to this discovery, recent research has also found that the degree of borough police reform varied from community to community after 1835 and was often finely tuned to local needs. Some borough policing remained poor but elsewhere real improvements were made. For example, Roger Swift's work on Wolverhampton, York and Exeter confirms the view that

²² Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 284.

²³ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 284-85.

²⁴ For a flavour and summary of research in this area see Emsley, *English Police*, Chs 1-3. Interesting work includes the following: Ruth Paley, "'An imperfect, inadequate and wretched system"? Policing London before Peel', *Criminal Justice History*, 10 (1989), pp. 95-130; David Philips, "'A New Engine of Power and Authority": The institutionalization of law enforcement in England 1780-1830', in *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, ed. by V. A. C. Gatrell, Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker (London: Europa, 1980); Robert D. Storch, 'Policing Rural Southern England before the Police: Opinion and Practice, 1830-1856', in *Policing and Prosecution in Britain 1750-1850* ed. by Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

the nature of local police reform in early Victorian England needs to be set in the context of local government structures and local social and economic characteristics. Swift shows that the urban propertied class of each place, including their locally elected representatives, were demanding local control of policing. Swift adds that they also wanted 'strict economy' in the management of their forces.²⁵ This sometimes undermined police effectiveness but not necessarily. It could depend on the degree of reform which was needed in the first place. These urban men of property differed as to the precise level, or intensity, of policing which they wanted in their particular locality. Greater reform was demanded, and implemented, in Wolverhampton, an expanding industrial town where the middle class were worried by the level of disorder and the culture of the working class. York was relatively more stable and less affected by social and economic change until the coming of the railways, therefore police reform was limited to a more systematic organization of existing police structures. Exeter was even less affected by modernizing forces than York, police reform was largely non-existent and the old police continued virtually unchanged until the 1850s when attempts at reform began. At mid-century, Exeter, and to a lesser extent York, had police forces which were in need of fundamental reform, whilst Wolverhampton's was considerably more organized and effective.²⁶ This variability of police reform in Early Victorian England tends to lend weight to Victor Bailey's assertion that:

the consensual view of police reform has underplayed the local resistance to a centralized police structure, and that the conflict view has too readily assumed the existence of a unified ruling elite, spurred into action by social fear. In all, the social reality which the historian is increasingly uncovering suggests the myopia of highlighting any one set of interests and events to explain the rise of the new police'.²⁷

Even so, Bailey can be criticized for not considering that, during a given period, class conflict and social fear could act as the primary impetus to police reform. The evidence provided by Storch and others seems to

²⁵ Swift, 'Urban Policing', p. 229.

²⁶ See Swift, 'Urban Policing', pp. 211-37 passim; idem, *Police Reform*, passim.

²⁷ Victor Bailey, Introduction, in *Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. by Victor Bailey (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 11-24 (p. 13).

indicate that this was the case from the 1820s to the 1850s at the very least. From the above explanation of police historiography it should now be apparent that the later historians, unlike their Whig predecessors, have produced a wider variety of historical analyses and interpretations. Many of the modern historians, but not all, would accept that the new police proved to be the most obvious, if not the best, response to the problem of maintaining order in nineteenth century society; and they can agree that the degree of success which the new police achieved must be carefully qualified.

Having briefly explained the historiography of English police history it is necessary to consider the background to the nineteenth century reforms in more detail. Until early in that century the state had been perceived as the main threat to propertied and elite interests and perceptions of liberty. Old perceptions of liberty and natural rights had been devoutly anti-statist. However, with the rapid spread of industrialization and urbanization and the proliferation of the urban working class this group came to be regarded as the main threat to the social order. In this situation it was the state which had to be marshalled to defend property. The old ideology, with its emphasis on liberty and natural rights, was gradually displaced by a new conception of the state as fears about the preservation of order grew. As executive power multiplied it slowly became the implicit source of rights, granted conditionally on the maintenance of order - which it alone had the wherewithal to ensure.²⁸ Hence action to reform the police became acceptable to a majority of the ruling classes, as Philips and Storch point out:

by the late eighteen-twenties, and especially the early eighteen thirties, important members of both the national governing class and the provincial ruling class were increasingly defining as a problem the inadequacy of existing policing arrangements in provincial England. Most of them rejected on various grounds the precise Benthamite *prescription* for reform, but accepted that reform was indicated.²⁹

²⁸ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 255.

²⁹ David Philips & Robert D. Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers: The Grey Ministry's national police scheme, 1832', *Historical Research*, 67 (1994), 75-90 (p. 76). Emphasis included in original.

This change of view had been partially helped by a gradual shift in the ruling classes' perception of the place of the magistracy in local administration. Until relatively late in the eighteenth century an individual magistrate's position in the legal system was derived simply from his personal authority in his locality. This notion began to be displaced though by the modern concept that a magistrate's performance should be evaluated on the basis of disinterested public service. Even though one can doubt whether disinterest was ever possible, it is important to stress that such a concept demanded more uniform and rational performance criteria, otherwise alternative remedies would be considered. For example, if magistrates' responses to threats of disorder fell below a certain norm then this would encourage the introduction of a more bureaucratic and methodical police system.³⁰

Any piece of research concerned with the reform of borough policing in the mid-nineteenth century used to take as its starting-point the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, passed by Lord Melbourne's Whig Government. However, recent research by Philips and Storch reveals that the Whigs were thinking about police reform which would have affected the incorporated boroughs, and far more places besides, well before 1835. Early in the 1830s prominent Whigs in the Grey Administration, including Grey himself and Melbourne, the Home Secretary, (and their Tory rivals, Peel and Ellenborough) were contemplating the need for reforms in the field of provincial policing. Concurrently, a cross-section of county magistrates, aristocracy and gentry were experimenting with local policing initiatives because of their growing dissatisfaction with the work of the parish constables.³¹ Philips and Storch concentrate on debates and arguments about police reform within the national governing class whilst acknowledging that elements of the provincial ruling class were also seriously considering the issue. The issue could only be decided after protracted and detailed negotiation produced a compromise agreement between the two sides. The landed class and urban bourgeoisie would not simply acquiesce to the wishes of the national governing class. The matter went right to the heart of issues such as local control of the law and order machinery and taxation.

³⁰ John Styles, 'The Emergence of the Police: Explaining police reform in eighteenth and nineteenth century England', *British Journal of Criminology*, 27 (1987), p. 21..

³¹ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', p. 77-78.

Given all these problems it is remarkable that in 1832 the Grey ministry drafted a bill for a national police system, evidently the first government attempt to extend police reform to the whole country. It predated the borough police provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act by three years and the first (permissive) Rural Constabulary Act by seven years.³² The bill was drafted shortly after the 'Captain Swing' agrarian disturbances and Reform Bill riots in Bristol, Nottingham and Derby in October 1831, which undoubtedly affected ministerial discussions on the issue of police reform. The bill was ready by late March 1832 and, briefly, it proposed the following.³³ Without creating a single national police force for the entire country, nor imposing the stationing of police everywhere, the bill would have enabled the government (using discretionary powers) to establish a national network of police agencies responsible to the Home Office through locally appointed stipendiary magistrates. Police districts would encompass not just individual corporate and non-corporate towns but also groups of towns or large rural districts. This would have allowed the creation of provincial police offices, each under a stipendiary magistrate, in a range of areas deemed to be in need of them; for example, tumultuous industrial and commercial towns and cities, riotous semi-urban/rural industrial 'conurbations', such as mining villages, and clamorous agricultural communities. Each police office would be responsible for maintaining a constabulary force 'on the model of the Metropolitan Police'.³⁴

Stipendiary magistrates had hitherto acted only in London since 1792 and subsequently a few large industrial towns. The creation of a national network of stipendiaries responsible to the Home Secretary would be the most contentious aspects of the whole process, undermining, as it would, the power of the unpaid, provincial justice of the peace, especially the country landowner, who was fundamental to all aspects of county government and administration. In May 1832 Melbourne explained all the various advantages and disadvantages of the bill, and some options which had been rejected, in an accompanying

³² Only two copies of the draft bill are known to exist, one in the Melbourne Papers in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, the other in the Duke of Richmond's papers as part of the Goodwood Collection in the West Sussex Record Office. For more information see Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', p. 75-90 *passim*.

³³ For a detailed explanation of its content see Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', pp. 80-81.

³⁴ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Copper', pp. 81, 87.

paper of 'Observations' (in which he specifically mentioned the Metropolitan model).³⁵ The bill and the 'Observations' were circulated to some Cabinet members for discussion but it is not clear whether the issue itself was ever discussed in Cabinet. Under pressure from Peel and his allies to act in response to the various disturbances, the Whigs had to admit in Parliament that they were considering a measure of police reform without ever revealing their intentions. In June 1832, however, the Whigs carefully announced that the contemplated measure of police reform would probably go no further and the following month local authorities were informed that they could introduce their own policing initiatives in local acts if they wished.³⁶ The reasons for the Whigs' decision not to take the bill any further are not difficult to discern. Quite apart from the undoubted hostility with which a large section of the magistracy would have greeted the bill there was the 'commotion and confusion' of the reform crisis to deal with, especially the events of the 'days of May'. Yet once the unrest and disorder was definitely terminated by the passage of the Reform Act in June 1832 the most pressing reason for reform was removed altogether. Leading members of the Grey administration had conceived the police bill and discussed it secretly between October 1831 and June 1832, a period of unparalleled political anxiety and general public unrest. Such an atmosphere gave an impetus to discussions about police reform and may have assuaged opposition to the measure from powerful interests if the plans had been made public at this time. Yet, once the Reform Bill crisis had been resolved and fears about urban-industrial and rural disorders had diminished, the Whig government lost any opportunity (had it been so inclined) of exploiting these to further its police initiative. There were other reasons why the government did not proceed with the measure. Melbourne, the chief architect of the police reform plans, had a reputation for pessimism and caution in the face of concerted opposition and probably did not have the single-minded determination which was necessary to push any radical measure through. Melbourne was never by instinct a supporter of an expanded role for the state and he would not countenance the one measure which might have undermined a great deal of the opposition to the plan for police reform: a substantial contribution to the cost of the scheme from central funds to supplement the sums raised locally. The circumstances for the reform of policing were not more propitious after the first election to the new reformed

³⁵ For a copy of the 'Observations' see Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', pp. 87-90 (p. 87).

³⁶ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', pp. 81-82.

Parliament in 1832, when reform of the old poor law system and its implementation became the most important political issue.³⁷

Significantly, what the abortive bill and the references to police reform in Hansard between 1831-32 show transparently is the extent to which government and opposition leaders were agreed on the need for a provincial measure. Leading Whigs hinted that a measure of police reform was being planned and leading Tories pressed them to make their proposals known swiftly. The political consensus about police reform was slowly radiating outwards, assisted by energetic local officials making their own innovations. Of course, many of the parliamentary backbenchers remained to be convinced, as did a sizeable proportion of the urban and rural plutocracy. Nevertheless, the supporters of police reform both inside and outside Parliament, in the shires, the cities and the towns, were gradually winning the argument. The real issue was fast becoming not whether to have a measure of police reform but what kind of reform should it be: who or what should have control of a new police and how should it be financed?³⁸ No measure could be imposed through central government diktat as Philips and Storch have correctly noted:

It was one thing for politicians to generate a scheme, another to make it acceptable to parliament, and yet another to bring around the provincial ruling class[...]some of whom were themselves members of parliament or connected by interest, acquaintance, friendship or blood to members of parliament. Much of the future story would lie in the untangling of these complicated webs of mutual interest and distrust between and within the national governing and the provincial ruling classes.³⁹

However, all had something in common: substantial private property to protect, a fear of popular unrest and a desire to impose a measure of social discipline on those refractory members of the working class who questioned the prevailing social order, with its maldistribution of economic and political power. Philip's and

³⁷ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', pp. 83-85.

³⁸ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Copper', pp. 85-86.

³⁹ Philips and Storch, 'Whigs and Coppers', pp. 86-87.

Storch are supported by David Jones who writes that 'amongst the propertied classes there was, from at least the 1830s, a general appreciation of the idea and value of a reformed police force. The vital questions were these: who was to control it, and who was to finance it?'⁴⁰

Having failed to even introduce the 1832 scheme for a national police network it now becomes more understandable why the Whigs attached a measure of borough police reform to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.⁴¹ By choosing not to develop their comprehensive plans the Whig leadership effectively left themselves with the option of introducing a piecemeal measure of reform or doing nothing. Yet any such measure had to be flexible and uncontentious enough to pass into law without arousing too much opposition from the provincial ruling classes, especially in the shires, where hostility to police reform was greatest. If the principle of reform could be sanctioned first, in the incorporated boroughs, perhaps it could be extended later to encompass other parts of the country. It then became sensible to tack the issue of policing on to a more general measure of reform. Local government reform was a logical extension of the parliamentary reform which the Whigs had implemented in 1832 and the Municipal Corporations Act was a comprehensive piece of legislation which made elected councillors accountable to the new ratepayer electorate. The Act was the culmination of a campaign 'to replace closed, self-elected and frequently corrupt local administrations by openly elected bodies accountable to the ratepayers for their actions.'⁴² It swept away local constitutional peculiarities and the strange and confusing collection of privileged communities which comprised the old corporations. Their successors, the newly-elected town councils, had few functions and supporters of the legislation drew comfort from the fact that by extending the principle of representation more reform could be introduced in the future. The Act endeavoured to rationalize a variety of local government functions in the incorporated boroughs, one of which was policing.⁴³ In this respect the

⁴⁰ David Jones, 'The New Police, Crime and People in England and Wales, 1829-1888', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 33 (1983), 151-68, (p. 163) quoted in Swift, 'Urban Policing', p. 229.

⁴¹ The part of the Act which relates to policing are sections 76-86 inclusive.

⁴² Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early industrial Britain 1783-1870* (Harlow: Longman, 1983), p. 293.

⁴³ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p.384.

legislation was an attempt to force incorporated boroughs to reform their existing arrangements for dealing with crime and preserving public order by creating reformed police forces - but the Act had grave weaknesses, which will be explained below. Eighteen twenty-nine had seen the creation of the Metropolitan Police and represented a genuine attempt by the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, and the Tory government, to introduce a new model of urban policing. After six years, in which the Metropolitan Police's structure, organization, manpower, strategy and tactics underwent reform as a result of practical experience, there emerged a consensus among the propertied classes, the middle and landed classes, in favour of extending the police reform into the provinces. The fundamental question, however, was what model of reform should be adopted? Although the Metropolitan model had many supporters there were others who criticized it as being too centralized.

Briefly, it was the tumultuous events of the previous half century or so, when the social fabric of the country was on the verge of tearing apart, which convinced a majority of the governing classes of the need for reform. The established order of society was threatened by the effects of profound economic and social change, a rising crime rate and greater fear of crime, foreign wars, and levels of popular disorder which were without precedent in recent British history.⁴⁴ From the 1770s to the 1830s large sections of the working class took a leading role in movements which challenged the status quo: the parliamentary reform movement, which was active intermittently throughout this period; the revolutionary radicalism of the 1790's; the Luddite industrial agitation; the trade union unrest of the mid-1820s; the Anti-Poor Law and Factory Reform movements and finally, the most important of all, beginning in 1836-37, Chartism. The opponents of police reform were drawn from all sections of society but numerically they were overwhelmingly working class and they objected to the imposition of new police forces for a variety of reasons. Both radicals and conservatives, equating local police forces with a standing army, voiced traditional political and constitutional fears about their role and regarded police reform as an attack on ancient rights or liberties (however they defined them). Propertied ratepayers protested that a day and night police would be a financial burden on themselves and too expensive to be justifiable. Moreover, ratepayers

⁴⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the points raised below see Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', pp. 61-90, passim.

who lived in rural areas - particularly landowners and farmers - firmly believed their money would finance forces which mainly operated in urban and industrial areas, where the risks of crime and public disorder were greater. The working class, meanwhile, regarded the prospect of police reform with great suspicion and enmity. There was a great fear that police forces would be used to monitor and regulate life in working class neighbourhoods, especially leisure pursuits such as drinking, street-gambling, brutal sports and traditional community celebrations, and rigidly enforce the New Poor Law. Furthermore, those working class people active in political and industrial movements were deeply worried that the police, at the behest of the governing classes, would infiltrate, spy on and eventually suppress opposition groups.⁴⁵

The introduction of a new police force on the Metropolitan model into Hull⁴⁶ in 1836, under the control of the reformed corporation, involved a major extension of the authority of the state in everyday life at a local level. Supporters of the legislation everywhere regarded such a growth of municipal, or local, state power as an acceptable price to pay to ensure that there would be a professionally organized body of men perpetually in place in the urban districts to maintain law, order and social discipline. By the 1830s, the propertied classes' fear of the 'massed ranks' of the working class at times of great economic, social and political upheaval had reached such an intensity that the former suspected the latter of plotting the complete overthrow of society. The gradual disintegration of the traditional social order since the end of the eighteenth century (principally as a result of the Dual Revolution) had brought about an enormous 'rupture' in class relations.⁴⁷ In the growing towns and cities of the industrial North and Midlands the social distance between the propertied and the propertyless was greater than ever before and this was perceived as a potential threat to the social system. The old network of social relations could not survive in a society which was rapidly industrializing and urbanizing. If the old ties were gone forever then there was a need for a new instrument of social control enforcing legal and moral codes of public behaviour. Palpably, the army was no longer suitable as an instrument to maintain order except in the direst of emergencies. It could not provide

⁴⁵ Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', pp. 65-66, 69, 84.

⁴⁶ The proper name of the town, later city, is Kingston upon Hull but for centuries it has been known simply as Hull.

⁴⁷ Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', pp. 62-63.

the kind of daily protection from crimes such as theft, assault, robbery and burglary which the supporters of reform now wanted. Its inability to respond flexibly when impelled to intervene meant that all too often maximum force was used in inappropriate situations. When it did act it could exacerbate social tensions in the process and aggravate the unrest which it had been sent in to eradicate.⁴⁸ Critics of the army's methods of maintaining order argued that soldiers deployed to quell a riot or disturbance could not act independently, they must maintain their place in the ranks. Moreover, armed with a clumsy two-handed weapon, the musket, the soldier could only shoot and bayonet, which invariably led to loss of life; the cavalryman was similarly restricted in what he could do, having a sabre in one hand and a pair of reins in the other; whereas a policeman, armed with a staff or cutlass, was less likely to cause death, could move independently among a crowd and had one hand free to apprehend rioters.

Although the propertied classes could not agree initially on the precise structure and organization of the new police, its relationship to central government and who would control it, there was a clearer understanding of what the police would be required to do in urban communities. Examining the area of disagreement first, it is apparent that the crux of the problem concerned the degree of control which should be exercised by local and central government. In the end there emerged a majority in favour of creating a loose, decentralized model of urban policing which was not the favoured option of some of the most ardent reformers, such as the Benthamites. By 1835 a consensus had emerged in favour of putting the urban police under the control of the locally elected plutocracy; but in 1839, when the extension of policing to the shires was being debated, it became apparent that reform would only be accepted if control was vested in the landowners, whose actions were not influenced by the contents of the ballot box. Although the question of who or what should be responsible for the police provoked intense debate for a short period, there was no disagreement or uncertainty over the role which it would be required to fulfil.⁴⁹ The police was given a very comprehensive commission to prevent and detect crime, monitor various aspects of working

⁴⁸ For more information see F. C. Mather, *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 153-81; Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', pp. 64-65.

⁴⁹ See Radzinowicz, *History of English Criminal Law*, IV, 215-21; Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', p. 64.

class life and act against those political and industrial movements, such as Chartism, which constituted a threat to public order.

Hostility towards the police in working class districts resulted both from a strong resentment of their interference in traditional community life and a firm belief that their presence was a blatant act of political surveillance. Probably most hostility to the police derived from their regulation of drinking, gambling and sports and their use of the hated 'move on' system; in other words from their general interference in working class neighbourhoods, as Storch notes:

Deployed in the streets the police offended the lower classes in very concrete ways. The look of the police, their dress, the fact that to many workers' eyes their chief function was to merely walk about all day, gave rise to the accusation that government had saddled the country with well-paid idlers, 'blue locusts', who devoured tax money and produced nothing of use in return.⁵⁰

This is not meant to imply that the antipathy of the working class radicals was unimportant. Most working class political leaders believed, with good reason, that the new police was not designed primarily as a crime-fighting force at all - as the reformers claimed - but as a political instrument to repress the working class movement. They were quick to point out that, according to the terms of the 1835 Act, a borough police force was legally under the control of a committee of the town council, which had the power to appoint, pay, promote and dismiss police officers and hence determine police strategy and tactics.⁵¹ These responsibilities were not always exercised impartially. It should be remembered that a town council, elected on the basis of a narrow property franchise, represented interests which were antithetical to those of the working class. Moreover, at this time the police were not forbidden by law from voting or canvassing in parliamentary or municipal elections and so numerous accusations were made that the police were politically biased. Hatred of the new police remained profound among all sections of the working class until well after the end of the

⁵⁰ Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts', p. 84.

⁵¹ See section 76 of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835.

Chartist era. From the late 1820s until at least the 1860s, working class leaders were constantly accusing the police of being unconstitutional, a threat to trade unionism and radical political activity and an intruder disrupting all facets of working class community life.⁵² Long after individual and collective opposition to the presence of policemen declined there remained a deep suspicion of their motives. Policemen brought with them into the modern industrial city an extraneous law and culture which they sought to impose as a means of suppressing public disorder and maintaining social discipline. As Storch correctly points out 'The police came as unwelcome spectators into the very nexus of urban neighbourhood life.'⁵³

The new policing methods inaugurated in Hull under the terms of the Municipal Reform Act had a profound effect on the town. Before 1836 Hull did not have a paid and professionally organized police force. Traditionally, policing had been the responsibility of annually appointed parish constables and three night-watches. However this still left large parts of the borough without the protection of a night-watch. The 1835 Act changed this by presenting the opportunity to radically reform the way in which Hull was policed. The social elite of some boroughs, especially Hull's, were broadly in favour of police reform - and policing in the town after 1835 was considerably better than the old system it replaced. Yet in many other places the propertied classes and their elected representatives displayed a level of hostility or ambivalence which disappointed the framers and supporters of the legislation. The fundamental police reforms introduced in Hull in 1836 were a result of the socio-economic structure of the town, the political disputes which occurred in the early 1830's (when the unreformed Town Corporation was subjected to a series of criticisms by radicals), the success of the reformers at the municipal elections of 1835 and the employment as superintendent of the new borough police force of an ex-Metropolitan Police inspector (see Chapters 1 and 2 for more information). These facts are themselves enough to justify an analysis of the nature of police reform in Hull, which resulted in the creation of a Metropolitan-style, full-time, twenty-four hour, patrolling police force. This development represented a major aggrandizement of the power of Hull Corporation in its

⁵² E. P. Thompson wrongly claims that the radical populace saw the police as oppressive until Chartist times. Storch's work demonstrates that the antipathy lasted well into the second half of the nineteenth century. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 89.

⁵³ Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', p. 84.

everyday dealings with the citizenry and was something which working class inhabitants of Hull in particular found difficult to accept.

The existing state of policing in towns and cities before the passage of the 1835 Act was far from ideal, as Radzinowicz notes:

Outside the metropolis the most urgent challenge in policing the country lay in the fast-growing towns and cities. Some of the largest of them, such as Bristol, had old established charters and corporations. Others, like Manchester, had the status merely of parishes or parts of parishes. In few cases had any of them proved capable of providing a police force at all adequate to control their populations.⁵⁴

Radzinowicz correctly argues that 'It was the thought of the great towns, with their crowded populations and ineffective constables, that caused the greatest dread.'⁵⁵ However, the 1835 Act only applied to the old incorporated boroughs and it did not offer a definite blueprint for police reform, limitations which undermined the effectiveness of the legislation. In total the Municipal Reform Act applied to 178 boroughs in England and Wales.⁵⁶ Hull, like the other boroughs affected, elected its first reformed council at the end of 1835 and it met for the first time in January 1836. Each corporation was compelled to appoint a watch committee, comprised of its members, with responsibility for creating a police force within three weeks and supervising it thereafter. Hull Corporation responded to this challenge more enthusiastically than most but it could not match this time-scale, given the fact that plans had to be formulated, officers and men appointed and trained, and clothing and equipment obtained. Hull's Watch Committee of fifteen was appointed on 27 February 1836 and met for the first time two days later; the borough police force it created began its life on 2 May 1836. The Act limited the annual amount which could be spent on the new police in every borough to

⁵⁴ Radzinowicz, *History of English Criminal Law*, IV, 208.

⁵⁵ Radzinowicz, *History of English Criminal Law*, IV, 211.

⁵⁶ For more information on the terms and weaknesses of the Act see Radzinowicz *History of English Criminal Law*, IV, 213-4; Palmer, *Police and Protest*, pp. 396-401; Jenifer Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police, 1835-56', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 411-27, passim.

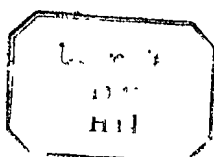
the average of what had been spent on policing over the previous seven years, which was not always an easy figure to calculate since police functions had generally been carried out by more than one body and on a part-time basis. The new borough forces were expected to maintain public order and prevent some crimes from being committed in addition to obviously trying to apprehend the persons responsible for the crimes which were carried out. It was the duty of the watch committees to make regulations to ensure the efficiency of their forces and discipline the policemen under their control. Legally, they should have sent quarterly returns to the Home Office detailing the activities of their forces, although in practice few of them did so.⁵⁷ Compared to its peers, Hull's Watch Committee was relatively conscientious in sending annual returns.

The Municipal Corporations Act gave the new policemen some of the powers of the Metropolitan Police. Not only were they empowered to act in their own boroughs but their jurisdiction extended beyond those boundaries. According to section 76 any borough constable appointed under the Act's terms had jurisdiction in the county in which his borough was situated and also within the area of any county up to a radius of seven miles from his borough. They could arrest 'idle and disorderly persons' who were disturbing the peace, or whom they suspected of intent to commit a felony; and when on night duty they could take recognizances from minor offenders.⁵⁸ Policemen could be disciplined or dismissed by either the watch committee or the magistrates. In the case of the Hull Police, however, it would seem that the latter did not challenge the authority of the committee to act in these matters. The watch committee also had responsibility for determining the wages, salaries and allowances of the policemen plus any extraordinary expenses to which they were entitled (for apprehending offenders, executing the orders of the justices, and so on), subject to the approval of the council.⁵⁹ In other respects the Municipal Corporations Act failed to create a uniform and efficient standard of policing in the boroughs. For example, it neglected to establish a

⁵⁷ The requirement to send these quarterly returns was abolished in 1858 according to section 1 of 21 & 22 Vict. c. 67. See KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Committee Minutes, 25 Aug. 1858.

⁵⁸ A recognizance is a bond given by a person which binds him/her to observe some condition, for example to appear before a court or magistrate when summoned. See *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, ed. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 7th edn. rev. by J. B. Sykes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 866.

⁵⁹ Radzinowicz, *History of English Criminal Law*, IV, 213-14.



centralized machinery of inspection, a minimum ratio of police to population, entrance qualifications for candidates and a national pay scale. Furthermore, the failure to create a precise structure of authority led to jurisdictional disputes in many boroughs between the corporation, the watch committee and the justices over who should have ultimate authority. The success of the Act was entirely dependent upon the diligence of the 178 borough councils it affected. In the case of Hull the councillors and aldermen rose to the challenge but in many other boroughs the outcome was much less of a success. By 1837 only just over half of the affected boroughs had established police forces, a total of ninety-three. By 1839 some 29 per cent of boroughs had not done so and by 1842 this figure had only dropped to 20 per cent; in 1853 six of the old boroughs still had no police force. However, of the nineteen boroughs granted incorporation between 1835 and 1853 all created police forces within two years of being incorporated.⁶⁰ Although the boroughs were compelled to create police forces by the terms of the 1835 Act the same legislation did not give the government the power to force them to do so.

Even where police forces were established there was no guarantee that they would be effective. As Emsley points out: 'the men who made up the rank and file were often the watchmen, serjeants, and beadles of the old town police now put into a semblance of uniform and called by the new name of 'policemen'.⁶¹ The hiring of new men, to signify a conscious break with the past, was only undertaken in a handful of boroughs (generally, but not always, the largest ones) including Liverpool, Bristol and, significantly, *Hull*. So great was the desire for economy and the maintenance of traditional liberties in many boroughs that police forces were deliberately kept small, too small to be truly effective in combating crime and public disorder. In the larger cities, such as Liverpool and Bristol, which had the most problems with crime and disorder, there was a greater likelihood that fundamental reform would be introduced. In the 1830s these two cities had the best, i.e. lowest, police to population ratios of any borough in the country, being approximately 1:485 and 1:544 respectively.⁶² It should be remembered though that many of the new

⁶⁰ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, pp. 399-400.

⁶¹ Emsley, *English Police*, p. 36.

⁶² These figures are based on information supplied by Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 400.

industrial towns and cities, such as Manchester, Birmingham and Bolton, were not incorporated boroughs and were therefore exempt from the legislation. Special legislation had to be passed in 1839 imposing Metropolitan-style police forces on these three places. In the medium-size towns with populations of between fifteen thousand and a hundred thousand, which included Hull, there were relatively few improvements in policing, making Hull's achievements even more impressive. In 1836, Hull with a population of approximately 56,047,⁶³ had a reformed police force of ninety-five, giving it a police to population ratio of 1:590 - not far behind those of Liverpool and Bristol. Chester and Newcastle had ratios which were slightly higher than Hull's but some important industrial towns were far worse, including Stockport (1:3,806), Wigan (1:4,097), and Walsall (1:6,299).⁶⁴ There were other problems in addition to the size of many forces. In some boroughs a separate day force was created to support the existing night watch and for several years they functioned in an atmosphere of mutual hostility, jealousy and rivalry. Even where there was only one force many policemen were still employed on a part-time basis and therefore never devoted their full attention to police work (this was permitted in Bath and Liverpool as late as 1852). Finally, many watch committees allowed one of the features of the old system which was most open to abuse, the taking of fees by constables and watchmen, to continue in their boroughs.⁶⁵

In spite of the flaws in the legislation, the reformers in Hull created a new police which was remarkable for its era, a borough police force directly modelled on the Metropolitan Police. Indeed, one can go so far as to argue that it was organized on the basis of a Metropolitan police division (for more information on police organization see Chapter 3). The sheer scale of police reform in Hull alone is sufficient to make this subject worthy of doctoral research. In particular my research investigates: the motivating forces behind the creation of the Hull Police and how it compared with the old system of policing; the new police's powers, functions, organization and general effectiveness; its success, or otherwise,

⁶³ This figure is calculated by linear interpolation using the Census figures for 1831 and 1841.

⁶⁴ These figures, for 1839, are quoted in Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p.400.

⁶⁵ Hart, 'Borough Police', pp. 419-20; Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 401; Radzinowicz, *History of Criminal Law*, IV, 214.

in combating crime; the effects of police reform on the town and its people, including an analysis of perceptions of the police, and the careers of some of the early policemen, where records permit. This qualification is important because certain records of the Hull Police for the nineteenth century only became available in the latter stages of this study. These records, in the care of the current police force for the East Yorkshire region, the Humberside Police, have not always been looked after as well as they ought to have been. Records loaned to two historians for a general study of nineteenth century police recruits were returned to the force but then went missing temporarily.⁶⁶ They were later located. Other records belonging to the Humberside Police are in temporary storage with the East Yorkshire Archive Service and have been consulted. However, there are further records still in the care of the police, some of which were damaged by rain water and snow during the winter of 1995-96 and it has not been possible to consult these. Access to all these records, both damaged and undamaged, remains difficult whilst they remain uncatalogued and in temporary storage in different places. Moreover, access will continue to be difficult until the Humberside Police finally decide whether to open a police museum. This issue was unresolved early in 1996. Although this study has utilized the widest possible range of records in the care of the various libraries and archives in Hull, Beverley and London, inevitably some have been used more than others, three especially: the minutes of the Hull Watch Committee from 1836 to 1866, local newspapers from the same period (particularly relevant editions of the *Hull Advertiser* and *Hull Times*) and parliamentary papers (most notably the Inspector of Constabulary's reports from 1857 to 1867).

Although significant events in the history of the Hull Police between 1836 to 1866 are discussed in the narrative, an attempt has been made to avoid 'event-based' history - which focuses too much attention on single events acting as turning-points or catalysts - by looking at the period as a whole. The termination date of the study, 1866, is important and needs explanation. The force was created in 1836 under

⁶⁶ See Clive Emsley and Mark Clapson, 'Recruiting the English Policeman c. 1840-1940', *Policing and Society*, 3 (1994), 269-86. Whilst the records were still missing I was able to access their contents via the data archive of the European Centre for the Study of Policing at the Open University with the help of the above authors. I am very grateful for their assistance. Unfortunately the surviving evidence yielded a total of only forty policemen who had enlisted between 1855 and 1866. This is far fewer than the true number who actually did so and must cast doubt on the representativeness of the sample, although an analysis of it is still presented in Chapter 6.

the command of Andrew McManus, an ex-Metropolitan Police inspector. He commanded the force until his death in 1866 and was the individual most responsible for moulding its character. Therefore it seems sensible to terminate the study at this point. Coincidentally other studies have covered a similar time period.⁶⁷ The structure of the narrative is generally contained within a chronological framework but organized thematically wherever possible. Chapter 1 introduces the economy, society and politics of Hull in the nineteenth century, concentrating on the middle decades of the century. Even this research has proved more difficult than it should have been because the history of nineteenth century Hull is scandalously underresearched. There is a paucity of secondary literature on all aspects of Hull's history in this period. This seems inexplicable given the undoubted importance of the port. The characteristics of the old police system in the early 1830s are analysed in Chapter 2, along with the proposals which were made for its reform in 1836 and the very similar measures actually introduced. Chapters 3 and 4 constitute the main part of the thesis arranged thematically. A loose distinction can be made between them, with Chapter 3 examining what the Hull Police was as a body (its organization, manpower, discipline etc.), while Chapter 4 analyses what it did (dealing with crime, public order and issues relevant to serving policemen, etc.). However, it must be stressed that this is not a rigid division of subject matter. Chapter 5 is concerned with two subjects: first, a service provided by the police, fire-fighting, which was usually effective but led to one controversial incident; second, an operational feature of the police, its police stations, which were a recurrent problem for many years until the issue was resolved handsomely. Finally, some of the early policemen are introduced in Chapter 6: their working lives are analysed and the effects which this had on them as individuals are considered. The Conclusion draws together the main findings of the research and the Appendices contain relevant information which is supplementary to the argument and analysis or too detailed to be easily presented in the text or footnotes.

One final observation should be made. Women do not figure prominently in nineteenth century police history, apart from when they were arrested by the police. Even then the numbers of female offenders were relatively low in comparison to their male counterparts. The relative absence of law-abiding

⁶⁷ For example, Philips, *Crime and Authority*; Swift, *Police Reform*.

women from police records is not surprising given the fact that they were not able to join police forces in this period, nor serve in local government and the magistracy. Unfortunately this can result in a history with a rather masculine bias which is difficult to counter. The gender specificity of nineteenth century police forces is a real barrier to the historian's understanding of women's views on policing during this period. This may be especially problematic in Hull, where the police was overwhelmingly conceived and functioned as a crime-fighting and crime prevention force, not as a public service performing a range of municipal duties (although policemen did perform some such functions). However, any social welfare service which the police performed was extremely incidental to its main purpose. Policing in Hull may have had an especially distinctive masculine trait. Where law-abiding women are mentioned in the early records of the Hull Police they are encountered infrequently and in exceptionally delimited roles as searchers of female prisoners and police station cleaners. Sometimes these are the wives of policemen and this is the only way in which they have entered the historical record. The most significant reference to Mrs McManus (even her forename is unknown) occurs after her death, when the Watch Committee sends its condolences to Chief Constable McManus. The most detailed references to women in the Watch Committee minutes are as follows. In 1836-37 Mrs Coulehan, the wife of Sergeant Patrick Coulehan, was employed as the searcher of the female prisoners at the Blanket Row police station, the larger of the two stations. In June 1837 she was being paid at the rate of 20s. per quarter backdated to 1 September 1836.⁶⁸ In December 1837 Mrs Lang, the wife of Inspector Lang, received 40s. per year paid quarterly for searching the female prisoners at the Jarratt Street police station.⁶⁹ Several years later, Mrs Yates, the wife of Inspector Yates, was acting as a female searcher but the Inspector tendered her resignation from the job in December 1853 and she was replaced by a Mrs Burroughs.⁷⁰ In 1866 a Mrs Wood was doing the job and her wages were raised by 10s. to 30s. per quarter.⁷¹ Whilst it was acceptable to the members of the Watch Committee for the wives of officers and sergeants to act as searchers of female prisoners, the members objected to them working as cleaners in the stations. In

⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Committee Minutes, 13 Jun. 1837.

⁶⁹ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 13 Dec. 1837. The payment commenced from 1 December.

⁷⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 7 Dec. 1853; TCM 217, Central Station Sub-Committee Minutes, 19 Dec. 1853.

⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 25 Jul., 1 Aug. 1866.

1855 when the station sub-committee discovered that the wife of one of the police officers was cleaning the station it unanimously resolved that no inspector or sergeant, nor their wives, would be allowed to do any menial work in the station. It also resolved that 6d. per week would be deducted from the pay of the single men living in the station to pay the wages of the charwoman.⁷² The wages of the charwoman were raised to 10s. per week in 1858 and in 1863 a Mrs Greaves was appointed to clean the station at a rate of 15s. per week.⁷³ From all this it should be apparent how much inherent gender bias there is in the available records. Women do work which enables the police stations to function smoothly but their attitudes to the police and the work which they do, and the duties performed, have been largely unrecorded. However, the general absence of women from histories of policing may also partly be a reflection of the privileged status given to manuscript and printed official public records, as opposed to personal correspondence and other forms of evidence, by police historians of the period.

⁷² KHRO, TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 13 Jan. 1855.

⁷³ KHRO, TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 3 Jul. 1858, 11 Jun. 1863.

1

HULL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**Economy**

Before analysing the degree of success of police reform in Hull in the period 1836 to 1866 it is appropriate to briefly examine the town's growth and development¹ in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its political characteristics.² Immediately before the process of police reform began a contemporary observer described Hull's key features in these terms:

The river Hull and the docks completely insulate the old town, so that the only communication with the populous suburbs of Drypool, Sculcoates, and the Pottery, is by bridges. The whole town lies on a level tract of ground: it is washed on two sides of its triangular figure by the tide from the Humber, which flows several miles up the river Hull. Its population, according to the last census, amounted to 50,000, including the suburbs just enumerated.

In *commercial importance* Hull stands deservedly high. Its intercourse with the *Baltic* is very great, besides which it sends a numerous fleet to the *whale fishery* every spring. Many vessels also trade between it and *America*, and of late years they have, for the most part, been crowded with emigrants. By

¹ For more information on the economic and social history of Hull in this period see: J. M. Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull in the Nineteenth Century With Special Reference to Business History', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Hull, 1965); J. M. Bellamy, *The Trade and Shipping of Nineteenth Century Hull* (Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1971); J. M. Bellamy, 'Occupations in Kingston upon Hull, 1841-1948', *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research*, 4 (1952), 33-50; J. M. Bellamy, 'Cotton Manufacture in Kingston upon Hull', *Business History*, 4 (1962), 91-108; J. M. Bellamy, 'A Hull Shipbuilding Firm: the History of C. & W. Earle and Earle's Shipbuilding and Engineering Company Ltd.', *Business History*, 6 (1963), 27-47; J. E. Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by K. J. Allison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, 174-214; Lucy M. Brown, 'Modern Hull', in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by K. J. Allison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, 215-86; Edward Gillett and Kenneth A. MacMahon, *A History of Hull* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1989); W. G. East, 'The Port of Kingston upon Hull during the Industrial Revolution', *Economica*, 11 (1931), 190-212.

² The political history of Hull in this period has been studied far less than its economic fortunes. The most detailed work covering the nineteenth century as far as 1872 is John Markham, *Nineteenth Century Parliamentary Elections in East Yorkshire* (Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1982). The only other useful works are Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', pp. 174-214, *passim* and Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp. 215-86, *passim*. There is no satisfactory history of Hull's municipal politics in the nineteenth century.

the introduction of *steam navigation*, the intercourse between Hull and the manufacturing districts in the West Riding, is wonderfully facilitated. Goods are conveyed from Selby in a few hours and at very moderate charges, but the projected *Rail Road* is expected to quicken the transit.³

Between 1801 and 1901, Hull's population increased almost tenfold from 27,609 to 239,517, although part of this rise was a result of boundary changes (for more on the population of Hull in this period see below). The town's growth, demographically and spatially, was a direct consequence of the economic development of Lancashire, the West Riding of Yorkshire and the Midlands counties, where rapid industrialization led to a growth in overseas trade with continental Europe. Economic changes in Hull's hinterland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transformed what had been a small, medieval river port into a modern, developed, entrepot.⁴ Hull developed as a port due to the impact which the Industrial Revolution had on the transformation and expansion of its hinterland. Transportation improvements, including the better use of waterway facilities, the local development of steamship travel and regional railway-building (even before Hull's connection to the rail network) served to spread the business of the port further inland. As one contemporary commentator noted:

Owing to the facility of communication with the great manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Nottinghamshire, by means of the rivers Humber, Ouse, Trent, Calder and Aire, and the canals communicating with them, the quantity of goods poured into this port from the interior is immense; those from the West Riding alone amounting in value to at least five millions annually.⁵

This was accompanied by more concentration of large-scale industries in the West Riding, Lancashire and the Midland counties as production techniques altered. As the geographical area of Hull's hinterland

³ J. Craggs, *A New Triennial Directory and Guide of Kingston-upon-Hull and the Suburbs* (Hull: [n.pub.], 1835), pp. 15-16. Emphasis included in original.

⁴ For a short summary of these changes see East, 'Port of Hull', pp. 190-212.

⁵ William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the West Riding Yorkshire, with the City of York and Port of Hull*, 2 vols (Leeds: [n.pub.], 1838), II, 585.

increased so too did its human characteristics. The demographic explosion and concurrent urbanization which occurred in parts of the region as a result of a higher birth rate and internal migration produced more demand for the products that an expanding port could provide. Peter Hall emphasizes the significance of ports in an era of industrial development:

Port towns, indeed, were just as important as pure industrial towns in the whole process of industrialization, because they effected the critical exchange of raw materials and finished products on which the whole system depended; thus cities like Liverpool, Hull, Glasgow and, above all, London, were among the fastest-growing places from 1780 onwards.⁶

The importance of the changes occurring in Hull's hinterland and the effect which these would have on the port can be summed up by a brief analysis of the developments occurring in one area, greater Yorkshire. The single most important feature of Yorkshire's industrialization was the concentration of the woollen and worsted industries in the West Riding, where more than a half of such factories in England were located by 1835, plus a third of the linen factories. Coal mining was slowly developing in the first half of the century around Leeds, along the River Calder below Wakefield, around Sheffield and Barnsley and, after 1835, along part of the Leeds-Selby railway. While it is true that exports of coal from the Yorkshire ports of Hull, Selby and Goole remained small until the second half of the century, an important mineral commodity was being exploited which would be important in trading terms in the future. Iron foundries were already to be found near Sheffield and Rotherham early in the nineteenth century. Although growth proceeded from a low level, total iron production grew steadily from 27,646 tons in 1806 to 66,560 tons by 1848. Later steel was produced in large quantities in Sheffield and Rotherham and in Barnsley. The iron and steel industry used large quantities of locally mined coal but the iron-ore had to be imported *via* Hull from Sweden or Russia.⁷ Hull, situated near the

⁶ Peter Hall, *Urban and Regional Planning* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 14-15.

⁷ East, 'Port of Hull', pp. 207-08.

mouth of the Humber Estuary, was in an ideal position to export the manufactured goods of the industrial districts and import the raw materials which industry needed. Accordingly, three docks were constructed between 1774 and 1829 and the first was, for a time, the largest in England. The old town effectively became an island with the construction of the Old Dock and Humber and Junction Docks, the former separating it from Sculcoates and the latter two docks from Myton. One author of a trade directory in 1835 had this to say about the appearance of the old town:

The [old] town as it now stands is well built, principally of brick; nearly all the streets are well paved, and many of them spacious and commodious. Instead of formidable bulwarks displaying the apparatus of war, Hull is now an open town, presenting on every side docks filled with ships, the vehicles of commerce and the emblems of peace.⁸

Joyce Bellamy has convincingly demonstrated that the economic and social history of Hull during the long nineteenth century is best understood if the era is divided into four periods: from the late eighteenth century to the end of the French Wars, from 1815 to approximately 1840, when the town's first rail link was opened, from 1840 to about 1870 and finally from then until the early years of the twentieth century.⁹ From this chronology it is apparent that shifts and changes in Hull's economy did not always neatly correspond with those affecting the wider national economy. During the course of the nineteenth century the shipping and trade of Hull experienced several changes which had a cumulative effect on the local economy. For example, in the early nineteenth century Hull's export trade had been far more important than its import trade in value terms but by the close of the century the opposite was true. This situation had partly arisen because of the growth of industries at Hull which processed many of the imported raw materials, such as seed-crushing and paint manufacture. Exports from Hull, however, were probably affected by the relatively poor inland transport network serving the town, a

⁸ Craggs, *Directory of Hull*, p. 57.

⁹ For more information see Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, passim.

constant complaint of Hull's mercantile community. The town's first railway link was not opened until 1840 and subsequent lines were developed slowly. In the early decades of the century Hull was the most important English port involved in the northern whale fishery and just as this industry was declining before mid-century an entirely separate trawl-fishing industry was emerging to ultimately take its place as a significant contributor to the town's wealth.¹⁰ In 1800 ships trading at Hull could use its one dock of almost ten acres, opened in 1778, which was entered via the River Hull.¹¹ Alternatively they could moor at the Old Harbour, which was in fact the lower, wharfed, reaches of the River Hull itself. These facilities were enough to place Hull fifth in the list of shipping registered at English ports, with 611 vessels totalling 68,533 tons. By 1900 Hull had 882 registered vessels amounting to 241,635 tons and had fallen to ninth place; however Hull was Britain's third largest port in terms of the value of its foreign trade.¹²

The growth rate of the port was particularly rapid between 1783 and 1793 when customs revenue increased from £86,000 to £200,000. Inwards shipping tonnage rose from almost 140,000 to 200,000 between 1788 and 1793. A total of 1058 ships, coastal and trading, arrived in the port in 1788 and by 1792 this figure had grown to 1522.¹³ However, the economic fortunes of Hull were mixed during the years of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and provided contemporaries with contradictory trends regarding the port's economic future.¹⁴ Shortly after the turn of the century the port suffered a temporary decline before recovering and growing again:

¹⁰ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 5.

¹¹ The opening of the first dock had an immediate effect on both the collection of revenue and volume of shipping. For example in the first complete year of the legal quay Customs receipts were 40 per cent above those of the preceding year. See East, 'Port of Hull' p. 200.

¹² Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 5-6.

¹³ Gillett and MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 231.

¹⁴ For more information see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull' Ch. I; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 7-14.

Largely because of the reduction in continental trade caused by the war, fewer ships were using the port. The tonnage plunged from 210,000 in 1802 to 79,000 in 1809; but from 1810 many more continental ports were open and the tonnage rose to 173,000. By the end of the war in 1815 it was 265,000. By 1825 dock dues were being paid on 449,000 tons and the criteria laid down for a third dock were now satisfied.¹⁵

Trade and shipping at Hull in these years had clearly been adversely affected by the blockading of continental ports which was a feature of the Napoleonic War. Even so, there was some growth of whale fishing and this, together with an extra demand for naval and merchant vessels, led to an expansion of shipbuilding output from local yards. Moreover, Hull's population increased by 25 per cent in the period 1801 to 1811. Principal imports in this period were wood and iron ore, plus some bar iron from Scandinavia, flax, hemp, linseed, tallow and tar, all mostly from Russia, rapeseed from Denmark, cork and dried fruits from the Mediterranean region, wines and spirits from France, Spain and Portugal, dyestuffs from Germany and Norway, clover-seed, groceries, hides, train oil and wheat, generally from Germany but also from Holland, and a small amount of trade with North America and the Caribbean which brought in some sugar, tobacco and spirits.¹⁶

From this list it should be apparent that much of Hull's trade was with Northern Europe, simultaneously a great strength of the port because it was a fairly solid and reliable trade in normal years but also a weakness because for a long period it discouraged the mercantile and shipping community from developing links with the more distant parts of Britain's world-wide trading network. Hull's over-reliance on its links with the Baltic and north European ports meant that it suffered from three recurring problems. First, because the Baltic freezes in winter Hull's trade in this region was highly seasonal; second, its trade could be disrupted by wars on the continent; third, it could never develop a

¹⁵ Gillett and MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 232.

¹⁶ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 7-8.

sizeable export market with these areas because of their relative under-development.¹⁷ Important local industries which relied on imported raw materials in these early years included iron founding, tanning and currying, soap manufacture, paint-making and sugar-refining. These industries existed alongside all the usual ancillary industries which serviced a bustling port such as shipbuilding and repair, sail- and rope-making, tar and turpentine distilling, nautical instrument-making and so on:

Hull possesses numerous mills for grinding corn, colours, and bones; for extracting oil from seeds, and for sawing timber. Some of these mills are worked by steam, but the greater part are set in motion by wind. There are many extensive breweries, soaperies, oil-refineries, founderies, roperies, a sugar-refinery, tan-yards, and potteries.¹⁸

Exports of British manufactured goods via Hull in this era are not as thoroughly documented as imports but cotton and woollen textiles, earthenware and ironware were the most important and the port also re-exported imported produce such as spirits and tobacco.¹⁹ It was in 1809 during the Napoleonic War that the port's second dock, the Humber Dock, of over seven acres, was opened although this development was overshadowed for some years by the substantially lower volume of traffic using the port because of the war. Without the expansion of the whale fishery in these years Hull would have been much weaker economically. Whaling from Hull had begun in the middle of the eighteenth century and the number of whaling ships sailing from the port rose to seven in 1770, twenty-four in 1790, thirty-eight in 1805 and fifty-seven in 1815. By the end of the Napoleonic War Hull was the biggest whaling port in the country.²⁰ During the industry's most prosperous period, from 1815 to 1825, Hull ships constituted a fifth of the total British vessels employed in the Northern fishery, produced an average of nearly 5,000

¹⁷ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 222.

¹⁸ Craggs, *Directory of Hull*, p. 17.

¹⁹ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 9.

²⁰ Gillett and MacMahon, *History of Hull*, pp. 235-38.

tons of oil per annum and provided employment for more than 2,000 men in the trade as a whole.²¹

Thereafter the industry entered a long, slow decline which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Before the end of the Napoleonic War, as the defeat of France seemed inevitable, trade began to recover and by 1815 inward tonnages had recovered to the level reached in 1800. The period from the end of the Napoleonic War until 1840, when Hull's first rail link opened (with Selby), was generally one in which the trade and shipping of the port grew but it did so somewhat unevenly, which affected levels of prosperity and employment in Hull quite severely at times.²² The volume of shipping using the port fluctuated generally in parallel with national trends, with summits in 1818, 1825 and 1839. Hull experienced the general economic depression of the late 1820s and early 1830s very acutely; output from local shipyards fell markedly and it was towards the end of this period that whaling in Hull began to go into decline. Yet Hull benefited from the general economic recovery of the mid-1830s, the volume of shipping using the port rose to a new peak and the shipbuilding industry shared in the expansion. Shipbuilding at Hull was relatively modest by national standards but locally it made a noteworthy contribution to the economy.²³ The onset of peace in 1815 was the cause of a rapid rise in trade until 1818, when shipping tonnages at Hull surpassed the level stipulated in the Dock Act of 1802 for the construction of a third dock. Unfortunately, various delays and wrangles between the mercantile and shipping community, Hull Corporation, Trinity House and the Dock Company, prevented the opening of the new Junction Dock, which connected the other two docks, until 1829. The three docks followed the line of the town's former walls and Hull now had a total dock capacity of twenty-three acres.²⁴ Even so, it should be stressed that 'the conflict between the mercantile classes of Hull and the

²¹ Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 183.

²² For more information see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, Ch. 2; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 15-29.

²³ For more information about an individual shipbuilding business and the industry in general in Hull see Bellamy, 'A Hull Shipbuilding Firm', pp. 27-47.

²⁴ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 15-16.

Dock Company over what were regarded as inadequate port facilities was a recurring theme in the history of the town in the nineteenth century.²⁵ The pattern of Hull's import trade in the 1820s and thirties was very similar to that of the preceding period already described. Two imports which became more important in this period were raw wool and bones, which were ground down and used as fertilizer.²⁶ The pattern of Hull's export trade in the 1820s and thirties was also little different from that which had prevailed before, except exports of cotton twist and yarn were making an even more important contribution to the total, with 70 per cent of UK yarn exports leaving the country from Hull in 1835 (although its share of cotton piece goods was only 10 per cent since these went to parts of the world that did not have strong trading links with Hull). Such developments helped to boost the value of Hull's export trade in 1833 to £5.2 million, then to £8.8 million in 1837 or 20 per cent of the declared value of British exports.

If one pauses at this point to reflect on the momentous changes which had transformed Hull during the classic period of the Industrial Revolution several changes are noteworthy. For example:

Broadly, over a period of seventy years, from 1775 until 1845, the tonnage using the port had increased nearly seven times. Custom receipts for the years 1775 and 1840, though the figures are not strictly comparable, point to an increased scale of commerce: whereas the Customs receipts were £91,366 in 1775, by 1840 they reached £800,412.²⁷

Using the measure of Customs receipts, Hull was the fourth ranked English port by 1835 after London, Liverpool and Bristol. In 1841, according to the measure of the number and tonnage of vessels using the port, Hull was still placed fifth nationally behind London, Liverpool and the two coal ports of Newcastle

²⁵ Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 46.

²⁶ For more information see Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 20-21.

²⁷ East, 'Port of Hull', p. 200.

and Sunderland.²⁸ Clearly the port of Hull had seen itself transformed over the previous seven or eight decades. Nevertheless, it is fair to conclude that 'its progress had not been so continuous and rapid as it might have been, had the various interested bodies in the town reacted more unitedly and speedily to the need of increasing shipping accommodation.'²⁹ This is apparent from the evidence given before the Parliamentary Committee on the Hull Dock Bill of 1840, when the inadequacies of the port became all too transparent. Failure to maintain the channel of the Old Harbour and its approaches had made it dangerous. The entrance to the Humber Dock was not wide enough to permit the entry of at least six of the port's steamships. There was a shortage of storage space for imports, especially timber. The obvious solution - if only it could be implemented - was:

for the town once more to reconcile its conflicting interests so that legal sanction could be obtained for a policy of dock extension along the Humberside. Then only could the town of Hull effectively meet the criticism, to which it was not unfairly exposed in 1840, that it was slack in exploiting its excellent natural advantages.³⁰

More positively, by 1840 Hull was symbiotically connected to an enlarged and economically dynamic hinterland that now intersected with regions which would have previously traded only with other ports such as London, Liverpool, Bristol and Newcastle.³¹

Meanwhile, on dry land some of Hull's merchants were prepared to invest locally in cotton manufacture because of the growth of this yarn export trade and two cotton spinning businesses

²⁸ East, 'Port of Hull', p. 200.

²⁹ East, 'Port of Hull', p. 206-07.

³⁰ East, 'Port of Hull', pp. 211-12.

³¹ East, 'Port of Hull', p. 211.

were formed, the first in the 1830s and the second in the following decade.³² The key developments in the local economy in this period have been summed up thus:

The principal changes in the industrial and trade economy of the port during the pre-railway era from 1815 to 1840 were undoubtedly the decline in whale fishing and the establishment of cotton manufacture. The latter, coupled with the rise in the volume of overseas trade and some increase in the industrial establishments in the town encouraged inwards migration which, in turn, created a demand for additional facilities to supply the material needs of the expanding population.³³

Yet the expansion of the cotton industry was finite and after reaching its peak around mid-century it went into a steady decline. Perhaps it is surprising then that these two industries which made a significant contribution to the economic and social expansion of Hull in the first half of the nineteenth century, namely whaling and to a lesser extent cotton manufacture, should decline relatively suddenly and ultimately disappear altogether in the second half of the century. The reasons for their decline can be explained. The decline of the Hull whale fishery fleet in the 1830s was the cause of much concern in the town. The year 1818 had been the peak one for whaling in Hull with over sixty ships sailing from the port and landing catches worth over £272,000. By 1830, even though a contemporary estimate suggested that capital invested in the whaling industry was in excess of £400,000 and it employed 1,500, the number of ships sailing from Hull had fallen to thirty-three. Ten years later only four whaling ships sailed from Hull and its share of total UK tonnage was only 13 per cent compared with a figure of 41 per cent for 1818-19. The industry rallied slightly in the 1840s³⁴ but continued to decline in the 1850s and sixties and whaling from Hull ceased in 1869 when the port's last remaining ship was lost at sea. One important reason for the decline of English whaling ports such as Hull was the geographical

³² Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 21.

³³ Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 45-46.

³⁴ Sixteen ships returned to Hull in 1848, the highest figure for that decade. Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 102-3.

advantage possessed by the Scottish whaling ports which were hundreds of miles closer to the Greenland whale fishery and whose ships could sail twice a year.³⁵ It has already been noted how cotton spinning in Hull was encouraged by the high level of cotton yarn and twist which was exported from the port in this period. At the time of the 1851 Census, cotton manufacture in Hull was employing more than two thousand workers, with females outnumbering males by a few hundred. A large proportion of this workforce had migrated to Hull from other parts of the country, including the cotton districts of Lancashire. The total employed fell to just under two thousand ten years later, most of the reduction coming from the male section of the labour force. Both cotton spinning companies were severely affected by the Cotton Famine brought on by the American Civil War. The first business failed in the late 1860s; a smaller successor company was formed but cotton manufacture at its mill had ended by the mid 1870s; the second business closed in 1894 but by then it had become a shadow of its former self. Probably more than any other reason cotton manufacture in Hull failed because of entrepreneurial and managerial incompetence. The owners of the businesses had no experience in the cotton industry and had to rely on uninspiring factory managers who were little better than themselves.³⁶

The 1820s and thirties saw much progress made in the expansion of steam shipping at Hull. The first regular steam shipping service began in 1821 from Hull to London and three years later local services to Goole and Selby were also established. In the following decades services to European ports such as Hamburg, Gothenberg, Rotterdam, and Antwerp were added.³⁷ However, the total tonnage of shipping registered in Hull in 1841 was only slightly higher than the 1800 figure: 73,200 as opposed to 68,533, possibly due to the decline of the whaling fleet.³⁸ The more thoughtful members of Hull's business community and other informed local observers began to question the

³⁵ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 23-24 & 37.

³⁶ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 21 & 34-35. For more information see Bellamy, 'Cotton Manufacture in Hull', pp. 91-108.

³⁷ See East, 'Port of Hull', p. 203; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 25-26.

³⁸ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 6, 26.

scope of the port's activities in the years 1820 to 1840.³⁹ During these years a number of individuals made repeated criticisms of the port's over-reliance on the North European trade and the large sum of money invested in the northern whale fishery, both of which were detrimental to the growth of other mercantile enterprises which would have diversified Hull's trade pattern. Their principal purpose was to argue for a substantial augmentation of the port's trade links with other parts of the world, especially North America, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and India. Given the transparent decline of the whaling industry in the 1830s some credence must be attached to this argument but whilst contemporaries might have accepted this assertion, many would have resisted any weakening of the trade links with Northern Europe. The majority of Hull's business community was content to continue along the old familiar path in the belief that what had brought them prosperity in the past would continue to do so in the future. In some respects the return of prosperity in the late 1830s partially obscured the extent of the economic challenges which Hull would have to confront over the next few years. Chief amongst these was the impact which increased competition would have on Hull, both from other Humber ports such as Goole and Grimsby and ports further up the north-east coast such as Sunderland and Hartlepool.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to assert that the period from the early 1840s to the mid 1870s was of great importance in determining the economic position of Hull for the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Initially the economic indicators appeared favourable to Hull. The first railway link was opened in 1840 to Selby and this connected Hull, via Leeds, with the manufacturing regions of the West Riding, Lancashire and the Midlands. By 1844 the tonnage of ships using the port had exceeded the previous peak and in the early 1840s the value of Hull's export trade was almost equal to that of London's. In the 1860s *The Times* could produce two articles with copious quantitative information which appeared to confirm an

³⁹ For more on this see Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 26-29.

⁴⁰ For more on this era see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 47-81; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 30-39.

impression of economic strength.⁴¹ However, in reality by the 1850s the economic position of the town was far less certain, with Hull's share of the national export trade declining while London's increased and Grimsby, also on the Humber River, became a more serious competitor port. Hull's over-reliance on specific aspects of its trade, in effect its narrow trading base, was becoming apparent to more members of the mercantile and shipping community. This worrying situation is illustrated perfectly by a study of the ships and cargoes which entered Hull in two representative weeks in 1848. Of sixty-nine ships no fewer than fifty-nine (over 85 per cent) came from Holland, Belgium, Germany and the Baltic ports, carrying cargoes of wheat, barley, beans, timber, iron, linseed and oil-cake.⁴² Hull could have developed a significant trade in coal exports from the Yorkshire coalfield if a railway line had been built between Hull and Barnsley in the 1840s; however the attempt to build one failed and Hull did not benefit from a rail link to the Yorkshire coalfield until 1869, when a line was opened between Hull and Doncaster.⁴³ Indeed, Hull's failure to achieve its full economic potential in this era was partly a result of its poor transport links with the rest of the country; the town was relatively badly served by railways until quite late in the nineteenth century. Even after lines to Hull were opened the freight rates charged by regional railway companies with substantial interests at other Humber and east coast ports, and the deliberate collusion between these companies, adversely affected trade at Hull, especially the level of exports.⁴⁴

Even so, Hull was comparatively prosperous in this mid-century period and relatively few contemporary inhabitants would have discerned that the town was under-achieving economically. Despite the effects of the trade depression of 1847-48, the slow growth of the early 1850s and the constraints placed on trade by the Crimean War, the value of Hull's import and export trades remained reassuringly high. Bellamy estimates that the total value of exports from Hull in 1857 was £15.7 million

⁴¹ B JL, *The Times* 21 Jun. 1862, 9 Sep. 1865.

⁴² Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 220. Only four ships came from Canada and North America.

⁴³ A direct rail link between the port and the Barnsley area was not available until 1885; see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 147.

⁴⁴ For more information see Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 32.

and the figure for imports was £7.8 million. By 1872 the two figures were £23.0 million and £16.5 million respectively. In 1857 exports from Hull were 12.9 per cent of total British exports and imports 4.2 per cent of the total. By 1872 the percentage of total British imports handled at Hull had risen to 4.7 but the corresponding figure for exports had fallen to 9.0, a sure sign that Hull was losing out in relation to other ports.⁴⁵ Hull's import trade in the 1850s and sixties was still dominated by raw materials: flax, grains, hemp, iron-ore, oilseeds, wood, and wool⁴⁶ but factors affecting its pattern of exports are of more importance historically. The importance of textiles in the British export trade of the mid-nineteenth century was well reflected at Hull. Cotton yarns and manufactures accounted for 53.9 per cent of total exports from Hull by value in 1850 although this figure declined to 30.1 per cent by 1870. The corresponding percentages for woollen yarns and manufacturers declined less, from 26.3 per cent to 23.6 per cent over the same period.⁴⁷ Linen goods and yarns, metals and machinery were the other main exports from Hull in this period. The export of machinery, hitherto marginal to the port's activities, became increasingly important in this era and even more so in the final three decades of the nineteenth century. The relative decline of cotton exports in relation to exports of machinery and metal manufactures in this period is one indication of the increasing diversification of the British economy away from its heavy reliance on the cotton industry.

However these figures and the pattern of exports cannot mask Hull's relative decline in this period as the other main Humber ports, Goole and Grimsby, developed their export trades. In 1860, 90 per cent of the exports leaving the country from the Humber estuary were exported from Hull but only ten years later this figure had fallen to 56 per cent and by 1872 it was 53 per cent.⁴⁸ Despite the port's relative decline, traffic, and hence congestion, increased in the 1850s, sixties and early seventies

⁴⁵ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 31.

⁴⁶ For more details see Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 33-36.

⁴⁷ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, Table IV, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 31-32, 47. In the late 1890s the figure for UK exports leaving the country from the Humber via Hull dipped to under 50 per cent.

exerting a tremendous strain on dock and rail facilities. Ships experienced considerable delays in loading and unloading their cargoes and rail sidings were congested with wagons. This occurred in spite of extensions to dock facilities which saw the opening of Railway Dock in 1846, Victoria Dock in 1850 (extended in 1863) and Albert Dock in 1869. Together these three docks had a total water area of forty-seven acres, about twice the size of the three earlier docks.⁴⁹ The expansion of dock facilities was not achieved easily, partly because of factional disputes between the different local interests. Although the Dock Company was intrinsic to the economic success of Hull, it was not held in high regard by the people of Hull:

The Dock Company in local eyes was a large and powerful corporation, the shareholders of which were predominantly strangers[...]The proprietors remained a small, isolated body, an easy target for public criticism. Many shares, it was said in 1859, had been bought or inherited by 'ladies and people living remote from Hull'; there were scarcely any shareholders 'who from the daily details of their business became practically acquainted with the wants and requirements' of the port.⁵⁰

There was an almost perpetual conflict between the company and other local interests during the century. For example, 'between 1835 and 1870 a prolonged struggle between the Dock Company and local interests had ended with greater local control and closer statutory limitations on the Dock Company, but with no fundamental change in the structure of ownership.'⁵¹ If the power and independence of the company was checked then this proved to be only a partial victory for its opponents. Disputes with the company continued until it was acquired by a regional railway company later in the century, which then became the target of local criticism.

⁴⁹ Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 70. For more information on the development of port facilities throughout the nineteenth century see Ch. 4 in the same work.

⁵⁰ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 228.

⁵¹ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 231.

In part, dock congestion at mid-century was caused by the sudden but economically crucial expansion of the Hull trawling industry in this period.⁵² Trawl fishing in the North Sea by smacks from Cornwall, Devon and Kent, using Hull as a summer station, had been carried on since the 1830s. The growth of Hull as a trawling centre was encouraged by the construction of a rail link with the rest of the country in 1840 and the discovery of the immensely productive fishing-ground, the Great Silver Pit, about fifty miles off-shore, in 1843.⁵³ In 1845 there were twenty-nine smacks at Hull with an average tonnage of nineteen tons and an average value of £225; by 1854 forty vessels were involved in this trade. Expansion of the industry over the next decade or so was rapid, with the tonnage of fish landed at Hull jumping from 1,571 in 1854 to 10,782 by 1864. These figures, however, do not convey the importance of the industry because perhaps as much as 50 per cent of the total catch was sent direct to London from the fishing grounds by fast clipper in the 1860s. A more accurate measurement of the industry's importance would be the number and tonnage of vessels frequenting the port in this period. From 1861 to 1868 the tonnage of shipping entering the port from the fishing grounds expanded from 86,100 to 143,600. In 1867 some 260 fishing smacks used the port and six years later this figure had increased to 330; by 1878 there were 386, averaging fifty-six tons each. When, in 1869, the smack-owners were allowed to use the recently-opened Albert Dock, approximately 1,200 fishermen were employed in the industry in Hull with thousands more engaged in ancillary trades such as packing, carting, coopering, boat-building, sail-making and rope-making. Fishing, however, was a hard and dangerous industry with the most appalling working conditions - which bred hard men. Not only was the death-rate among fishermen relatively high due to vessels being lost at sea but the industry was also noted for its sadism and cruelty, particularly towards those who were least able to defend themselves, namely the young boys who served as apprentices and cabin boys.⁵⁴

⁵² For more information see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, pp. 346-49; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 37-38.

⁵³ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 225.

⁵⁴ For more information on the industry see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, Ch. 23, *passim*.

In addition to the problems confronting the port in the middle decades of the century, the pace of industrial expansion was also frustratingly slow.⁵⁵ The retardation of some business developments in early and mid-nineteenth century Hull may have been due to the relative shortage of local capital.⁵⁶ Certainly this was an important reason for the failure, or at least delay, of some dock and railway schemes. Until the late 1830s the manufacturing base of the town had changed little since the beginning of the nineteenth century but the establishment of cotton spinning, whilst only temporarily important in itself, may have stimulated some industrial growth in conjunction with the trade of the port and the opening of the first railway line.⁵⁷ At mid-century the nucleus of small-scale industries in existence started to expand, the most important being paint manufacture, oilseed crushing, iron founding, engineering, wood processing, and shipbuilding, which was increasingly switching from using wood to iron. Bellamy makes the point that 'Numerically most of the industries proper were not large employers of labour during the middle decades of the century, so that the cotton industry at that time was one of the largest individual sources of employment in the town, especially for the female population.'⁵⁸ In Hull in this period individual businesses employing more than three hundred workers were very few in number. From about 1870 until the end of the century the expansion of Hull's manufacturing sector was probably more impressive with a steady increase in the size of business units occurring. Even so, some of this expansion was merely Hull's industries 'catching-up' with those of other English regions. Shipbuilding, engineering, paint manufacture and oil-milling were still important but the food and metal trades had also grown considerably and Hull was becoming important for cement manufacture. Steam shipping services were an aspect of the shipping industry at which Hull excelled mainly because this kind of service dominated the short-haul transport market to European destinations. Over 59,000 tons of

⁵⁵ For more information see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 52-57.

⁵⁶ For more information see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 409 & Ch. 7, *passim*.

⁵⁷ For more information see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, Ch. 6, *passim*.

⁵⁸ Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 107. For more on the occupational structure of Hull in this period see below.

Hull's registered shipping, or 12 per cent, was powered by steam in 1851 and most of the steam ships were locally owned, although few had been locally built. 'By the early 1870s regular steamship services linked Hull to all the principal European ports and connections with more remote parts of the world were being developed.'⁵⁹ The contribution which steam shipping made to the increased registered tonnage of the port in this period was absolutely fundamental. Shipping registered at Hull expanded by over 100,000 tons between the 1840s and early 1870s but the growth rate was far from uniform. The figure was practically invariable for the first twenty years and the growth, from 72,000 tons to 175,000 tons, occurred in the period 1864 to 1874, the result of additions to the steam shipping fleet.⁶⁰

From the 1870s until the end of the century Hull's economic fortunes continued to be mixed and this is best exemplified by the performance of its export trade. The value of Hull's trade in British exports decreased from some £23 million in the early 1870s to only £17 million by 1900, by which time Hull was shipping less than half of the UK's exports leaving the country from the Humber. The situation can be summed up thus:

Hull's export pattern differed from national trends in so far as the value of British goods shipped from the port was less in the 1880s and 1890s than in the 1870s, whereas the values of total UK exports of British produce and manufactures rose. Hull's share of national exports therefore declined, from ten per cent in the mid-1870s to 5.8 per cent in 1900, although this decline was partly mitigated by an increase in the re-export of imported merchandise.⁶¹

When the values of the three sectors of trade (imports, exports and re-exports) are summed and converted into percentages of total UK trade for the years 1882 to 1900 inclusive, these indicate that Hull's share varied within the very narrow range of 5.9 per cent (1883) to 6.8 per cent (1898). Within

⁵⁹ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 39.

⁶⁰ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 39.

⁶¹ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 47.

this overall pattern significant contrast was evident in the three sectors. Exports fell steadily until the end of the century, with Glasgow replacing Hull as Britain's third port in this sector in 1900, a position Hull had maintained since 1833, when comparative records became available. Re-exports fluctuated between 5 and 10 per cent of UK totals but remained significant in relation to the country as a whole and constituted nearly 40 per cent of the value of home produced goods shipped from the port in the peak year of 1898. Imports expanded relatively smoothly and faster than the national rate, from 46 per cent to 58 per cent of Hull's total trade, thus becoming preponderant in the trade pattern of the port and indeed crucial in maintaining Hull as the country's third most important port in overall trade terms. However Hull remained a long way behind the first and second place ports, London and Liverpool.⁶² The mediocre performance of the port in trading terms in the second half of the nineteenth century, its failure to reach its potential and become a serious challenger to London and Liverpool, was to a great extent mitigated in economic terms by the steady development of the trawling industry. In the last quarter of the century it became the commanding sector of the trade and shipping of the port, employing at least an estimated 10,000 people both on- and off-shore.⁶³ For this reason Hull remained a relatively prosperous place in the latter half of the nineteenth century but one whose economy was still built upon a relatively narrow base and which was geographically isolated, thus making it particularly vulnerable to sudden adverse changes in the economic climate.

To complete this analysis of the local economy of Hull in the nineteenth century the employment structure of the town will be explained.⁶⁴ The pattern of employment in Hull can be studied using the occupation tables in the Censuses; however there are two minor problems with the 1841 Census, the first one to include relatively reliable occupation statistics. First, the statistics from the 1841 Census do not correspond to the area of the borough as constituted in 1851 but the population recorded

⁶² Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 48.

⁶³ Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, p. 52.

⁶⁴ For more information on the former see Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, Chs 5, 6; Bellamy, *Trade and Shipping*, pp. 53-58. For more on the latter see Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', pp. 33-40.

in 1841 constitutes 86 per cent of the first borough population figure, some 57,800 people from a total of 67,300.⁶⁵ Second, the occupation figures include a relatively high proportion of people working in 'other occupations' (14.1 per cent), for example general labourers employed in building, metals, or some form of transport work (10.6 per cent alone).⁶⁶ This inevitably results in some distortion to the figures but improvements in recording techniques reduced this 'other occupations' category in later Censuses (to 7.8 per cent in 1851, 6.9 per cent in 1861 and 6.9 per cent in 1871)⁶⁷

What then was the occupation structure of Hull in the mid-nineteenth century? Bellamy quotes a figure for the total occupied population of Hull in 1841 of 20,475 (comparisons of actual numbers for early and later years being impossible, all other data for subsequent years are given as percentages) and almost a third of this total were employed in domestic service or the making of clothes of some kind (19.3 per cent and 12.2 per cent respectively). When those employed in the metal, engineering and building trades (a combined total of 15.5 per cent excluding undefined labourers), transport (8.1 per cent), woodworking (4.8 per cent), food trades (5.7 per cent) and mercantile and commercial occupations (4.5 per cent) are added to the above, this constitutes circa 70 per cent of the total occupied population.⁶⁸ Trawling was not yet an established industry and the paint and oil-milling (seed crushing) industries were only small employers of labour in this period. In contrast to the multiplicity of occupations in which men could be employed, work opportunities for women were restricted and 84 per cent of working females were employed in domestic service and clothes making. There were two hundred females listed in the professions either as teachers (140) or nurses.⁶⁹ A decade later the major development reflected in the figures was the sudden expansion of employment in textiles

⁶⁵ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 35.

⁶⁶ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 36.

⁶⁷ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 38.

⁶⁸ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table I & pp. 35-36.

⁶⁹ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 37.

manufacture, from 3.6 per cent of the occupied population to 8.6 per cent; however this expansion went into reverse (for reasons which have already been explained) and by 1871 textiles accounted for only 2.8 per cent of the employed total.⁷⁰ The noteworthy changes in occupational structure reflected in the Census returns for the period 1851 to 1871 are as follows. The numbers employed in transport as seamen, canal workers, railwaymen and so on had increased to become the largest single occupational category in 1851 at 17.2 per cent, reaching a peak of 17.7 per cent in 1871. The metal and engineering trades had become the third largest employment sector by 1871 (5.9 per cent to 11.8 per cent) and there had been steady growth in the numbers employed in fishing (0.9 per cent to 2.2 per cent), chemicals, oils and paints (1.8 per cent to 3.3 per cent) and building (5.5 per cent to 7.9 per cent) Also of significance was the reduced percentage of those employed in domestic service and the clothing trades as well as textiles - dropping from a combined figure of 37.2 per cent in 1851 to 26 per cent by 1871 - although domestic service remained the second largest employment category throughout the period (15.7 per cent to 13.4 per cent).⁷¹

To sum up the period 1840 to 1870 it seems likely that the largest employers of labour were Blundell's paint works, Earle's and Samuelson's shipyards and the two cotton mills although the latter rapidly declined in importance after mid-century.⁷² A high proportion of jobs in Hull were either seasonal, casual or offered uncertain prospects because of the particular nature of the port trade. The labour market in nineteenth century Hull is probably a good example of one crippled with chronic under-employment and job insecurity. Bellamy notes that 'The pattern of male employment is closely related to that of the total occupied on account of the preponderance of males in the occupied population.'⁷³ Between 1841 and 1871 inclusive, males comprised never less than 71 per cent of the total

⁷⁰ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table II & pp. 37-38. It should be noted that Census data for 1871 included only the occupied population aged twenty years and over.

⁷¹ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table II & pp. 37-38.

⁷² Brown, 'Modern Hull' p. 227.

⁷³ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 38.

occupied population.⁷⁴ By 1871 seven occupational groupings accounted for 70 per cent of all employed males: transport, metals, building, food, woodworking, chemicals, and clothing.⁷⁵ The pattern of female employment between 1851 and 1871 was affected most by the decline of textile production with only 3.4 per cent of women being employed at the latter date as opposed to 12.7 per cent in 1851. Although more females were finding employment in metals and engineering, food, chemicals and government service this amounted to only 6.8 per cent of the total in 1871, at which time domestic service and the clothing trades accounted for over 75 per cent of employed females; the average for the period 1851 to 1871 was just under 75 per cent. The opportunities available to women to follow a professional career had increased slightly over the same period from 4.7 per cent of the occupied female labour force to 7.2 per cent but the vast majority were still either teaching or nursing. The pattern of female labour in Hull did not begin to display any expansion of opportunity until the very end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ The pattern of male employment also remained stable until the end of the century - but as has been demonstrated they had a far wider range of employment opportunities to begin with. Of the seven principal male occupational categories identified in the period 1851 to 1871, clothing was the only one which did not remain significant until the end of the century, its place being taken by commercial employments.⁷⁷

Society

A modern estimate has put the population of Hull and the adjoining parish of Sculcoates (in effect a northern suburb of Hull but then part of the East Riding) at 7,512 in 1700.⁷⁸ The first relatively reliable

⁷⁴ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table IV, p. 39.

⁷⁵ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table III, p. 39.

⁷⁶ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', Table V & pp. 39-40.

⁷⁷ Bellamy, 'Occupations in Hull', p. 41.

⁷⁸ Williams 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 190. The parish of Sculcoates was formally incorporated into the borough in 1837.

contemporary estimate dates from 1792 when the Hull Society for Literary Information estimated that the population of Hull and Sculcoates was 22,286.⁷⁹ In most years of the eighteenth century there was an excess of deaths over births in the town so the population increased due to inward migration. From 1801 onwards more reliable population figures are available from the decennial census returns (see Table 1.1).⁸⁰ Bellamy notes that in 1851 just over 50 per cent of Hull's population had been born there. Yet this was a far larger percentage of natives than in some other northern towns such as Bradford, Manchester and Liverpool. A majority of migrants to Hull had come from other regions of Yorkshire and the Midlands, especially Lincolnshire, but about 4 per cent originated from Ireland.⁸¹

Table 1.1: *Population of Hull (including Sculcoates) 1801-1901*

Year	Population
1801	27,609
1811	32,944
1821	39,040
1831	46,426
1841	65,670
1851	84,690
1861	97,661
1871	123,408
1881	162,194
1891	200,044
1901	239,517

Source: Allison (ed.), *History of the East Riding I*, 190, 215.

As can be seen from the figures the population of Hull and Sculcoates increased by almost 300 per cent between 1792 and 1841. Hull's growth in the mid-nineteenth century, as illustrated by the increase in the

⁷⁹ Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 191.

⁸⁰ The population figures for 1801 to 1831 are for the Municipal Borough of Hull plus the East Riding district of Sculcoates, which adjoined Hull but was not incorporated into the borough until 1837. From 1841 onwards the figures are for Hull Parliamentary borough and are identical to those for the Municipal Borough until 1871, when the size of the former overtook that of the latter. The large population increases in the second half of the nineteenth century can partly be explained by this and other boundary changes in 1868, 1882, 1885, and 1897.

⁸¹ Bellamy, 'Some Aspects of the Economy of Hull', I, 50.

number of houses from almost 12,000 in 1831 to more than 20,000 by 1861, created a host of social problems which were very similar to those of other expanding northern industrial towns. From 1835 to 1870 population growth occurred largely outside the boundaries of the old town, in North and South Myton, Sculcoates and Drypool. For example in South Myton, the district straddling Hessle Road, the population grew by almost 40,000 to a total of 54,000 by 1871. In Sculcoates, incorporated into the borough in 1837, the population grew by over 20,000 between 1831 and 1871 to reach a total of 34,000. Most of the growth came in the area to the east of Beverley Road, near the cotton-mills, oil-mills and other industrial sites which were spreading along the west bank of the River Hull. In percentage terms population growth was most spectacular in Drypool (including the area north of Victoria Dock), growing from a low base figure of 1,821 in 1831 to 12,425 by 1871.⁸²

The growth of Hull's population in the nineteenth century produced all the social problems which one would expect of a port town experiencing rapid urbanization as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The two most important and recurring public health problems in nineteenth century Hull were bad housing and an inadequate water supply. Eventually the latter problem was solved in the 1860s but the former was not effectively tackled during the nineteenth century. To the untrained eyes of the nineteenth century observer Hull might appear not to have a housing problem. Indeed ground conditions meant that high tenement buildings could not be constructed and relatively few houses in Hull were higher than two storeys. However the preponderance of low-rise housing hid a miserable network of filthy courts, and courts-within-courts.⁸³ A group of younger physicians alarmed by the state of public health in Hull, supported by laymen who were also keen on reform, formed a Medical Society to inquire into the state of the town. In 1847 its Sanitary Committee produced a report which was a damning indictment of conditions in Hull. The report:

⁸² Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 231.

⁸³ For more information on the housing problem see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, Chs 20, 22, *passim*; Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp 215-86, *passim*.

pulled no punches and its mass of scarifying detail testifies to its accuracy as a word picture of conditions in Hull and its developing industrial suburbs. Dividing the town into districts for the purpose of the survey, it recorded, for example, 'lazy streams of filth', overcrowded living conditions, stinking dunghills, muck garths and midden stands, ubiquitous pigs and their evil-smelling sties, and the overbursting graveyard of St Mary's Lowgate, where one burial could mean the enforced removal of three or four coffins.⁸⁴

The report was an ominous portent for only two years later Hull was struck by cholera for the second time, its first visitation having occurred in 1832.⁸⁵ The cholera epidemic in Hull in the summer of 1849 led to the highest death rate in the country: 24.1 per thousand, a total of more than 1,800 deaths.⁸⁶ In the twenty years following the outbreak of 1849 the foundations of reform were laid. However progress was painstakingly slow in all but the improvement of the water supply which was crucial because polluted water was the fundamental cause of cholera. The champions of reform from all walks of life fought a war of attrition against the powerful local forces who opposed remedial action on financial grounds. Their support for the maintenance of the squalid status quo led them to be dubbed the 'muck interest' by the contemptuous reformers.⁸⁷ Gillett and MacMahon scathingly observe that by 'the middle of the century much of the town had assumed the appearance of a gigantic slum, which was to remain with little change for the next fifty years.' Despite all the glories of the Industrial Revolution and the 'triumphs of iron, coal and steam, Hull remained poor and squalid, but with a superior kind of poverty, and a longer life in which to enjoy it.'⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 273.

⁸⁵ For more on the outbreaks of 1832 and 1849 see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, pp. 270-79.

⁸⁶ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 234.

⁸⁷ For more information see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, Ch. 20, 22, passim; Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp. 215-86, passim. The opponents of reform in the mid-Victorian era were immovable despite a further outbreak of cholera in 1854 which claimed twenty-four victims. Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 279.

⁸⁸ Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, pp. 318, 284. For an interesting contemporary report on life in Hull see KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 1 Feb. 1850.

Hull's problem of finding a clean and adequate water supply persisted for about two-thirds of the nineteenth century. A major recurring problem, this issue had affected Hull for centuries. The 1847 report of the Sanitary Committee of Hull's Medical Society dealt with the issue at length, giving the first clear description of the scale of the problem. Hull lies on the margin of a large area of low-lying ground, much of which is below high-water mark at spring tides, so the problems of water supply and drainage are obvious. This in turn created a problem of sewage disposal. The best solution would have been to construct deep sewers emptying into the Humber, with pumping stations at the outlets to maintain an efficient flow. However this would have been too costly for most Hull ratepayers to accept. Instead the town authorities made use of a number of open agricultural drains which traversed the town. Short sewers were built to take the sewage away from the old town and they connected with the open agricultural drains, which in turn flowed into the River Hull, a river that is tidal in its lower reaches. Not only was this method of sewage disposal inefficient it was also dangerous to public health, because of the 'solution' which was applied to the water supply problem before the 1860s. Historically the town had derived its water supply from chalk wolds at Anlaby but by the 1830s, in spite of improvements to the pumping machinery, supplies were not large enough to cater for Hull's expanding population. The municipal authorities decided that the solution was to build a waterworks at Stoneferry, drawing water from the River Hull. Chemical tests had seemingly indicated that water pumped from here would not be contaminated by the sewage disposed near the mouth of the River Hull. However those tests were wrong: given certain tide conditions the water supply could be contaminated although this was not discovered until several years later. Contemporaries, while they acknowledged that the disposal of sewage was not ideal, believed that the water supply was safe. Hull's water supply problem was not solved until the 1860s when a local engineer proved that more water could be obtained from Anlaby by boring an artesian well, and early tests in 1860 produced ample daily supplies. Pumping machinery was installed at the well site, Springhead, in 1862 and the new supply was formally inaugurated. Supplies from Stoneferry were stopped in 1865 and only the reservoirs there were

used to store water pumped from Springhead. For the rest of the century the quantity and quality of Hull's water was no longer a problem.⁸⁹

Religious influence in Hull was shared between evangelical Anglicans and Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists. As for numbers the Religious Census of 1851 recorded more than 13,000 Nonconformists worshippers, less than 9,000 Anglicans and 1,200 Catholics.⁹⁰ The Roman Catholic population grew during the nineteenth century but remained relatively small and the Jewish community was less influential in Hull than it was in other places such as Leeds and Manchester. The greatest advances were achieved by Nonconformism which:

made rapid strides in the earlier nineteenth century as the population of Hull increased and the town expanded. Chapels were beginning to be built in new housing areas away from the old town centre, sometimes to relieve overcrowding in older chapels. While much of the expansion took place from well-established congregations, there was also a proliferation of small meeting-places - in rooms, houses and workshops - whose denomination and even location have not been identified.⁹¹

In the early decades of the century the Nonconformist advance was quite specific: 'Of most consequence at this time was the rise of Primitive Methodism which, here as elsewhere, largely attracted the working classes, in contrast to the other nonconformist groups which included some of the most wealthy and influential merchants among their congregations.'⁹² Although seven Anglican churches were built between 1791 and 1847, most of the building activity came in the 1830s and forties. Yet only two obtained full parochial status, an indication of the opposition mounted to them by the incumbent of the

⁸⁹ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 233, 237.

⁹⁰ Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 330.

⁹¹ K. J. Allison, 'Protestant Nonconformity', in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by idem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) I, 311-330 (p. 314).

⁹² Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', pp. 213-14.

enormous parish of Holy Trinity, J. H. Bromby, and the precarious nature of church finances. Evangelicals in the Church of England might have been more powerful in Hull had it not been for the incumbency of Bromby, who was more sympathetic to the ideal of a broad church. Bromby effectively checked the power of the evangelicals in Hull for seventy years. He became the incumbent of Holy Trinity in 1797 at the age of twenty-seven and did not retire until 1867 at the age of ninety-six.⁹³

Anglican in-fighting certainly helped the Methodists to wield a great deal of religious influence in Hull during the nineteenth century but the Methodists were numerous anyway and the Wesleyans included among their ranks some of the wealthiest businessmen of the town, many of whom were closely associated with Whig, later Liberal, politics. This was in no way unusual, as Eric Evans notes: 'Nonconformist political sympathies were overwhelmingly Whig; towns with a substantial middle-class dissenting presence, like Birmingham, Leeds or Hull, proved notable supporters of the Whig cause in national politics.'⁹⁴ Catholics and Jews drew their support from immigrant populations and remained relatively small communities. However, the number of Roman Catholics increased after the creation of the two cotton mills in the town which drew Irish immigrant labour from Lancashire. Two of the most important Catholics in the town were E. F. Collins, the editor of the Hull Advertiser from 1841 to 1866⁹⁵ and none other than the Hull Police chief, Andrew McManus. While evangelicals and Methodists might be verbally hostile to, or suspicious of, Catholics there was no sectarian division in the town on the scale to be found in the great port on the western side of the country, Liverpool. However, the proportion of Catholics in Hull's population never came anywhere near the corresponding figure for Liverpool. If it had done sectarianism might have loomed larger in Hull's history. Generally Anglican evangelicals and Nonconformists were not prominent in campaigns to improve social conditions in nineteenth century Hull even so they did play an important role in

⁹³ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 239.

⁹⁴ Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early industrial Britain 1783-1870* (Longman: Harlow, 1983), p. 237.

⁹⁵ Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp. 233, 241.

improving education. The size of the Jewish community increased after the 1848 revolutions but most Hull Jews were small dealers and craftsmen living in a state of chronic poverty, although the wealthy shipbuilder Martin Samuelson was an exception to this pattern.⁹⁶

Politics

The economic life and political life of Hull in this period were very closely connected. Since the town's continued growth and prosperity very largely depended on the growth of the port's trade, its shipowners and merchants exercised a level of power and influence out of proportion to their small numbers. Locally, the shipowners in particular had been an organized, vociferous and influential interest group for some time. However, their influence also resulted, in part, from the political process which had to be followed in order to develop a modern port. The construction of docks and ancillary facilities required prior parliamentary approval and the shipowners of Hull were skilful at mobilizing political opinion to serve their own interests.⁹⁷ Occasionally, however, the interests of the Hull shipowners could clash with those of the rest of the town. For example, proposals to extend the Leeds-Selby railway opened in 1834 to Hull, were opposed by shipowners because they operated profitable steam packets to Selby up the Ouse.⁹⁸ A railway line was eventually opened but the shipowners, among others, managed to delay it for a further six years. Before the Municipal Corporations Act the government of Hull was the responsibility of the old, unreformed, Tory-dominated, town corporation comprised of a mayor, recorder, sheriff, twelve aldermen and two chamberlains. Additionally, two sets of improvement commissioners acting for Hull and Myton, and Sculcoates, were responsible for watching, drainage, paving, street-lighting, and some fire prevention in their districts.⁹⁹ The mode of operation of the unreformed Hull Corporation had

⁹⁶ For more on the religious history of Hull in the nineteenth century see Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp. 239-42.

⁹⁷ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 216.

⁹⁸ Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 300; Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 174.

⁹⁹ They continued to be responsible for all these things, *except watching*, until 1851 when they were transferred to the reformed corporation.

changed very little over four hundred years and by the 1830s it was exceedingly unpopular and widely perceived as thoroughly corrupt. During the agitation over the Great Reform Bill the three corporate bodies which together controlled much of the political and economic life of Hull - the Dock Company, Trinity House and the town corporation - were subjected to a wave of radical criticism. This highlighted the town's intricate economic and political structure which, coupled with its relative geographical isolation, had made it very insular and prone to bitter disputes.¹⁰⁰ These disputes occurred either between the old authorities themselves or between the authorities and the reformers. The entangled nature of Hull's economic and political structure, with different institutions having overlapping powers and personnel, seems to have made disputes more intense. However the old corporation should be given credit where this is due: it had played an important role in the development of the town, for example by assisting with the financing of Humber and Junction Docks.¹⁰¹

From 1831 to 1832, at the height of the Reform Bill crisis, much discontent was expressed about the corporation by an extreme section of the town's radicals led by the flamboyant but erratic James Acland, a journalist who had lately come to the town from Bristol. He began a weekly magazine, the *Hull Portfolio*, and initiated a campaign against the corporation.¹⁰² This lasted from August 1831 until his final imprisonment in November 1832. The public unrest in Hull from 1831 to 1832 and the feeble attempts to suppress it require explanation for they were fundamental to the decision to effect police reform in 1836, in the wake of the reformers' victory in the municipal elections. The unrest began when public meetings were held at which Acland spoke of the 'wickedness of the corporation' and the gross injustices it perpetrated. The magistrates received criticism for their slow response to the public order problems created by Acland's activities. On 20 November 1831 a disorderly assembly of some three thousand persons took place and three days later the magistrates swore in a

¹⁰⁰ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 215.

¹⁰¹ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 215.

¹⁰² Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p 199. For a summary of Acland's activities see pp. 199-200.

thousand special constables. Despite being imprisoned for failing to pay the costs of a court case and two separate charges of libel, Acland continued to criticize the corporation. During Acland's imprisonment the magistrates did nothing more to maintain order in the borough, probably in the belief that the threat had been neutralized. However they were proved wrong: on his release in September 1832 Acland and an ally stood for election to the two posts of chamberlain in opposition to the official candidates. This caused disorder in the town once more and 470 men were sworn in as special constables. The one thousand special constables sworn in the previous November were also called out but only seven attended. Acland's supporters demonstrated and attacked the constables who could not maintain order and the cavalry had to intervene to retrieve the situation for the authorities. Later the Royal Commissioners appointed to investigate municipal reform paid close attention to these incidents during their investigation into affairs in Hull. The failure of the special constables to perform their police duties was discussed in their final report. This cited two likely reasons for their absence: they feared retribution from the rioters and/or they were unsympathetic towards the corporation and the magistrates.¹⁰³

Undaunted by further arrest for his part in the riot Acland announced his intention to stand as a radical candidate in the forthcoming General Election. Over five hundred townsmen were sufficiently alarmed by what had happened that they signed a petition supporting the magistracy in its attempts to suppress the disorder. Acland was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment in November but still stood as a candidate in the December General Election, polling very few votes (probably because most of his supporters were unenfranchised anyway). In 1834, from his prison cell, he made an appeal to his supporters 'for assistance in his hour of need' but by this time his popularity had waned.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ For a discussion of the disturbances see B.J.L., *Parliamentary Papers*, 1835 (116), XXIII, First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, pp. 1560-61. For more information on the population's anger towards the corporation and magistrates in general see pp. 1555-62.

¹⁰⁴ Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 200. Acland later had a tessellated career as an Anti-Corn Law League Lecturer, 'election and registration adviser' to the Reform League and Liberal party agent. When the ACLL finished its work, Acland (with help), obtained employment with the Electric Telegraph Company but he was soon dismissed when he tried to use confidential information to make Stock Market speculations. He had debts at the time and his

Nevertheless Acland should not be dismissed as merely a skilful demagogue. At a time when the desire for reform was powerful nationally, Acland made Hull people more cognizant of local injustices affecting them and educated them to campaign for enhanced rights. The political unrest in Hull from 1831 to 1832 is a good example of the way in which a national radical campaign can be inflected at a local level into a struggle against unpopular local symbols of authority. Meanwhile the passage of the First Reform Act had reduced the political tension in Hull and then in 1833 the Whig government had announced it would create a Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations to investigate the operation of municipal government. The more moderate reformers in Hull had been satisfied by the knowledge that the commissioners would come to Hull to investigate the operation of the old corporation and the town's police system. The case of the reformers was explained to the Royal Commission by one of the leading radicals in the town, the respected solicitor William Woolley, who subsequently played a key role in police reform in Hull in 1836. When the report was published in 1835 its findings were very damaging to the corporation. The commissioners stated their belief that Acland could not be blamed for fomenting all the unrest in the town; there were genuine grievances against the corporation and the report went on to list them. The narrowness of the franchise was criticized, as was the auditing of the corporation's accounts,¹⁰⁵ its control of finances, its dealings with gas companies, its regulation of market stalls and ferry boats (Acland had also initiated two campaigns against the council on this issue) and its management of the water supply.¹⁰⁶ The commissioners stressed that there was no common council to provide a representative element in the structure of the unreformed corporation.¹⁰⁷ They also noted that there had been some complaints concerning the administration of justice. Significantly, the report noted

personal finances were in disarray for a large part of his life. See Norman McCord, *The Anti-Corn Law League* (London: Unwin, 1968) pp. 56-58, 163.

¹⁰⁵ The commissioners wrote: 'Everything connected with the control and auditing of [the corporation's] accounts and the secrecy preserved in these matters occasions great and general dissatisfaction and distrust.' See Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull* p. 261; B JL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, p. 1552. For more on borough finances in the nineteenth century see below.

¹⁰⁶ Hull, like many towns and cities, had suffered from an outbreak of cholera in 1832 in which 270 people died. See KHPL, *HA* 14 Sep. 1832.

¹⁰⁷ B JL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, p. 1551; Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 192.

that the magistrates and the various bodies responsible for policing had *failed to maintain order*.¹⁰⁸ Very shortly this conclusion would have a tremendous impact on the nature of law and order in the borough.

In 1835 the Whig-Liberal reformers won a resounding victory in the municipal elections. They won all but one of the forty-two council seats, the other going to a Tory timber merchant who was later defeated in a by-election towards the end of 1836. The reformed Hull Corporation consisted of fourteen aldermen and forty-two councillors. The town was divided into seven wards, each of which returned six councillors elected for three years. The aldermen were chosen by the council and remained in office for six years. Traditionally the aldermen of the old corporation had been representatives of Hull's established merchant class, particularly the shipowners. Although the reformed council included three shipowners, the new councillors and aldermen were mostly representatives of the 'shopocracy' who lived and worked in the wards they represented, plus a leaven of professional men, doctors and lawyers like William Woolley.¹⁰⁹ The effect which these elections had on police reform in Hull will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. This analysis will concentrate on the performance of the reformed corporation during the mid-century period. One of the major tasks of the new corporation was the reform of borough finances. The financial position of the old corporation should, in fact, have been sound, largely because of the regular sums received in dock dues. Dock dues at Hull were relatively high since they had to be paid to the corporation and Trinity House as well as the Dock Company. Sums were payable to the corporation, known as water-bailiff's dues, in respect of goods imported and exported, though goods which were the sole property of Hull freemen in British ships were exempt. Freemen resident in York and some other places were also exempt from the dues but if they moved the exemption was lost. Timber imports were principally affected by the duty. The water-bailiff's

¹⁰⁸ B JL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, pp. 1555-62 (p. 1560); & Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 200. Emphasis added to original.

¹⁰⁹ For more information see Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, Ch. 19, *passim*; Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 216.

dues were credited to the general fund of the corporation.¹¹⁰ Despite this by 1834 the old corporation had accumulated debts amounting to £37,000 due to a number of reasons. The cost of maintaining order during the Acland disturbances had been high and as a result of Acland's agitation the corporation had lost revenue from the market tolls and the Humber ferry; it had also made some street improvements. However it was in financial difficulties mainly because it had loaned £15,000 to the Dock Company in the 1820s to finance the construction of Junction Dock.¹¹¹ The new corporation had dealt with this financial liability by the mid-1840s, partly through the sale of unwanted property. Between 1835 and 1840 it paid off bond debts to a total of almost £17,000 and a further £13,000 was repaid between 1841 and 1845. The underlying financial strength of the corporation is evident from the state of the borough fund in 1841-42. Of the £18,750 received by the borough fund in that year, £6,656 came from rents, £1,287 from market dues and £6,374 from the water bailiff's dues. The latter included a variety of charges on imported and exported commodities and dues on shipping for anchorage, hostage and jettage. The corporation as owner of the port claimed these dues from all areas of the port, both in the docks and the River Hull. This placed it in a sound financial position: 'the corporation had a substantial source of income which might be sensitive to trade fluctuations but which over a longer term would grow automatically with the expansion of the port.'¹¹²

The borough finances remained exceptionally strong until the late 1860s when the corporation had to fund a number of public works, including a new borough gaol and bridge - and it also decided to build a new town hall (eventually special rates had to be levied to pay for the building of the gaol and the bridge). In 1852 the dues levied by the corporation on goods handled in the port - but not shipping - were abolished, which had only a slight effect on borough finances. In 1866-67, £7,379 of the income in the borough fund, almost a third, still came from shipping dues. The proportion did not fall

¹¹⁰ Williams, 'Hull, 1700-1835', p. 187.

¹¹¹ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 217.

¹¹² Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 218.

significantly until the late 1870s, when port dues were reduced. Except for 1856, when port dues dropped sharply because of the Crimean War, 1873 was the first year in which the borough fund was in deficit; even so a general rate was not levied until 1875. Perhaps by this stage members of the council regretted some of the earlier lavish spending. However, most of the projects which had been supported were probably necessary, the only significant exception to this being the building of the new town hall. It is debatable whether one was needed. The corporation's surplus income was spent on a number of things, including the maintenance of the borough gaol, modernizing the water supply and dock and street improvements. For example, it contributed to the cost of a new waterworks at Stoneferry, constructed a dry dock and provided a landing pier for the Humber ferry boats. Moreover, it established and maintained public baths and wash-houses at Stoneferry (1845) and in Trippett Street (1850).¹¹³ Significantly, the corporation was also spending considerable sums on the police. In the years 1836 to 1866 the corporation spent an average of more than £3,700 per annum on policing over and above the sum which was received from the watch rate and later (after 1857) the government grant towards the cost of police pay and clothing. At one point, in the early 1850s, the annual overspend was over £5,000 per annum (see Appendix 2). The council was using other sources of income from property rents and port charges to boost its overall spending on policing. Moreover, major capital spending on the police included the purchase of the old workhouse as a new police headquarters in 1851 (see Chapter 5). Obviously, with a regular source of income from the port the Hull Corporation had the wherewithal to withstand the expenditure of such sums. Yet this does not explain why the corporation should have chosen to spend the money on the police. This is the subject of later chapters but irrespective of the reasons why, one can be certain that members of the council must have believed such high and prolonged expenditure was absolutely necessary and politically justifiable. It is highly unlikely that figures such as these could have been spent year after year without a profound degree of political consensus on the issue.

¹¹³ Brown, 'Modern Hull', pp. 218-19, 229.

If attention is now turned to more general political activity in the town and the conduct and outcome of parliamentary elections, it is conspicuous how politically unremarkable Hull was in the nineteenth century: 'After 1832 [when two reform candidates were elected] the wind of political reform slackened in Hull, and few of the national political agitations of the 1830s and 1840s appear to have made a serious impact on local opinion.'¹¹⁴ Although the dates do not precisely coincide, the changed political stance of Hull's leading newspaper, the *Hull Advertiser*, does mirror the general political mood of the town. Founded in 1794, the newspaper was Tory until 1833, when a change of ownership turned it into a radical organ. In that year it was acquired by William Kennedy, its proprietor until 1842. The major influence on the paper in the mid-nineteenth century was E. F. Collins, initially its editor in the 1840s and then its editor-proprietor from 1848 until 1858, when he joined with others to create a limited proprietary company. Collins was a Roman Catholic radical, a disciple of Joseph Hume and a keen campaigner for sanitary reform and poor law reform in Hull. His defence of Roman Catholicism sparked off some religious controversy in the town and when he retired as editor in 1866 his co-proprietors altered the stance of the newspaper. In 1867 it was incorporated into the *Eastern Morning News*.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless during his time as editor Collins had been one of the major influences on Liberal politics in the town. The town's second most important paper in the mid-century period, a Tory organ founded in 1787, was the *Hull Packet*. Although two well-known Chartists, Henry Vincent and William Hill, had connections with Hull this did not encourage any growth of Chartism in the town.¹¹⁶ Hull was largely insulated from Chartist activity in this period. More than one writer has commented on the apparent apathy which Hull people felt towards national politics in the middle of the nineteenth century:

¹¹⁴ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 242.

¹¹⁵ C. A. McLaren, 'Social Institutions [Newspapers]', in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by K. J. Allison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) I, 418-32 (pp. 428-29).

¹¹⁶ Vincent, although born in London was a printer's apprentice in Hull before he became well-known in radical politics. Hill, who was also pastor of a Swedenborgian church in Hull, edited the main Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star*, from 1837 to 1843. In the 1860s he also edited the *Hull Express* for a short period. See Gillett & MacMahon, *History of Hull*, p. 321; Markham, *Parliamentary Elections*, p. 6.

There is, in fact, a strong contrast to be noticed between the indifference shown in Hull to national political issues which were of immediate interest to local economic development, and the obsessive interest shown at this time in the drains or the docks of Hull. This may be interpreted partly in terms of the town's isolation, but it may also indicate, by the absence of expressed grievance, that the town felt itself to be reasonably prosperous. The history of parliamentary elections tends to strengthen the impression of indifference.¹¹⁷

Hull's parliamentary boundaries were enlarged in 1832 to include Sculcoates and Drypool. In 1801 a mere 7 per cent of the population had the vote but even after the Great Reform Act of 1832 this only increased to 8.3 per cent. The 1867 Reform Act increased the percentage of the electorate to 19.1.¹¹⁸

After the Great Reform Act there were approximately 4,500 parliamentary electors in Hull of whom over one third - 1,834 in 1852 - were freemen who had had the right to vote before the act and retained it for the rest of their lives. Many of the freemen, who were much poorer than the new £10 ratepayer electors, had regularly received polling money before the 1832 Reform Act and continued to expect it afterwards. Indeed the more cynical critics of the freemen's political power alleged that they regarded it as a 'birthright'. Nevertheless, because of their numbers the freemen usually had a decisive influence on the outcome of a parliamentary election as long as there was a fairly even division of opinion among the rest of the electorate. If the freemen had an overwhelming political objective it was to ensure that there was a contest at every parliamentary election so that they would have to be 'treated'. It would be wrong to assume, however, that the freemen were motivated simply by money or other forms of bribery. They could, and did, have sophisticated political views and a clear idea of what their wider political interests were and which candidate could best serve them. In the first half of the nineteenth century Hull returned a mixture of Whig-Liberals and Tory MPs, with the Tories dominating until the 1832 Reform Act, thanks to the power of the shipping interest which tended to be devoutly protectionist.

¹¹⁷ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 242.

¹¹⁸ Markham, *Parliamentary Elections*, p. 12.

Thereafter, Whig-Liberals began to gain the advantage but this process was not completed until the second half of the century when Liberal politics in Hull gained the ascendancy. The national political issues which aroused interest in Hull in the first half of the century tended to be mercantile: the East Indian monopoly, the navigation laws, free trade and protection.¹¹⁹ However, the town's interest in the abolition of the slave trade and slavery was only partly motivated by mercantile considerations (the negative effects that abolition would have on the Atlantic trade of Liverpool and Bristol) for there was much genuine opposition to slavery on humanitarian and religious grounds as one might expect in the town which was most closely connected with William Wilberforce. In the second half of the century the future of the port still dominated political life but public health became an increasingly important issue.

Following the General Election of 1852 the two defeated Conservative candidates petitioned the House of Commons alleging that the Liberals had practised bribery on a widespread scale. The parliamentary commissioners who investigated the alleged malpractice took evidence in Hull for sixty-four days from approximately 1,400 witnesses. They satisfied themselves that in the elections of 1841, 1847 and 1852 approximately 1,100 to 1,300 votes had been corrupt out of a total poll of about 3,500 to 4,000 votes at each election. Electoral corruption on this scale was not peculiar to Hull in this period but it may have been on the increase. Certainly, parliamentary elections in Hull were expensive and as the greater part of the bill was met by the candidates themselves it was difficult to get good ones to stand for office. Only two of the candidates in the first twenty years following the Reform Bill had good local knowledge before they stood for election in Hull. Most of the candidates had no connection with Hull and had been chosen after local Liberals and Conservatives wrote to the Reform and Carlton Clubs respectively asking for suitable names.¹²⁰ However it would be wrong to assume that in the mid-nineteenth century charges of electoral corruption could tarnish a local party's image or blight an individual's political career. Markham notes that 'Defiance of the electoral laws was not then popularly

¹¹⁹ Markham, *Parliamentary Elections*, p. 11.

¹²⁰ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 243.

regarded as a serious misdemeanour and wholesale evasion of the law was skilfully engineered by lawyers who were agents and officials in political organizations.¹²¹ The two Liberal MPs who were unseated in 1853 following the parliamentary inquiry made a swift return to politic life. In the case of Lord Goderich the return was extremely rapid since he was elected as the MP for Huddersfield in the same year. In 1863 when he returned to Hull to be appointed High Steward of the town he was honoured with a great ceremony. The other Liberal MP, James Clay, who before his removal had represented the town since 1847, reappeared in Hull during the by-election campaign of 1854 and was subsequently re-elected as one of Hull's MPs in 1857.¹²² After the corruption of 1852 was subjected to public scrutiny its frequency and intensity diminished in successive elections but did not disappear.¹²³ Neither party had a permanent organization in Hull until the eve of the 1866-67 reform agitation. The town's Conservatives, after being heavily defeated in the General Election of 1865, formed the Hull Conservative Association and the Liberals followed suit with their Hull Liberal Association in 1866. At this time the sitting Liberal MPs, Clay and Norwood, complained that the absence of such an organization in the past had hampered their campaigns. In fact, in previous elections, for example those of 1841 and 1859, the Liberal candidates' campaigns were conducted by separate election committees, so desperate was each man to beat his party rival to secure election.¹²⁴ The management of local party affairs was left to prominent local men. On the Liberal side the foremost individuals were Boswell Jalland, C. S. Todd, both of whom served on the Watch Committee, and J. H. Galloway. On the Conservative side, the leading figures were J. R. Pease of the banking family, Robert Wells and W. H. H. Broadley. In the period 1832 to 1865 shipowners did not exert a major influence over the politics of the town, in contrast to the first and final thirds of the century when at least one of Hull's MPs was a representative of the shipowners.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Markham, *Parliamentary Elections*, p. 2.

¹²² Markham, *Parliamentary Elections*, p. 3. For an unflattering pen-portrait of the young James Clay, before he became an MP, see Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (London: Methuen, 1966) pp. 62-71.

¹²³ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 244.

¹²⁴ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 244.

¹²⁵ Brown, 'Modern Hull', p. 245.

HULL'S OLD POLICE AND THE FORMATION OF THE NEW POLICE

The Old Police

The predecessor of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations, the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations, had previously investigated the old police system in Hull in April 1833. At that time the then Mayor of Hull, John Barkworth, gave evidence before the Select Committee. Barkworth admitted that without the night-watch the police of the town would be insufficient and that during the Acland disturbances the magistrates had been obliged to appoint special constables and request the assistance of the military on one occasion. Barkworth, nevertheless, believed that the constables and watchmen were sufficient for the ordinary policing of the town.¹ Probably as a result of the committee's highlighting of the disturbances in Hull and the failure of the old police authorities to maintain order, the Royal Commissioners also focused attention on the issue. In the introduction to their report of 1835 the Commissioners were highly critical of the policing arrangements in Hull and the conduct of the authorities:

At Hull, in consequence of the disunion between the governing body and the inhabitants, chiefly arising out of a dispute about the tolls and duties, only seven persons attended to suppress a riot, out of 1,000 who had been sworn in as special constables, and on another similar occasion none attended.²

The 1835 report stressed the unreformed police's inability to preserve order in Hull on numerous occasions between August 1831 and November 1832 (when Acland was orchestrating much radical unrest) in the following terms:

¹ B JL, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1833 (344), XIII, Report from the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations, p. 310.

² B JL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, p. 43.

During the greater part of that time, large assemblies of persons collected together nightly in the streets in a tumultuous manner, where they were addressed by Mr Acland[...]chiefly on the subject of the conduct of the members of the corporation. Persons going about their ordinary business were frequently molested and assaulted by the mob, and so great was the concourse of persons assembled, that carriages and horses were obliged to take a circuitous route, in consequence of being unable to pass the places where they were collected.³

Following the passage of the Municipal Corporations Act, the members of the old corporation were vanquished by the reform party of Whig-Liberals and radicals at the municipal elections of December 1835. The old corporation was swept from power; none of the twelve former aldermen were elected and the reformers won forty-one of the forty-two council seats.⁴ They immediately set about the mammoth task of reforming Hull's decrepit system of policing.

Before 1836 the borough of Kingston-upon-Hull did not have a paid and professionally organized police force. Traditionally, policing duties had been performed by three separate groupings: petty constables, led by a high, or chief constable; three night-watches which patrolled Hull, Myton and Sculcoates; and a small separate force of dock constables who only protected Dock Company property. This division of police responsibilities was not unusual. For example, in York prior to the Municipal Corporations Act three separate authorities had responsibility for policing: the unreformed corporation; the city commissioners and the parish vestries.⁵ The organization of the old police in Hull in the early 1830s can be explained with the aid of three sources. First, Barkworth's evidence to the 1833 Select Committee

³ B JL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, p. 1560.

⁴ For more information see Edward Gillett & Kenneth A. MacMahon, *A History of Hull* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1989), Ch. 19, passim; Lucy M. Brown, 'Modern Hull' in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by K. J. Allison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, 215-86, (p. 216).

⁵ Roger Swift, *Police Reform in Early Victorian York 1835-56* (York: York University Borthwick Paper, 1988), pp. 5-6. For more comparisons between Hull and elsewhere see below.

on Municipal Corporations contains a brief description of the police duties performed by the ordinary constables. Second, evidence given before the Royal Commissioners, who visited Hull in 1833, provides more information.⁶ Third, an early report by the Local Acts Committee of the reformed council gives a very detailed description of the night-watches. Barkworth reported to the Select Committee that in Hull there was a high, or chief constable, and thirty-nine petty constables under the control of the corporation. Only the high constable and the keeper of the lock-up, who doubled as one of the constables, received a regular salary.⁷ The high constable received £20 per annum, paid out of the county rate and the keeper of the lock-up £75 a year, paid by the corporation. All the other constables were paid only when they performed their various police duties. They were paid for apprehending felons and attending at the sessions from the county rate and for apprehending vagrants by the corporation. The chief constable and the petty constables were the only police wholly under the control of the corporation. The corporation had only a very tenuous control over the watchmen, it having the power of dismissing any of them for misconduct on the action of the mayor alone. (This probably explains why the council committee's police report dealt with the three night-watches at some length: this was the agglomeration which the council knew least about). Meanwhile, the dock company had a separate force numbering about ten constables.⁸

According to the information given to the Commissioners, the number of constables - including the chief constable - had risen slightly to forty-four, and there were also seventy-two watchmen in Hull and Myton.⁹ The Commissioners heard that the duties of the chief constable involved attending to

⁶ The Commissioners, Fortunatus Dwaris and Sampson Augustus Rumball, spent ten days conducting their enquiry in Hull's Guildhall in December 1833. A report of the proceedings was compiled by William Gawtress and subsequently published. It contains much useful material on both the Acland agitation and the old police system of Hull. On the fifth day of their enquiry the Commissioners heard evidence on the police and watchmen of the town and the Acland disturbances. See William Gawtress, *A Report of the Inquiry into the Existing State of the Corporation of Hull* (Hull: Goddard and Brown, 1834), pp. 144-73.

⁷ The lock-up for Hull and Myton, established in 1829, was in the former house of correction in Fetter Lane. The keeper of the lock-up was dispensed with in 1836 when the reformed police came into operation and the head constable, or chief constable, who had no responsibility for policing after 1836, merely dealt with the collection of watch rates until his resignation in 1839.

⁸ BJL, *PP*, 1833 (344), XIII, p. 310.

⁹ Gawtress, *Corporation of Hull*, p. 144; BJL, *PP*, 1835 (116), XXIII, p. 1557; K. J. Allison, 'Public Services' in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, 6 vols, ed. by idem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), I, 371-86 (p.

the magistrates and superintending the police whenever called upon. He collected the county rates and paid them to the county treasurer (but in Hull the same person held both offices). He also executed warrants and precepts relating to the rates and performed other duties which were usually performed by high constables. He attended the quarter Sessions and summoned other constables to attend. In addition to his salary of £20 a year from the county rate, he received fees which on average over the last three years had amounted to about £40 a year. The same officer was also (by special appointment under a statute) the bookkeeper or clerk to the new gaol and house of correction on a salary of £20 a year.¹⁰ The keeper of the lock-up house was called the chief police officer. He lived at the lock-up house, formerly the house of correction. He received and had the charge of persons apprehended by the constables and watchmen during the night and brought them before the magistrates. He was expected to attend at the hall every day during the sitting of the magistrates, among other things to record offenders' names. According to the evidence given to the Commissioners by the old corporation's Town Clerk, the chief police officer 'inspects the streets after dark, and attends in a more particular manner than the other constables to the general peace and good order of the town.' In addition to his salary of £75 a year he also received two chaldrons of coal and £3 10s. for candles. He lived in his 'house free of rent and taxes' and was paid for attending the sessions as a witness in the same manner as other constables.¹¹

The report of the reformed council's Local Acts Committee on the effectiveness of the old police system and its proposals for reform was published on 22 February 1836.¹² The report revealed that the present policing arrangements in Hull still left large parts of the borough, such as Holderness,

379). The precise number in Sculcoates at this time was not known, although the reformed council later ascertained this.

¹⁰ Gawtress, *Corporation of Hull*, p. 96.

¹¹ Gawtress, *Corporation of Hull*, p. 94.

¹² KHPL, L352, *Kingston upon Hull Municipal Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report of the Committee on Local Acts, Police and the Powers, Prerogatives and Duties of the New Municipal Government' (1836). The volume is not consecutively paginated so any page numbers mentioned in the footnotes refer to the page numbers of the report itself. The main findings and recommendations of the report are summarized in KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 26 Feb. 1836.

without any night watch despite there being three night-watches for the town and its environs.¹³ The Myton and Sculcoates districts, in common with many other urban areas, had each secured the passage of a local improvement act to facilitate, amongst other things, the establishment of a watch.¹⁴ The Hull Watch was appointed by the improvement commissioners acting under the authority of the Myton Act but paid by the assessors acting under the authority of (four) other acts and the Myton Act.¹⁵ In Hull, Myton and Sculcoates in 1836 there were a total of 102 watchmen and ninety-six constables¹⁶ (including one chief constable and one chief police officer). In addition there were another nine constables and fifteen watchmen specifically protecting the dock company's property, the latter patrolling from 7.00pm to 5.00am. The committee believed that this dock force was efficient and did not direct any criticism at it. The committee was able to ascertain the approximate ages of 101 watchmen and it divided them into age cohorts (see Table 2.1).¹⁷

Table 2.1 *Approximate Ages of the Hull, Myton and Sculcoates Watchmen in 1836*

Watches	Ages				Total
	Under 35	35-49	50-59	60 and Over	
Hull	7	24	18	3	52
Myton	2	9	4	4	19
Sculcoates	6	15	6	3	30
Total	15	48	28	10	101

Source: KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836)

¹³ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 4.

¹⁴ The Myton and Sculcoates Improvement Acts are, respectively: 50 Geo. III c. 41; 41 Geo. III c. 30.

¹⁵ They are, respectively: 28 Geo. II c. 27; 2 Geo. III c. 70; 4 Geo. III c. 74; 23 Geo. III c. 55.

¹⁶ As the 1835 report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations lists a figure of forty-four constables for Hull alone it is possible that the extra fifty-two constables who made up the total of ninety-six given in the Local Acts Committee report were the number who served in Myton, Sculcoates, Drypool and elsewhere. Unfortunately this cannot be confirmed. The numbers of watchmen given in the Local Acts report are accurate because figures provided by the improvement commissioners were quoted and a partial cross-reference confirms this accuracy. For example the Local Acts report gave a figure of seventy-one watchmen for Hull and Myton and the 1833 Select Committee on Municipal Corporations quoted a corresponding figure of seventy-two. See BJL, *PP*, 1833 (344), XIII, p. 310.

¹⁷ For more information on the three watches see KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), pp. 11, 19-23.

From these figures it can be seen that 37 per cent of the watchmen were fifty or over and 84 per cent were thirty-five or over. This must cast some doubt on their effectiveness, especially as it was widely acknowledged that part of Hull's crime problem resulted from the activities of juveniles a good deal younger, fitter and stronger than the middle-aged and elderly watchmen. Of the three members of the Hull Watch over sixty, one was sixty-one, another sixty-four and the third sixty-five. None of the seven men who were under thirty-five were in their twenties. All fifty-two men of the Hull Watch were employed every evening during the winter, with two men to each beat. They were paid 7s. per week during the winter season, which ran from 1 October to 7 May each year. The watch was divided into two shifts, with the first on duty from 10.00pm until 2.00am and the second from 2.00am until 6.00am. During the summer - when three of the twenty-six beats were closed - the men went on duty every other night (which seems an especially ludicrous arrangement) and received 1s. 6d. per night, or 5s. 3d. per week. In the summer the men were not relieved and worked from 10.30pm until 3.30am.¹⁸

Neither of the two men in the Myton Watch who were under thirty-five were in their twenties and of the four men who were sixty and over, two were sixty-three, one sixty-four and the other sixty. During the winter twenty watchmen patrolled ten beats but during the summer it would seem that one beat was closed, for only eighteen watchmen were employed. In the winter season of twenty-two weeks the hours worked by Myton watchmen were similar to those of the Hull men, except that the former finished at 5.45am rather than 6.00am; and during the summer season of thirty weeks they worked until 4.00am rather than 3.30am. Their wages during winter and summer were exactly the same as the Hull Watch. Each of the Myton watchmen was supplied with a great coat, rattle, lantern, oil tin and oil.¹⁹ The

¹⁸ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 20.

¹⁹ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), pp. 20-21. For more information on the Hull and Myton Watches see the correspondence to the commissioners: KHRO, ICH 833-4, Hull and Myton Improvement Commissioners, letter from the Town Clerk requesting written returns regarding the watching, etc., of the borough and for the committee to interview the commissioners' officers, dated 23 Jan. 1836; ICH 836, letter from the Town Clerk requesting information about the Myton Watchmen and for the committee to interview the commissioners' officers, dated 8 Feb. 1836; ICH 838, letter from the Town Clerk requesting information about the cost of watching Hull and Trippett for the last seven years and about the watchmen, dated 13 Feb. 1836.

Sculcoates Watch had thirty watchmen plus five supernumeraries who were employed when any of the regular watchmen were absent or ill. This watch had the dubious distinction of employing the oldest watchman, Ralph Dobson, who was seventy-two, and there were two more watchmen in their sixties: one sixty-six, the other sixty-three. Only one of the six watchmen under thirty-five was in his twenties and that was George Thwaites, aged twenty-eight. In the winter season (from 26 September to 28 March) all the men were employed every night on fifteen beats and the hours of work were the same as those of the Hull Watch. However, during the summer only eighteen men were employed nightly - none under 35 years of age. Presumably the improvement commissioners felt that during the summer the younger men had more chance of finding alternative employment so they favoured the older men. The hours of work in summer were from 10.00pm to 1.00am for the first shift and 1.00am to 4.00am for the relief. The watchmen received 7s. all year round, as did the supernumeraries whenever they were called upon.²⁰

These arrangements still left large parts of the borough unpoliced, not least because for at least sixteen hours of the day, from dawn to late evening, there were no policemen on duty, except for a limited provision in Sculcoates during the day and Hull on Sunday evenings. In Sculcoates two men were paid to patrol the streets, one by day at 10s. 6d. per week and the other by night at 12s. per week.²¹ Six constables were employed by the corporation as a patrol in Hull on Sunday evenings between 6.00pm and 9.00pm and were paid 1s. each out of corporation funds. Some parts of the city did not even have the

²⁰ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), pp. 22-23. For more information see the correspondence to the Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners: ICS 436, resolution of the Local Acts Committee requesting written information about watching and other matters and for the commissioners' officers to attend the Local Acts Committee to be interviewed [n.d.]; ICS 439, letter from the Town Clerk requesting information about the watch and watchmen in writing and verbally from the officers of the Sculcoates Commissioners, dated 8 Feb. 1836; ICS 440, copy of the return submitted in reply to ICS 439 giving names, ages, beats and remuneration of watchmen and a description of their duties [n.d.].

²¹ The information about the Sculcoates patrol is confirmed by evidence in York. See CYRO, YDG 320/1 - 321/1 A/17, description of the old police system in Leeds, Hull and Liverpool [n.d. but c. April/May 1836]. The Sculcoates patrolmen may have been employed under the terms of the Lighting and Watching Act 1833 but this cannot be confirmed. The measure attempted to improve on Acts passed in 1827 and 1830. Without compulsion, it permitted the ratepayers of any parish to elect a committee of between three and twelve inspectors to light and watch the parish. The inspectors could raise a rate to pay for their work and were given extensive powers. Parishes could opt to adopt the lighting or watching provisions of the Act or both. The provisions of the Act had to be readopted by the community every three years. For a study of how the Act worked in practice in rural Lincolnshire see B. J. Davey, *Lawless and Immoral: Policing a Country Town 1838-1857* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983).

benefit of the unsatisfactory protection that the watches provided and the Local Acts Committee was clearly concerned about one ward in particular: 'The whole of Holderness Ward is entirely destitute of watchmen, and exposed, both by day and night, to the attacks of depredators, whose operations are greatly facilitated by the want of public lamps.'²² The committee also investigated the activities of the constables but if anything it regarded them with even more disdain than the watchmen. None of the constables in the town received a salary for their police duties; they were only paid when employed on special duty. Most of their income was derived from fees which they charged for the various services they performed. The committee was particularly concerned about one aspect of the constables' work:

in no case do they receive any remuneration for preventing a felony, their only pay in cases of that nature being an allowance out of the County rate, by order of Justices, for apprehending persons who have already committed robberies; they are frequently paid by the persons robbed; and in cases of breaches of the peace, and other misdemeanours, they are paid by those who employ them.²³

The committee's report went on to note one criticism of the system that appears repeatedly in contemporary literature:

The tendency of the system is rather to encourage than to repress crime. If a Constable has received certain information that a felony is about to be committed, should he interfere to prevent it, he receives nothing for his exertions. Should he suffer the robber to commit the crime and then apprehend him, he would be, of course, paid for his services. The body of Constables, as a preventive force, is therefore worse than useless.²⁴

The constables could claim fees for a variety of duties; for example they were paid from the county rate for duty at the sessions and from corporation funds for duty at elections and on public occasions, at a rate

²² KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police', (1836), p. 4.

²³ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police', (1836) p. 5.

²⁴ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 8.

of 3s. 6d., 5s. or 7s. 6d. per day, depending on the duties performed. However, in Sculcoates and Holderness Ward constables who served at elections and on public occasions were paid out of the poor rate. The committee found it impossible to ascertain how much constables received in fees, expenses and other payments when employed by private individuals to solve certain crimes.

The members of the Local Acts Committee highlighted the deficiencies of the old police in their report and forcefully stated their opinion that Hull required the protection of an efficient day and night police.²⁵ It is clear from the report that the committee placed some of the blame for the perceived increase in crime in the borough on the inadequacies and inefficiencies of the old police. Having three separate bodies of watchmen under the control of different inspectors precluded the introduction and co-ordination of a common plan of policing for the whole of the urban area. The great majority of the watchmen were unsuitable for the task of policing, being too old, infirm, or apathetic to do the job properly. Their pay was too low and they were allowed to receive money from persons they apprehended (such as a small sum for keeping them in a lock-up overnight). On the recommendation of the parish officers the improvement commissioners had appointed too many paupers as night-watchmen because they could not obtain employment elsewhere. The committee was not slow in reporting examples of inefficiency, criminality and incompetence among the watchmen. For example, on 1 December 1835 one of the Myton Watch, William Bond, was discharged for allowing a prisoner to escape; furthermore the committee alleged that another 'was tried and sentenced to transportation, for committing a burglary in a house on his beat, when on duty; and another has been a watchman twenty years in a populous district and has never been known to signalize his valour by the capture of a single prisoner.'²⁶ The Local Acts Committee's most important objection to the old system of police was the fact that the watchmen and constables did not give police work their full, undivided attention. Consequently, Hull was not policed twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year and the watchmen and constables could not develop the skills

²⁵ Their recommendations about the structure and organization of the proposed new force, together with its actual characteristics are analysed in Chapter 2.

²⁶ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]*Police*' (1836), p. 7.

and professional expertise which was needed to operate effectively. Although there were many reformers who believed that they did not want to.

This confusing division of authority, with the corporation controlling the constables and two sets of improvement commissioners controlling the three night-watches was fairly typical amongst old police authorities. Evidence from Wolverhampton, York and Exeter confirms the prevailing view that police functions during the early nineteenth century were controlled by a number of local government agencies including unreformed corporations, improvement commissioners, magistrates and parish vestries. The level of co-operation and co-ordination between these different agencies varied tremendously from one locality to the next and hence the effectiveness and efficiency of the forces they controlled. It has been indicated above that reformers in Hull were deeply concerned about the organization of their old police system but how did Hull compare with other towns and cities? In the case of Wolverhampton in the 1830s and forties, a town experiencing major upheavals as a result of industrialization and urbanization, evidence suggests that crime and public order were real problems with which the old police could no longer deal. York, less affected by the great economic and social developments of the era - until the coming of the railway age later in the century - was more insulated from the effects of crime and generally more orderly. Therefore public concerns focused narrowly on the 'condition of the streets'. Exeter was even more orderly than York in this period - although the situation changed around mid-century - and there was general agreement that the old police could generally deal with the small levels of crime and disorder in the town. Consequently policing arrangements in Wolverhampton underwent most change. In York there was simply a more systematic organization of the old system and there was even less change in Exeter.²⁷ Thus the experiences of Wolverhampton and Hull share some marked similarities, with the great social and economic changes associated with the Industrial Revolution exerting a marked effect on police reform, despite the qualification that while Wolverhampton was a manufacturing centre Hull was a port and any comparison of the two should take full account of their different local characteristics.

²⁷ Roger Swift, 'Urban Policing in Victorian England, 1835-56: A Reappraisal', *History* 73 (1988), pp. 211-37, passim.

Reform Plans

Despite the weakness of the Municipal Corporations Act as it applied to policing, the combined efforts of a determined Watch Committee and an experienced, conscientious, ex-Metropolitan Police officer resulted in the creation of a borough police force in Hull in 1836 which was considerably superior to many others in terms of its manpower, effectiveness and efficiency. It has already been explained how the reformers triumphed at the municipal elections of 1835 and then established a Local Acts Committee to inquire into the state of policing in the borough and make proposals for its reform. The two leading members of the committee were William Woolley, the solicitor and influential radical and B. M. Jalland, an important businessman.²⁸ In effect this body was the embryonic Watch Committee since all seven of its members proceeded to serve on that committee when it was created in February 1836. The corporation was keen to fulfil its legal obligations impeccably so there were sound reasons for appointing a Local Acts Committee with this role. Once a Watch Committee had been formed under the terms of the legislation it had only three weeks to appoint a police force. In that time it would have to decide its duties and acquaint itself with the existing policing arrangements. More important, the sum of money a Watch Committee could raise to perform its police functions was limited to an average of what had been spent on policing by the old authorities over the previous seven years. Obviously it would be to the benefit of the future Watch Committee to have detailed information on which to make its decisions and execute the onerous task of reform. The Local Acts Committee's report on policing was published on 22 February 1836 and the criticisms which it made of the old police system have already been explained in Chapter 1. However, this was only part of its purpose; its full brief was 'to enquire into the state of the public establishments for protection of person and property, and to devise a system of Police for the preservation of the peace, the prevention of crime, and the apprehending of offenders within the new Municipal Borough'.²⁹ The plans,

²⁸ The other members of the committee were William Stephenson, Timothy Thorney, Richard Casson, J. M. Storry and P. Lowther. See KHPL, HA 15 Jan. 1836; KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corporation Minutes, 14 Jan. 1836.

²⁹ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report of the Committee on Local Acts, Police and the Powers, Prerogatives and Duties of the New Municipal Government' (1836), p. 3.

or proposals, which it made for reform will now be explained in some detail. Uncertain whether the agricultural district surrounding Hull would ever become part of the borough, the Local Acts Committee decided not to consider any police plan for that district. Moreover, the docks were already policed by a separate force of constables and watchmen under the control of the dock company and the committee ignored this part of the borough because it was unclear how the watching provisions of the various dock acts would be affected by the Municipal Reform Act. The committee therefore concentrated on the policing arrangements in Hull, Myton and Sculcoates. Before outlining the recommendations for new policing arrangements it should be stated that the evidence does not reveal who was the leading figure behind the committee's report but the most probable person would be the solicitor William Woolley. The report has the incisiveness, the eye for precision and detail, which comes with a legal training. Woolley's influence on the reform of Hull's institutions was compressed into a short period of time but was tremendously important; he died in 1837.

What then did the Local Acts Committee recommend to make the police of Hull an effective force capable of protecting the borough? It has already been noted that the committee's most important criticism of the old police was the latter's inability to function continuously on a full-time, twenty-four hour basis. Accordingly, it unanimously recommended that in future all police officers should devote their full attention to police duties and be barred from engaging in other forms of employment.³⁰ Clearly inspired by the regulations of the Metropolitan Police, this was truly a radical policy to recommend as the mode of operation of a borough police force in the mid-1830s. Other borough forces had separate day and night sections and did not prohibit police officers from taking other employment when off duty. Moreover, at a time of well-documented borough parsimony in general, another interesting aspect of the committee's report was its staunch support for 'efficiency over economy', which was expressed in these terms:

³⁰ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police (1836), p. 8.

Economy has not been lost sight of, but your Committee feel that they should ill discharge their duty, if they permitted any consideration to prevent them from recommending what they believe to be essentially requisite to produce a satisfactory result. They are convinced that any scraping or pairing will materially diminish the utility of their plan, and if too much cut down, possibly we may be deluded with the shadow of Protection, whilst we fondly imagine we are grasping the reality.³¹

This raises a crucial question concerning the committee's definition of 'efficiency' - which also applies to its successor, the Watch Committee. There are good reasons for believing that the members of each committee, rather than equating 'efficiency' with financial stringency, interpreted it as meaning 'effectiveness'. This point is more than merely a question of semantics; it is cardinal to the reform and management of Hull's borough police force, a force which was controlled by the elected representatives of the town's bourgeoisie. In Hull, police efficiency or police effectiveness - whatever one wishes to call it - was defined by the bourgeoisie in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It was a bourgeois notion which was fixated with the suppression of all kinds of street crime: drunken and disorderly behaviour; riots and public disorder; and serious property crimes such as robbery and burglary. The notion was underpinned by the belief that deploying as many 'men in blue' on the streets as funds would permit, to act as both an instrument of compulsion and deterrence, was the surest way to achieve effective policing of these social problems.

The Local Acts Committee report recommended that the borough should be divided into four irregular sections, sub-divided into several beats (see Table 2.2). The beats should be about a mile long and in winter between 7.00pm and 7.00am there should be one man per beat permanently on duty. In this way a policeman would pass every house in the borough approximately once every thirty minutes. If this level of public surveillance could be achieved it would be truly impressive for its time; but the mere fact that the committee was even recommending such supervision and observation is itself telling and must indicate, at the very least, a significant *fear* of crime. From 7.00am to 7.00pm half the beats should be

³¹ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 8.

patrolled and some men placed in the market place and the principal streets of the town. To achieve this a force of 110 men would be required, with a hundred for the permanent beat duties and a reserve force of ten for emergencies. A further reserve force of ten men comprised of candidates for vacancies would take the place of sick or absent men and be paid from the stoppages of the men whose places they had taken. Fifty of the men should be on duty between 7.00pm and 1.00am and the other fifty from 1.00am to 7.00am. They would be relieved by half of the first fifty from 7.00am to 1.00pm and then the other twenty-five would be on duty again from 1.00pm to 7.00pm. In this way each man would patrol for six hours at night and six during the day.³²

Table 2.2 *Proposed Sections and Beats of the New Police*

Sections	Number of Beats
The Town Within the Docks	16
South Myton Ward	7
Sculcoates, Trippett & North Myton Ward	18
Holderness Ward	9
Total	50

Source: KHPL, L352, Council Reports 1836-43, First Report[...]Police' (1836)

The report went on to recommend that the force should be under the command of one chief officer, permanently resident in the Town Hall if possible, responsible for all the men and accountable to the Watch Committee. Under him there should be eight inspectors or intermediate officers (two for each section) and a clerk.³³ The report recommended that the force should have its own neat uniform and four station houses, one for each section. It was also adamant that:

³² KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 9.

³³ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 9.

a proper system of cheques [sic] should be introduced, to prevent the possibility of neglect of duty without discovery; and the men should be forbid [sic], on pain of instant dismissal, from taking any fee or reward; it is, however, desirable that the [Watch] Committee should adopt a system of rewards for meritorious services, personal risk, or extraordinary exertions.³⁴

The Local Acts Committee suggested that the new police could begin their operations with four officers and up to half the full complement of the force, with the remainder being recruited as they were required. Finally, the committee thought it expedient that an experienced Metropolitan Police officer should be invited to Hull, on a salary of £3 per week plus traveling expenses, to assist the Watch Committee in forming the borough force. He could also offer himself as a candidate for the job of superintendent if he so wished.³⁵

Principally for political reasons the Local Acts Committee was eager to highlight that the old police had not only been inefficient but also expensive; and it went to some lengths to 'prove' that the new system of police would be considerably cheaper. The committee estimated that the total annual cost of the present system of constables and watchmen (excluding such things as incidental expenses, printing and stationery costs, private payments to constables and charges levied by watchmen, which could not be calculated) was £3,034 14s. 11d.³⁶ From that total it is known that the cost of watching Sculcoates for the period from June 1834 to June 1835 was £519 6s. 9d., and for the twelve months prior to that it had been £523 4s. 10d.³⁷ The initial calculation of the annual cost of the new police, at £7,003 12s., was comprised of the expenses listed in Table 2.3 (see Table 2.3 below). However, the committee then made a deduction of £1,400 14s. 5d. from the total on the grounds that this would be the sum contributed to the watch rate

³⁴ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 10.

³⁵ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 18.

³⁶ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police', (1836), p. 13.

³⁷ KHRO, ICS 12, Minute Book of the Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners, 3 Feb. 1836.

by areas of the borough, such as Holderness, which had not been watched under the old system. This left a total of £5,602 17s. 7d. Although this was still a real extra cost of £2,568 2s. 8d. the committee noted that this would provide an efficient day and night police for twenty-four hours a day, whereas the old night watch only provided protection for eight hours at the most. Therefore the real cost of twenty-four hour protection under the old system would be over £9,000 per annum. Disaggregated into a cost per hour (on a twenty-four hour basis), the old system would cost about £1 9d per hour and the new system only 12s. 9d.³⁸

Table 2.3 *Initial Estimated Cost of the New Police*

Budget item	Cost		
	£	s.	d.
Superintendent at £3 pw	156	0	0
8 Inspectors at £1 5s. pw	520	0	0
Clothes for the above at £7 10s. pa	60	0	0
110 Privates at 18s. pw	5148	0	0
Clothes for the above at £6 pw	715	0	0
Clerk of Police at £1 1s. pw	54	12	0
4 Lock-ups with part-time keepers	150	0	0
Incidental Expenses	200	0	0
Total	7003	12	0

Source: KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*,
First Report[...]Police' (1836)

The Sculcoates and Myton Improvement Commissioners were not slow to realize that the policing provisions of the Municipal Reform Act threatened their power and they must have been aware that the success of the reformers in the municipal elections meant they would have to deal with an unsympathetic corporation. When the reformed Hull Corporation established the Local Acts Committee in January 1836 it had resolved that the committee should request the improvement commissioners to provide information about the sums of money raised and spent on watching, lighting, cleansing and improving their districts. However, as both sets of improvement commissioners had overwhelmingly decided not to transfer their

³⁸ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police' (1836), p. 17-18.

residual powers to the council they refused to provide anything other than information on watching. Even then, the Local Acts Committee found that all information regarding watching was refused 'except through the tedious and formal process of written correspondence through the Chairman of the respective boards'.³⁹ Indeed, it was alleged by the committee that the commissioners had issued orders to their clerks and officers - 'on pain of instant dismissal' - not to give any information, verbal or written, to the corporation or the committee. Certainly it was the case that the Hull and Myton Improvement Commissioners refused to allow their officers to be 'interrogated', as they put it, by the Local Acts Committee.⁴⁰

The printed report of the Local Acts Committee contains two resolutions, one passed by the Sculcoates commissioners on 3 February 1836, the other by the Myton commissioners on 28 January, and an undated letter to the Town Clerk from the Chairman of the Assessors of Lamps and Scavengers (who were responsible for paying the wages of the Hull watchmen), all of which reveal something of the attitude of these old authorities to the new corporation. The resolution of the Sculcoates commissioners is reproduced below. The tone and content of the other resolution and letter are very similar:

At a meeting of the Sculcoates Commissioners, 3rd February, 1836, it was

Resolved unanimously

That this Board having deemed it expedient to retain the powers left to them by the Municipal Reform Act, consider it unnecessary to supply any returns to the Town Council or to the Committee appointed by that body, except such as relate to the Watching of the parish.

That the Commissioners cannot consent that their clerk or other servants shall be examined by such Committee on any matters, the entire management and controul [*sic*] of which, have been entrusted by the Legislature to this Board, but the Commissioners will be ready at all times to furnish such information to the Town Council, as in the judgement of the Commissioners, may be advantageous to the public interests.⁴¹

³⁹ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...Police]' (1836), p. 13.

⁴⁰ KHRO, ICH 53, Minutes of the Hull and Myton Improvement Commissioners, 28 Jan. 1836.

⁴¹ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...Police]' (1836), p. 15.

However, the Local Acts Committee's work was not impeded too much by the intransigent attitude of the Sculcoates and Myton Improvement Commissioners because the latter were obliged to give detailed written information on the watches to the corporation and this in itself was good enough for the committee's purposes. Moreover, the committee, was able to obtain valuable information from the Metropolitan Police and cities such as Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle.

Nevertheless, this was not the end of the disputes between the old police authorities and the reformers; there were two more, the second occurring soon after the Local Acts Committee's report was published and the third a few months later. In the Hull Advertiser of 4 March there appeared an angry letter from Michael Bell, the Chairman of the Assessors of Lamps and Scavengers, who had calculated the annual cost of watching Hull and Trippett, as requested by the Local Acts Committee. The police report stated that the cost of watching Hull and Trippett was £1,000 15s. 8d. per annum (out of the total cost of £3,034 14s. 11d.), exclusive of incidental expenses. In his letter Bell stated that this figure was wrong, everything had been included and, moreover, he heavily criticized William Woolley for deliberately spreading untruths about the lack of co-operation the Local Acts Committee had received from the assessors and the commissioners. He said that he and his colleagues had fully co-operated with the committee and furnished it with as much information as they could, as quickly as they could, in the limited time available. Bell attempted to refute the report's claim that the assessors and commissioners were only prepared to deal with the committee through tedious written correspondence and that they ordered their officers not to co-operate with the enquiry 'on pain of instant dismissal'. His first claim - about the means of communication between the assessors, commissioners and the committee - can be challenged using the evidence of the two resolutions from the Sculcoates and Myton Improvement Commissioners (one of which is reproduced above) and Bell's own letter to the Town Clerk which states: 'the Assessors do not[...]see it necessary to direct their Officers to attend the Committee for the purposes required; but the Assessors will, through myself, be ready at all times to furnish the Committee with all requisite

information as to the Watching.⁴² The nature and intensity of the political conflict between the reformers in the council and the old authorities as represented by groups like the improvement commissioners and assessors is exemplified by the closing sentence of Bell's letter to the *Hull Advertiser*: 'I little thought when taking so much trouble [in calculating the annual cost of the Hull and Trippett Watch] that I should be thus rewarded; but this I suppose is a specimen of the liberal principles that Mr Woolley and his little party of politicians profess, and of which I have no desire to be considered a member.'⁴³ In all probability both sides in the conflict were telling lies, or at the very least being economical with the truth. However, after weighing up the evidence it would seem that the old authorities were the worst offenders in this respect.

Even before the report was printed supporters of police reform were expressing their opinions in the columns of the local newspapers, particularly the *Hull Advertiser*, a paper which, from 1833, was firmly liberal in its principles and supportive of reform. A report in the newspaper in January 1836 criticized the present system of police and looked forward to the creation of an efficient day and night police to prevent crime and detect offenders. The article identified three major problems in need of attention: a large number of thieves living in the town, many of whom had come from Leeds, Manchester or other places; several gangs of young pickpockets and thieves which operated in the centre of town near the market place and, the small number of officers on duty in Hull to fight crime.⁴⁴ There also seems to have been some concern among the residents of Myton regarding their watch. Following an unprovoked knife attack on a 'respectable' young lady and her mother late one January evening, a correspondent wrote to the editor of the *Hull Advertiser* complaining about the small number of watchmen on duty in the Pottery area of Myton. He quoted one of the watchmen as claiming that it took him a whole hour to cover his beat and ended by writing:

⁴² KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[.]Police' (1836), pp. 15-16.

⁴³ KHPL, HA 4 Mar. 1836. Bell also sent the letter of complaint about the Local Acts Committee report to another newspaper which printed it too. See KHPL, *Hull Packet* 4 Mar. 1836.

⁴⁴ KHPL, HA 29 Jan. 1836.

I trust, Sir, that those who have the management will see the necessity of increasing the numbers of watchmen for the Pottery district as early as possible, in order that protection may be afforded to the inhabitants against such brutal acts of lawless violence as that to which I have referred.⁴⁵

In another letter to the editor a correspondent complained about the absence of lights and a watch in a different part of Hull: 'the inhabitants of Drypool have neither lamps nor watchmen; thus about a tenth part of the population of Hull are unprotected and in total darkness, and, therefore, no wonder if their deeds should be evil.'⁴⁶

When the Local Acts Committee reported to the council on 24 February the editor of the newspaper was staunch in his support for its recommendations.⁴⁷ Following the publication of the police report and a thorough debate of its content by the members of the Corporation, they unanimously carried a motion that the present system of police in the borough was inefficient and another that approved the report itself.⁴⁸ Other motions had also been approved. These authorized the nascent Watch Committee to avail itself of the services of an experienced Metropolitan Police officer to assist in organizing the new police, if the committee wished to pursue this option; and urged the forthcoming committee to review the scale of salaries recommended in the police report and make any alterations deemed prudent to keep the expenditure moderate.⁴⁹ The council then established a Watch Committee of fifteen persons (two per ward plus a chairman) which met for the first time on 29 February 1836, two days after its creation. All seven

⁴⁵ KHPL, HA 29 Jan. 1836. An alleged upsurge of crime in Myton, combined with the concerns raised by this letter and other similar ones, encouraged the Mayor to provide, out of his own pocket, a temporary patrol for the Myton area. The patrol of four men, which was to last until the new police began their operations, was on duty between 5.00pm and 10.00pm and each man received 2s. per day in wages.

⁴⁶ KHPL, HA 5 Feb. 1836.

⁴⁷ KHPL, HA 26 Feb. 1836.

⁴⁸ KHPL, HA 4 Mar. 1836.

⁴⁹ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 27 Feb. 1836.

members of the Local Acts Committee were on the Watch Committee, with Woolley as the chairman.⁵⁰ Given the widespread support for police reform in Hull at this time, certainly amongst the middle class of the town, it was perhaps mischievousness and bitterness which motivated the leading Tory newspaper in the town, the *Hull Packet*, to print a long and rambling letter to its editor from a public lecturer criticizing the findings of the police report. The public lecturer in question was a William Marris Dinsdale, who claimed that he had presented a plan to the Local Acts Committee about the reform of policing. Dinsdale claimed that the plan outlined in the report was a muddled version of his own plan, which the committee had not acknowledged. In his letter he criticized much of the published report, including the recommendation to employ a Metropolitan Police officer and he tried to present himself as a serious candidate for the post of superintendent.⁵¹ While it is possible that Dinsdale did submit his own plan to the Local Acts Committee there is no evidence to suggest that it was used as the basis of the committee's recommendations. It is difficult to substantiate Dinsdale's claims and view them seriously. Given that the committee had readily obtained information from other police forces, including the Metropolitan Police, and had acknowledged this, why should it need to plagiarize the ideas of a public lecturer? Dinsdale appears to be something of an eccentric and dilettante.

Achievements

The Watch Committee, having agreed in general that progress should be based on the recommendations of the police report, unanimously decided that an experienced Metropolitan Police officer should be invited to fill the post of Chief Officer, or Superintendent, of Police in Hull on a wage of £3 per week and to take responsibility for organizing the force. In Hull the course of events revealed that the opposition to police reform was remarkably muted, all the more surprising as it aroused such strong passions elsewhere in the

⁵⁰ The other eight members of the first Hull Corporation Watch Committee were W. H. Bell, Benjamin Casson, George Cookman, John Atkinson, William Bettison, Denis Peacock (the only Tory on the Council), Edward Rheim, and William Caley. See KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Committee Minutes, 29 Feb. 1836. Woolley remained chairman until July 1836 when he left the council to become Clerk of the Peace for the Hull Borough Sessions.

⁵¹ KHPL, *HP* 11 Mar. 1836.

country. One such place where plans for police reform initiated a fierce debate was York, only 38 miles from Hull. In York there was sustained opposition to fundamental reform of policing and the creation of a Metropolitan-style police force. While in Hull the overwhelming success of the reformers in the municipal elections meant there were no political squabbles to delay the process of reform this was not so in York, where although Liberals were in a majority on the council, Tories had a majority on the Watch Committee and the issue of police reform became embroiled in party conflicts for six months.⁵² York Corporation was forced to reassure its critics that the Metropolitan Police officer who had been invited to the city to prepare a report on its policing requirements would only be there temporarily. In the event, the carefully-prepared report of the Metropolitan officer was ignored on grounds of cost and the man left York highly critical of the present system of policing. He recommended that York needed, as an absolute minimum, a police force of twenty-one. In contrast the council decided, for financial reasons, that the new force should be no greater than the combined total of the old day and night watchmen, which was twelve.⁵³ York Corporation had been made to bow to public pressure, which was against radical change, and attempt a more systematic organization of the existing, old police, structures. The man chosen to lead the 'new police' was none other than the principal peace officer employed by the unreformed corporation. He remained in charge until his death in 1841 (when a Metropolitan police officer was appointed) and did not initiate any major changes in the way in which York was policed.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Hull's new Watch Committee underlined its commitment to ushering in deep-seated reforms by deciding to make certain stipulations regarding candidates applying for employment as police constables.⁵⁵ Advertisements for inspectors, constables and a police clerk were then placed in the local newspapers.⁵⁶ Prospective candidates for the eight posts of Inspector, at £1 5s. per week

⁵² Swift, *Police Reform*, p. 6.

⁵³ Swift, *Police Reform*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ Swift, *Police Reform*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 29 Feb. 1836.

⁵⁶ For an example of the advertisements see KHPL, HA 4 Mar. 1836.

with uniform, were informed that 'None but men of intelligence, character and respectability need apply.': seventy-four men believed they had those qualities. Meanwhile, those wishing to become police constables, earning 18s. per week with a uniform, were required to: be literate; devote all their time to police duties; be between twenty-one and thirty-five years of age; be at least 5' 7" in height; be in good health and of a sound constitution, and provide employer references recommending them for their control of temper, sobriety, honesty, activity and intelligence. In addition, each successful candidate had to deposit £3 or find security for that amount as a guarantee for his uniform in case he left the force without returning it and to contribute no more than 6d. per week from his wages to a superannuation fund. The 304 candidates for the vacant posts were required to undergo a medical examination and pay the examining surgeon a fee of 1s. The Watch Committee was extremely strict in enforcing this list of requirements: for example in 1836 only one man over the age of thirty-five, John Hewitt, was admitted to the force and that was because he had been recommended as a particularly meticulous and effective parish constable.⁵⁷ Significantly *none* of the old watchmen were employed as constables, a conscious break with the past which was rarely achieved in other incorporated boroughs. Finally, twenty-five men applied for the job of police clerk, knowing that their 'character had to bear the strictest investigation'. The Watch Committee appointed George Freeman of Witham on a weekly basis in the first instance. On 18 March the committee appointed four inspectors and thirty-one constables. Then on the 30th and 31 March the committee appointed a further seventy constables.⁵⁸ Having acknowledged that the timetable specified in the legislation was unrealistic (it stipulated a three week gap between the appointment of a Watch Committee and the creation of a police force), Hull's Watch Committee decided that the constables would not commence duty until 2 May; however the four inspectors were sworn in the day after they were appointed and their pay began on 21 March.

⁵⁷ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 19 Aug., 15 Sep. 1836. In 1850 the Watch Committee later reduced the upper age limit for applicants joining as constables to thirty. See KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 12 Dec. 1850.

⁵⁸ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 18, 30, 31 Mar. 1836. Between 7 April and 2 May the committee appointed a further fifteen men, six of whom were to replace men who had absented themselves, failed to meet the physical requirements, or resigned.

Simultaneously, the search was on for a suitable Chief Officer or Superintendent of Police. Woolley and Jalland, with the approval of the Watch Committee, had gone to London to discuss their requirements with Colonel Rowan of the Metropolitan Police and had the power to appoint whomsoever they chose.⁵⁹ Rowan must have been impressed by their attitude towards police reform for he let them study and take notes from the operating plans of the Metropolitan Police⁶⁰ and he recommended to them one of his most senior inspectors, Andrew McManus, a man who had been in the Metropolitan Police since its formation in 1829 and who was second in line for promotion to superintendent.⁶¹ According to the *Hull Advertiser* in addition to being recommended by Rowan, McManus was also recommended by Sir J. S. Lillie, the magistrate in the Metropolitan Police division where he served; and his work had been admired by no less a person than the Duchess of Kent, 'by personal observation'.⁶² Andrew McManus was promoted from the rank of sergeant in the Metropolitan Police to that of inspector on 10 December 1830.⁶³ McManus's resignation from the Metropolitan Police in 1836 is noted in Metropolitan Police Orders; he had been serving as an inspector in T division, at Hammersmith.⁶⁴ Woolley and Jalland offered, and McManus accepted, the job of Superintendent of the Hull Police on a salary of £150 in the first year, £175 in the second Year and £200 thereafter, plus a residence, as long as he retained the support of the Watch Committee. It was also agreed that the Watch Committee would pay McManus's travelling expenses to Hull and a return journey to London should he resign from his position within a year. The Watch Committee need not have worried about such a resignation: Andrew McManus remained the Superintendent (later his title was changed to Chief Constable) of the Hull Police for thirty years, dying while still in office in 1866. At McManus's suggestion, Woolley and Jalland agreed that a sergeant should be brought from London to assist him in laying out the beats and other essential tasks,

⁵⁹ See KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 29 Mar. 1836; KHPL, HA 1 Apr. 1836.

⁶⁰ To appreciate how grateful Woolley and Jalland were for Colonel Rowan's help and the thanks they and the council gave him, see the report in KHPL, HA 20 May 1836.

⁶¹ The report in KHPL, HA 1 Apr. 1836 wrongly gives his first name as Alexander

⁶² KHPL, HA 1 Apr. 1836.

⁶³ PRO, Metropolitan Police Office, MEPO 7/1, General Orders, 11 Dec. 1830.

⁶⁴ PRO, MEPO 7/4, General Orders, 2 Apr. 1836.

which he began to do as soon as he arrived in Hull towards the end of March. The Watch Committee reported to the council that a superintendent had been appointed, the salary details were given for three years and the council passed a motion approving and confirming McManus's appointment.⁶⁵

By early April, having made all the necessary appointments, the Watch Committee drafted the rules and regulations of the police force which were intended to make its constables efficient in the performance of their duties and prevent neglect and abuse. The next task was to find suitable premises for police stations; this proved to be more difficult than anyone could have foreseen and was the occasion of the final clash between the reformers and the improvement commissioners in 1836. The initial report had recommended four stations but after surveying the borough McManus was satisfied that the police only needed two. This meant the police budget would be considerably lower than the one presented in the report. Under the terms of the Municipal Reform Act the old police authorities had to transfer all their police buildings and equipment, including lock-ups and watch-boxes, to the Watch Committee for use by the new police before they commenced their duties.⁶⁶ The Watch Committee received a lock-up on Fetter Lane which the superintendent concluded was unfit for use as a station or 'section house'. A suitable replacement building in Blanket Row, lately used as a tobacco factory was very quickly found.⁶⁷ Although alterations estimated to cost forty to fifty pounds needed to be made to the building, the Watch Committee was prepared to pay for them and sign a seven year lease at £60 per annum because all the annual rental would be recouped by providing accommodation for twenty-five single men at 1s. per week; the council approved the terms of the lease.⁶⁸ In addition to providing a large room with a kitchen for the

⁶⁵ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 30 Mar. 1836.

⁶⁶ The record of the transfer of Sculcoates Watch property has survived, see: KHRO, ICS 441, Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners, Inventory taken by James Oldham of all the watch boxes, accoutrements and other equipment with a receipt signed for them by Richard Potton on behalf of the new corporation, dated 2 May 1836. The police force later decided that they did not need the forty-nine watch-boxes lately used by the old watchmen. The watch-boxes, together with some other equipment, were advertised for sale on the front page of the *Advertiser*; see KHPL, HA 24 Jun. 1836. The advert noted that the watch-boxes were 'well adapted for Seats and Summer-Houses in small Gardens.'

⁶⁷ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 2, 19 Apr.; KHPL, HA 29 Apr. 1836.

⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 25 Apr. 1836.

accommodation of the constables, the Blanket Row station house had an inspector's room (which could be used by visiting magistrates) and three cells.

Concurrently, the Watch Committee was making the final preparations before the new police came into operation. A notice was sent in the name of the Mayor to the improvement commissioners informing them that the committee had appointed constables who would begin to act on 2 May and requesting the transfer of the watch houses, watch boxes and other accoutrements. The notice to the Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners has survived and on receiving it they directed their surveyor to ensure that this was done.⁶⁹ The Watch Committee unanimously decided that the men should gather together for instructions and training from 25 April and be paid at 12s. 6d. from then until their duties commenced on 2 May. Also it unanimously decided to purchase twelve cutlasses and five pistols for use by the force (although these would only to be used in exceptional circumstances because the policemen would normally be armed with staves). Furthermore, it agreed that no more inspectors would be appointed but the four in place would have their wage increased by 5s. per week to £1 10s. In addition, two posts of 'sergeant and acting inspector' would be created at a wage of £1 5s. - equal to that of the clerk - one of which would be given, on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to an experienced Metropolitan policeman (Sergeant Edward O'Hara of the Metropolitan Police was appointed acting inspector in early May soon after the force came into existence). Finally, eight post of sergeant would be made attracting a weekly wage of £1 1s. Although this was a sensible financial and organizational review the Watch Committee decided that it would not be advisable to inform the rest of the council about the changes in the men's salaries at this stage. The plans for the smooth introduction of the force on 2 May do not seem to have been disrupted too much by the sudden and unexplained resignation of Bentley, one of the inspectors, at the end of April. His position was later filled by Acting Inspector Lang.

⁶⁹ KHRO, ICH 53, Hull & Myton Imp. Com., 25 Apr. 1836. See KHRO, ICS 442, Sculcoates Imp. Com., printed poster announcing that the corporation police force would take over from other watching bodies on 2 May, dated 22 Mar. 1836.

By 30 April the Watch Committee had agreed on the rules and regulations of the Hull Police which, unsurprisingly given McManus's pervasive influence, were very similar to those of the Metropolitan Police.⁷⁰ The Watch Committee stressed at the beginning that 'It cannot be too forcibly impressed upon the minds of both officers and Men that the principal object to be attained is "**The Prevention of Crime.**"'⁷¹ It further emphasized that 'The absence of crime will be considered the best proof of the efficiency of the Police, and those men who best exert themselves in the preservation of security and good order may rest assured that such good conduct will be noticed by **Rewards and Promotion.**'⁷² Although the Superintendent of Police received his orders from the Watch Committee, he commanded the force on an everyday basis and was responsible for the conduct of the officers and men. The Watch Committee provided a uniform for the men which consisted of one great coat, one cape, one coat, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of boots and one hat.⁷³ The first uniform of white duck trousers, swallow-tailed coat and glazed top hat was an exact copy of that worn by the Metropolitan Police.⁷⁴ The conditions of service of the new police force were very rigorous. Each policeman was required to devote all his time to the police service and was expected to be close at hand even when off duty in case of sudden emergencies. He could not accept money from others without the express permission of the Watch Committee. If he was unmarried then lodgings were found for him (if not accommodated in one of the two police stations) and a shilling a week was deducted from his pay to cover the cost of this; and if he was married his rent was negotiated with his landlord. The Watch Committee had the power to order him to pay off any debts he had incurred and required him to deposit £3 or give security for his clothing should he leave the force without returning it. A superannuation fund was provided for the men and they

⁷⁰ The main sections of the rules and regulations - a copy of which was given to each man - fill twenty-five pages of the Watch Committee's minute book. See KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 30 Apr. 1836.

⁷¹ See KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 30 Apr. 1836 for this and other quotations from the rules and regulations. Emphasis included in original.

⁷² KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min, 30 Apr. 1836. Emphasis included in original.

⁷³ In the following year the men would receive another coat, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of boots and a hat.

⁷⁴ This style was retained until the early 1860s when it was replaced by a helmet, tunic and trousers similar to the type worn by modern policemen until relatively recently. The Hull Watch Committee decided to change the uniform in the sixties so that it conformed with the current Metropolitan Police uniform. See KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com Min., 5 Dec. 1860; 20 Nov. 1861.

contributed varying amounts according to rank: inspectors 10d. per week, acting inspectors 8d., sergeants 7d. and constables 6d.⁷⁵ Any officer or man dismissed from the force or who resigned his office before the period at which he became entitled to superannuation allowance forfeited all claim to any portion of the fund. The constables were expected to patrol their beats continuously and only with good reason could they stay in one place for any length of time. On no account were they to enter a public house or beershop except in the exercise of their duty and any breach of this rule would make them liable to disciplinary action.⁷⁶ In the event of a fire the police were to assist the firemen by controlling crowds and recovering and guarding property if safe to do so. A policeman was expected to give a month's notice before he left the force, if he did not - or he was dismissed - he forfeited any pay he was owed. Officers and men were liable to immediate dismissal for unfitness, negligence, or misconduct independent of any other punishment which they might be subject to by law. In fact, the Watch Committee was not obliged to give a reason for dismissal, although in practice it did so.

Ninety-one constables and sergeants were sworn in on 2 May 1836 in the courtyard of the Town Hall in the presence of the Mayor and several members of the council.⁷⁷ After each man took the oath of a constable the Mayor addressed them as follows: 'You are now entered into a solemn compact with your God and your country, to perform well and faithfully the duties of the station in which you have been placed by the authorities of the borough; I trust you will perform your duties fearlessly and faithfully.'⁷⁸ He then urged them to obey the commands of their Superintendent, reminding them to be vigilant and intrepid, to control their temper at all times, to be impartial and to help equally rich and poor alike. The men were requested to observe the rules and regulations which had been read to them. Those

⁷⁵ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 30 Apr. 1836.

⁷⁶ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 30 Apr. 1836. In fact any publican who served a policeman or allowed him to stay on his premises could himself be fined according to the sixth by-law of the council. For more information on this see Chapter 3 and TCM 1, Hull Cor. Min., 9 Oct. 1837.

⁷⁷ Some constables originally appointed in March and April did not attend to be sworn in.

⁷⁸ KHPL, HA 6 May 1836.

found guilty of misconduct would be punished and those deserving of promotion would receive it. After the speech the Superintendent marched the men to the gaol where the prisoners were paraded before them so that each policeman could recognize them in future. Thus after much planning and preparation the borough of Kingston-upon-Hull now had a new police force on duty, comprised (when at full strength) of a superintendent, four inspectors, three acting inspectors, one clerk, nine sergeants and seventy-seven constables, making a total force of ninety-five, including the police clerk (who was sworn in as a constable and assumed the rank of acting inspector).⁷⁹ At a council meeting about a fortnight after the police commenced their duties the Watch Committee presented a report on progress thus far and the council formally thanked the committee 'for their exertions in forming a Police for the borough and for the very able Report of their proceedings now read.' Interestingly, the council also thanked Colonel Rowan of the Metropolitan Police for the help he had given to the deputation which had selected Superintendent McManus, another indication of the extent to which the authorities in Hull had been impressed by police procedures in the capital.⁸⁰ This is significant because the Hull Police was functioning as the Metropolitan Police in microcosm, it being transparent that McManus was organizing the policing of Hull as though it was a police division of the Metropolis. The organization of the Metropolitan Police was on the basis of 'encadrement' with each division having 165 men: one superintendent, four inspectors, sixteen sergeants and 144 constables (one sergeant to every nine constables). Although Hull was clearly smaller than a Metropolitan division (and so would need fewer constables) the rank structure in the two forces was remarkably similar. Superintendent McManus had as many inspectors as a superintendent in the Metropolitan Police and in Hull the ratio of constables to the combined total of sergeants and acting inspectors was almost 6.5:1. Furthermore, McManus brought with him the Metropolitan Police's quasi-military practice of stationing groups of single men in dormitory-style section houses attached to police stations, which meant that units of men could be moved and deployed at short notice.⁸¹

⁷⁹ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 17 May 1836; KHPL, HA 20 May 1836.

⁸⁰ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 18 May 1836.

⁸¹ Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 296; Philip John Stead, 'The New Police', in *Police and Society*, ed by David Bayley (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), pp. 73-84. (p. 82).

With a police force of ninety-four (excluding the police clerk) in 1836 this gave Hull a police to population ratio of approximately 1:596, one of the best in the country outside London.⁸² How did Hull compare with other towns and cities when measured on a scale of police reform? York, with a population of approximately 30,000 in 1835 and a 'new police' force of only twelve had a police to population ratio of 1:2,500, some four times more than the corresponding figure for Hull.⁸³ In the only incorporated town in the Black Country in 1836, Walsall, the 'new police' force created by the corporation 'was a virtual continuation of the town's old watch force, under another name, and had a strength of only three to four men for its first six years.'⁸⁴ This was clearly inadequate for Walsall, a town whose population increased from 14,420 in 1831 to 19,587 ten years later,⁸⁵ thus giving a police to population ratio of over 1:6,000 in 1841. The nine man borough police force of Bedford appointed in January 1836 included the mayor's sergeant, the bellman and the beadle (all town functionaries) and the old system of separate day and night patrols was maintained until the 1850s.⁸⁶ The 'reform' of the Exeter borough police was similarly modest, with town functionaries also serving as policemen and separate day and night patrols being maintained for many years.⁸⁷ It is also illuminating to compare police reform in Hull with police reform in that other major port, Liverpool. Until 1836 Liverpool had three different old police forces: a small day force operated by the unreformed corporation (under the mayor's control), a night-watch managed by the improvement commissioners, and the dock police, under the control of the Dock Committee. The night-watch and the day police came together to form the basis of the new Liverpool

⁸² This ratio is calculated using an interpolated population figure of 56,047 for 1836, derived from the Census figures of 1831 and 1841.

⁸³ This figure is calculated using information supplied by Swift, *Police Reform*, pp. 6, 9.

⁸⁴ David Philips, *Crime and Authority in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 64.

⁸⁵ Philips, *Crime and Authority*, p. 57.

⁸⁶ Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900* (Harlow: Longman, 1987), p. 181.

⁸⁷ R. E. Swift, 'Crime Law and Order in Two English Towns During the Early Nineteenth Century: the Experience of Exeter and Wolverhampton 1815-56' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1981), p. 142, *passim*.

Police in 1836, with the superintendent of the night watch assuming command of the united force. The dock police remained quasi-independent of the new police until 1841, when it was incorporated into the borough force. Of the estimated 360 men (including reserves) in the borough force at its inception in 1836, 114 had served in at least one of the other forces.⁸⁸ It should be remembered that in Hull no former watchman was admitted into the new police and there is only one recorded case of a parish constable being accepted. One crucial difference between policing in Liverpool and Hull before 1836 was that in the former a degree of police reform was implemented, with all three old forces benefiting from having ex-Metropolitan Police officers in leadership positions at some time. Thus if police reform in Liverpool after 1836 was less radical than in Hull this is in part explained by the fact that the west coast port had experienced more change before that date.

Although the introduction of the new police in Hull was not greeted with universal approval it must be noted that criticism of, and opposition to, police reform in the town was remarkably mild and insignificant. Probably the most public piece of criticism was a single news report in the town's main Tory newspaper, the *Hull Packet*, which will be discussed below; although concern was also expressed for the future of the redundant watchmen. The council had earlier received a petition from the governor, deputy governor and assistant guardians of the Hull workhouse (the first petition presented to the reformed corporation) expressing concern that the watchmen made redundant by the creation of the new police would become a burden on the borough and consequently should be found work mending roads and paths.⁸⁹ Neither the Watch Committee nor the council seems to have given the issue much attention. Nor do they appear to have been ruffled by the views expressed in the *Hull Packet*. Commenting on the police's deployment on their first day of operation, 2 May 1836, the newspaper made the following point:

⁸⁸ W. R. Cockcroft, 'The Liverpool Police Force, 1836-1902', in *Victorian Lancashire*, ed. by S. Peter Bell (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1974), pp. 150-168 (pp. 150-52); Anne Bryson, 'Riotous Liverpool, 1815-1860', in *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool history, 1790-1940*, ed. by John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), pp. 98-134 (pp. 102-03, 113).

⁸⁹ KHRO, TCC 2/1, Hull Corporation Correspondence, 9 Mar. 1836.

The marching of so large a body of men in uniform through the town wore a very military aspect, and the introduction of the continental gendarmarie system, as one of the first acts of the new liberal regime, unavoidably presented itself to the mind of the spectator as a somewhat singular anomaly.⁹⁰

The same article in the *Hull Packet* also commented on the treatment of the redundant watchmen:

these men have been treated with singular ingratitude. Not one of them has been appointed in the new police, though many of them are of acknowledged ability and activity, and quite *young* enough (age being the only objection assigned by the Mayor) to perform the duties of policeman. No charge that we have heard has been brought against them, and yet they are carelessly, and cruelly we may say, thrown upon the shelf, although a few months ago they had reason to suppose otherwise than that they would hold their situations for life! But they were appointed by the old corporation, and that is sin enough in these days of reform, and it will cost a *liberal* no greater effort to cashier and throw upon the world human beings, with other human beings in the shape of wives and children dependent on them, than to dispose of old plate and old wines.⁹¹

Although this is an emotive attack on the liberal principles of reform the attacker somewhat undermines his argument about the effectiveness of the watchmen by suggesting that the old watchmen would be capable of holding their situations for life. Given the previously highlighted age structure of the old police - evidence that was never challenged - that suggestion is absolutely risible.

A few days later, perhaps in reply to the *Hull Packet's* attack on the new police, the *Hull Advertiser* criticized the use of watchmens' and constables' fees under the old system, which were

⁹⁰ KHPL, *HP* 6 May 1836.

⁹¹ KHPL, *HP* 6 May 1836. Italics included in original. The reference to 'old plate and old wines' was probably deliberate as the new corporation was debating whether to dispose of the stockpile owned by the old corporation.

henceforth abolished in the Hull Police.⁹² Later, in August 1836, an editorial in the *Advertiser* launched a blistering attack on the 'low Tories' of the town who attached themselves 'to the respectable section of the party like barnacles to a ship' for the purpose of attacking the forces of law and order. In a tone that seethed with anger the editorial alleged that:

A part of their plan was to calumniate the Magistracy and Police, and to bring the administration of justice into contempt. And with this mad and wicked design, which, if successful, would place life and property in jeopardy, these miscreants have the audacity to call themselves "Conservatives!" We are no strangers to the machinery at work - nor are we unacquainted with the sort of agency in motion here and elsewhere. The gang shall not be permitted to outrage social feeling with impunity.⁹³

Finally, the editorial suggested that a proper remedy - and suitable form of punishment - for conspirators with '*cacoethes scribendi*' (the irresistible desire to write) was a treadmill.⁹⁴ After this the war of words between reformers and Tories on the issue of police reform began to diminish. Public feeling had not been excited by police reform and respectable opinion was swinging even more in favour of the police.

The Watch Committee's strategy for dealing with actual and potential criticism was to accentuate the positive features of reform. For example the committee was pleased to report to the council that it now believed the new police would cost the borough the sum of £5,777 4s. per annum (see Table 2.4). This was some £1,200 less than the original estimate of the Local Acts Committee and had been saved mainly because of the Superintendent's assertion that fewer policemen and police stations were needed than the original report recommended.⁹⁵ Closely modelled on the Metropolitan Police, the Hull Police were clothed in a similar uniform, worked similar hours and compiled similar daily reports and

⁹² For more information see KHPL, *HA* 6 May 1836.

⁹³ KHPL, *HA* 19 Aug. 1836.

⁹⁴ KHPL, *HA* 19 Aug. 1836. Italics included in original.

⁹⁵ KHPL, *HA* 29 Apr. 1836.

returns. What differences there were between the two forces tended to result purely from local circumstances.

Table 2.4 Revised Estimated Cost of the New Police

Budget item	Cost		
	£	s.	d.
Superintendent's Salary	150	0	0
Clothing & Incidentals for the above	9	14	0
Inspectors' Salaries	312	0	0
Acting Inspectors' Salaries	195	0	0
Clothing for the above	45	10	0
Sergeants' Wages	491	8	0
Constables' Wages	3603	12	0
Clothing for the above	430	0	0
Superintendent's Horse	40	0	0
Incidentals	500	0	0
Total	5777	4	0

Source: KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 17 May 1836

However, within two weeks of the new police becoming operational there began another conflict with the Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners, this time concerning the police's use of Sculcoates Public Hall. The hall had been built, at public expense, under the provisions of the Sculcoates Improvement Act by the commissioners, for their use, as a place of residence for the parish's now defunct chief police officer/keeper of the lock-up and as a place for the temporary confinement of prisoners apprehended by the watch and by parish constables. When the new police began their duties they were only given that part of the building which had been used for the confinement of prisoners, a large room on the ground floor. After hearing the complaints of the Superintendent concerning this arrangement the Watch Committee compiled a report to the corporation in an effort to secure all, or a greater part of, the hall for use by the borough police. The working conditions under which the police had to operate were far from satisfactory and the superintendent was not exaggerating when he stated that if the police were not given more space and improved facilities they would have to find an alternative station in the Sculcoates area.⁹⁶ The report

⁹⁶ For more information see KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 17 May 1836.

recommended that the police should have use of all the building and warned that if this was not done the Watch Committee would be forced to find another station for the Sculcoates division, thus increasing the police budget. The council requested the Watch Committee to confer personally with the Sculcoates Improvement Commissioners on the subject of obtaining more space at the hall.⁹⁷ The committee based their claim to the building on section 84 of the Municipal Reform Act which stated that all watch houses provided at public expense for the use of the old watchmen should be given to the new police.⁹⁸

However, Sculcoates Public Hall was more than a watch house and the commissioners claimed that they had legally discharged their duties by delivering up to the committee that part of the building which had been used by the old watch. The rest of the building was theirs to use as they wished and the committee had no right to it. The improvement commissioners were probably correct: section 84 did limit the occupancy rights of the new police in any shared building which had been partly used for watching in the past. Therefore a process of negotiation began between the committee and the commissioners to produce an agreement which was acceptable to both sides. By early June an agreement had been reached whereby the police would rent the greater part of the hall at £50 per annum from the commissioners, who would pay for alterations to the building. The negotiation of the agreement did not stop Hull Corporation and Watch Committee from flimsily asserting that despite their claim to all or a greater part of the building a decision had been taken to authorize the agreement in the interests of police efficiency.⁹⁹ Even so, the Council and the committee had been forced to concede defeat; the wording of the legislation left them with no option but to negotiate with the improvement commissioners to obtain greater use of Sculcoates Public Hall. The new Sculcoates station house would accommodate sixteen single men plus an inspector and his family and be equipped with similar facilities to those at Blanket Row.¹⁰⁰ Even after agreement was reached there remained a good deal of animosity on both sides which

⁹⁷ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Cor. Min., 18 May 1836.

⁹⁸ 5 & 6 Wm IV c. 76, s 84.

⁹⁹ For more information see KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 1, 15 Jun. 1836; KHPL, HA 17 Jun. 1836.

¹⁰⁰ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 10 Jun. 1836.

manifested itself once more at the end of July when the commissioners mistakenly accused the police of breaking into the hall when in fact it was workmen who had done so to finish the alterations. The bickering had come to an end by the time the lease was signed on 8 September 1836.¹⁰¹

The deployment of the Hull Police under McManus's instructions is another example of his implementation of Metropolitan Police procedures.¹⁰² The total area patrolled by the Hull Police was about two miles by two miles, sub-divided into fifty-three beats each of which could be walked in about twenty minutes. During the night one constable was assigned to each beat and patrolled for nine hours from 9.00pm until 6.00am. They were regularly checked by two inspectors, two acting inspectors and five sergeants, meaning that out of a force of ninety-four men no fewer than sixty-two were on duty during the hours of darkness. Interestingly, this figure compares well with the highest number of night-watchmen on duty at any one time: sixty-three during the summer months.¹⁰³ Those who opposed the new police nationally were generally able to argue that wherever it operated the new system not only cost more but actually resulted in fewer men patrolling at night. However in Hull that clearly was not the case. McManus may have deliberately deployed his men in such a way so as to silence critics on this point. Yet it is more likely that he was simply following standard Metropolitan Police practice in deploying two-thirds of the force at night for a period of nine hours.¹⁰⁴ This was the procedure which had been instilled into him and one can understand that he would be very unlikely to depart from it. Meanwhile, the day duty in the borough was done by the remaining third of the men who were divided into two parties, or sections, of fifteen men each. The first section came on duty at 6.00am and was replaced by the second section at

¹⁰¹ For more information see KHRO, ICS 12, Sculcoates Imp. Com., Minute Book, 3 Aug., 8 Sep. 1836; ICS 417, Memoranda regarding Sculcoates Public Hall; ICS 416-31, 433-35, Sculcoates Imp. Com., Letters and papers from the Watch Committee regarding the use of Sculcoates Public Hall; TCM 1, Hull Cor. Min., 17 Aug. 1836.

¹⁰² The system in use in 1840 is known because the Town Clerk of Bath wrote to the Town Clerk of Hull requesting information regarding the policing of Hull and a copy of the reply has survived. See KHRO, TCW 12, Questionnaire from the Town Clerk of Bath relating to the strength etc. of the Hull Police, 1840. There is no evidence to suggest that the system in use had changed between 1836 and 1840.

¹⁰³ It should be remembered that most of the time the three night-watches worked a shift system, so all 102 men were never on duty at the same time. During the winter months only half the watchmen were on duty at any one time.

¹⁰⁴ For more on the organization of the Metropolitan Police in the 1830s see Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 301.

8.00am. The second section stayed on duty until 2.00pm when it was replaced by the first, which worked until 9.00pm; but at 5.00pm the first section was joined by the second which also worked until 9.00pm. The next day the first and second sections swapped around so that the men did nine hours duty one day and ten the next.

It should be apparent by now that the Hull Police was far more efficient in its organization than most borough forces. One of the manifestations of this efficiency, which also encouraged policemen to see their job as providing bonuses which other forms of employment did not offer, was the creation of three special funds for the benefit of the men. The first of these, a superannuation fund, was started when the force came into being and by October 1836 amounted to almost £100.¹⁰⁵ It was clearly intended to reward long service by providing policemen with some security in their retirement. Very few police forces had such a fund at this time and given that it was such an unusual feature it is not surprising that the Watch Committee was uncertain, for some years to come, as to how it should be administered - although in 1836 it decided that in the event of the death of any policeman the sum of £3 would be paid out of the fund towards his funeral expenses. At least the committee can be commended for having the good sense to establish a superannuation fund in the first place. The medical fund was also established at the same time as the police force itself and it enabled medical aid to be given to any member of the force. The police surgeon, who was appointed annually by the Watch Committee between 1836 and 1875 (when a permanent appointment was made), had the task of examining prospective candidates for positions in the police and also serving policemen being considered for leave due to sickness or injury. Many of the appointees retained the office for several years. The third fund, the fines fund, was created shortly after the police came into existence. As its name suggests it was comprised of the small fines which were imposed on policemen who transgressed the rules and regulations. Any policemen who acted diligently or bravely in solving a crime, preventing one from taking place, or saving a life, frequently received a small reward - usually a few shillings - from the fines fund. This supplemented the rewards that the men received from private individuals and businesses with the approval of the Watch Committee.

¹⁰⁵ For more details on the superannuation fund see Chapter 4.

As well as undertaking routine duties on their beats and in their sections Hull policemen were also required to: give evidence at petty and quarter sessions, sometimes giving evidence at sessions in other towns and cities; escort prisoners to houses of correction and prisons, occasionally over great distances, and police public events and celebrations such as elections, feasts and fairs. However, the operational priorities of the Hull Police were apparent from their inception and they were to: prevent robberies and burglaries at night or apprehend those persons responsible for the crimes which were committed; act against drunken and disorderly behaviour on the streets and enforce the licensing laws; combat street thefts and robberies, especially those committed by gangs of juveniles; contain and reverse the rising wave of prostitution; apprehend any vagrants and mendicants, and break up any brawls or street fights. Ultimately the success of the police would be judged by how well it responded to these challenges. It can be argued that the task the police had been set was to generally make the streets of Hull safe for the 'respectable' members of its citizenry. The middle class of Hull frequently complained of drunkenness and lawlessness in the town although there is no evidence to suggest that their incidence in Hull was any worse than most large towns.¹⁰⁶ Certainly the Watch Committee's report to the council in October 1836 is evidence of its satisfaction at the way the police were performing. The report began by reiterating that the committee had been able to establish an efficient day and night police for a sum which was £1,000 less than the original figure of £7,003 quoted in February. Whilst the committee admitted that it had 'found it necessary to remove from the force several of the Men first engaged, many of them had entered it [the force] with erroneous notions of the duties which would be required of them', it was quick to point out 'no difficulty is however experienced in supplying their places with more efficient men.' The report also noted that Superintendent McManus's suggestion to quarter some of the men at the two station houses had been both financially and organizationally astute, yielding enough money to pay the rent on the buildings and providing a force of men to help in the event of fire (which had already happened on at least one occasion when forty-six policemen and the superintendent helped to fight a fire in Wincolmllee). Although the committee acknowledged that the absence of by-laws at present hampered police effectiveness because

¹⁰⁶ For a summary of crime in Hull in this era see Chapter 4.

policemen could not 'prevent some nuisances and undesirable behaviour', it was adamant that the Hull Police had significantly contributed to the fight against crime:

It was truly stated in the Report of the Local Acts Committee, that Thieves made this town a place of refuge from their pursuers; experience must now convince them that it no longer affords the same means of escape from Justice; many Thieves from other places have been taken in Hull, several of the Police are bound over to appear on Trials in London, Leeds, Sheffield, York, Beverley and other places, whilst on the other hand no criminal has escaped for crimes committed within this Borough[...]

The Magistrates have already borne testimony to the efficiency of the Police: during Hull Fair, not a single Robbery was committed. This unprecedented circumstance fully evinces the activity and intelligence [*sic*] of the Superintendent and the general good conduct and zeal, of the Officers and Men under his command.¹⁰⁷

Recognizing the crucial role that Andrew McManus had played, the report recommended that the council should present him with £25 and in recognition of 'his extraordinary services in the formation of the Police' raise his salary to £200 per annum. Although McManus had already been publicly praised by the Mayor in May for his competence, his attention to detail and his efficiency,¹⁰⁸ and had many admirers in council, there were other council members who felt that raising his salary forthwith would be a 'betrayal of the principles of retrenchment and reform that had been their election pledges.' Accordingly, the council voted to present McManus with £25 immediately and discuss the raising of his salary again at the end of his first year of office.¹⁰⁹ The assembled aldermen and councillors heard a report describing how the police had acquitted themselves over the previous five months: they had saved six lives, extinguished ten fires, arrested 931 people and found 104 houses open.¹¹⁰ A few days later on 27

¹⁰⁷ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 18 Oct. 1836.

¹⁰⁸ See KHPL, HA 20 May 1836.

¹⁰⁹ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Corp. Min., 19 Oct. 1836; KHPL, HA 21 Oct. 1836.

¹¹⁰ KHPL, HA 21 Oct. 1836.

October at the Town Hall, the Mayor in the presence of the Watch Committee, addressed the police force, expressing his approval at its efficiency and conduct. He told the policemen that he had even heard a political opponent, a Tory merchant, praise the police.¹¹¹ The members of Hull Corporation were well pleased with the performance of their new borough police force but can one be satisfied with their judgement alone? Of course the answer is no but how does one try to gauge public responses to the police?

An illuminating way to do this for the year 1836 is to study some of the recorded complaints which were made against the force. For example, between May 1836 and the end of that year opposition to, and criticism of, the actions of the Hull Police manifested itself in seven recorded complaints about policemen's behaviour. Six of these were investigated by the Watch Committee but the seventh complaint was dealt with by the magistrates because it resulted in a case of assault being brought against a police sergeant (which is outlined below). Of the six complaints investigated by the Watch Committee three were rejected, two were upheld and in one case the committee placed equal blame on the complainant and the policeman involved, who was cautioned for taking a man into custody improperly. From the perspective of natural justice it would not be ideal for the Watch Committee to adjudicate on complaints made against the policemen it commanded, even though there is no evidence that it dealt with any of these in a partial way. Nevertheless, a suspicion must remain that it may not have been as punitive towards the said policemen as their behaviour warranted. In this era, however, there was no legal framework governing the investigation of complaints against the police so it would have been quite usual for any watch committee to investigate complaints made against its own men. Most of the complaints alleged that the policemen had exceeded their authority, acted improperly, used excessive force or been rude and discourteous. The following are an example of the complaints which were investigated by the Watch Committee. A Mr Dinsdale (possibly the public lecturer mentioned above) charged Sergeant Dickenson with being rude and uncivil towards him and PC Edgecombe with having sent Dickenson to his house for the purpose of annoying him. A Mr Bennett, a foreman, witnessed the incident and said that the

¹¹¹ KHPL, HA 28 Oct. 1836.

conduct of the policemen had been correct. Therefore the Watch Committee unanimously exonerated Dickenson and Edgecombe, concluding that Dinsdale's charge could not be substantiated.¹¹² A Mr Fenwick, a bailiff, reported PC Doran for interrupting him in the execution of his duty. The Watch Committee heard from Doran that he acted to clear an obstruction in the street at the time and concluded that he was doing his duty properly.¹¹³

One of the complaints which was upheld in 1836 involved PC John Osbourne, who was reported by a Mr Tate for entering his house without proper authority. Although the Watch Committee fined Osbourne one day's pay, Tate was not satisfied with this, arguing that the policeman's action had 'injured his character'. After some deliberation the committee decided that Tate could not prove that his character had been damaged and the members refused to discipline Osbourne further.¹¹⁴ The most serious case of police misconduct in 1836, involving PC William Frennieu, only came to light while a husband and wife were being tried at the Police Court for being drunk and disorderly. Frennieu was on duty patrolling when a woman who was being verbally abused by another female called on him to intervene. The second woman, Rebecca Staveley, who was drunk, was insulting the first through the window of her home, which was situated in a passage near Mytongate. After spending some time trying to placate her, Frennieu entered the house and apprehended her. At this stage Rebecca's husband James, who was also drunk, came up and tried to prevent his wife from being arrested but another constable appeared to assist Frennieu in taking them both to the station. The Mayor, John Parker, who was acting as a magistrate, said that Frennieu had no business going into the Staveleys' home; he had exceeded his authority and therefore the prisoners were discharged. Consequently the Watch Committee investigated the incident and dismissed PC Frennieu for apprehending the woman improperly and taking her to the station in an unfit state.¹¹⁵

¹¹² KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 28 Sep. 1836.

¹¹³ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 10 Nov. 1836.

¹¹⁴ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 31 May 1836. Osbourne was dismissed two weeks later for drunkenness.

¹¹⁵ For more information see KHPL, HA 24 Jun. 1836.

It has already been stated that one policeman was charged with assaulting a cab driver and tried before the magistrates.¹¹⁶ This case merits some attention since it illustrates how actions by the police to control established customs and practices could bring them into conflict with the local community. John Harrison,¹¹⁷ the driver of a fly, charged Sergeant Wilson with assaulting him on the evening of Sunday 5 June at about midnight. Harrison said he had been driving down Dock Street with two passengers when Sgt Wilson stopped him to find out who was in his cab. The cab driver told the policeman to 'go to the devil' and drove on. A little later, after he had dropped his fare, he saw Wilson again and asked him for his number, whereupon the Sergeant allegedly struck him twice. Cross-examined by Superintendent McManus, Harrison said he was sober and driving steadily at the time and one witness corroborated Harrison's testimony. In his defence Wilson said that the police had received orders that evening to be on the lookout for absent soldiers because the local regiment was leaving next morning. On seeing a cab being driven furiously late at night he stopped it to ascertain who was inside. Harrison, the cab driver, used extremely vulgar language and drove on. On returning to Dock Street after making a report to his inspector, the cab driver returned and demanded to know his number even though it could be plainly seen on the collar of his greatcoat. Harrison twice put his hand up to Wilson's collar and the Sergeant told him to stand off before shoving him away. Two witnesses, one of whom was a dock watchmen, corroborated part of Wilson's testimony. One of the presiding magistrates, Boswell Jalland, opined that Sergeant Wilson should have given his number when asked but Harrison was not justified in grabbing his collar. The other magistrate, a Mr Bourne, thought that in the circumstances the policeman was justified in stopping the cab to check who was inside. Accordingly they dismissed the case against Wilson and then McManus publicly warned Harrison 'that in future carriages would very often be subject to inspection if driven at untimely hours.'¹¹⁸ In a situation such as this where new police procedures clashed with

¹¹⁶ KHPL, HA 10 Jun. 1836.

¹¹⁷ It may have been the same John Harrison who two weeks later was fined £1 with costs for assaulting Sergeant Boltwood in Wincolmlee and in default committed for one month. See HA 24 Jun. 1836.

¹¹⁸ KHPL, HA 10 Jun. 1836.

established custom and practice, conflict - or at least animosity - was bound to ensue. A working man such as Harrison would feel that his ability to work without interference was being challenged whilst the police would regard such activity at night, if noisy, as a nuisance to be controlled.

THE CONTROL AND OPERATION OF THE HULL POLICE PART I, 1836 TO 1866

The Watch Committee

It has already been stated how Hull's Watch Committee formulated a set of priority functions for its new borough police force. However, it would be beneficial to reiterate them before the analysis concentrates on the Watch Committee's control of the force. The functions dictated that the Hull Police would essentially have a twofold role: first it would patrol the town suppressing minor disorders, functioning as a visible presence on the streets to prevent crime and, second, it would investigate those crimes which had been committed and arrest the persons responsible for them. As far as the members of the Watch Committee were concerned they had set the police force a task to perform, one which should be done diligently and obediently. To fulfil its priority functions the Hull Police was expected to: control drunken and disorderly behaviour and enforce the licensing laws; subdue any minor disturbances such as brawls and street fights; prevent thefts, robberies and burglaries from occurring; apprehend those suspected of committing crimes; act against vagrancy and 'aggressive begging'; restrain prostitution, and repress juvenile crime in general. As part of their routine duties Hull policemen would patrol their beats, preserve order, fight fires, and perform other miscellaneous tasks. These would include giving evidence in court, escorting prisoners and supervising a variety of public events such as elections, feasts, horse-racing meetings (in Beverley), fairs, circus performances, theatre and variety shows and fetes. Policemen on duty in the town centre during the day might have extra tasks given to them because of their dealings with the public. Thus, the police had been given the task of securing the safety of the streets. Metaphorically this 'thin blue line' was the

nineteenth century equivalent of the town's medieval city walls,¹ although the policemen were a two-way barrier who were expected to defend the 'respectable' citizens of Hull from the enemy within as much as from the enemy without. The new police was a new form of town fortification - a mobile fortification in human form - for a modern, urban, industrialized society. In the final analysis, Hull's Watch Committee and the town's plutocracy would evaluate the police according to how effectively it responded to the tasks outlined above. The bourgeoisie of Hull, like the bourgeoisie of many other towns and cities, were alarmed by the condition of their streets, by the drunkenness and lawlessness which they believed was endemic to them and which they wanted arrested. There is no reason to believe, however, that these social problems were any greater in Hull than in other expanding urban areas.

Although the Hull Police was under the day to day command of Superintendent McManus the corporation's Watch Committee legally had ultimate control of the force. Of course this applied to all English borough police forces and in the British Isles the English borough police were anomalous among police forces in terms of their operation. For example, the highly centralized London and Irish police forces were under the control of professional policemen and the English county forces were led by Chief Constables who had a great deal of legally enshrined power. Yet the borough Head Constable (his correct title) was in reality a minion of plutocratic, municipal politics. He was a servant of his middle class employers, the borough watch committee, which recruited, disciplined and organized his men as it saw fit. Far from being separate from the local government system the borough police were intrinsic to it.² This issue merits more explanation, for its importance can easily be underestimated. In the

¹ Ironically, the last vestiges of which were demolished to make way for Hull's first three docks, those signs of commercial progress in a nascent industrial economy.

² Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 532. See also Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The formation of English provincial police forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 41-47.

boroughs, particularly those which were not large cities, it was quite normal for the head or chief constable to be considered as socially inferior to the members of the watch committee, who tended to view him as their servant. McManus probably found himself in this situation despite his former rank in the Metropolitan Police. Redlich and Hurst, two analysts of English local government writing at the turn of the twentieth century, could state that 'as a matter of law and constitution the [borough] Chief Constable's authority is very nearly the same as that of every other municipal official -that is to say, he has to act on the instructions of his committee.'³ The relative powerlessness, de facto, of the borough head constable is emphasized by Steedman:

The head constable of a borough was in a quite different statutory and bureaucratic position from that of a county chief constable: he was only the senior officer of a body of men that the watch committee of the town council had absolute power to select, direct and dismiss. The county chief constable, on the other hand, possessed these powers in law.⁴

In spite of all the watch committee's power its legal position was peculiar. It had a statutory existence but being merely a committee of a municipal corporation it was not therefore incorporated and could not be sued.⁵ The legally enshrined subservience of a borough chief constable to his watch committee leads Steedman to conclude that municipal police chiefs could only hope to aspire to the position of a trusted factotum or major-domo:

³ Quoted in Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1991), p. 85.

⁴ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 43.

⁵ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 43.

in larger towns, head constables came to be seen as faithful head servants to whom certain powers could be delegated, and who had specialized knowledge about the business of social control and discipline - choosing constables, for example. But there was not in the boroughs the social identification that was to be found between a county chief constable and the county magistrates. The county chief constable occupied a social position and an area of social assumption in common with the members of the court of quarter sessions. The head constable of the mid-Victorian borough identified himself with his masters (or might find strength in opposing such identification). Nothing attached to the office in itself. The borough head constable was part of a system of local government.⁶

Whilst not disputing the general observations which Steedman is making, this study aims to show that Hull's Watch Committee allowed its Chief Constable considerable autonomy, making him clearly responsible for the day to day operation of the police force, its organization and deployment. For example, although the Watch Committee made the final decision concerning the hiring and firing of men it is clear from the minutes that it gave considerable weight to the views of McManus. McManus advised how many extra constables were needed at different times and more often than not the committee accepted his advice. The committee had to have a high degree of faith in its chief officer to do this, for the size of the force would directly affect the cost of policing, policemen's wages being the largest single item in the police budget. Moreover, this study also attempts to show that the Watch Committee did not regard its policemen as mere hands, lackeys or dogsbodies. The Watch Committee came to accept very quickly the idea that the Hull policeman should be a professional made in the image of his Metropolitan counterpart. Thus, while Hull policemen were expected to perform duties other than police work, such as fire-fighting, these extra responsibilities were generally kept to a minimum. The members of the Watch Committee

⁶ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 46-47.

certainly saw themselves as employers, but the employers of professional policemen, not manservants.⁷ What is not in dispute is the fact that Hull's Watch Committee, in common with watch committees elsewhere, enjoyed a good deal of financial sovereignty from the rest of the corporation, it being a convention of municipal government that the work of this committee should not be rigorously scrutinized by the plenary town council. Again, by convention newspapers did not report the discussions of watch committees simply because they usually met in camera.⁸

Hull's Watch Committee of fifteen members was selected annually, usually in November, from among the councillors and aldermen of the corporation. It seems that the membership was fixed at fifteen in 1836 so that there would be two members from each of the seven council wards plus a chairman; but although the total remained fixed in subsequent years the proportionality rule seems to have been relaxed. The committee generally met weekly to transact business but it organized itself into a sub-committee of three, with a rotating membership, which met between the normal weekly meetings to deal with any matters which arose. The composition of the sub-committee changed on a quarterly basis and it dealt with a variety of business both urgent and non-urgent. However important decisions were usually taken by the full Watch Committee. In 1846 a motion moved in council by a Mr Atkinson to reduce the Watch Committee to eleven members was defeated.⁹ Undoubtedly one of the great strengths of Hull's Watch Committee was its continuity of membership and long-serving chairmen. From February 1836 until November 1866 a total of ninety-five councillors and aldermen served on the Watch Committee for

⁷ This contrast with the way other watch committees regarded their policemen, likening them to factory hands or household servants. See Steedman, *Policing*, p. 114-15.

⁸ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 45.

⁹ KHRO, TCM 3, Hull Corporation Minutes, 9 Nov. 1846.

periods ranging from one year to eighteen years.¹⁰ The longest-serving member, Thomas Abbey, was still a member of the committee, and its chair, in 1866 when this study terminates. Another two members had been on the committee for at least fifteen years and eight more for at least ten years. A further thirty-three had accumulated between five and nine years of membership (see Tables 3.1a-b below). This longevity of membership was not unusual. For example, in Cambridge and Sheffield between 1850 and 1880, long-serving members of the watch committees notched up seventeen and twenty-seven years respectively.¹¹ During the period 1836 to 1866 the Hull Watch Committee was chaired by only seven individuals, including two between February and November 1836.¹² It was rare for the chairs of the Watch Committee to be confronted with personal criticism, and even rarer for them to be criticized in public. Generally they do appear to have enjoyed a high level of public confidence. One of the chairs, William Stephenson, was criticized in September 1836 but the origins and instigators of the criticism remain unknown. Although the other members of the committee gave him their support and urged him to remain in place, which he did until November, he left the committee at this time. It is not known whether this was his own wish.¹³

The Watch Committee jealously and zealously guarded its legally enshrined responsibility for policing from the rest of the corporation, which occasionally tried to encroach into this area (although in general the corporation was content to leave police matters to the committee). A good example of this occurred in 1856 when Parliament was considering the County and Borough Police Bill.

¹⁰ The membership of the first Watch Committee, although it lasted from only February to November 1836, has been counted as one municipal year. Where individuals were members of the committee for less than twelve months this has been rounded up to a full year.

¹¹ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 43.

¹² The two chairs from February to November 1836 were William Woolley (who resigned as a councillor to become Clerk of the Hull Borough Sessions) and William Stephenson. The other chairs, with the dates of their chairmanship, are as follows: John Atkinson 1836 to 1842, William Bettison 1842 to 1846, Herbert Seaton 1846-47, Robert Bean 1847 to 1855, and Thomas Abbey from 1855 onwards. KHRO, TCM 188-197, Watch Committee Minutes, Feb 1836-Nov. 1866.

¹³ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 22 Sep. 1836.

By its actions the Watch Committee delivered a stern rebuke to the corporation for what it regarded as a blatant interference in its affairs:

The Heads of the proposed County and Borough Police Bill having been read and discussed and a conversation having ensued as to the interference by the Town Council with the duties of this Committee in appointing a Deputation to watch the Progress of the Bill during its stages and great surprise having been expressed at such an exceptional interference with the function of this Committee and which if allowed to pass unnoticed by this Committee might be hereafter construed to its prejudice in the management and regulation of the Police force for this Borough, Resolved That in order to preserve the rights and independence of this Committee a Deputation[...]are hereby authorized to proceed to [London] to watch the progress of the said Bill and to report the result to this Committee independently of any instructions from the Town Council.¹⁴

Table 3.1a *Length of Membership of the Watch Committee and Number of Members 1836-1866*

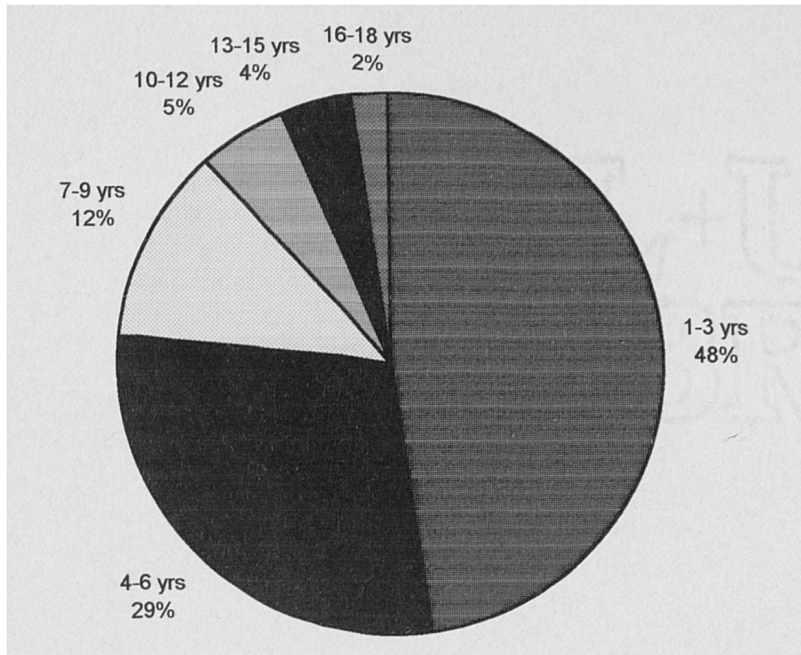
Years of Service*	Number of Members
1-3 yrs	45
4-6 yrs	27
7-9 yrs	11
10-12 yrs	5
13-15 yrs	4
16-18 yrs	2
Total	94

* All service of less than twelve months has been rounded up to one year

Source: KHRO, TCM 188-197, Feb. 1836-Nov. 1866

¹⁴ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 8 Feb. 1856. Emphasis included in original. The Hull Watch Committee, in common with many other watch committees, actively opposed the passage of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act but ultimately had to accept the greater role which it assigned to the state. See for example KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 18, 25 Feb., 12 Mar. 1856.

Table 3.1b Length of Membership of the Watch Committee and Percentage of Members 1836-1866



After 1856 however, the corporation made repeated, and successful, efforts to obtain more information from the Watch Committee and this undoubtedly enabled the former to have a greater involvement in policing issues than ever before. The events of the Blanket Row Fire in 1857, when the conduct of the police was questioned but ultimately vindicated, may have prompted certain members of the council to call for its greater involvement in policing issues. For example, in 1857 a Mr Atkinson (probably the same person who tried to obtain a reduction in the size of the committee in 1846) proposed a motion that the Watch Committee should 'be requested to report in future their proceedings as well as their money orders' and it was carried.¹⁵ The Watch Committee's control of information was vital to its control of the police force so not surprisingly when it discussed the effect of the corporation's resolution in November 1857 the committee again demonstrated a determination to remain supreme in such matters. It resolved that the

¹⁵ KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Corp. Min., 29 Oct. 1857.

corporation should not be made aware of the full proceedings of its meetings. Instead they would be edited, or 'determined', as the committee put it, before presentation to the corporation. The council would receive reports on a regular basis but they would not include matters of discipline.¹⁶

Members of the committee were certainly not unanimous on this issue of accessibility to its proceedings and some were desirous of making its business rather more open. They tried to achieve this again in January 1859 by proposing the admission of journalists to its meetings but were defeated by eight votes to six.¹⁷ Following the passage of the Atkinson resolution of October 1857 concerning the reporting of Watch Committee business, the committee presented a printed report to the next council meeting in January 1858. This was its first paper report to the council for many years and provided information on the last increase in police numbers (made to ensure the receipt of the government grant) and the deployment of one man at the Jarratt Street station. The council received the report but passed an amendment instructing the Watch Committee to station a sufficient number of men at Jarratt Street for police purposes.¹⁸ Having a more detailed printed report to digest may have enabled the members of council to challenge the committee on this last matter. Hereafter, the Watch Committee regularly presented printed reports to the council and they were later bound together in volumes separate from the council minutes.¹⁹ It was noted above that the Watch Committee took a decision to exclude the disciplinary cases from its printed reports to the council. However, these reports excluded more than merely the disciplinary cases. One can only speculate why certain information was excluded but it appears that which was information likely to be financially sensitive was also omitted. For example, details of superannuation for long service were

¹⁶ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 11, 18 Nov. 1857.

¹⁷ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 19 Jan. 1859.

¹⁸ KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Corp. Min., 14 Jan. 1858.

¹⁹ The printed reports of the Watch Committee from 1857-66 are available; see KHRO, *Minutes Hull Town Council*, vols 11-16 [n.ref.].

omitted and any spending by the committee which might be opposed by members of the corporation on the grounds of economy.²⁰

It is likely that one important reason for the Watch Committee's successful control of the Hull Police in the years 1836 to 1866 was its generally good working relationship with the borough magistrates and their eventual successor, the Stipendiary Magistrate. This may have been a direct result of having a link with the magistrates via the committee's membership. When membership of the Watch Committee is collated with the composition of the borough magistracy, an interesting pattern is evident for part of the period. From February 1836 to November 1837 the Watch Committee included at least one active magistrate and for part of the period there were two.²¹ From November 1837 until March 1841 it appears that no member of the Watch Committee was an active magistrate, at which point T. W. Palmer joined the magistracy. A member of the Watch Committee since November 1840, he remained on it until November 1847, to be joined by another magistrate, John Egginton, for one year, between 1844 and 1845.²² When Palmer retired from the Watch Committee it is interesting to note that another of its

²⁰ An example of this occurred in March 1862 when the Watch Committee received a letter which was copied into the manuscript minutes but excluded from the printed report to the council; nor was there any reference to its subject matter in the report. The letter was from a Mr Stead who proposed a plan to install an electric telegraph connecting the police station with the waterworks at Stone Ferry in order to facilitate better communication between the two in the event of fires (when the water pressure could be increased accordingly). Such a measure was eventually implemented but whilst it was still under consideration by the Watch Committee, there was perhaps a good reason, on financial grounds, for not divulging the details until a case in favour had been prepared. The issue of purchasing telegraphic apparatus was not mentioned in the printed minutes until May 1862, when the committee unanimously recommended that such apparatus should be purchased and connected at a cost not exceeding £130. See KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 26 Mar, 28 May 1862.

²¹ They were Boswell Jalland, who served from February to November 1836 and George Cookman, who was a member of the committee from February 1836 until November 1837. KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., Feb. 1836-Nov. 1837; PRO, Chancery and Lord Chancellor's Office, C234/103, 1837-1923 English and Welsh Boroughs I-L, return dated 14 Dec. 1837; PRO, Home Office, HO 90/1, return dated 27 Oct. 1841.

²² Edward Gibson was on the Watch Committee from 1839 to 1844 and he was listed as a appointed magistrate in 1841 but he had never qualified and so did not act in that capacity. Indeed, he was struck off the list of magistrates at his own request in May 1850. KHRO, TCM 188-190, Watch Com. Min., Nov. 1837-Nov. 1847; PRO, HO 90/1,

members, John Gresham - who served from 1846 to 1849 - was appointed to the magistracy almost immediately.²³ Gresham's departure from the committee brought in Thomas Thompson, who had been an active magistrate for eight years when he joined the Watch Committee in 1849, continuing as a member until 1851.²⁴ Thus it is clear that an active magistrate served on the Watch Committee practically continuously from 1841 to 1851 and when one left the committee in 1847 and 1849 a replacement was found. There is no written evidence that this continual representation from 1836-37 and 1841 to 1851 was deliberate Watch Committee policy but the timing of the membership changes is certainly noteworthy. After 1851 there is a striking change to this representation, with no Watch Committee member definitely acting as a magistrate until Anthony Bannister was appointed to the magistracy in July 1866.²⁵ There may be a very good reason why the Watch Committee chose not to continue the practice of representing the magistracy after 1851. In 1854 the Corporation petitioned for and was granted the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate who assumed the most important day-to-day responsibilities of the borough magistrates. Therefore after this date the Watch Committee would derive little benefit from having a borough magistrate as one of its members. Whilst it cannot be confirmed that the committee was pursuing a deliberate policy between 1841 and 1851 the consistency of the practice is striking. One can argue that it brought two (technically) separate institutions of the law and order system into an intertwined relationship which was not fitting and ethical from a democratic perspective. Yet it may have produced considerable

return dated 25 Oct. 1841; PRO, Chan. & Lord Chan. Off., C234/103, 1837-1923 English and Welsh Boroughs I-L, returns dated 20 Mar., 25 Nov. 1841, May 1850.

²³ Gresham had previously been a member for one year from 1837-38. KHRO, TCM 188-190, Watch Com. Min., Nov. 1847-Nov. 1849; PRO, Chan. & Lord Chan. Off., C234/103, 1837-1923 English and Welsh Boroughs I-L, return dated 14 Dec. 1847.

²⁴ KHRO, TCM 190-91, Watch Com. Min., Nov. 1849-Nov. 1851; PRO, HO90/1, return dated 25 Oct. 1841; PRO, Chan. & Lord Chan. Off., C234/103, 1837-1923 English and Welsh Boroughs I-L, return dated 20 Mar. 1841.

²⁵ Bannister was the third longest serving member of the committee up to 1866, with fifteen years service (not continuous). KHRO, TCM 191-97, Watch Com. Min., Nov 1851-Jul. 1866; PRO, Chan. & Lord Chan. Off., C234/103, 1837-1923 English and Welsh Boroughs I-L, return dated 18 Jul. 1866. Although in 1863 the Watch Committee minutes state that another member (from 1862 to 1865), Martin Samuelson, was a borough magistrate, the evidence from the PRO does not include his name and nor does [n.auth.] *C. N. Wright's Commercial Directory of Kingston upon Hull* ([n.p., n.pub.] 1863), p. 363.

benefits as regards the Watch Committee's relationship with the magistracy and the co-ordination of police and judicial activity.

The functioning of the magistrates' bench in Hull in the first half of the nineteenth century was periodically frustrated by the shortage of suitable candidates for the post of justice of the peace. Hull's bench was not unusual in this respect as many expanding commercial or industrial towns in the north of England suffered from this problem in an age of rapid industrialization and urbanization.²⁶ An indication of this problem appeared in 1840 when the clerk to the magistrates wrote to the council to inform it of the desirability of increasing the number of acting magistrates.²⁷ The council investigated the matter, discovering that for various reasons only ten of the eighteen men named on the Commission of the Peace for 1837 could be relied upon as active magistrates. Given that daily petty sessions were held in Hull which necessitated the presence of two or more justices, sometimes for several hours, having just ten active magistrates was too small a number to carry on the business of the sessions without their own private affairs being seriously neglected. The council decided that it would petition the crown requesting the appointment of ten more magistrates for the town.²⁸ The very same problem recurred again in 1850 when the council passed a motion opining that the present number of 'acting magistrates in this Borough is not adequate to transacting the business brought before them.'²⁹ Four years later it would appear that the problem still persisted because the council adopted a permanent and far-sighted solution by voting to appoint a stipendiary police magistrate on a salary of £800 per annum.³⁰ His salary would be paid

²⁶ For a brief summary of this problem see Clive Emsley, 'The English Magistracy 1700-1850', *International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice Bulletin*, 15 (1992), 28-38, passim.

²⁷ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Corp. Min., 9 Nov. 1840.

²⁸ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Corp. Min., 18 Nov. 1840.

²⁹ KHRO, TCM 4, Hull Corp. Min., 7 Mar. 1850.

³⁰ KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Corp. Min., 20 Jul. 1854.

quarterly from the borough fund.³¹ The Watch Committee generally enjoyed good working relations with the stipendiary magistrate, Mr T. H. Travers, who regularly attended the annual reviews of the Hull Police at the invitation of the Watch Committee and spoke on these occasions. There was only one incident, in 1863, when the Watch Committee expressed stern criticism of his actions. The disagreement arose when the Watch Committee discovered that Travers had sworn in 350 special constables on his own authority, without consulting the other magistrates when there were no circumstances involving the efficiency of the police or the state of the borough which warranted such action.³²

The Watch Committee itself was not above criticism and there were a few occasions when its conduct was subjected to close public scrutiny. The most serious of these was during and immediately after the Police Strike of 1853 (see Chapter 4). A trivial but illuminating accusation, revealing the petty conflicts of borough politics, which could escalate out of all proportion to their importance, was made by Thomas Newmarch (ironically a magistrate) in 1850. The saga begins in March 1845 when the Watch Committee resolved to establish a police library specifically for the borough policemen, who would each contribute a penny a week from their wages to a fund which would be used to purchase books. This decision can be seen as evidence of the committee's desire to foster 'rational recreation' among its own policemen and of its paternalistic attitude towards its employees. A sub-committee of three was appointed to carry the resolution into effect and within a few weeks donations totalling £8 3s. had been made by the Mayor, four members of the committee and some other individuals.³³ Between March 1845 and August 1850 about £125 was spent on books from a total of £151 9s. 6d. collected in subscriptions and donations (the remaining money was banked) and the library had some 660 volumes. In August 1850 Newmarch

³¹ KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Corp. Min., 3 Aug. 1854.

³² For more information see KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 4, 5 Nov. 1863.

³³ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 5 Mar., 2 Apr. 1845.

alleged publicly that the contents of the police library were worth no more than £5. Following a visit to the library he revised this estimate to no more than £20. Newmarch continued to make his allegation and the chairman of the Watch Committee responded by asking the Mayor and magistrates to value the books, which they agreed to do.³⁴ Newmarch's refusal to abandon the issue and admit that in all likelihood his assessment of the library's value was wrong given the number of volumes it contained had now turned into something of a farce. His persistent attempts to highlight what he perceived as the Watch Committee's financial incompetence had resulted in the magistrates and the Mayor being dragged into the issue in order to terminate the dispute. The magistrates checked the purchase receipts of the books, confirming that the Watch Committee had spent the sum it claimed, and Newmarch publicly apologized in open court for making a false accusation against the committee.³⁵ The creation of a police library was not the only paternalistic action by the Watch Committee to encourage rational forms of recreation for its men. In September 1861 the committee unanimously resolved that the force should have a band and it created a sub-committee to direct the project.³⁶ A Mr Raynard was engaged as a music teacher for one quarter in the first instance at the rate of £30 per annum, to give two lessons per week for two hours each time. Five days later the band instruments were received from Manchester.³⁷ Nothing more is recorded about the police band until May 1865, when a Mr Sanar applied to the Watch Committee for the cost of repairing the damage that his horse and cart had done to the convent wall, the animal 'having taken fright at the police band, which was playing at the time.' The committee ordered that the necessary repairs should be done.³⁸ In October of that year the Watch Committee consented to the band playing at Hengler's circus.³⁹ That

³⁴ KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 30 Aug., 6 Sep., 1 Nov. 1850.

³⁵ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 30 Oct., 6 Nov. 1850.

³⁶ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 18, 25, 28 Sep., 5, 7 Oct. 1861.

³⁷ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 7, 12 Oct. 1861.

³⁸ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 17 May 1865. Hopefully this was not a reflection of the band's musicianship.

³⁹ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 18 Oct. 1865.

same month the committee was only too pleased to approve the men's request that they be allowed, through Chief Constable McManus, to present a gift of a silver ink stand and gold pen and holder to the band master, Mr Smith, 'as testimony of their appreciation of his valuable services in that capacity.'⁴⁰

Police Organization

The organizational basis of the Hull Police, established at the time of its creation in 1836, remained fundamentally the same for the next thirty years, the date this study ends. A number of relatively minor changes were implemented following the 1853 police strike and these were probably the most important ones made in this period (these are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). However, before the organization of the force is explained it is necessary to refute a claim made by Jenifer Hart that before 1856 part of the borough was unpoliced - a claim that she makes without citing any reference to support her statement.⁴¹ If by 'unpoliced' Hart means not policed by the new borough police (and this is unclear) then in the strictest terms she is correct but misleading. From 1836 to 1844 the borough police did not police the docks but it was not 'unpoliced', that task being performed by the dock company's own private force of constables and watchmen. A similar system had been practised in Liverpool and the Hull Police followed the lead of the force in that city by taking responsibility for the policing of the docks after a few years.⁴² Also the boundaries of the borough were enlarged between 1836 and 1856, with suburbs which were part of the East Riding joining the borough. This may have caused historical confusion regarding

⁴⁰ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 31 Oct. 1865.

⁴¹ Jenifer Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police, 1835-1856', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 411-27, (p. 420).

⁴² For more information on the Hull Police's patrolling of the docks and their relations with the dock company see Chapter 4.

what districts were added and when. The addition of Sculcoates in 1837 is the best example of this growth. These areas may have been unpoliced, or badly policed, before their inclusion but where this was the case it was the fault of the East Riding authorities - not the borough of Hull. No part of Hull was completely unpoliced between 1836 and 1856, or after that date, and from 1844 the new police had sole responsibility for policing all of the borough.

A plan which would have completely reorganized the basic structure of the force was put forward by one of the councillors, John Gresham, in 1838. Even though this plan failed it is worthy of study because the nature of its failure serves to highlight the confidence which the corporation had in its new police force. The issue of the police establishment was briefly discussed at council meetings in October 1837 and January 1838 but the outcome was inconclusive. However this did not prevent Gresham from presenting his plan to the Watch Committee's meeting of 19 February 1838.⁴³ Undeterred by the fact that the Watch Committee resolved - by ten votes to one, with only Gresham voting against - 'That Mr Gresham's scheme for reducing the Police expenditure should not be adopted', he persisted in bringing the issue before the full council, which debated it in June 1838. The crux of Gresham's argument was that his plan would put the police 'establishment on a more economical footing without impairing its efficiency.'⁴⁴ The force then totalled ninety-four men and cost approximately £5,700 per annum (including clothing, police stations and all incidentals).⁴⁵ Gresham proposed that it should be divided into two separate bodies, the day and night police, but under the control of Superintendent McManus. There would be two

⁴³ The details of the plan are not recorded in the Watch Committee minutes for this date but they are to be found in the Hull Corporation minutes for June of that year, when Gresham put his proposals to the full council. See KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jun. 1838. For the early, inconclusive references see TCM 1, 26 Oct. 1837; TCM 2, 3 Jan. 1838.

⁴⁴ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jun. 1838.

⁴⁵ It was comprised of one superintendent, four inspectors, two acting inspectors, one clerk, nine sergeants and seventy-seven constables.

inspectors, two sergeants and a clerk who, together with McManus, would have responsibility for the general superintendence and inspection of the day and night forces. The day police would be comprised of two sergeants at 21s. per week and twenty constables at 18s. per week clothed as at present. The night police would be comprised of five sergeants at 21s. per week and fifty-six constables at 15s. per week who would only be supplied with hats, capes and great coats (every other year). However, ten night constables would be dispensed with from 16 April to 15 September each year, which would bring their annual cost down to £2,364 18s. The cost of the other categories of policemen and miscellaneous expenditure would be as follows: the general police officers, £542 4s.; the day police, £1,177 4s. and contingent expenses on the stations and incidentals, £150. This would give a total cost of £4,234 6s. 0d. The total number of policemen would be eighty-nine, five fewer than at present, but from April to September there would be only a maximum of seventy-nine. Such a reduction in manpower would have clearly increased the workload of the men employed.⁴⁶

Gresham thought that there was no valid objection to dividing the men into different day and night classes, with a wage differential between them. According to his reasoning, the duties of police officers could be divided into two categories: first, the prevention of crime and suppression of disorders at night; second, the detection and apprehension of persons committing offences, which required men of superior abilities and greater activity. Gresham argued 'there can be neither injustice nor inconsistency in offering to the night police a lower rate of wages than the daily force.' Under the present system each policeman was required to give his full attention to police duties but Gresham urged that this rule might be rescinded with regard to the night police. Since they would only be on duty for eight hours from 9.30pm until 5.30am, they could be permitted to work elsewhere when off duty, as 'no disadvantage could ensue from them earning a trifle at any light work during the day.' The day police would be selected from 'the

⁴⁶ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jun. 1838.

most intelligent active, and well conducted men'.⁴⁷ The plan seems to have envisaged dispensing with the services of two inspectors and two acting inspectors, since these officers are not mentioned in the proposal put to the meeting, although Gresham never made this clear. Having only two inspectors under Gresham's plan, one for each sub-division, might compel them to frequently alternate their day and night duties with two sergeants, perhaps every twenty-four hours. Such a change could only harm the quality of leadership given to the force and weaken the links between officers and men. Moreover, whilst any reduction in manpower would result in financial savings, this would be at the expense of the men's health and performance as workload levels increased. Other aspects of the plan suggested how further expenditure cuts could be made if desired, for example by only using the Sculcoates station as a lock-up at night; this would save approximately another £100 per annum. The total amount saved from the Borough Fund if Gresham's plan was implemented in full would be about £1,600 per annum. At present about £1,900 of the total cost of the new police came from the watch rate and £3,800 from the Borough Fund. After presenting his report in council, Gresham moved, and Mr Westerdale seconded, a motion 'That a Select Committee of 5 from this Council be now appointed to investigate the above propositions.' That motion was lost and another in favour of the Watch Committee's report, which rejected the plan, was carried.⁴⁸ Gresham had failed to find any significant support for his proposals and the members of the corporation, by voting for the status quo, had made a powerful statement about their satisfaction with the policing arrangements in Hull. The Gresham plan was never heard of again, nor anything similar to it during the remainder of the period of this study.

Several criticisms can be levelled at Gresham's plan, the most important being the proposal to create separate bodies for day and night police work, with the attendant changes to pay and

⁴⁷ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jun. 1838.

⁴⁸ KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jun. 1838.

conditions of work. If implemented this would have been a retrograde step and one based on a simplistic definition of policing. In the context of police reform in Hull, where a single, full-time Metropolitan-style police force had been functioning successfully for over two years, implementation of the Gresham plan for day and night watches would have been a backward move. In boroughs where there had been no radical reform of policing, Gresham's plan would have been a perfectly acceptable improvement but Hull had already by-passed such a measure. Whilst it was basically correct to state that the police had a twofold role, firstly, crime prevention and suppression of disorders and secondly, detection and apprehension, there was no logical corollary which dictated that policemen did the former by day and the latter by night. Such an argument was flawed and open to serious challenge. Policemen performed these duties continually throughout the day; but if anything the incidence of crime was greater during the hours of darkness, which provided a cloak for nefarious activities. This was when Gresham proposed to put the men of inferior abilities on duty, many of whom would already be exhausted from physical exertion during the day. Therefore Gresham's plan was impractical, archaic and likely to undermine police effectiveness because of the organizational difficulties of maintaining communication links between what would be, de facto, two separate forces. By overwhelmingly rejecting his plan the members of the Watch Committee and the other members of Hull Corporation disavowed the idea of maintaining a borough police force at minimal cost. In their opinion having a police force which was effective was more important than having one which was economical.

A central tenet of this thesis is the argument that the Hull Police was far more efficient in its organization than most borough forces. An important manifestation of this organizational superiority was the creation of three special funds for the benefit of the men in 1836. Here one must praise the managerial sagacity of the members of the first Watch Committee who probably benefited from the wisdom of Superintendent McManus's practical advice. Of the three funds, two in particular were of

tremendous long-term importance to the officers and men of the force. The most noteworthy was the superannuation fund (see Chapter 4) but for the moment attention will focus on the medical and fines funds. The medical (or sick) fund, together with the superannuation fund, was established at the same time as the police force itself and it enabled medical aid to be given to any member of the force. The Police Surgeon, who was appointed annually by the Watch Committee between 1836 and 1875 (when a permanent appointment was made), had the task of examining prospective candidates for positions in the police and providing medical care to policemen who were absent from duty due to sickness or injury. The Watch Committee altered the remuneration of the Police Surgeon in June 1837. He still earned the sum of 1s. per man per day for attending to each sick or injured policemen, the sums involved being deducted from their wages except when they had been hurt on duty; but he no longer received a shilling for examining each candidate for admission.⁴⁹ Many of those appointed as Police Surgeon retained the office for several years between 1836-75. By 1861 the Police Surgeon was earning a salary of £70 per annum.⁵⁰

In March 1866 the Watch Committee received the results of a survey of police surgeon appointments to other police forces. A total of twenty-three other county and borough forces were surveyed, revealing that nine had no medical appointee to administer to sick and injured policemen. The medical provision made by the Hull Police of one police surgeon paid a salary of £70 per annum compared well with the other fourteen forces which also had surgeons attached to them. These other police surgeons generally had the same basic duties as their counterpart in Hull although the full range of all their

⁴⁹ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 2 Mar. 1836; TCM 188, 13 Jun. 1837. Previously the surgeon had been allowed 1s. for each candidate examined according to the committee's resolution of 2 March 1836. Until July 1856 the inspectors were exempt from the rule which required 1s. to be deducted from the pay of men unavailable for duty. See KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 9 Jul. 1856.

⁵⁰ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 18 Dec. 1861.

duties varied somewhat.⁵¹ Unfortunately the survey does not reveal when the other forces first made their appointment so there is no way of knowing whether the borough forces did this as early in their history as the Hull Police (in 1836). The medical fund became a large and useful source of funds relatively quickly due to the practice of deducting a shilling a day from the wages of incapacitated policemen (sergeants and constables only before 1856) who had not been injured on duty. It totalled over £327 in November 1848 and £212 of this sum was invested in the Hull Savings Bank, the rest being held by the corporation.⁵² The money so raised paid the surgeon's salary and after the fines fund was discontinued policemen rewarded for good conduct were paid from the medical fund (although the rewards system seems to have been used far less after the early 1850s). According to modern standards of employment it may appear harsh to deduct pay from unfit policemen, who could lose almost half their weekly wage if off-duty for seven days, but it should be remembered that the majority of workers in this period did not have any source of income when unwell and unable to work. Whilst these poor unfortunates had to somehow find the means to survive at least policemen were guaranteed over 50 per cent of their income until they returned to duty - and no policeman suffered financially if he had been injured in the line of duty. The fines fund was created shortly after the Hull Police came into existence. As its name suggests it was comprised of the fines which were imposed on policemen who transgressed the rules and regulations. However, any policemen who acted diligently or bravely, for example by preventing or solving a crime or saving a life, frequently received a small reward - usually a few shillings - from the fines fund. This supplemented the rewards which the men received from private individuals and businesses, all of which had to be approved by the Watch Committee.⁵³ Rewards and gratuities given to policemen by the Watch Committee from the fines

⁵¹ For more details see KHRO, TCW 28, Watch Committee Papers, Mar. 1866. The nine police forces without a medical appointee included some large and important ones: Bolton, Bradford, Cheshire, Lancashire, Leicester, Portsmouth, Stockport Wolverhampton and North Yorkshire. The Wolverhampton Police reported that it deducted 1.25 per cent from the policemen's pay to provide a sick fund.

⁵² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 8 Nov. 1848.

⁵³ Private rewards and gratuities usually ranged from 2s. to 20s. but occasionally there were some amounting to several pounds. Most rewards and gratuities given by private individuals were as a thank you for recovering stolen

fund (or later the medical fund) were generally smaller than the sums given by private individuals. During the early years of the force, before the superannuation issue was settled in 1848, the Watch Committee used money from the fines fund to make grants to sick or injured policemen who had to retire from the force, or to their widows. Later in the history of the force, probably some time after 1848 (the exact date is unclear), the fines fund disappeared and all monies collected from the policemen as fines for breaches of rules and regulations were credited to the superannuation fund.

In practice one would expect the Hull Police to continually improve as a cadre of long-serving, experienced policemen developed and would be able to offer support and guidance to the new recruits. As long as the size of the force kept pace with the growing population of the town, so that the police to population ratio remained at no more than one policeman per one thousand inhabitants, then there was a strong likelihood that the Hull Police would, over the long term, firmly establish itself as a dedicated, professional and efficient force. The success achieved in creating a core of capable and disciplined policemen was becoming apparent as early as April 1840 when the Watch Committee presented twenty-two men with rewards for good conduct, distributing a total of £23. McManus received £10, three inspectors £1 each, four sergeants 15s. each and fourteen constables 10s. each.⁵⁴ The committee distributed a further £20 10s. to eighteen policemen for good conduct in October 1843. £10 went to McManus, £1 each to two inspectors, 15s. each to four sergeants and 10s. each to eleven constables.⁵⁵ Clear evidence that a cadre of experienced, long-serving and effective policemen was in place came on 20 October 1847 when the Watch Committee resolved that a sum not exceeding £80 should be taken from the sick fund (which then totalled more than £300) and divided amongst the officers and men according to

property or helping someone in need and most were subject to a deduction of 25 per cent. This deduction was paid into the fines fund, then subsequently into the superannuation fund when the former was dispensed with.

⁵⁴ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 1 Apr. 1840.

⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 25 Oct. 1843.

length of service on a scale of 4s. per year for every year of service. Meanwhile, Superintendent McManus was given a gratuity of £10. Eleven years was the maximum that the longest-serving policemen could have served and there were a total of sixteen men, including McManus, who had done so, including all four inspectors, one of the three acting inspectors and six of the ten sergeants. In total, fifty-two men, excluding McManus, received sums ranging from 12s. for three years service up to £2 4s. for eleven years service (see Table 3.2 below). Unfortunately it is not known how many men had completed one or two years service because there was not enough money left out of the £80 to reward them, the total cost of rewarding the fifty-two men amounting to £78 4s.⁵⁶ The fifty-two men who were rewarded in 1847 plus the Superintendent had amassed an impressive 402 years of service in the Hull Police. Their average length of service was over seven years. This is quite remarkable when one notes that it is almost half of the 116 man force. However it should be noted that some Hull Policemen, even some of the long-serving ones, could have extremely tessellated careers which saw them being regularly promoted, demoted, re-promoted, rewarded, fined and, occasionally, dismissed and reinstated (for further information on the careers of individual policemen see Chapter 6).

A desire to encourage long-service was accompanied by an eagerness to give the ordinary constables an incentive to obtain promotion by demonstrating their diligence and skill as policemen. This manifested itself as early as March 1841 when the Watch Committee resolved to change the structure of the constables' section of the force. To increase the efficiency of the force the committee decided to gradually move towards a system of first and second class constables with different levels of pay: 19s. per week for the former and 17s. per week for the latter (subject to the usual deductions for superannuation,

⁵⁶ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 20 Oct., 3 Nov. 1847. In October 1849 the Watch Committee ordered that another £80 from the sick fund should be divided between all the policemen with at least three years service in exactly the same way and McManus was also given another £10. See KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 31 Oct. 1849.

finer for misconduct and so on). However, until these two classes were fully formed another class, called the original class, would exist and would be paid the original wage of 18s. per week. Henceforth new constables would join the second class and the men presently employed would continue in the original class until they were promoted to the first class or demoted, for misconduct, to the second class. Whenever new recruits were appointed to the second class the intention was to promote, on merit, a roughly equivalent number of original constables to the higher class. This process would continue until the original class ceased to exist and there remained only first and second class constables.⁵⁷

Table 3.2 *Hull Policemen With Long Service 1836-1847*

Length of Service	Rank					Number of Policemen
	Superintendent	Inspector	Act. Inspector	Sergeant	Constable	
3 yrs						9
4 yrs						7
5 yrs						1
6 yrs						2
7 yrs				1		3
8 yrs						4
9 yrs					1	5
10 yrs				2	2	4
11 yrs	1	4	1	6	4	16
Totals	1	4	3	10	35	53

Source: KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 20 Oct., 3 Nov. 1847

When the original class disappeared any vacancy in the first class would be filled by the most deserving candidate in the second class. The Watch Committee reserved the right to demote a constable from the first to the second class for any offence which deserved such punishment and replace him with someone else. These new arrangements came into force on 1 May 1841.⁵⁸ Clarke is wrong when

⁵⁷ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 24 Mar. 1841.

⁵⁸ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 24 Mar. 1841.

he states that the original constables had to accept a pay cut after the new system was introduced.⁵⁹ Those men who were not promoted to first class constable when the reform was introduced remained in the original class, earning 18s. per week until they were promoted later, demoted for misconduct or resigned from the force. The Watch Committee realized that the original structure did not give the ordinary constables enough incentive to improve and develop as policemen. Promotion to one of the ten sergeancies would only occur after many years of diligent service and whilst several men might be worthy of promotion only a few would receive it. The new system of first and second class constables would give the ambitious men an opportunity to show their abilities. By October 1843 the original class had all but disappeared, with only three constables left in that class while there were thirty-seven and forty-six in the first and second classes respectively.⁶⁰

Another noteworthy feature of the Hull Police and the Watch Committee was their capacity to adopt new administrative and operational procedures or improve existing ones. For example, in 1840 the committee decided to accept a resolution of the magistrates urging the police to compile a register of all property taken from persons committed for trial and to place such property in the care of the Superintendent.⁶¹ If relatively small the stolen property was sealed up in the presence of the arresting policeman, deposited in the safe in McManus's office and later produced in court by the police clerk. A few months later the Watch Committee, in its annual report to the Home Office, was pleased to report that the system was working successfully.⁶² In 1845 the force began using the relatively new innovation of

⁵⁹ See A. A. Clarke, *The Policemen of Hull: The Story of Hull Police Force 1836 to 1974* (Beverley: Hutton Press, 1992) p. 54.

⁶⁰ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min, 31 Oct. 1843.

⁶¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 22 July 1840.

⁶² KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 28 Oct. 1840.

plainclothes policemen and four men were selected for this duty, with the Watch Committee allocating £10 for them to buy suitable clothes.⁶³ The likely intention here was to use the plainclothes men as a primitive detective force, the Metropolitan Police having established its own detective section in 1842. The Liverpool Police had followed suit in 1844, forming a detective department comprised of a superintendent, clerk and six constables.⁶⁴ Detective work in the mid-nineteenth century, however, had its limitations, which is why relatively few policemen - in Hull and elsewhere - were allocated to the work:

Understood in its modern sense, detective work could not become a widely used police method until some primitive forensic science established itself, and the novelty of taking plaster casts of burglar's footprints became dispersed throughout general police work. The detective policeman of the mid-nineteenth century operated by talking and listening, and by acting on information received. City streets, public houses, the broken stair of the common lodging house, offered opportunity for the pursuit and capture of sudden offence.⁶⁵

It was the Watch Committee which demonstrated an awareness of the need to innovate and make reforms by authorizing the appointment of a civilian interpreter, Julius Jacobsen, in July 1859 on a salary of £20 per annum.⁶⁶ Jacobsen was required to question and examine foreign prisoners and witnesses, usually at the station, in the police court or aboard ships. Although only appointed on a

⁶³ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 3 Dec. 1845. As with the creation of the superannuation fund this innovation was probably introduced at the urging of Superintendent McManus, although this cannot be proved.

⁶⁴ See Clive Emsley, *Policing and its Context 1750-1870* (London: MacMillan, 1983), p. 66.; E. C. Midwinter, *Law and Order in Early Victorian Lancashire* (York: York University Borthwick Paper 1968), p. 38; or E. C. Midwinter, *Social Administration in Lancashire 1830-1860 Poor Law, Public Health and Police* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 170.

⁶⁵ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 157-58.

⁶⁶ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 6 Jul. 1859.

temporary basis at first he very quickly demonstrated that his services had become indispensable and his position became more long-term. This situation was exemplified by the fact that his salary was raised on four occasions between February 1861 and September 1866, by which date he was earning £60 per annum.⁶⁷ Already in 1863 he had informed the Watch Committee that in the previous twelve months 'my duties to the Police Court and Police Station has caused me entirely to abandon all other business'.⁶⁸ In 1862 the Watch Committee unanimously agreed to purchase telegraphic apparatus to connect the police station with the waterworks at Stoneferry. The purpose of the equipment was to allow rapid communication between the two places so that a good supply of water could be obtained to fight fires with. The cost of installing the telegraphic equipment came to £130; the committee paid for it to be replaced when it malfunctioned a year later and for its reconstruction in 1866.⁶⁹ However from a policing perspective perhaps one of the most interesting innovations involved the application of photography to police work. This was first discussed by the Watch Committee in March 1865 when it resolved: 'That the Chairman with the assistance of the Chief Constable make arrangements for procuring photographic likenesses of such prisoners as it may be thought desirable should be taken for the purposes of justice'.⁷⁰ This was implemented later that year when the committee authorized payment of a bill for £4 2s. 11d. to a Mr Smith for photographic apparatus, chemicals and other items. The following year the station house sub-committee recommended that PC McCormick should be instructed in photography to enable him to take pictures of prisoners charged with felony.⁷¹

⁶⁷ KHRO, TCW 38, Notes Relating to Pay Increments to Julius Jacobsen, Interpreter, 1860-82, dated Nov. 1882.

⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 7 Oct. 1863. Jacobsen's income was raised again in 1871; in December 1874, the last date on which his salary was recorded, his pay increased to £100 per annum: KHRO, TCW 38, Notes Relating to Pay Increments to Julius Jacobsen, Interpreter, 1860-82, dated Nov. 1882.

⁶⁹ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 28 May, 2 Jul. 1862, 1 Jul. 1863; TCM 197, 24 Jan. 1866.

⁷⁰ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 22 Mar. 1865.

⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 6 Dec. 1865; TCM 218, Central Station Sub-Committee Minutes, 2 Jun. 1866.

Although the police's role as fire-fighters was probably their most important ancillary role (see Chapter 5) the Watch Committee allowed policemen to perform other duties which suggests that the force acted as a proto-welfare agency. In 1848 the police assisted the authorities during the cholera outbreak and from 1852 the police aided the council's Sanitary Committee by reporting nuisances and delivering notices.⁷² Moreover, in 1853 the Superintendent, inspectors and sergeants were appointed as Assistant Inspectors of Common Lodging Houses by the Board of Health. It is probable that the Watch Committee and Superintendent McManus favoured policemen undertaking this latter duty in the belief that it would help them to identify and supervise criminals, suspects and prostitutes, who were thought to frequent such places.⁷³ Co-operation with the Board of Health was further developed in 1858 when the Watch Committee acceded to the request to assist its meat inspector in the suppression of 'unwholesome meat'. The Secretary to the Board of Health, Robert Wells, informed the Watch Committee that he wanted in particular the services of the detective officers, who could watch ferry boats to see if any offending material was off-loaded.⁷⁴ Even so it would seem that Hull policemen did not acquire the legal power to board vessels, conduct searches and detain suspects until the passage of the Hull Docks Act of 1861.⁷⁵ Once policemen had this power it would be easier for them to assist customs officers in their work, although no evidence has been found which suggests that this was the reason why the power was sought. Nevertheless, in 1866 the Collector of Customs in Hull, Mr Colquhoun, wrote to McManus requesting that the police be given the legal power of making seizures of contraband goods, for which they would be provided with customs deputations. The Watch Committee ordered that Colquhoun's request should be acceded to and McManus should issue the requisite orders to the force.⁷⁶

⁷² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 11 Oct. 1848; TCM 191, 27 Oct., 3 Nov. 1852.

⁷³ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 8 Sep. 1852, 13 Apr., 25 May 1853.

⁷⁴ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 7 Jul. 1858.

⁷⁵ 24 & 25 Vict. c. 79, s. 106.

⁷⁶ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 31 Jan., 7 Feb. 1866.

Manpower and Government Inspection

Police recruitment drew heavily from the ranks of the semi-skilled and unskilled working class. However it is important to stress that different police forces drew from different pools of labour in the nineteenth century and had different recruitment practices. For example, agricultural labourers were preferred by some forces while others drew from a variety of occupational backgrounds. Some forces were willing to recruit local men to serve in their own districts while others would not. Some forces were more amenable to employing ex-soldiers than others. It is very difficult to generalize about police recruitment practices in the nineteenth century.⁷⁷ Virtually all the Hull Police personnel records covering the period of this study, 1836 to 1866, have not survived although there are some for the final third of the nineteenth century which Emsley has analysed.⁷⁸ There are fragments of information for a handful of Hull policemen from the mid-Victorian era but these can in no way be described as representative. If the social origins of the early policemen corresponded to that of the town's population as a whole then a large minority would have come from outside Hull, either from the East Riding, elsewhere in Yorkshire or neighbouring counties such as Lincolnshire. Andrew McManus was not the only Hull policeman of Irish descent.

The size of the force was a problematic issue for the Watch Committee to deal with, for any increase in police strength would raise the police budget and very good reasons for such action would have to be enunciated. From 1836 to 1842 the maximum size of the Hull Police was either ninety-four or

⁷⁷ For more information see Clive Emsley and Mark Clapson, 'Recruiting the English Policeman c. 1840-1940', *Policing and Society* 3 (1994), 269-286, passim.

⁷⁸ Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 181, 184, Ch. 9, passim.

ninety-five men, including the police clerk.⁷⁹ However, by this latter date the borough authorities were aware that the increasing population and area of the town necessitated an augmentation of police manpower. For example, at their meeting of 22 June 1842, the town's magistrates passed a resolution recommending an increase in the number of constables and they sent a copy of this to the Watch Committee. Initially the committee responded by resolving unanimously that twenty-four extra PCs and one sergeant should be appointed but at its very next meeting the committee agreed to reconsider the subject and resolved to discuss it further at the meeting scheduled for 20 July. On that date the Watch Committee resolved, by a majority of three, not to increase the police numbers by twenty-five extra men and then resolved unanimously to increase the police strength by ten (nine constables and a sergeant).⁸⁰ The new men were added to the force on 1 August 1842 and the force, including the clerk, then comprised 104.⁸¹ This total comprised the superintendent, four inspectors, two acting inspectors, the clerk, ten sergeants and eighty-six constables. The Watch Committee was aware that the borough had grown in size since 1836 and that more buildings had been built which required protection; this was its primary reason for supporting the increase in police manpower. In August 1844 the Watch Committee agreed unanimously to increase the size of the force by twelve constables when the police took responsibility for policing Dock Company property, even though McManus had asked for only five extra men as he finalized the new policing arrangements.⁸² Concurrently the committee also agreed that the Foundry

⁷⁹ The difference of one may be accounted for by a reduction in the number of acting inspectors from three to two during or before 1839. In 1839 the Hull police was comprised of: one superintendent earning £200 per annum plus a house rent and tax free and £10 in lieu of a uniform (he was not allowed any fees or emoluments); four inspectors earning 30s. per week; two acting inspectors and a clerk earning 25s. per week; nine sergeants earning 21s. per week and seventy-seven constables earning 18s. per week, making a total of ninety-three. See KHRO, TCC/1/260, Hull Corporation Correspondence, letter from the Town Clerk of Leicester to the Town Clerk of Hull regarding the police, dated 12 Sep. 1839.

⁸⁰ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 29 Jun., 2, 6, 20 Jul. 1842.

⁸¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 31 Oct. 1842. Slight errors in the total of policemen for the years 1842 to 1866, +/- 1 or 2, are probably a result of unfilled places or reappointments of dismissed men. Where a discrepancy of one or two is known to exist the highest figure has been quoted. Statistically this does not alter the police to population ratios to any great extent.

⁸² See Chapter 4 for the events leading to the extension of policing to include Dock Company property and the problematic relationship with the Dock Company throughout this period.

district of Sculcoates, a small district on the very edge of the urban area that had only recently merged with the borough, should now be watched by the force and the inhabitants pay an appropriate watch rate. This does not explain why such a large increase in manpower was sanctioned, since the Foundry district was far smaller in area than Dock Company property. One possible explanation is that, in effect, the Watch Committee reversed its decision of July 1842 not to increase the size of the force by the larger figure proposed then. It may have become cognizant of the extra burdens being placed on police manpower as a consequence of the borough's demographical and geographical expansion. After this last increase the total number of constables stood at ninety-eight.⁸³

Hitherto, patrolling the Foundry district had not been necessary because it had been sparsely populated with few buildings. Moreover, the Watch Committee interpreted the terms of the Municipal Reform Act as requiring the new police to patrol a borough up to any *boundary point* where there was a continuous line of buildings not more than two hundred yards apart and the corporation seems to have accepted this. Buildings more than two hundred yards from any continuous line of properties did not have to be watched. The committee justified its interpretation by referring to sections 7 and 8 of the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act.⁸⁴ Section 7 of the Act confirmed that the boundary of certain boroughs, including Hull's, had been settled by previous legislation.⁸⁵ Section 8 of the Act ruled that every place included within the boundary of a borough was a part of that borough for watching purposes, whilst parts detached from it belonged to the adjoining county. In this way the Watch Committee was able to justify not patrolling the Foundry district before 1844. It was probably the case that by 1844 in-filling had taken

⁸³ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 10, 16 Aug. 1844. Of the ninety-eight constables employed after this last increase, thirty-eight were first class and sixty second class: KHRO, TCM 189, 2 Nov. 1844. See below for an explanation of the system of first and second class constables.

⁸⁴ 5 & 6 Will. IV c. 76, s. 7-8.

⁸⁵ 2 & 3 Will. IV c. 64.

place between the old boundary and the Foundry district, connecting the latter to the main part of the borough. The council unanimously approved the committee's decision to commence patrolling the Foundry district.⁸⁶ By 1844 the total number of policemen including the clerk had risen to 116. In December 1847 four more constables were added, a further ten PCs were employed in June 1849 as a result of concern that property and persons in the suburbs needed more protection and, in 1851, another four constables were recruited to increase the number patrolling the docks area.⁸⁷ In 1848 the Hull Police was comprised of Superintendent McManus, four inspectors, two acting inspectors, ten sergeants, fifty-one first-class PCs and fifty-two second class PCs, a total of 120 policemen.⁸⁸ Before the Police strike in July 1853 the total size of the force had reached 135. In fact, according to a Parliamentary Paper of 1852, Hull, with its 135 policemen, had the sixth largest borough police force in the country after Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, and Leeds. This is quite remarkable for a town with a population of only 84,690 in 1851, since all the other five were substantially larger cities.⁸⁹ Yet there are reasons for this pattern. Like Hull, Liverpool and Bristol were major ports and Manchester and Birmingham had Metropolitan-style police forces imposed upon them by government in 1839.⁹⁰ Immediately after the strike of 1853 Hull's Watch Committee decided to reduce the total size of the force to one hundred. The next significant increase did not occur until early in 1857, after which the force totalled 111 (the augmentation of police numbers from 1857 to 1865 is analysed in more detail below). As a result of the

⁸⁶ KHPL, HA 6 Sep. 1844.

⁸⁷ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 15 Dec. 1847, 6, 13 Jun. 1849, 2 Apr. 1851.

⁸⁸ After the first police clerk, Acting Inspector George Freeman, was dismissed in August 1847 (see Chapter 6), his job was done by an inspector but it appears that no one was promoted at this point to fill the inspector's old post.

⁸⁹ BJL, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1852 (490), XLI, A Return of the Rural or Municipal Police, pp. 477-93. Quoted in Midwinter, *Law and Order*, p. 23. In 1851 the populations of the other five cities was as follows: Liverpool 376,000, Manchester 303,000, Birmingham 233,000, Leeds 172,000 and Bristol 137,000. Quoted in Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (Harlow: Longman, 1983), pp. 407-09.

⁹⁰ For more information on the imposition of Metropolitan-style police forces on Birmingham and Manchester (and Bolton) in 1839 see Palmer, *Police and Protest*, Chs 10, 11, passim; Michael Weaver, 'The New Science of Policing: Crime and the Birmingham Police Force, 1839-1842', *Albion*, 26 (1994), 289-308, passim.

first government inspection by an Inspector of Constabulary later that year more constables were added in June/July advancing the total to 122. Even so the 1853 figure was not exceeded until July 1861 when, due to another government inspection, the force swelled to 142 policemen. The maximum size attained by the Hull Police during the period of this study was 152 in October/November 1865.

In the four years which followed the police manpower reductions made in the wake of the strike of 1853, frequent criticisms were made of the inadequate size of the force, not least by the Dock Company, which was concerned about the protection afforded to property stored on the docks and quays (for more about the policing of the docks in this era see Chapter 4). The general public also criticized the level of policing in evidence in the town's suburbs. It is transparent that from August 1853 until July 1857 the Hull Police was understaffed and struggled to perform its duties effectively. Eventually, at the very end of 1856, the Watch Committee responded to public concerns by creating a sub-committee of seven, including the Chairman, to investigate and report whether the present number of policemen was sufficient for the borough; Chief Constable McManus was made responsible for providing the sub-committee with all the information it required. At the same time a memorial signed by seventy inhabitants of the Kingston Estate complaining of inefficient watching was referred to the sub-committee.⁹¹ It instructed McManus to write to the police forces in Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol and Birmingham requesting returns regarding the size of their forces. Within a few days replies had been received from all of them and the sub-committee had the information in Table 3.3 to help it compile its report (see Table 3.3 below).⁹² Ignoring Sheffield, whose population was not recorded, the figures (allegedly) indicate that Hull had the highest ratio of population to police officers and there is every likelihood that this knowledge influenced the vote on police manpower which was taken by the sub-

⁹¹ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 31 Dec. 1856.

⁹² KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 5, 9, 16 Jan. 1857.

committee.⁹³ After considerable deliberation, at two successive meetings, the sub-committee voted by four votes to two to recommend increasing the size of the force by twenty constables, the recommendation being supported by Skilbeck, Wilde, Morley and Clarke and opposed by Thomas Abbey, the chairman, and Mayfield.⁹⁴ When the sub-committee presented its report to the Watch Committee five days later it justified the considerable increase in police manpower by comparing the situation in 1836, when the town had a population of some 60,000 and a police force of ninety-five, with the present population of approximately 95,000 which was policed by only 101 men.⁹⁵ The report expressed concern not only about the vastly greater population but also a number of other pertinent issues:

Along with that increase of population there has necessarily been an increase of Buildings on the outskirts of the Town thus lengthening necessarily the Beats of the Police, and tho' thro' [sic] the arrangements of the Superintendent of the Police the duties entrusted to the force have been as well performed perhaps in this Town as in any part of the Kingdom, yet that is done at our Expenditure of the Energies and bodily powers of the men which we think it unreasonable to expect should be personally maintained. In the present place of crime to a mode of Robbery from the Person has become common of late which is more likely to be practiced on the outskirts of the Town than elsewhere we allude to Garotting and tho' [sic] this Town has not of late been the scene of crimes of that nature we have reason to know that alarm does exist in parts of the Suburbs from the frequency of that crime in other places.⁹⁶

⁹³ Hull's police to population ratio was 1:941, with Nottingham's being the second highest at 1:909. Bristol had the lowest ratio, 1: 565, and all the other towns and cities had ratios ranging from 1:610 to 1:837. The population figures listed for Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Bristol bear some relation to the Census returns for 1851. However, it is not revealed how they were calculated. See Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 407-09.

⁹⁴ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 12, 16 Jan. 1857.

⁹⁵ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 21 Jan. 1857.

⁹⁶ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 21 Jan. 1857.

Table 3.3 *Returns of Police Manpower in Selected Urban Areas Given to the Watch Committee in 1857*

Place	Population	Number of Policemen
Sheffield	No data	102
Leeds	115,000	144
Newcastle	87,000	104
Manchester	337,412	553
Nottingham	70,000	77
Birmingham	250,000	330
Bristol	140,000	248

Source: KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 9, 16 Jan. 1857

The report concluded by reiterating that probably more attention needed to be paid to the outskirts of Hull and twenty extra constables were immediately required for the town as a whole. Notwithstanding, the Watch Committee voted narrowly in favour of an amendment, by six votes to five, to augment the size of the force by ten men.⁹⁷

The total strength of the force including the Chief Constable was now 111 men. Although a welcome improvement in police manpower, the addition of this number of officers would be unlikely to make a significant improvement to police effectiveness as the constables would still over-extend themselves when fulfilling their duties. However there was a further growth in personnel during 1857, this time as a consequence of the first inspection of the Hull Police by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary. The Inspectorate of Constabulary was created according to the terms of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act to regularly inspect the country's police forces. The system of

⁹⁷ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 21, 28 Jan. 1857. Abbey, Mayfield, Pickering, Jackson, Brown and McBride voted for an increase of ten and Morley, Skilbeck, Wilde, Clarke and Loft voted for the report's recommendation of twenty. The extra men were added to the force in February. See KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Corp. Min., 5 Feb. 1857; KHPL, HA 28 Feb. 1857.

annual inspection of county and borough police forces had as one of its priorities the assessment of police force size as a means of encouraging growth in manpower. When the inspection system began in 1857 the Hull Police emerged from its first official inspection by Colonel Woodford with a creditable report, ensuring that it received the central government grant of one quarter of the cost of pay and clothing under the terms of the 1856 Act. The Watch Committee was keen to secure this grant and after making his first inspection Woodford wrote to the committee raising the issue of the Hull Police's size. A correspondence between the Watch Committee and Woodford then ensued in which the committee readily agreed to increase the complement of the force. In this correspondence the committee tried to elicit his views on the subject and explain the circumstances in which manpower was cut following the strike of 1853, and the Home Secretary's approval of events at the time. As a consequence of this the Watch Committee, at its meeting on 20 June, voted to strengthen the size of the force by the immediate addition of ten men, although an amendment to add twenty was defeated by five votes to three. Woodford expressed his approval of the increase by completing a favourable inspection report on the Hull Police.⁹⁸ It appears that Woodford's object in recommending a growth of police numbers was to urge the Watch Committee to address the issue of the time occupied patrolling the night beats. This would be directly determined by the manpower available because up to two-thirds of the force patrolled at night.

The above is a brief summary of the results of the first inspection but a narrative of the full course of events reveals that the Watch Committee was forced to accept criticism of its handling of the manpower issue between 1853 and 1857. The first inspection by the Constabulary Inspector, Woodford, took place on 18 April 1857.⁹⁹ Woodford ultimately gave the police a positive and praiseworthy report but

⁹⁸ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 29 Apr., 13, 18 May, 13, 17, 20 Jun., 1 Jul. 1857.

⁹⁹ For more information from the report see B JL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1857, pp. 64-66.

at the time of the inspection he expressed doubts and concerns about the force's size and made a couple of minor criticisms on other matters. After his inspection of the Hull Police, Woodford put his detailed comments in writing to the Mayor later that same day, having already moved on to Beverley to inspect the police force there. Woodford found much to commend about the force, especially the inestimable role performed by McManus:

it affords me pleasure to acquaint you that I had reason to be well satisfied with the general appearance of the officers and men, with the correct and orderly manner in which the books are kept, and the ordinary business of the office conducted, with the cleanly condition of the station house, offices and cells, and especially with the systematic and office-like manner in which the duties of the inspectors, sergeants and constables are arranged and carried out, *so far as the means at his disposal will allow, by your zealous, intelligent, and experienced chief constable.*

Upon all of these points it will be my pleasing duty to report favourably to the Secretary of State.

Yet he was forthright in recommending the augmentation of police manpower as an absolute necessity to raise the effectiveness of the force:

It is, therefore, with some regret that I feel it incumbent upon me to observe upon and represent to you, as deserving of the serious and deliberate consideration of the council, the inadequacy, as it seems to me, of your present number of constables to afford to the ratepayers and inhabitants

generally that full and fair amount of protection to persons and property which they are justly entitled to look for at the hands of the governing authorities.¹⁰⁰

Woodford noted that four years previously the size of the force was larger than at present and without recommending the specific number of new recruits which were required, he clearly indicated his preference for a return to the status quo ante: 'an establishment considered requisite in 1853 is manifestly in no degree less necessary now.'¹⁰¹

Two days after Woodford's inspection the Mayor informed those present in the police court that he had received the said letter from the Constabulary Inspector and he astutely read the first part of it aloud in the court - up to the sentence which ends with reference to the Secretary of State - and it was reported verbatim in the *Hull Advertiser*. The Mayor introduced the extract by announcing:

it afforded him very great pleasure to be enabled to read publicly in the court so satisfactory a testimonial of the efficiency of the police force. Thinking it a matter of duty that the expression of opinion by a gentleman so well qualified to offer it as Colonel Woodford should be immediately made public, he had felt him called upon at once to come into court and make itself known.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ B JL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, both at p. 65. Emphasis added to original.

¹⁰¹ B JL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, p. 65.

¹⁰² KHPL, *HA* 25 Apr. 1857.

After reading the extract the Mayor diplomatically avoided any further mention of the letter's content by stating that there were other matters alluded to in the letter which came 'within the province of the Town Council' and should be put to it before being made public. The Watch Committee and Corporation seem to have been somewhat surprised by Woodford's criticism of the force's size and the Town Clerk was instructed to write to the Constabulary Inspector explaining the circumstances surrounding the police strike in 1853, and the subsequent reduction in manpower, (see Chapter 4) and requesting him to substantiate his conclusion that Hull needed more policemen. Woodford replied shortly after, drawing attention to the policing of the suburbs and the docks area in particular:

the conclusion at which I arrived on the occasion of my recent inspection of the police force was founded upon the following considerations:

[...]some portions of the borough have little or no protection afforded to them either by day or by night, although the inhabitants of those parts can no less fairly claim consideration than others living in more central parts of the town[...]some of the beats are of so great extent that they cannot be traversed during the day in much less time than three hours, nor during the night under one hour and upwards[...]there is constantly lying exposed in the immediate vicinity of the docks[...]a considerable amount of valuable property, which, as it seemed to me, was very inadequately protected.¹⁰³

On the issue of the number of additional constables to appoint Woodford suggested that the Watch Committee could call upon the advice of the Chief Constable and other officers of the force 'who, in my humble opinion, can only in such a question be actuated by their zeal in the service, and a praiseworthy

¹⁰³ BJL, *PP* 1857-58 (20), XLVII, p. 66.

desire to see the duties well and efficiently discharged.¹⁰⁴ Only nine days after this letter the size of the Hull Police was increased to 121 men, an addition of ten. The criticism which Woodford made about police manpower was therefore addressed speedily and in his inspection report he considered that this total was sufficient for all normal police duties in the borough.¹⁰⁵ Although the Watch Committee had known unofficially for some months, because of Woodford's correspondence, that its police had passed the first inspection, the corporation received official notification of this in December 1857, some months after the end of the inspection year (which ran from September to September).¹⁰⁶ He inspected the Hull Police in subsequent years and it continued to receive impressive reports from him and certificates of efficiency from the Home Office, which entitled it to receive the 25 per cent grant. This meant that the Hull Police received more than £17,000 from the government between 1857 and 1865.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ B JL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ B JL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, p. 64.

¹⁰⁶ KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Cor. Min., 17 Dec. 1857; TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 23 Dec. 1857. A letter had been received from the Home Office addressed to the Mayor.

¹⁰⁷ The dates when the Watch Committee learnt officially of the result of the inspections and the size of the grants for the years 1857 to 1865 inclusive, are as follows (with the sums granted in brackets):

1857: KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 23 Dec. 1857, 17 Mar. 1858 (£1,593 13s.);

1858: TCM 193, 8 Dec. 1858, [2nd date and grant not found];

1859: TCM 194, 14 Dec. 1859, 11 Jan. 1860 (£1,812 14s. 7d.);

1860: TCM 194, 19 Dec. 1860, 30 Jan. 1861 (£1,823 6s. 10d.);

1861: TCM 194, 24 Dec. 1861, 29 Jan. 1862 (£1,880 4s. 3d.);

1862: TCM 195, 24 Dec. 1862, 22 Apr. 1863 (£2,157 16s. 6d.)

1863: TCM 196, 6 Jan. 1864, 9 Mar. 1864 (£2,121 18s. 1d.);

1864: TCM 196, 4 Jan. 1865, 8 Mar. 1865 (£2,225 10s 10d.);

1865: TCM 197, [1st date not found], 21 Mar. 1866 (£2,165 3s. 8d.).

Although the Hull Police was undermanned for a period of time, this only applied to the years 1853 to 1857. Between August 1853 and February 1857 the police to population ratio in Hull at one point actually exceeded 1:900. From February to June 1857 it improved, falling to approximately 1:833 and following the increase in police numbers to 121 in June it stood at about 1:764 (for more analysis of police to population ratios see below).¹⁰⁸ Once the Watch Committee received constructive criticism of the manpower situation from an authority on policing unconnected with the borough, it expedited improvements relatively quickly: only two months elapsed between Woodford making his written comments to the Mayor and the appointment of ten additional constables. Even though the committee sanctioned an increase in police numbers it appears that the councillors and aldermen refused to accept one aspect of Woodford's argument: that the size of the beats did not result in enough protection being given to exposed goods.¹⁰⁹ This criticism had in fact been made by the Dock Company on several occasions between 1853 and 1857 and Woodford was probably repeating its concerns (see Chapter 4). The issue of the force's size was discussed again in May 1861 by the Watch Committee which requested the Chief Constable to report on the matter.¹¹⁰ In his report McManus noted the rising population of the borough and new demands on police manpower, such as the patrolling of the Citadel and Pearson's Park (the police had already begun to watch the former and would soon have to do the same to the latter when it opened to the public).¹¹¹ McManus recommended the addition of twenty more constables, taking the total size of the force to 142 men and the Watch Committee agreed with him. The extra men commenced their duties in

¹⁰⁸ These ratios are calculated using interpolated population figures derived from the 1851 and 1861 Census returns.

¹⁰⁹ See for example KHRO, TCC/1/1970, Hull Cor. Cor., draft of letter from the Town Clerk to Colonel Woodford, dated June 1857.

¹¹⁰ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 8 May 1861.

¹¹¹ In November 1860 the Watch Committee resolved that the police should watch the old Citadel in the same manner as other property in the borough. The military had occupied it until the 1850s but after the army left it had been empty for a time until tenants of the new owner moved in. See KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 7 Nov. 1860.

July.¹¹² The complement of the force was increased again in 1865 and again this seems to have been implemented on the suggestion of Colonel Woodford. In a letter he wrote to McManus dated 10 June 1865 Woodford commented: 'I trust therefore that the suggestion I ventured to offer that the force should be gradually augmented from time to time to meet the additional requirements of the Borough as they arise will not be wholly lost sight of.'¹¹³ Less than three months later the Watch Committee agreed unanimously to increase the size of the force by ten constables - to a total of 152 - subject to the confirmation of the council. This was given and most of the additional men were recruited by the end of October.¹¹⁴

The annual inspection reports were about more than manpower and if they are analysed comprehensively some important features of the Hull Police become apparent. In the 1859 inspection report (conducted in 1858) Woodford produced a very positive assessment of the Hull Police's overall condition, noting that it:

was complete in number, and in a very satisfactory state of discipline and efficiency; the clothing and accoutrements were in a good serviceable condition, the offices, charge-room, and cells clean, commodious, and well adapted for their purposes, and the station houses for the men were in a cleanly, wholesome condition, and furnished and fitted up with much attention to their comfort.

¹¹² KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 22 May, 17 Jul. 1861.

¹¹³ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 14 Jun. 1865.

¹¹⁴ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 30 Aug., 6, 27 Sep., 4 Oct. 1865.

The Inspector is of opinion that this establishment has been maintained in such a state of general efficiency as to merit the most favourable consideration of the Secretary of State.¹¹⁵

All this contrasts very sharply with what had been happening in York since the passage of the 1856 Act. The York Corporation resolved not to apply for the Treasury grant. In 1856 and the following year the York Police, now totalling twenty-seven men, was still inspected by Woodford and on both occasions he reported it was inefficient. However, in 1858 the corporation reversed its decision, the police force was reorganized and it passed its inspection that year, thus receiving the grant.¹¹⁶

The Hull Police's 1860 inspection report (conducted in 1859) continued the trend of praiseworthiness, highlighting the many good facilities which were available to the single and married policemen who resided at the police station, especially their separate quarters, the kitchen and the small infirmary.¹¹⁷ Three of the inspection reports, for the years 1861, 1864 and 1866, were copied into the Watch Committee minutes (with the inspections being conducted in April 1860, May 1863 and May 1865 respectively).¹¹⁸ A part of the 1861 report is reproduced below; it is slightly more detailed than the other two but otherwise the three are typical of all the reports dating from the period 1857 to 1866:

¹¹⁵ B JL, *PP*, 1859 (17 Sess. 1), XXII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1858, p. 70. Woodford reported that the area of the Hull borough was 5,123 acres, which gave a police to acres ratio of 1:42. He also reported the population as being 84,690 but this would give a misleading police to population ratio because the latter figure dates from the 1851 Census. At the time of the inspection the police force consisted of one head constable, five inspectors, ten sergeants and 106 constables, making a total of 122 officers and men.

¹¹⁶ Roger Swift, 'Urban Policing in Victorian England, 1835-56: A reappraisal', *History* 73 (1988), pp. 217-18.

¹¹⁷ B JL, *PP*, 1860 (30), LVII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1859, p. 67.

¹¹⁸ B JL, *PP*, 1861 (67), LII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1860, p. 68; *PP*, 1864 (26), XLVIII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1863, p. 82; *PP*, 1866 (54), XXXIV, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1865, p. 95. For copies of the reports

The officers and men presented a highly creditable appearance; the clothing and accoutrements were in good serviceable condition; the books were found to have been properly kept; and the cells for prisoners, which have been improved, were very clean and in good order.

It has before been reported that at the central station commodious quarters have been fitted up for both married and unmarried men, and the inspector has had the gratification more than once of bearing testimony to the care and attention which have been bestowed upon the comfort and welfare of the resident constables; it is therefore with sincere pleasure that he now records, as the result of this last inspection, his conviction that in this regard there has been no diminution of the solicitude heretofore evinced by the local authorities in favour of this fine and effective body of men.[...]

The Inspector is of opinion that this establishment has been maintained in a very satisfactory state of discipline and efficiency.¹¹⁹

The reports by the Constabulary Inspector present a glowing picture of the Hull Police in these the early years of central inspection of provincial police forces.¹²⁰

in the Watch Committee minutes (with minor transcription errors) see KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 3 Apr. 1861; TCM 196, 17 Feb. 1864; TCM 197, 14 Mar. 1866.

¹¹⁹ B JL, *PP*, 1861 (67), LII, p. 68. Woodford lists the area in acres in 1851 as 5,123 and the number of constables as 122, which gives the same police to area ratio as before. Moreover, he still quotes the population figure from 1851 which would give a misleading police to population ratio.

¹²⁰ The 1866 inspection, in June of that year, made after the appointment of the new Chief Constable, Thomas Cook, continued to be praiseworthy of the Hull Police's performance. See B JL, *PP*, 1867 (14), XXXVI, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1866, p. 97.

However Woodford also recognized how the authorities in Hull positively responded to his constructive criticisms. This was apparent during the inspection of May 1861,¹²¹ after which the authorities implemented Woodford's recommendation to increase the size of the force by twenty men, to a total of 141, as a consequence of Hull's increasing population. The Constabulary Inspector was effusive in his praise of the authorities of the borough which:

have always manifested an unusually warm and lively interest in the comfort and welfare of the men; and the Inspector has been much gratified by observing on their part a readiness to carry into effect such suggestions as he has occasionally felt it his duty to offer, having a tendency to increase the general efficiency of their police force.¹²²

He went on to report that following his recommendation concerning augmenting the size of the force to maintain its efficiency the council had given its approval to do this in June and the extra men were added to the force on 18 July. He welcomed this decision in the following terms: 'It would be well if so much decision and promptitude of action could be witnessed in places where they are more needed.' Moreover, he had 'very great satisfaction in reporting that the discipline and efficiency of this police force have been well maintained.'¹²³

¹²¹ B JL, *PP*, 1862 (28), XLV Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sep. 1861, pp. 63-64.

¹²² B JL, *PP*, 1862 (28), XLV, p. 64.

¹²³ B JL, *PP*, 1862 (28), p. 64.

Whilst it is probably the case that the constabulary inspections of the Hull Police from 1857 to 1865, and the government grant which resulted from them, were the principal factor encouraging the Watch Committee to enhance the size of the force, it would be wrong to assume that Colonel Woodford brought undue pressure to bear on the committee to act on this issue. There is no evidence he ever deliberately directed, or advised, that the force should be increased by a given number. The question of additional numbers was determined entirely by the Watch Committee, usually aided by advice from Chief Constable McManus. There is just reason to be critical of the Watch Committee regarding the issue of manpower from 1853 to 1857 but this should be tempered by the knowledge that even during this period, when the size of the force was relatively small, Hull nevertheless had a better police to population ratio than many other comparable towns and cities. Even during this period of under-manning the police to population ratio never exceeded the crucial 1:1,000 benchmark.

The relatively large size of the Hull Police force in the mid century era, apart from the years 1853 to 1857, is a subject of considerable importance. The police to population ratio is a crude but nevertheless useful measure of police effectiveness and it is significant that for much of this period the ratio in Hull was relatively good. (See Table 3.5 and Figure 3.1 below; see also Table 3.4 on the police establishment, which summarizes information in the early constabulary inspection reports). For example from 1836 to 1852 the police to population ratio was well under 1:700. It only exceeded this level in one year, 1842. The growth of police manpower in these years led to the maintenance of what was a remarkably stable police to population ratio which comes very close to being a proportional plateau. Whilst it cannot be stated conclusively that it was a policy of the Watch Committee to do this, the evidence is suggestive of some determination to sustain a comparatively low and stable ratio. The police to population ratio was relatively high from 1853 to 1857, when police manpower was cut after the

conclusion of the strike. Thereafter it fell to a more sensible level as the police force grew in size but it did not return to the proportions which had been maintained in the 1830s and forties.

Table 3.4 The Police Establishment of Hull 1857-1866

Year	Established Strength (every Sep)*	Rank and Number of Men				Area in Acres	Proportion of Area to each Policeman	Yearly Pay			Weekly Pay		
		Chief Officers	Inspectors & Clerks	Sub-Inspectors & Sergeants	Constables			Chief Officers	Inspectors & Clerks**	Sub-Inspectors & Sergeants#	Constables		
											Class 1	Class 2--	Class 3
1857	122	1	No data	No data	No data	3,621	No data	£ 274	78 0s	22	20	18	-
1858	122	1	5	10	106	5,123	42	274	78 0s	22	20	18	-
1859	122	1	5	10	106	5,123	42	274	78 0s	22	20	18	-
1860	122	1	5	10	106	5,123	42	274	78 0s	22	20	18	-
1861	142	1	4	12	125	5,123	36	304	78 0s	22	20	18	-
1862	142	1	4	12	125	5,123	36	304	88 8s	24	21	19	18
1863	142	1	4	12	125	5,123	36	304	88 8s	24	21	19	18
1864	142	1	4	12	125	5,123	36	304	88 8s	24	21	19	18
1865	142	1	5	12	124	5,123	36	350	98 16s	26	22	20	19
1866	152	1	5	12	134	5,123	34	250	98 16s	26	22	20	19

* Except for 1866, which was the number when inspected.

** The inspectors' annual salaries for 1862 are wrongly given as £78 in the *Parliamentary Papers*

The sergeants' weekly wages for 1859 are wrongly given as 24s in the *Parliamentary Papers*

The 2nd class PCs' weekly wages for 1863 and 1865 are wrongly given as 20s. and 21s respectively in the *Parliamentary Papers*

Source: Adapted from *Parliamentary Papers*, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary, 1857-66

The Rural Constabulary Act of 1839¹²⁴ introduced the principle of police to population ratios. According to the terms of the Act the county magistracy could determine whether their county needed a police force. They could set the size of their force, but the ratio had to be no more than one policeman to every one thousand inhabitants.¹²⁵ This was judged to be the highest acceptable police-to-population ratio for effective policing. However, by 1839 *of those boroughs which made returns to the Home Office* only 29 per cent had ratios lower than 1:900 and more than half had ratios in excess of 1:1,100. By 1848 only a handful of boroughs had met this requirement and almost two-thirds were still wanting in manpower.¹²⁶ In the great majority of the 178 boroughs affected by the 1835 reforms the new borough policemen were merely reappointed constables, beadles and watchmen who had been formerly

¹²⁴ 2 & 3 Vict. c. 93.

¹²⁵ Clive Emsley, *Policing*, p. 70.

¹²⁶ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, pp. 400-01. The ratio of 1:1,000 is also mentioned by Hart, 'Borough police', pp. 415-16. For a contemporary expression of this view see the evidence of W. C. Harris, Chief Constable of Hampshire, in B.J.L., *PP*, 1852-53 (603), XXXVI, First Report of the Select Committee on Police, p. 11.

Table 3.5 *Police to Population Ratios in Hull 1836-1865*

Year	Population	Number of Policemen	Number of Population to each Policeman
1836	56,048	95	590
1837	57,972	95	610
1838	59,897	95	630
1839	61,821	95	651
1839	61,821	94	658
1840	63,746	94	678
1841	65,670	94	699
1842	67,572	94	719
1842	67,572	104	650
1843	69,474	104	668
1844	71,376	104	686
1844	71,376	116	615
1845	73,278	116	632
1846	75,180	116	648
1847	77,082	116	665
1847	77,082	120	642
1848	78,984	120	658
1849	80,886	120	674
1849	80,886	130	622
1850	82,788	130	637
1851	84,690	130	651
1851	84,690	134	632
1852	85,987	134	642
1852	85,987	135	637
1853	87,284	135	647
1853	87,284	100	873
1853	87,284	101	864
1854	88,581	101	877
1855	89,878	101	890
1856	91,176	101	903
1857	92,473	101	916
1857	92,473	111	833
1857	92,473	121	764
1857	92,473	122	758
1858	93,770	122	769
1859	95,067	122	779
1860	96,364	122	790
1861	97,661	122	801
1861	97,661	142	688
1862	100,236	142	706
1863	102,810	142	724
1864	105,385	142	742
1865	107,960	142	760
1865	107,960	152	710

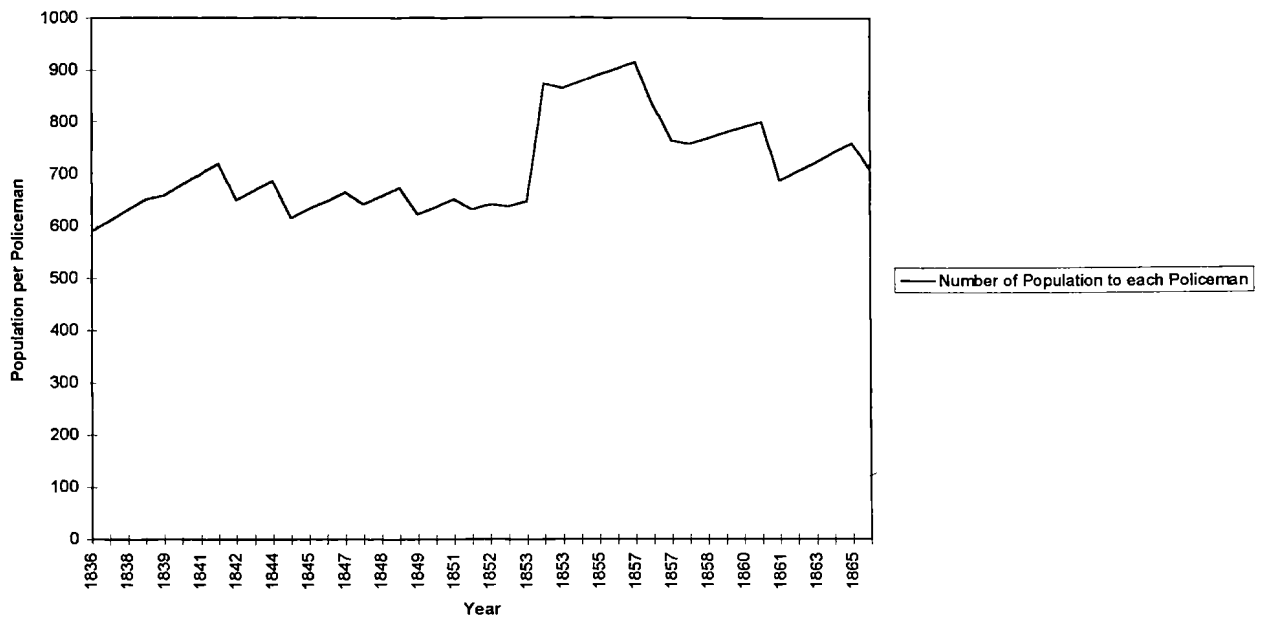
Source: KHRO, TCM 188-97, Watch
Com. Min., 1836-1865; Allison (ed.),
History of the East Riding, I, 190, 215

employed by the old corporations and improvement commissioners. This was the case in Leeds, Chester, Newport and Swansea, in Walsall and in Portsmouth. Furthermore, in two towns where the police were considered to be abundant and relatively neoteric, Bath and Liverpool, the men were allowed to have second jobs as late as 1852.¹²⁷

This makes Hull's achievement in almost continuously maintaining a low police to population ratio all the more impressive. Only the reduction in manpower following the police strike sent it hurtling upwards above 1:900 for a few years. The growth in police personnel after 1857 eventually brought it back down to 1:715 by 1865. The maintenance of such a ratio would have been a considerable achievement for any mid-nineteenth century provincial police force and something to be proud of, especially as few managed to achieve this. There is no simple explanation why the Hull Police was so large in relation to the size of the town although four reasons stand out as important. First a large force was created in the first place because the collective memory of the Acland disturbances was still very vivid. Second, the reformers won such a resounding victory at the 1835 municipal elections. Third, the Watch Committee appointed a dedicated, professional, ex-Metropolitan police officer with reforming zeal to command the new borough force. Finally, a great deal of human traffic and goods moved through the town because of the status of the port and this produced specific criminal problems (see Chapter 4 for more information on crime in Hull).

¹²⁷ For Leeds, Chester, Newport and Swansea see T. A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales* (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 64-65; for Walsall see David Philips, *Crime and Authority in Victorian England: The Black Country 1835-1860* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 55, 57; for Portsmouth see John Field, 'Police, Power and Community in a Provincial English Town: Portsmouth 1815-1875', in *Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. by Victor Bailey (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 42-64 (pp. 46-49); for Bath and Liverpool see Palmer, *Police and Protest*, 401.

Fig. 3.1 Police to Population Ratios in Hull 1836-1865



Even so this does not explain why the force continued to grow in subsequent years so that the impressive police to population ratio was maintained (except for the years 1853 to 1857). The size of the Hull Police could easily have remained static for very many years, with a consequent deterioration in its effectiveness. Several reasons can be advanced for the force's continued augmentation, not least of which would be Andrew McManus's continued stewardship of it (see below). Other probable influences would be: the high level of continuity among the membership of Watch Committee leading to policy continuity; the demonstrable early successes of the Hull Police which reinforced public opinion in its favour and the commercial importance of Hull as Britain's third largest port in this period, after London and Liverpool respectively. This latter point may appear unusual but it is worth advancing a hypothesis on this matter.

It seems more than coincidental that the four most significant ports in England, London, Liverpool, Hull and Bristol, all had relatively large police forces in this era.¹²⁸ This may have been in response to the value of their inward and outward trade, or the volume of human traffic which moved through them, or both. The valuable goods in transit on the docks and quays of Hull would have been a tempting target for any covetous thief or robber and would have to be watched and protected. Busy ports generate much human traffic as sailors, fishermen and travellers arrive and depart and their activities generate what can best be described as ancillary problems such as drunkenness and prostitution, with which the police must deal. In addition, Hull was on the route followed by European emigrants heading for North America, who embarked from European ports to Hull and then travelled by rail to Liverpool, where they boarded ships to New York and elsewhere. There may be a connection between the relative importance of a mid-nineteenth century port and the size of its new police force. However only further research could firmly establish any link and such research would have to investigate policing arrangements not only in London and Liverpool but also in other leading ports such as Bristol, Newcastle and Glasgow. Of course there may be other explanations for the relatively large size of the Hull Police. For example, a large force may have been needed to control a sizeable local drinks trade.

In August 1849 the *Hull Advertiser* propounded that the force was relatively large for this very reason.¹²⁹ The newspaper's interest in the size of the force began two months earlier when it published a comparative table giving the population of, and number of policemen in, several large towns and cities. The newspaper's table is reproduced in Table 3.6 (see Table 3.6 below).¹³⁰ The figures quoted are not

¹²⁸ As was mentioned earlier the three provincial cities in this list had some of the largest borough police forces in the country in 1852.

¹²⁹ KHPL, HA 31 Aug. 1849.

¹³⁰ KHPL, HA 22 Jun. 1849.

accurate enough for the compilation of meaningful police to population ratios because the population data was taken from the 1841 Census, compiled eight years previously, and the source of the police manpower data is unknown.¹³¹ Despite the inaccuracies, the *Advertiser* had noted, for the benefit of its readers, that the police force in Hull was unusually large in comparison to the town's population and its size compared well with urban forces elsewhere. The *Advertiser's* August article on policing supplemented its earlier report by providing details of a recent news item in the *Bolton Chronicle*, which noted the large number of public houses per head of population in Hull compared with other towns and cities.¹³² The table accompanying the *Hull Advertiser's* article is reproduced in Table 3.7 (see Table 3.7 below). According to these figures Hull had more than twice as many public houses in proportion to the number of inhabitants as Bolton and more public houses per capita than Liverpool, with a population almost six times larger than Hull. The *Advertiser* reported the speech of a Mr Taylor, the Coroner of Bolton, at the annual Brewster Sessions of that town before the local magistrates:

My friend Mr Gaskell, [a solicitor appearing on behalf of a beer-housekeeper applying for a spirit license] instanced Hull as containing more public houses in proportion to the population than Bolton. He said that with 70,000 inhabitants at Hull, there were 304 public houses, and that here, with 65,000 inhabitants, we had 117; but he did not tell you the expense thrown upon the people of Hull by reason of this great preponderance. Though, however, he gives the population as nearly the same in both cases there are 121 police officers at Hull, while we have only 22 at Bolton. And what is the reason for this difference in police? Why the difference in the number of alehouses.¹³³

¹³¹ The interpolated population figure for Hull in 1849 is 80,886.

¹³² KHPL, HA 31 Aug. 1849.

¹³³ KHPL, HA 31 Aug. 1849.

Table 3.6 *Population of, and Policemen in, Several Large Towns and Cities* (published in 1849)

Place	Number of Policemen	Population
Stockport	11	50,154
Preston	26	50,332
Leicester	50	50,365
Nottingham	54	51,441
Bath	109	52,346
Norwich	80	60,982
Hull	121	65,670
Bradford	69	66,501
Salford	43	66,624
Leeds	128	151,063

Source: *Hull Advertiser* 22 Jun. 1849

Table 3.7 *A Comparison of Public Houses per capita in Several Towns and Cities* (published in 1849)

Place	Public Houses	Population	Pubs per capita
Bolton	117	65,000	555
Oldham	113	60,000	530
Birmingham	550	200,000	363
Wigan	97	30,000	309
Liverpool*	1,450	400,000	275
Hull	304	70,000	230

* The Liverpool per capita figure is wrongly given as 375 in the newspaper

Source: *Hull Advertiser* 31 Aug. 1849

The *Advertiser* ended its report by stating that this was a 'conclusion for the magistrates of Hull to ponder over.'¹³⁴ The evidence emanating from Bolton is certainly fascinating but it should not be accepted uncritically. Taylor's statement may reveal more about the level of policing in Bolton in relation to the number of pubs than it does about Hull. Indicative evidence concerning the number of public houses in Hull can be obtained from the numerous town directories of the era but all are subject to a margin of error. For example, *White's Town Directory of Hull and District* for 1851 lists 307 public houses (including

¹³⁴ KHPL, HA 31 Aug. 1849.

hotels, inns and taverns) and seventy-four beerhouses. *Freebody's Directory of Kingston-upon-Hull* for the same year gives a total of 328 public houses and sixty-three beerhouses. Ten years later Kelly & Co.'s *Post Office Directory of Hull and Suburbs* gives a figure of 335 public houses and seventy-eight beer retailers. *C. N. Wright's Commercial Directory of Kingston-upon-Hull and Suburbs for 1863* provides the lowest total of public houses, 297, and lists eighty beer retailers.¹³⁵

Discipline and Dismissals

One measure of the effectiveness of nineteenth century police forces is their disciplinary record, with the number of dismissals per year being an indication of the standard of their policemen.¹³⁶ It was widely believed that discipline within the Hull Police was strict. At the annual review of 1844 the Mayor, W. B. Carrick, addressed a section of his speech to new police recruits:

To the men who have recently joined the force, I would simply say, be not discouraged at your first entrance. Men do sometimes join the body without giving due thought as to the nature of the duties which they will be called upon to perform; and as those duties are by no means light, they are frequently

¹³⁵ [N.auth.] *White's Town Directory of Hull and District* (Sheffield: White, 1851); [n.auth.] *Freebody's Directory of Kingston-upon-Hull* (n.p.: Freebody, 1851); [n.auth.] *Post Office Directory of Hull and Suburbs* (London: Kelly, 1861); [n.auth.] *C. N. Wright's Commercial Directory of Kingston-upon-Hull and Suburbs* (n.p.: n.pub., 1863).

¹³⁶ For more information on the range of disciplinary charges policemen faced see EYRO, Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Book, Hull Police, 1836-1876, [n.ref.]; Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Book, Hull Police, 1848-1883, [n.ref.]; Rewards and Commendations, Offences and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1860-1920 [n.ref.]. These records were only discovered late in the research process (for the reasons explained in the introduction) and it was not possible to use them to make a broad study of police discipline. Generally, all cases of dismissal have been recorded using the Watch Committee minutes, which are very detailed on all disciplinary matters.

discouraged at the outset at circumstances which in a short time would become familiar to them. All they have to do is strictly to obey their orders, and they will then have their due reward - unless they do so they cannot expect to be advanced.¹³⁷

This is a clear statement of the importance which was attached to the maintenance of discipline within the force and Councillor Bettison, a member of the Watch Committee since its formation and its present chairman, confirmed the importance of the Mayor's observations and referred to the 'exceeding good conduct of the force generally'.¹³⁸ Not long after the formation of the force it was recognized that its discipline was relatively strict by the standards of the era. Commenting on the first annual review of the borough police in May 1837 the *Hull Advertiser* noted: 'The excellent regulations introduced have rendered them a most efficient body, and we have pleasure of knowing that this fact is generally acknowledged'.¹³⁹

Internal police discipline was one of the most important problems which McManus and the Watch Committee had to confront after the policing of the town itself. The issue of discipline was itself related to the rapid turnover of policemen, either as a result of dismissals or resignations. This problem affected the great majority of English police forces in their early years and one can easily understand why. Although Emsley is referring to the constables of the Metropolitan Police his comments are just as applicable to the men of the Hull Police:

¹³⁷ KHPL, HA 31 May 1844.

¹³⁸ KHPL, HA 31 May 1844.

¹³⁹ KHPL, HA 5 May 1837.

Many men could not stand the rigours of the job; the policeman was on call twenty-four hours a day; most of his lonely patrolling was done at night, and he might have to spend a significant part of his daytime in court. Though every effort was taken to ensure that the police did not appear as a military force, the constable's life was strictly disciplined and regimented.¹⁴⁰

Quite simply, large numbers of men could not withstand the demands (and temptations) of the job. In 1834 the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, Rowan and Mayne, informed a parliamentary select committee that only 562 of the 2,800 constables serving in May 1830 remained in the force. They also reported that 80 per cent of the men dismissed had been removed for drunkenness.¹⁴¹ It is important to state that in virtually all English police forces 'Punishment took a variety of forms and its severity appears to have depended largely on a man's previous record and character.'¹⁴² This may appear a truism but its importance should be borne in mind when the issue of drunkenness amongst policemen is analysed.

In the case of the Hull Police it is generally correct to observe that not even the previous good conduct of a policeman could save him from dismissal if his offence was serious enough to deserve it. Of course one can observe a few exceptions to this rule (which are mentioned below) but ordinarily it was the case that dismissal occurred when it was the deserved punishment. Conversely, if a policeman's offence was not serious then he would receive a lesser but just punishment. Breaches of rules and regulations which did not warrant dismissal were usually punished with either a reprimand, a fine of between one and three day's pay, or more unusually, heavier fines of up to seven day's pay or temporary

¹⁴⁰ Emsley, *Policing*, p 63.

¹⁴¹ Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 59, 185.

¹⁴² Emsley, *English Police*, p 219.

suspension. Throughout the first thirty years of the force's history the offences most likely to lead to dismissal were drunkenness, disobedience, absence from beat/duty and negligence. For an analysis of the turnover of men in the Hull Police in 1836 and dismissals in that year see Table 3.8 below (dismissals and appointments in subsequent years are analysed later). From the available evidence it is known that despite all the departures (resignations and dismissals) the borough police was kept at or very near full strength with vacant positions being filled quickly, for there was always a list of approved candidates waiting for vacancies to arise in the force. In the year in which the Hull Police was formed, 1836, there were 148 appointments to the force, including four men who were reappointed.¹⁴³ All these appointments were needed to maintain the Hull Police at its full complement of ninety-five.

On 3 May the first policeman (a constable) was dismissed, for drunkenness, as an example to the other men; he had been found drunk on the very first day of the force's existence. The Watch Committee requested the Superintendent to remind the men that such breaches of discipline would be punished.¹⁴⁴ The figures show that 54 per cent of the men dismissed in 1836 were removed for drunkenness (of these one was a sergeant, the rest constables) and indeed this was an endemic problem in all British police forces until well past mid-century. Indeed, dismissals for drunkenness were frequently reported in the provincial press in a sensational manner. Steedman notes how newspapers reported the 'irresistible knock-about farce of the men in blue'.¹⁴⁵ Although the *Hull Advertiser* carried stories about drunken policemen and the way in which they were disciplined it seems to have done so with some

¹⁴³ EYRO, Police Constables' Statutory Declaration Book, Hull Police, c. 1836-1957 [n.ref].

¹⁴⁴ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 3 May 1836; KHPL, HA 6 May 1836. It is amusing to note that an inexperienced journalist from the *Hull Packet* who was reporting cases in the magistrates court in 1836 incorrectly reported that a PC Higgins had been arrested for drunkenness, brought before the magistrates and then dismissed from the force. In actual fact Higgins was giving evidence against someone he had arrested. See TCM 188, 4 Aug. 1836; KHPL, *Hull Packet* 29 Jul., 5 Aug. 1836.

¹⁴⁵ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 162.

restraint, overlooking the more lurid details and trying to avoid undermining public confidence in the police. The pattern of dismissals from the Hull Police in 1836 shows that nine of the fifteen men dismissed for drunkenness were removed after their first offence, four after their second, one after his third and, somewhat surprisingly, one after his fifth.¹⁴⁶ The dismissal of PC Francis Smith for disobedience is a typical example of this kind of dismissal: having been absent from his beat for seventy minutes he then assailed his sergeant with 'abusive and disgusting language' and refused to obey an inspector's order to return to his beat.¹⁴⁷ The case of PC James Smith, one of the men dismissed for protesting is most interesting: he and the twelve other constables of his section objected to the appointment of Thomas Boltwood as sergeant of their section. Smith persuaded the other constables to sign a letter of protest which was sent to the Watch Committee and this brought about his dismissal (the next day two more men were dismissed for protesting against a decision of the Watch Committee, unfortunately it is not known whether they were showing solidarity with Smith or complaining about some other decision). However, Smith petitioned the Watch Committee to reappoint him and at least two other people wrote letters in his support. On 30 June, Smith, having expressed his regret for what he had done, was reappointed by the Watch Committee on account of his good conduct prior to this incident.¹⁴⁸ Smith was still in the force on 12 June 1839 when he received a gratuity but he had left by 12 August 1840 when he received another.¹⁴⁹ PC John Leggatt also managed to get himself reappointed after being dismissed for drunkenness. Before

¹⁴⁶ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 2 May-31 Dec. 1836.

¹⁴⁷ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 15 Sep. 1836.

¹⁴⁸ KHRO, TCM 188 Watch Com. Min., 16, 18, 30 Jun. 1836. When he was readmitted to the force he became PC 67 James Smith, the number of another PC who had been recently dismissed for a different offence. It was common practice to give reappointed PCs any vacant number so there was no guarantee that they would be given their old number back.

¹⁴⁹ KHRO, Watch Com. Min., TCM 188, 12 Jun. 1839; TCM 189, 12 Aug. 1840.

his dismissal Leggatt had signalled his bravery by preventing a robbery aboard a ship and capturing the offender, for which he received 10s. as a reward.¹⁵⁰

Table 3.8 *Turnover of Men in the Hull Police in 1836*

Appointments	Number
Newly appointed serving policemen in May 1836	94
Reappointed policemen May-December 1836	4
Other appointments to the police May-December 1836	50
Total	148
Departures	
Resigned	1
Asked/allowed to resign	3
Transferred to another force	1
Dismissed	28
Total	33
Dismissals	
Drunkenness	15
Neglect of duty/absence from beat	3
Disobedience	4
Assault (on a fellow constable)	1
Protesting	3
Other	2
Total	28

Source: KHRO, TCM 188, Watch. Com. Min., May-Dec. 1836;
EYRO, PCs' Declaration Book, Hull Police 1836-1957, [no ref.]

Events involving Inspector Robert Craven indicate that there was not only a discipline problem among the lower ranks in 1836. The first signs of tension between him and Superintendent McManus came in July when Craven was reprimanded for using 'uncivil and insubordinate language' to the Superintendent and Acting Inspector Freeman. He apologized and was forgiven. In August he was in trouble again, this time being reported for sending a false return to McManus regarding the state of his sub-division during the night of 16 August and being drunk on parade the day before. Although the Watch

¹⁵⁰ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 27 Jun., 26 Aug., 6 Sep. 1836.

Committee allowed Craven to resign - in effect a dismissal in all but name - he immediately wrote to the committee applying for a situation in the force and it decided that: 'he cannot under any circumstances, be re-admitted into the Force.' That appeared to be the end of the matter but at a Watch Committee meeting three days later Boswell Jalland moved that Craven should be reappointed to the force as a constable when the first vacancy arose. A vote was taken in the committee and Jalland's motion was carried by five votes to one. However, PC Craven only remained in the force for a few months: he was dismissed for being drunk on duty in December.¹⁵¹ Craven was not the only policeman above the rank of constable who was disciplined. Sergeant Simpson was dismissed for drunkenness only two weeks after the force came into operation.¹⁵² Inspector Lang was demoted to sergeant for being absent from duty one evening and making a false return of charges taken that night.¹⁵³ Lang had already clashed with McManus over a trivial matter and so further conflict between them was to some extent predictable. Even an experienced former Metropolitan police sergeant like Acting Inspector Edward O'Hara could commit a serious breach of regulations. O'Hara was fined seven day's pay and severely reprimanded for drinking in a public house when on duty, locking up a man who went to the station to make a charge against him and equivocating when asked to explain his conduct; he was probably extremely fortunate not to be demoted or even dismissed.¹⁵⁴

Finally, six sergeants were reduced to constable for various reasons including: Patrick Coulehan for neglect of duty, he having been found sleeping off a hangover in a 'privy' in Mytongate at

¹⁵¹ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 11 Jul., 18, 22, 25 Aug., 1 Dec. 1836.

¹⁵² KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 16 May; KHPL, HA 20 May 1836.

¹⁵³ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 14 Nov. 1836.

¹⁵⁴ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 2 Nov. 1836. O'Hara resigned from the Hull Police in October 1838. See TCM 188, 17 Oct. 1838.

4.30am; Joseph Akester for being in a public house and 'springing' his police rattle which took two constables off their beats at 2.30am on a Sunday morning; and Sergeant Bashforth for allowing a female prisoner he was escorting to the Hulks in London to escape (she was later recaptured).¹⁵⁵ If these demotions appear lenient punishments for quite serious breaches of rules and regulations it is necessary to record that all three men had already demonstrated some capability as policemen and they went on to have long careers in the Hull Police. It can be argued that by imposing a punishment other than dismissal McManus and the Watch Committee were taking into account the inexperience of the good recruits, offering them a chance to reassess their conduct and encouraging them to become career policemen. Dismissals from, and appointments to, the force during the period 1836 to 1866 are given in Table 3.9 and Figure 3.2. (see below). Some of the figures for appointments to the force disagree with those provided by Clarke in his book on the Hull Police.¹⁵⁶ It is possible to interpret some of the peaks and troughs in the dismissals and appointments figures before analysing a few individual cases in more detail. Concentrating on dismissals first, clearly the figure for 1836 is high because this was the year of the force's creation and it was necessary to remove those men who would not make policemen. After 1836 there is a period of relative stability for six years when annual dismissals remain in single figures. The numbers then jump suddenly in 1843 and remain in low double figures until the early 1850s. This sudden rise is probably a result of additions to the complement of the force which were made in 1842, 1844, 1847, 1849, and 1851 and which increased the total size of the force from ninety-five to 134 between these dates. The drop in

¹⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 1 Sep., 3 Nov., 23 Dec. 1836.

¹⁵⁶ The years in question are 1846, 1850, 1853 and 1857. For 1846 Clarke includes in his list ten names beside the date 18 March which do not appear in the PCs' statutory declaration book. For the other three years he misses one signature in each year: Thomas Wooldridge, 17 August 1850; George Greaves, 29 July 1853 and, William Robinson, 22 October 1857. See Clarke, *Policemen of Hull*, pp. 137, 139-40, 142. From 1836-52 the PCs' declaration book notes how many men were reappointed each year. Four were reappointed in 1836; two in each of the following years: 1839, 1841, 1844 and 1846; one in each of the following years: 1838, 1843, 1848 and 1851; there were no reappointments in the remaining years from 1836-52 inclusive. Also it is known that in 1853 fourteen men were reappointed in the immediate aftermath of the police strike (for more information see Chapter 4). See EYRO, PCs' Sta. Dec. Bk, Hull Police, c. 1836-1957 [n.ref].

dismissals in 1851-52 cannot be explained but 1853 is interesting because it was the year of the police strike. Of the seven dismissals that year six involved policemen who refused to tender their resignations

Table 3.9 *Dismissals from, and Appointments to, the Hull Police 1836-1866*

Year	Dismissals for Drunkenness or Involving Drink*	Total Dismissals	Number of Appointments
1836	15	28	148
1837	4	7	48
1838	0	1	56
1839	0	1	49
1840	0	2	46
1841	0	1	24
1842**	1	5	39
1843**	3	13	35
1844	3	10	35
1845	3	3	36
1846	3	12	64
1847	7	15	54
1848	1	13	23
1849	6	14	47
1850	4	11	23
1851	5	8	26
1852	1	2	19
1853	1	7	41
1854	5	6	16
1855	4	10	21
1856	3	8	16
1857	13	26	76
1858	4	10	31
1859	2	5	24
1860	8	15	38
1861	3	14	70
1862	11	19	28
1863	6	11	34
1864**	7	9	26
1865#	4	7	45
1866	8	15	54
Totals	135	308	1292

* Dismissals involving drink are for drunkenness and another charge, e.g. disobedience and drunkenness etc.

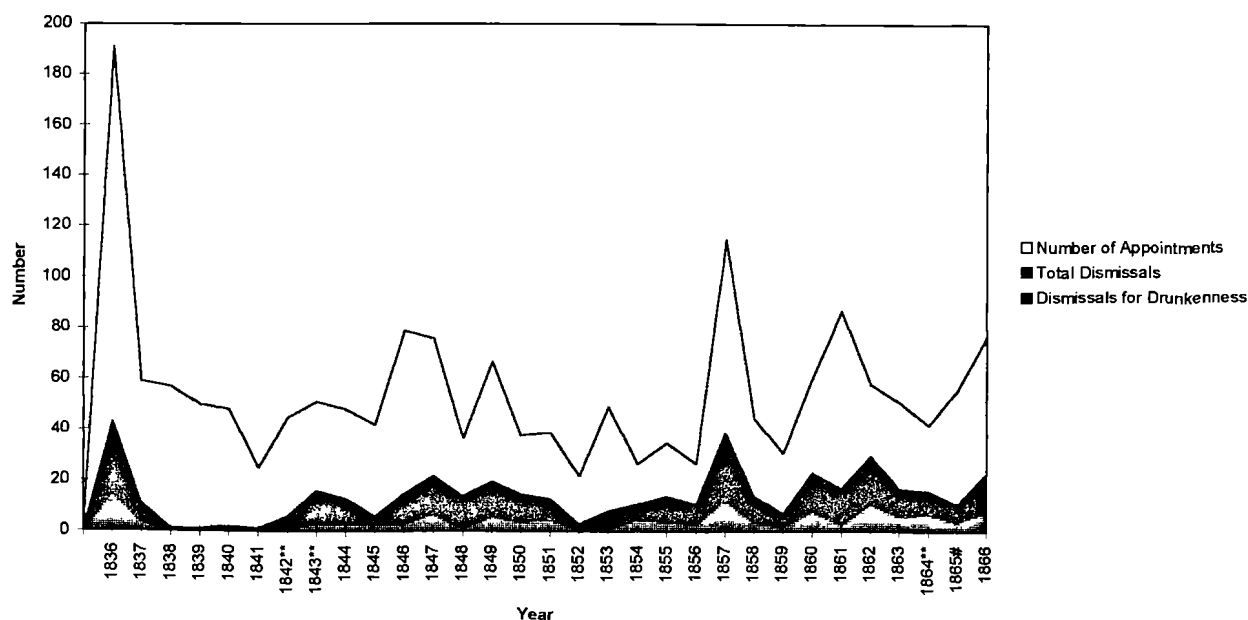
** Four reasons for dismissal are not given in the Watch Committee minutes in 1842, two in 1843 and one in 1864.

In 1865 the outcome of one disciplinary case before the Watch Committee is unknown.

Source: KHRO, TCM 188-197, May 1836-Dec. 1866;
EYRO, PCs' Declaration Book, Hull Police, 1836-1957 [no. ref.]

when the Watch Committee declined to raise police wages by 3s. per week (for more information on the strike see Chapter 4).¹⁵⁷

Fig. 3.2 Dismissals from, and Appointments to, the Hull Police 1836-1866



From 1853 to 1856 dismissals remain relatively low, lower than they had been in the 1840s. This is partly explained by the fact that the force was reduced in size to one hundred immediately after the strike and it did not grow again until 1857. The sudden rise in dismissals in that year could have been caused by the addition of twenty men to the total complement of the force and the subsequent removal of the unfit recruits. There were further increases in police manpower in 1861 and 1865 which may help to explain the slightly higher dismissal figures from 1861 to 1862 and during 1866. Conceivably the Watch Committee and McManus had learnt something from dealing with the high number of

¹⁵⁷ Another forty PCs were forced to hand in their resignations at this time when they could not accept the Watch Committee's decision regarding wages. They did resign their positions, although they were clearly compelled to do so, and it would be misleading to count these as dismissals.

dismissals in 1857 and were able to keep the figures slightly lower by a more careful selection of candidates. For most of the period 1858 to 1866 the dismissals total is in low double figures and perhaps there are some parallels with the period 1843 to 1850. At both times police manpower grew and although there was some fluctuation in dismissal figures there were no sudden increases which cannot be accounted for with a tenable explanation. The dismissal figures for the period 1837 to 1866 confirm the pattern of the figures for the single year 1836: policemen were most likely to be dismissed for drunkenness, disobedience, absence from beat/duty or negligence. No less than 135 of the 308 total dismissals - 44 per cent - were for drunkenness or drink-related charges. With the dismissals for a drink-related charge it is not possible to determine whether the fact that the dismissed policemen had been drinking was more important than the other charge made against them. At the very least the fact that a disobedient or absent policeman had been drinking compounded his offence. With an offence such as drunkenness one can only speculate why some constables were dismissed after their first or second offence whilst other PCs repeatedly received lesser punishments and went on to serve in the force for many years. It is likely, however, that the Watch Committee gave some consideration to the competence of the policemen brought before them and how drunk they were. A policeman who demonstrated some ability on the job would probably be treated more leniently than the policeman who was incompetent, indolent or irresponsible. The recording of drunkenness cases in the Watch Committee minutes does not indicate how drunk each man was. When it came to imposing punishments, conceivably the committee differentiated between the policeman with alcohol on his breath and the policeman who was rolling drunk and incapable of performing his duty.

Early in the history of the force there is evidence that the council tried to do something about the problem of policemen drinking when on duty. If it was difficult to stop the policemen themselves drinking then someone ingeniously thought of attacking the problem at source by putting the

onus on publicans to control the drinking habits of policemen. This was done by passing a by-law which stated:

That if any Victualler, Publican, or other person, Selling, Ale or Beer or any Spirituous or other liquors within this Borough, or any person in his or her employ shall knowingly entertain or harbour in his, her, or their house, habitation, shop or premises, any Constable or Policeman of this Borough during any of the hours or times appointed for such Constable or Policeman to be on duty, every such Victualler, Publican, or other person so offending shall for every such offence forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding the sum of five pounds.¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that this by-law had any positive effect. Indeed no substantial evidence of it being repeatedly enforced has been found and the by-law was rescinded in March 1858.¹⁵⁹

The appointments figures also show some discernible trends but they are less amenable to close scrutiny than the dismissals figures. This is because the level of appointments was affected by more than merely the number of dismissals. For example, appointments could be made as a result of policemen resigning, retiring, dying, being allowed to resign, being invalided out, and increases in manpower. The Watch Committee minutes do not consistently or fully record the policemen who departed from the Hull Police for any of the above reasons. There is a particular problem consistently differentiating

¹⁵⁸ KHRO, TCM 1, Hull Cor. Min., 9 Oct. 1836. This was the sixth by-law of the council but later became the seventh by-law on 3 Jan. 1838. See TCM 2, 3 Jan. 1838.

¹⁵⁹ KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Corp. Min., 4 Mar. 1858.

the policemen who resigned from those who were allowed to resign: the information was not uniformly recorded. The difference here is important because for a policeman to be allowed to resign carried an implication of unfitness. Nevertheless, with these reservations noted it is possible to explain why appointments were high in some years. Again 1836 stands out because it was the year in which the Hull Police was formed and great difficulty was experienced in finding suitable recruits. There is no obvious reason why the figure should be relatively high in 1846 since this was not a year when the force expanded in number but it did in 1857 and 1861 and the figures for these years are the second and third highest respectively. One can argue that there was some correlation between appointments and dismissals in 1836, 1857 and 1861.

If the Hull Police was atypical in having so many long-serving policemen comparatively soon after its formation it was probably also atypical in having a relatively good disciplinary record, with a correspondingly low level of dismissals. However a note of caution needs to be raised here on two counts. First, the point made above concerning the absence of reliable data on the number of policemen who were allowed to resign is relevant, since it is possible that dismissals remained low because many unsatisfactory policemen were allowed to resign instead. Second, perhaps the dismissal rate was low because the Watch Committee did not dismiss enough policemen who warranted this punishment. This may give a slightly more flattering impression of the Hull Police than is justified. The first observation is difficult to prove or disprove; the available evidence is simply not detailed enough even to decide the balance of probability let alone make an authoritative statement. However, it is easier to discount the second observation because by contemporary standards there were comparatively few serious breaches of police rules and regulations. No evidence has been found of significant numbers of Hull policemen who escaped dismissal when guilty of serious misconduct or malpractice. Of course a few examples have been discovered of policemen who were possibly fortunate to avoid dismissal and these are included below. A small number of policemen

were dismissed for serious offences and those mentioned, while not a complete list, are the most important cases. For example, PC McKee was dismissed for being found in possession of a stolen watch which he had tried to pawn.¹⁶⁰ PC Bland was dismissed for attempting to pass a counterfeit coin to Mrs Cliff of Bowling Green Court.¹⁶¹ PC Ticklepenny was dismissed 'for having prompted a Prisoner [his wife, who was convicted of cruelty to a child] in the Police Court yesterday to assert a falsehood for the purpose of defeating the ends of justice.'¹⁶² The *Hull Advertiser* alleged that Mrs Ticklepenny 'took in washing', a means of earning money which was frequently frowned upon by Watch Committees and senior police officers because, in their opinion, it could lower the public image of policemen and their families and bring them into contact with disreputable characters. PC Collingwood was dismissed for having been convicted in Lincolnshire in 1862 of being a 'rogue and vagabond'.¹⁶³

Then there is the case of PCs Killick and Sizer: Killick was reported for being off his beat in Crown Court near Dock Street in the company of a prostitute and Sizer. Killick took 'improper liberties with Elizabeth Gibson in Crown Court Dock Street' and Sizer kept watch until Killick 'fulfilled his purpose.' Both men were dismissed from the force.¹⁶⁴ Probably the most serious dismissal involving a policeman above the rank of constable was the case of Sergeant Greaves, the police clerk, who was dismissed in 1864 for misappropriating money.¹⁶⁵ Although the charges for which PC James was dismissed were not especially serious, one of his breaches of regulations indicates how enterprising

¹⁶⁰ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 25 Apr. 1846.

¹⁶¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 14, 19 Jul. 1854.

¹⁶² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 7 Oct. 1848; KHPL, HA 13 Oct. 1848.

¹⁶³ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 22 Aug. 1866.

¹⁶⁴ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 26, 27 Sep. 1862.

¹⁶⁵ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 6 Jan. 1864.

policemen could be in their efforts to supplement their earnings. James was partly dismissed for being absent from duty and in a beer house but he had also been reported 'for receiving money from persons for calling them up on a morning contrary to the police regulations and for denying statements which were proved to have been made by him to the Chief Constable in the presence of the Inspectors and his Sergeant.¹⁶⁶ This was a relatively easy way for policemen to make a few extra shillings per week but in doing so they could be diverted from their duties on the beat. Some of the dismissals are comical, such as that of PC Jackson who was dismissed for being absent from his beat in the early hours of 18 April 1866 and when found was laid asleep worse for liquor on a manure heap in a stable yard.¹⁶⁷

On a small number of occasions police constables and officers who were disciplined were probably fortunate not to be dismissed. One such officer was Inspector Patrick Coulehan, who was involved in two serious disciplinary matters in 1850 and 1851. Coulehan was demoted to sergeant in 1850 for retaining some lost property in his possession for over twelve months.¹⁶⁸ When, in 1851, it was discovered that Sergeant Coulehan and three other policemen had been in a house where a robbery had been committed and not reported it, he was probably fortunate to be punished with only a severe reprimand (for more on Coulehan's police career see Chapter 6).¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, these are rare exceptions to the Hull Police's strict disciplinary policy. Two constables who found themselves in trouble were PCs Grace and Billney. In April 1853 Grace was only reprimanded for having been fined 10s. plus costs by the magistrates for assaulting a man in Mill Street one afternoon. Billney, who was with Grace at the time, was likewise only reprimanded for not giving his evidence in court in a satisfactory manner and no further

¹⁶⁶ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 14 Feb. 1865.

¹⁶⁷ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 18 Apr. 1866.

¹⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 15 May 1850.

¹⁶⁹ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 5 Mar. 1851.

action was taken against Billney when the Watch Committee discovered that he had been sentenced to four months imprisonment at Beverley Quarter Sessions for his part in a riot at Sunk Island before he joined the force.¹⁷⁰ However, it must be stressed that this case is extremely atypical as the Watch Committee and McManus usually met breaches of rules and regulations with punishments which reflected the severity of the offence. Unfortunately it is not clear why Billney was allowed to remain in the force after this information came to light. He did not continue as a policeman for much longer because only three months later he was allowed to resign, an indication that the Watch Committee and McManus were far from satisfied with his conduct.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile Grace, the constable fined by the magistrates for assault, showed himself to be a capable policeman. He was promoted to sergeant in September 1861 and then to inspector in April 1866.¹⁷²

The swift action taken by the Watch Committee against PC Collingwood thirteen years later (the ex-vagrant mentioned above) may indicate that it adopted a tougher policy to deal with constables who had hidden something criminal, embarrassing or unsavoury from their past. It is not possible to confirm this because no other cases have been discovered of policemen who were dismissed for having prior convictions. Another policeman who was probably fortunate not to be dismissed was PC Samuel Jackson (not the Jackson mentioned previously) who was only cautioned by the chairman of the Watch Committee for being found guilty of assaulting his wife and ordered to find a surety and pay costs.¹⁷³ However Jackson was dismissed from the force six weeks later for being absent from duty, drunk

¹⁷⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 23 Apr. 1853.

¹⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Jul. 1853.

¹⁷² He had joined the Hull Police in May 1852, at the relatively old age of thirty-one, which may indicate that he had previous police or military experience. EYRO, Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Books, Hull Police, 1836-1876 & 1848-1883 [n.pag. & n.ref. for both].

¹⁷³ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 28 Jan. 1863.

and disorderly, and assaulting a fellow PC.¹⁷⁴ Thus it is significant that a number of policemen who perhaps should have been dismissed for serious misconduct were actually removed from the force, by one means or another, shortly after, including Billney and Jackson. Very few policemen above the rank of constable were ever dismissed from the Hull Police and furthermore only a small number had to answer truly serious disciplinary charges. Probably the most noteworthy case has already been mentioned, that of Sergeant Greaves. These inspectors, acting inspectors and sergeants would be some of the best, longest-serving and most experienced men in the force and therefore it is less conceivable that they would commit serious breaches of rules and regulations. All had risen to their positions largely on merit and thus would have demonstrated considerable capability as policemen. Also demotion would not only affect them financially, it would also undermine their status both inside and outside the force. Some of the most important disciplinary cases involving senior officers are cited below and it is fair to say that none of these warranted dismissal. For example, in 1857 Acting Inspector Farrow was reduced to sergeant for giving a false return of the night beats and in 1864 Sergeant Joshua Fitch Bentley was reduced to first class constable for being drunk when coming off duty at 9.00pm the previous evening and for being unable to account for his men.¹⁷⁵ Sergeant Mulligan was more fortunate in July 1853 when he was reduced to first class constable for being absent from his section from 2.30am until 5.00am and worse for liquor. Only two days later the Watch Committee decided to moderate his punishment by restoring him to his previous rank and giving him a severe reprimand instead, possibly because a sergeant with Mulligan's experience was sorely needed to help maintain the steadiness of the force in the wake of the police strike.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 9 Mar. 1863.

¹⁷⁵ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 25 Mar. 1857; TCM 196, 22 Dec. 1864.

¹⁷⁶ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min , 27, 29 Jul 1853.

Although the inspector involved in the following case did not face any disciplinary charge - because a regulation did not exist prohibiting his alleged action - it is relevant to mention the case since the Watch Committee acted to prevent any recurrence of this incident. In October 1856 the Stipendiary Magistrate, T. H. Travis, wrote to McManus about a worrying situation which had recently come to his attention. An inspector in the force, in fact the then police clerk, Inspector Yates, had been living in the house of a lawyer for a few months. The lawyer, a Mr William Stead, had his office in the house and the inspector's wife worked as a cleaner there.¹⁷⁷ Although Travis had no proof that legal work had been obtained by Stead as a result of this arrangement his attention was drawn by the large number of prosecutions conducted by the lawyer in the last month, which might fuel suspicions of malpractice. Travis regarded this lodging arrangement as 'very objectionable and should if possible be put a stop to. I have always understood that the Police are expressly forbidden to interfere in prosecutions except officially and that on no account should there be any appearance even of Attornies obtaining business thro' [sic] the instrumentality of the Police.'¹⁷⁸ The Watch Committee discussed the letter thoroughly and resolved unanimously that henceforth no policeman would be permitted to live in, or be responsible for, the house or premises of a lawyer, nor could his wife work for a lawyer in any capacity. Not surprisingly Stead reacted angrily to what he felt was a stain on his character. Replying to the accusation that he had obtained information from the inspector, Stead wrote: I have to inform you that whoever informed you that such is or was the case have told you a diabolical falsehood as I never heard a word from Mr Yates with respect to any Police business since he came here now near three months ago.' And he added in an interesting postscript, but without substantiating his claim: 'If the order had been made a year or two back it would I think have applied to your Superintendent.'¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com Min , 22 Oct. 1856.

¹⁷⁸ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com Min , 22 Oct. 1856

¹⁷⁹ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com Min., both at 29 Oct. 1856

The record of dismissals from, and appointments to, the Hull Police does not conclusively add weight to the proposition that the Hull Police was an effective and efficient force. A review of the total number of dismissals per annum reveals a set of figures which are relatively low in relation to the size of the force. Admittedly it is impossible to calculate a reliable figure for the number of constables who were allowed to resign. Moreover, the number of appointments to the force appears relatively high in many years and this probably indicates a problem obtaining enough suitable recruits who could withstand the rigours of the job and the disciplinary regime. All this must temper any positive assessment of the force as a whole. More encouragingly, there is enough evidence to state that discipline within the force was relatively strict; by one means or another unsuitable recruits were removed and large numbers of dismissed policemen were not reappointed. Furthermore, the number of long-serving policemen in post by the late 1840s does indicate that almost half of the 116 man force could withstand the demands of the job, with fifty-three men having accumulated between three and eleven years service; sixteen having the maximum figure, including Superintendent McManus.

Perceptions of the Police

It is important to place events in Hull in a national context. Hull, like many other towns, grew rapidly in the nineteenth century and had to tackle a whole host of economic and social problems, including water supply, public health and housing. Yet in contrast to many towns elsewhere in Yorkshire and Lancashire, Hull avoided the intense political, social and industrial unrest of the 1830s and forties. This may have been due to the town's geographical isolation from the manufacturing regions to the west and the relative absence in Hull of the factory system, which bred intense class hostility elsewhere. This meant that the policemen of Hull were not subjected to the same kind of challenging test as their colleagues in

Manchester, Leeds or Bradford who, at the behest of the governing classes, struggled to control the Anti-Poor Law Movement, the Factory Reform Movement and Chartism. Despite not having to confront and contain working class radical and reform movements there is no evidence to suggest that the Hull Police was in any way inadequate or ineffectual at this time. On the contrary, by the standards of the day it must be regarded as one of the best and most efficient borough forces in the country. The authorities in Hull certainly held their police force in high esteem and they believed that many policemen who had gained substantial experience of policing in the town had gone on to assume positions of responsibility elsewhere in the region (although corroborative evidence is not available to confirm this). At the annual review of 1851 the Mayor was confidently echoing the opinion of other councillors and magistrates when he said that 'A great many superintendents of the rural police in the East-Riding of Yorkshire and the northern part of Lincolnshire had formerly served in the Hull police force, and had, no doubt, materially profited by the good advice of the present superintendent of that efficient corps.'¹⁸⁰

The available evidence of public opinion, mostly expressed through the columns of the local newspapers and correspondence to the Watch Committee, does not establish emphatically that public opinion in the town was supportive towards the police. Indeed, there are good grounds for supposing that the majority of Hull's working class were anti-police because of the way the force sought to regulate all aspects of working class life, including drinking, entertainments and brutal sports. Unfortunately working class people from this era produced very few records of their everyday lives and no evidence has been uncovered about their attitudes towards the police. Evidence of middle class opinion is easier to find but even this can be fragmentary and incomplete - or produced by public figures who tended to be uncritical of the police. There is more evidence produced by this kind of middle class citizen than by the more ordinary bourgeois paterfamilias, whilst evidence generated by their wives is even rarer. Nevertheless, the

¹⁸⁰ KHPL, HA 9 May 1851.

evidence from middle class sources does reveal general trends in middle class opinion. At the very least middle class opinion was sympathetic towards the police, although there are persuasive reasons for supposing that it was highly supportive because of the force's avowed aim to tackle the 'condition of the streets'. The correspondent to the *Hull Advertiser*, writing under the pseudonym 'BENIGNUS', illustrates this trend in middle class opinion with his appeal to the 'gentry of Hull' and his criticism of the 'mob', traditionally a pejorative description of crowd behaviour:

Were it not for the spirit of reform which fortunately pervades the whole nation, and which is entertained in the breasts of the most enlightened abuses would go uncorrected, continue to disgust the humane, and impose upon the timid.

I most gladly submit it to the candid and impartial opinion of the gentry of Hull, whether their streets are not materially improved in respectability since the establishment of the Municipal Police.

In the Metropolis that body of men have proved to be of important and timely service in cases of disturbance of the public peace; and have, by their vigilance and activity, contributed much to mitigate the disastrous consequences of accidental fire, by keeping the mob from plundering the property rescued from the flames.

Now, in the towns which have followed the example of the capital in planting some well-disciplined and able-bodied men, we find that order and decency have supplied the place of riot and drunkenness, which before obstructed the ways of the peaceable.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ KHPL, HA 20 May 1836.

Although it is not entirely satisfactory for a historian to quote an unknown author - in this instance the opinions expressed could be those of the Mayor, the chairman of the Watch Committee or Superintendent McManus - it is probable that the above statements would have concurred with the opinions of a large proportion of Hull's middle class.

The Hull Police had to consolidate the impressive start it had made in 1836 by continually improving its efficiency and effectiveness and strengthening its relations with the public. However, the force was affected by the national mood and class relations, which were not conducive to such developments. The mid-nineteenth century police could achieve greater acceptance from the community - and hence greater success against crime through mutual co-operation - if they could cultivate an image of impartial professionalism, as the servant of all without *parti pris*. This was an ideal situation, however, rather than the actuality because working class opinion would remain at best suspicious of, at worst hostile to, the police for some years to come whilst that class remained *the* key target of police activity. Certainly whilst large sections of the working class were determined to change the fundamental structure of capitalist society they would not regard the police as their friends. Crucial to the process of community acceptance would be the police's strategies and tactics for combating crime and maintaining public order. Yet cultivating working class confidence in the Hull Police in this era was always going to be difficult, if not impossible, given the fact that it was under the political control of the Watch Committee and Hull Corporation, a middle class body elected on the basis of a property franchise. More importantly the operational priorities of the Hull Police were the result of a middle class agenda designed to control the behaviour of their social inferiors.

At the first annual review of the borough police in May 1837 it is noteworthy that the Mayor, Boswell Jalland, said he was 'extremely happy to bear testimony to their general good conduct,

and the efficiency which, under their able superintendent and other officers they had attained, and he trusted that nothing would occur during his mayoralty, which would give him any chance to alter the high opinion he entertained of them.¹⁸² Two years later, at the annual review of 1839, Alderman J. C. Parker, the first Mayor of the reformed council, commented on the need for good relations between the police and the citizenry when 'He urged upon them [the policemen] that they should cultivate the good opinion of the inhabitants of the town; the inhabitants owed the police much duty and kindness, which he trusted would be reciprocated by the police.'¹⁸³ At the annual review of 1841, the Mayor that year, Matthew Chalmers, expressed the magistrates' approval of the police's performance and gave a positive assessment of their role:

It gives me great pleasure to communicate to you that the magistrates have deputed me to express to you their satisfaction at the manner in which you have discharged your duties during the last twelve months, and I believe the same sentiments exist in a great majority of the townspeople. It is true - and where the police did their duty it is probably unavoidably so - that some of the bad disposed of the inhabitants have a feeling against the police; *but I am quite sure that you will always be supported by the respectable portion of the people of Hull[...]* *To your care is entrusted a large portion of the property in the town of Hull; and I am quite sure that you always will - as you have done hitherto - protect the lives and property of the inhabitants with the utmost zeal and assiduity.*¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² KHPL, HA 5 May 1837. A high opinion was also expressed by the former Mayor, Alderman Parker.

¹⁸³ KHPL, HA 3 May 1839.

¹⁸⁴ KHPL, HA 7 May 1841. Emphasis added to original.

However, Chalmers was probably exaggerating when he claimed that 'a great majority of the townspeople' were satisfied with the police, given the depth of working class animosity to police reform. The same criticism could be made against the Mayor in 1844, W. B. Carrick, who claimed that prejudice against the police 'has been, to a very considerable extent, done away with'.¹⁸⁵ It has been well documented in research by Storch and others, how working class resentment at police interference in their everyday lives remained strong until well past mid-century.¹⁸⁶ It is known that middle class opinion of the police was far more supportive and appreciative of their role. Carrick was a long-serving magistrate whose duties in this respect had naturally brought him into close contact with the police and this was probably the reason for his unequivocal confidence in, and support of, the force. He also made the interesting observation that there was one section of Hull's population who particularly appreciated the presence of the police:

I mean the ladies. Among them there exists a universal feeling of thankfulness. They are now able to leave a public meeting or a private party, and dare traverse the streets at a late hour, without fear or dread of annoyance or insult; and this is an improvement which none know better how to appreciate than they.¹⁸⁷

If the language used by Chalmers and Carrick is analysed in greater depth it is quite revealing. Allowing for the obvious hyperbole when praising the police, the acclamation is nevertheless genuine and heartfelt. Chalmer's references to 'the respectable portion of the people of Hull' is practically synonymous with the middle class and 'a large portion of the[ir] property in the town of Hull' is entrusted

¹⁸⁵ KHPL, HA 31 May 1844.

¹⁸⁶ See for example: Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57', *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975) 61-90, passim; Robert D. Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880', *Journal of Social History*, 9 (1976), 481-509, passim.

¹⁸⁷ KHPL, HA 31 May 1844.

to the care of the police, who have acted with the 'utmost zeal and assiduity.' Thus it is Chalmer's belief that the middle class can be well satisfied with the police's performance. Carrick's language is no less class specific, given that he expresses the thanks of the 'ladies' i.e. middle class ladies, not working class women. Thereby implying that the police's function is to provide protection for the one but not the other. The relative success of the Hull Police so soon after its formation, the impact which it had on crime and public order, was its most effective way of silencing those middle class critics who objected to reformed policing on the grounds of cost or the infringement of personal liberties - and there were a small number of these people in the early years of the force's existence. Remember one such critic on financial grounds in 1838 was Councillor John Gresham, who is mentioned above. Gresham, a member of the Watch Committee, proposed a scheme in February of that year which would have reduced police expenditure and involved making alterations to the force, including reducing its size. After a long discussion the Watch Committee decided by ten votes to one to reject his scheme. However Gresham gradually changed his views on policing and in 1846, when Mayor of the borough, he gave this opinion about the police at the annual review of that year:

He could not on that occasion refrain from looking back to the condition of the constabulary force of this borough eleven years ago, [before reform] and contrasting its ineffective state then to its present excellent discipline: it must be a matter of the greatest pleasure to the inhabitants generally to know that their persons and property are so well protected.¹⁸⁸

Praise for the police did not come only from members of Hull Corporation. It was not uncommon for members of the public to send letters to the Watch Committee or the Superintendent

¹⁸⁸ KHPL, HA 8 May 1846.

thanking or commending policemen and offering them a gratuity. The Watch Committee sometimes sent such letters to the press for possible publication. One such letter praising policemen, addressed to McManus and written by a pawnbroker, Thomas Cowham, a shopkeeper who would have frequent contact with the police, appeared in the Hull Advertiser in August 1843:

I shall feel greatly obliged to you by causing the inclosed [sic] sovereign to be given in equal proportions to the four following police officers[...]. I have witnessed their efficiency as police officers, and observed, with pleasure, their uniform civil behaviour; and I conceive it to be my duty to show, by some means, my approbation of their conduct, as I am fully persuaded that tradesmen in my line of business (pawnbrokers), are to a considerable extent benefitted [sic] by the unremitting vigilance which they have displayed.¹⁸⁹

Cowham concluded by praising McManus personally: 'Allow me to add, that in speaking approvingly of those under your direction, I must say that I am persuaded that the superintendence must be excellent where the efficiency of the corps under its care is so apparent as in the Hull Police.' Cowham's comments could be sincere but it is also highly likely that a pawnbroker would desire good relations with the police, his profession no doubt being subject to some form of supervision to check for stolen goods. As a final example it is interesting to note that in March 1848 three Hull policemen received a total of £2 16s. from Lord George Bentinck as a thank you for their work in discovering the persons who obtained money from him under false pretences.¹⁹⁰ Significantly, those quoted above who use the word 'efficiency' - and two do so, Jalland and Cowham - do not use it in the crude sense of cost efficiency, meaning policing at the least possible expense. Rather they mean competence or capability, with the stress on quality and outcome, not

¹⁸⁹ KHPL, HA 25 Aug. 1843.

¹⁹⁰ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 8 Mar. 1848.

outlay. Clearly to Jalland and Cowham efficiency hinged on the performance of the police in a practical not a financial sense. In their view, and here they may be representing a trend in middle class opinion, it was more important that the job of policing was done well rather than done cheaply. Remember this was definitely the view of the members of the Local Acts Committee who produced the first report on policing in 1836. They did not want the performance of the new police of Hull to be materially impaired by inadequate funding.¹⁹¹

In the period 1836 to 1866 the Hull Police as a whole was the subject of a serious complaint only once, regarding its performance and conduct at the Blanket Row Fire of 1857, (see Chapter 4) and this charge was withdrawn during the process of investigation. Even during the Police Strike of 1853 (see also Chapter 4) the opposing sides blamed either the Watch Committee and McManus or the striking policemen and their advisers, rather than the force as a whole. After 1836 various allegations continued to be made against individual policemen which were serious enough to warrant investigation by the Watch Committee. Several of these allegations were not upheld upon investigation and a couple are explained below because they shed some light on how far the committee was willing to go to maintain the good reputation of the police force. Although the Watch Committee minutes generally contain enough details to understand the substance of the complaint this is not always the case. A few complaints, generally lesser ones, are not recorded fully. It seems that neither the Watch Committee, nor McManus, kept a separate record of public complaints against policemen.¹⁹² This should not be regarded as evidence of any kind of cover-up or inefficient administration. There was no formalized police

¹⁹¹ KHPL, L352, *Kingston upon Hull Municipal Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report of the Committee on Local Acts, Police and the Powers, Prerogatives and Duties of the New Municipal Government', (1836), p. 8.

¹⁹² The service records of individual policemen give a brief description of their breaches of discipline and penalties imposed upon them but this does not differentiate between policemen who were reported by their colleagues or by members of the public. For more information on disciplinary charges see EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Books, Hull Police, 1836-1876, 1848-1883 & 1860-1920 [n.ref. for all three].

complaints procedure at this time and watch committees made their own ad hoc arrangements, which in Hull's case generally consisted of the committee (or one of its sub-committees) hearing the complaint, questioning the policeman or men involved and reaching a decision.

Enough information can be gleaned from some of the most interesting allegations to provide details of them. One case involved an allegation made against Inspector David Vickerman in an editorial in the *Hull Packet* in July 1837.¹⁹³ The editor alleged that Vickerman had threatened an enfranchised policeman, John North, to prevent him from voting for the Conservative candidate in a forthcoming parliamentary election. He also alleged that North had given up his job rather than submit to such threats. It was further alleged that the police had acted partially in the period before the election, clearly favouring the Whig-radical candidates by harassing Conservative supporters. However, no credible evidence was quoted to support these accusations; they were almost totally unsubstantiated and consisted of little more than hearsay. Perhaps such politically-motivated accusations by Tory journalists against Vickerman, and the police in general, were only to be expected less than two years after the Tories had been humiliated at the 1835 municipal elections. Nevertheless, the Watch Committee took the investigation of the accusation seriously by first assembling the force and asking if any man had been threatened by the Inspector, to which there was a negative response. Next, Vickerman himself was examined and denied the charge. Finally, the committee wrote to the editor of the *Packet* requesting him to substantiate his charge so that if proved the Inspector could be punished. The editor did not substantiate the charge and the committee concluded that an unfounded accusation had been made against Vickerman, there being no evidence to suggest that he had threatened any policeman in an attempt to influence his vote. However, the Watch Committee gave the assurance that should any evidence present itself the incident would be reinvestigated. In an effort to maintain public confidence in the police and eradicate all

¹⁹³ KHPL, *HP* 21 Jul. 1837.

suspicion of a cover-up, the committee obtained voluntarily a signed declaration from ex-PC John North. However, North had not given up his job, as the editor of the *Packet* alleged, rather he had been recently dismissed for drunkenness. His signed declaration stated that neither Vickerman nor anybody else had tried to influence his vote at a parliamentary election. A copy of the declaration was forwarded to the editor.¹⁹⁴

The allegation made against PC101 Hiram Wright in 1848 deserves close attention because a case was brought against him in the magistrates court. Wright was charged before the magistrates by George Headley, a whitesmith, with violently assaulting him and stealing two £10 notes and four or five sovereigns between 11.00pm and midnight on Saturday 7 September 1848. Two other policemen and two members of the public gave evidence that Wright was at Blanket Row police station at that time so he was discharged by the magistrates 'without the least stain upon his character.' Afterwards the Watch Committee resolved that it should take 'some steps on the above report in order that the Police may be protected from all unfounded attacks of the nature Reported' and it further resolved that legal action should be commenced against Headley for the 'unfounded prosecution and false imprisonment of PC Wright for highway robbery.'¹⁹⁵ It appears that the Watch Committee was determined to press on with a prosecution against Headley unless he made a satisfactory apology. By April 1849 he had still not made one so the committee further resolved to carry out its decision to prosecute him. It must have pressed ahead with legal action and won its case because finally in November 1849 Headley sent a letter of apology which the committee was prepared to accept and it requested that the bailiff be withdrawn from Headley's house and the execution now in force be held over him 'in terrorem'. The Watch Committee passed the letter of apology to the newspapers for publication. The legal costs for prosecuting Headley

¹⁹⁴ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 27 Jul. 1837.

¹⁹⁵ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 13 Sep. 1848.

amounted to £73 11s. 3d. and were paid out of the Sick Fund - a considerable sum to expend in order to protect the honour and reputation of the Hull Police as a whole and an individual policeman from malicious accusations.¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately it is not known why Headley made the allegation against Wright in the first place. None of the public complaints or allegations made against individual policemen in this period, whether upheld or rejected, seriously affected the performance and conduct of the Hull Police and most must be regarded as relatively trivial when compared with the criticisms which were directed at some other borough police forces. For example, there was a public scandal in York in 1855 when a long-serving police inspector was forced to resign after it emerged that he had for many years owned the lease on some cottages which were rented out to prostitutes.¹⁹⁷ Certainly it is noteworthy that the Hull Police was not subjected to a concerted anti-police campaign at any time during its first thirty years; nor was it the target of a co-ordinated wave of public criticism, either popular or journalistic. Relatively little criticism was ever made of the new police in Hull's press and even less of McManus, despite Hull possessing newspapers which were as vigorous and politically competitive as any other large provincial town. All this serves to highlight the fact that compared to other towns and cities policing in Hull was a relatively uncontentious subject in this era which did not arouse the intense public opposition experienced elsewhere.

The Hull Police could be both efficient and officious and one alien who was caught unawares by its officiousness was a Dr Biermann of Hanover, a medical practitioner, whose unfortunate story reached the pages of *The Times* in November 1859.¹⁹⁸ His case came to public attention when a

¹⁹⁶ For more details see KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 15, 22 Nov., 6 Dec. 1848, 25 Apr., 21, 28 Nov., 26 Dec. 1849, 30 Jan. 1850.

¹⁹⁷ Roger Swift, *Police Reform in Early Victorian York, 1835-1856* (York: York University Borthwick Paper, 1988) p. 23; Frances Finnigan, *Poverty and Prostitution: A study of Victorian prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 63-65.

¹⁹⁸ BJL, *The Times* 4, 8, 15 Nov. 1859.

correspondent's letter relating the events surrounding the arrest and detention of this Hanoverian doctor in Hull was published in the newspaper. The correspondent reported that the series of events began in the early hours of 20 October 1859 when Biermann arrived in Hull by boat. Before he could disembark he was arrested by a policeman on suspicion of being one Dr Tiemann, a doctor of law, who was wanted by the authorities in Berlin on a charge of forgery. A companion of Biermann's who vouched for his identity was also arrested. Biermann had much proof of his identity in his possession including his passport, diploma as a doctor of medicine, baptismal certificate and a parcel of letters addressed to him but it seems that all this evidence was ignored. Biermann was taken to the station, strip-searched, deprived of his possessions, brought before Chief Constable McManus later that Friday morning, and then before the magistrates later in the day, who ordered that he be detained.¹⁹⁹ Technically, at this time he passed out of the hands of the Hull Police into the care of the prison authorities. He was not discharged, along with his companion, until Saturday afternoon having spent most of his time in cells inhabited by common criminals. Biermann then made his way to London to complete the final stage of his journey to Madeira. According to the newspaper story he was only discharged because no extradition treaty existed between England and Prussia, not because the authorities became convinced of his identity. There was no public declaration of Biermann's innocence, nor that of his companion. There was no apology from the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Travers, nor from the Prussian Vice-Consul in Hull, a Mr Atkinson, at whose instigation all the English officials had acted. The correspondent ended his account by reporting that Biermann had lost no time in bringing this matter to the attention of the Hanoverian ambassador and was intent on engaging a lawyer to get him financial compensation.²⁰⁰ A few days later, the Clerk to the Justices in Hull, William Ayre, was able to write to *The Times* to inform its readers that the case had been referred to the Hanoverian and Prussian authorities and concluded to Biermann's satisfaction, and the

¹⁹⁹ BJJ, *The Times* 4 Nov. 1859.

²⁰⁰ BJJ, *The Times* 4 Nov. 1859.

doctor attributed no blame to the stipendiary magistrate.²⁰¹

On 24 October Biermann had sent a parcel to Travers, enclosing two books and a letter which revealed some of his feelings about the whole experience. The letter was originally written in German and printed in *The Times* and part of it is translated below

Although I have been treated severely and unjustly in Hull, I nevertheless got to know people whom I esteem highly. You belong to the latter through your honourable impartiality. As a token of my respect I send you through my sister one of the classical German works as a friendly keepsake. I did notice that you are interested in our language.²⁰²

It would appear that the police acted over-zealously in the Biermann case. Although it cannot be held responsible for what happened to him and his companion after they were handed over to the prison authorities, it is fair to reiterate that he was arrested and detained when ample proof existed as to his true identity and therefore his innocence. It was probably not good police practice to detain Biermann without checking that an extradition treaty existed between Prussia and England, nor to bring him before a magistrate without confirming that he really was the suspect Tiemann. Perhaps the whole incident illustrates the considerable problems which the police and prison authorities had in identifying wanted persons and recidivists who were unfamiliar.

²⁰¹ BJL, *The Times* 15 Nov. 1859.

²⁰² BJL, *The Times* 15 Nov. 1859. I am grateful to Mrs Gabrielle Ramsden for translating this letter.

It was mentioned above that public statements about the police tended to be made by middle class public figures, for example councillors and aldermen with a political link to the Hull Police, and for this reason their opinions must always be analysed with caution. Yet T. H. Travers, the Stipendiary Magistrate, was more removed from the police. Although transparently he was part of the law and order machinery in the borough, he was not a member of the corporation, so had no involvement in the management of the police, and he was independent of the borough magistrates, who were nominated by the corporation. Travers, by virtue of his post, would be in an ideal position to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of the borough police, being thoroughly versed in issues of law and order. Having no direct link with the police force, his public statements about it might be more impartial. Therefore his comments at the Hull Police's annual review of 1856 may be regarded as particularly striking evidence concerning its performance:

They [the policemen] had invariably shown great forbearance, but more particularly had this been noticeable on several recent occasions, where that forbearance had been exercised, without which the police force would be nothing at all. He regretted that several of these occasions were instances where crowds of people had assembled and endeavoured to rescue prisoners, but, as he had before said, the police at such times had exercised the utmost forbearance, and their conduct reflected the greatest credit on the Chief Constable's admirable training. He could scarcely express his humble and entire approbation of the force, and promised so long as he could to afford them the utmost protection which laid in his power[...]When he [the Stipendiary] looked round him, and saw the admirable order which prevailed there that day he thought it could only be attributed to his [the Chief Constable's] care and conduct (cheers).²⁰³

²⁰³ KHPL, HA 3 May 1856.

At the same review the *Hull Advertiser* noted that 'the encomiums subsequently passed upon them by the speakers are richly deserved.'²⁰⁴

Although Travers was impressed by the conduct and performance of the Hull Police he was quite prepared to be critical of the police in public and this makes his testimony more plausible overall. He accepted that the Hull Police was not perfect, it had faults and weaknesses just like any other force but his readiness to state these publicly while still acknowledging its superiority is a very realistic position to adopt. Typical of his public comments are those which he made at the annual review of 1864, which were reported in the *Hull Times*. Having compared carefully various forces Travers concluded:

there were faults in all, as might be expected, but he thought those faults did not exist here to the same extent as in other places. This was due to the careful manner in which they observed the instructions given to them, and to the great care that was taken by those who had the superintendence and management of them - the chief constable and the chairman and members of the watch committee.²⁰⁵

In 1862 at the same annual event he spoke about the conduct of the police over the previous twelve months, testifying 'to the admirable manner in which they had performed their duties. Unless they had performed their duties satisfactorily, complaints would no doubt be made to the magistrates, and the very

²⁰⁴ KHPL, *HA* 3 May 1856.

²⁰⁵ KHPL, *HT* 7 May 1864.

few complaints on this score only proved the general excellency of the men.²⁰⁶ The following year, 1863, at the annual inspection conducted by the constabulary inspector, Travers, made these observations:

If he recollected one or two instances during the year where he had found it his duty to reprimand in severe terms some of the constables, it had been in very exceptional cases, and the force on the whole did its duty in a most exemplary manner. He trusted that the same good conduct would always be exhibited amongst them, and he did not believe that in all the more valuable points which mark a policeman's character any body of men in the kingdom could be found superior, if equal, to the Hull force. He therefore exhorted them not to be influenced by any bad example on the part of a few - it was perhaps impossible that the force could be quite free from evil of this sort, but they should all endeavour to eradicate it.²⁰⁷

In conclusion, he added his tribute to that of the constabulary inspector saying that the men's conduct reflected great credit on their officers and Chief Constable McManus, whose career as the chief police officer of Hull will now be examined.

The Career of Andrew McManus

It is impossible to discuss the progress which the Hull Police made in the years 1836 to 1866 without assessing the fundamental and essential role played by Superintendent, later Chief Constable, Andrew

²⁰⁶ KHPL, *HT* 3 May 1862.

²⁰⁷ KHPL, *HT* 2 May 1863.

McManus. He led the force by example, moulded it, created its quintessential character and was probably more responsible than any one else for making it the institution it became. He was certainly held in high esteem by the borough authorities. For example in 1839 the magistrates made him Chief Constable of the borough (although this did not become his official title at the time), following the resignation of the previous occupant of the post. McManus received an additional sum of £20 per annum (without any extra income from fees) for doing this job, the most important task being the collection of the borough and watch rates on behalf of the Treasurer of Hull Corporation.²⁰⁸ The salary which McManus was paid for commanding the Hull Police is a good indication of how the Watch Committee and Hull Corporation regarded his performance in that role. When McManus was appointed in 1836 his salary was £150 per annum, plus £34 in allowances towards his house rent and uniform (see Chapter 2). In October 1836, a mere six months after his appointment, the Watch Committee decided that his salary should be raised to £200 per annum with effect from March 1837, the end of his first year in office.²⁰⁹ His salary remained unchanged until the 1850s but at the time of the first inspection in 1857 his income was recorded as an inclusive sum of £274 per year. The 1862 inspection report quotes his salary as £304 per annum and during 1865 it was increased further to £350 per annum.²¹⁰ The later pay rises appear to have been granted in recognition of the force being certified as efficient and therefore eligible to receive several thousand pounds in government grants. Thus over the course of twenty-nine years his salary rose by more than 130 per cent. It is inconceivable that a majority of councillors and aldermen would have approved a career pay rise of this magnitude had they not been completely satisfied with McManus's performance in office.

²⁰⁸ KHPL, HA 1 Nov. 1839; KHRO, TCM 2, Watch Com. Min., 1 Jan. 1840. McManus did not use Chief Constable as his official title until May 1856 when the Watch Committee resolved that he should forthwith be known as the Chief Constable of the Hull Police. For all dates before May 1856 McManus is referred to as the Superintendent, thereafter as the Chief Constable. See KHRO, TCM 192, 21 May 1856.

²⁰⁹ KHRO, TCM 188, 18 Oct. 1836.

²¹⁰ BJL, PP, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, p. 82; PP, 1862 (28), XLV, p. 70; PP, 1866 (54), XXXIV, p. 102. In November 1848 the Watch Committee minutes wrongly give his salary as £300 per annum instead of £200 per annum. See KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 8 Nov. 1848.

Praise of McManus came from many different quarters and the editorial which appeared in the *Hull Advertiser* in October 1840, in spite of its hyperbole, is typical of the accolades he received:

We need hardly say that to Mr M'Manus, [sic] the Chief Constable and Superintendent, the praise is eminently due for having placed the local constabulary on so efficient a footing. We are moved by no partisan feeling when we express our belief that there is not a more competent and impartial officer in his department within the limits of the kingdom. A similar opinion appears to be entertained elsewhere, as we perceive, by the report of the proceedings at the special sessions at Wakefield, respecting the introduction of a constabulary force into the West Riding. The Rev. Mr Cooke, who was in favour of the adoption of the Act passed last session, particularly referred to the evidence of the Hull Superintendent before the Constabulary Force Commissioners, which went to show that since thieves had been driven out of towns they located in the country, and that crime could not be diminished without an extended system of town and country police.²¹¹

McManus's evidence to the Royal Commissioners inquiring into the creation of a rural constabulary force in 1839 reveals a great deal about his ideas on policing and assessment of criminal problems. He made some incisive comments about the areas in which police reform could be undertaken. McManus, along with other senior police officers from large boroughs, noted an apparent increase in the crime of embezzlement and other similar offences. One of the causes of this - increasing temptation - was linked with improvements to the transport network, particularly the building of railways, which facilitated a speedier escape to other parts of the country or abroad. McManus argued, along with other policemen, that this could be remedied by appointing proper policemen at railway stations who would observe

²¹¹ KHPL, HA 2 Oct. 1840.

suspicious characters. It was his conviction that this would 'greatly diminish the temptations of persons meditating thefts and planning escape, to be aware that at each station where they stopped there would be a policeman by whom they might be noticed, for though he might not apprehend them, he might recognize them and aid in tracing them.'²¹² McManus and the other officers were in effect arguing for the creation of a rudimentary national transport police.

The Royal Commissioners, especially, Edwin Chadwick, have been much criticized by historians for exaggerating the amount of crime committed by migratory criminals, many of whom, it was argued, conducted their nefarious activities over long distances. Much of this contemporary obsession with the migratory criminal has rightly been challenged by historians. Yet an analysis of McManus's evidence to the Commissioners reveals that a certain kind of 'migratory criminal' operating over short distances could be a nuisance in specific circumstances such as those which prevailed in Hull. The town, by common agreement, had a large and effective police force of ninety-four men in 1839 to police a population of approximately 62,000. Nevertheless Hull was relatively isolated from other major towns²¹³ and the intervening county, the East Riding, was poorly policed before 1856, when the county adopted the 1839 Rural Constabulary Act. Therefore Hull and its immediate environs was an archipelago of effective policing in an exceptionally expansive and unpatrolled sea, which had some very rich fishing grounds available to the migratory criminal who was prepared to trawl a few miles away from his island home. Thus it does seem perfectly plausible that the enterprising and intelligent Hull criminals would ply their trade in the town's rural hinterland, beyond the immediate reach of the Hull Police. McManus, in his examination before the Royal Commissioners, asserted that some Hull criminals were doing just this,

²¹² B JL, *PP*, 1839 [169], XIX, First Report of Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into Establishing a Constabulary Force in England and Wales, p. 55.

²¹³ York is some thirty-five miles distant, Sheffield and Leeds are over fifty and sixty miles away respectively, with only the latter having a sizeable police force in the 1830s.

listing two burglars, eight housebreakers, thirty-seven pickpockets, and forty-three common thieves who were known to the police. McManus stated that: 'They can rob in the country with less difficulty than they can in town, so that they take the country as their choice.'²¹⁴ These criminals would leave Hull early in the morning and return at night or they might even stay away for several nights. His men on patrol regularly saw them entering and leaving the town and the farmers also knew who they were but the problem was catching these people whilst they were committing crimes (or had stolen property in their possession), since they tended to abide by the law when in Hull. On being asked whether the thieves lived riotously in beer houses McManus was categorical:

No, they are quiet and regular, always regular from the time they come in till they go again. We hardly ever have a thief locked up for drunkenness, as if they were afraid of getting drunk for fear of being taken into custody. They are rich in their living. They go to their butchers and tradesmen the same as persons in decent circumstances would, and order a joint of meat. They are regular in going out. As soon as the money is spent they go into the country, perhaps five in a gang going off together.²¹⁵

The lack of police in the rural district was a great inconvenience to the Hull Police for two reasons. First the force had to try to arrest these offenders if evidence of their wrongdoing came to light and offer some assistance to victims of crime from the county if they came to Hull in search of their stolen goods. Second, the Hull Police could be smaller in size if a rural police existed, especially if the two forces were amalgamated. The rural section could then consist of a mounted element, which McManus would have deployed as follows:

²¹⁴ B JL, *PP*, 1839 [169], XIX, p. 142.

²¹⁵ B JL, *PP*, 1839 [169], XIX, p. 142.

On the main coach roads, I should like to have a communication with horses; one man to have four or five miles to go every night and another to meet him, so that if a thief rode by in his horse and gig, those men would be after him; and it would also prevent a great deal of poaching.²¹⁶

Although clearly an ingenious and ambitious plan of policing to have an amalgamated force for the urban and rural area, with a mounted element, the plan went no further than this. There is no evidence to confirm that McManus ever formally put this plan to the Watch Committee but even if the committee and the council had supported the initiative it is highly unlikely that the East Riding authorities would ever have done so. They evinced a deep-seated hostility to police reform over a number of years: when the Rural Constabulary Act was passed in 1839 the county rejected its adoption and did not reverse this decision until 1856 - and then only because the impending passage of the County and Borough Police Bill would have compelled it to create a county constabulary force.

Individuals who praised the Hull Police frequently spoke of its strict disciplinary code and identified this with the pervasive influence of McManus. The comments of the Mayor, B. M. Jalland, (one of the two men selected to appoint a police superintendent in 1836) at the annual review of 1847 are representative of this body of opinion and a powerful testimony to McManus's indispensability:

I never go into large towns where I do not observe the state of the police force, and I have no hesitation in saying that even in London I am never afraid of comparing you with the police force there. At all times the

²¹⁶ B JL, *PP*, 1839 [169], XIX, p. 143.

comparison has been highly to your advantage, and I cannot but ascribe this to the excellent discipline which you have been under by your superintendent, and I am sure that that circumstance is a passport to any officer going from this to any other town. I do not believe that a better superintendent exists in the country [acclamation]. We are indebted to you for the protection of our persons and property, and for the maintenance of good order in the town, which we enjoy in a high degree.²¹⁷

As a strict disciplinarian and upholder of police authority it is not surprising that a man in McManus's position would make enemies both inside and outside the force. He was bound to arouse the opposition of both some of his own men who would not submit to his authority (and private citizens). This happened intermittently during his thirty year career in Hull. As for his enforcement of discipline within the force, the previous section dealing with this topic judges him to be firm but fair on the whole. Not surprisingly his own personal conduct was generally above reproach and there is perhaps only one occasion during his tenure of office when his conduct could be unequivocally and seriously criticized, namely before the police strike in 1853 (see Chapter 4).²¹⁸

It is sometimes dangerous to construct an historical argument that is postulated on the basis of the 'great man' tradition of historical scholarship. Individuals are only representative of social classes and they are influenced by the ideology and milieu of their particular class. Nevertheless individuals can change the course of local history in a way that is comparable to their capacity to alter national and international history. One way in which they can facilitate this is through their ideas and

²¹⁷ KHPL, *HA* 7 May 1847.

²¹⁸ A police constable did falsely accuse McManus of having an affair with his wife but the Watch Committee investigated the charge thoroughly and exonerated McManus. For more information see KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 16 Aug. 1848; KHPL, *HA* 18 Aug. 1848.

beliefs and their life experiences, which interact and influence how much they ultimately make history or are made by it. Of course ideas and beliefs and life experiences are heavily influenced by one's environment, social origins, and class position. Little is known about McManus before he joined the Metropolitan Police in 1829 other than that he was born in Ireland in 1799, had served in the Connaught Rangers and was Roman Catholic.²¹⁹ Although many senior police officers had liberal, reforming sympathies in this era - which is only to be expected given that the politicians who favoured police reform were generally liberal or Whig - McManus's philosophy of policing and law and order was distinctly liberal and progressive. At the annual review of 1845 he probably gave the clearest statement of his ideas and beliefs which were reported in the *Hull Advertiser*:

One great object of the body [the Hull Police] was the prevention of crime, and for his part he [McManus] was better satisfied with the police officer who prevented the commission of an offence than with him, however expert, who permitted the crime to be committed, and afterwards pursued and secured the delinquent. He felt strongly on this point, for in the first place, if crime be prevented, the poor unfortunate being who has been tempted to attempt it, may possibly never be so tempted again, and thus a character and prospect in life may be saved from ruin; then, in the second place, there is the cost of maintaining the prisoner in custody till the trial; thirdly, the heavy expenses of prosecution; fourthly, in many cases the costs and anxiety of the prisoner and his friends in the defence; fifthly, the expenses of his punishment, if convicted; besides all which, the great probability that the party, once incarcerated, will come out of prison, if he come at all, more contaminated than when he went in.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Clarke, *Policemen of Hull*, p. 14.

²²⁰ KHPL, HA 9 May 1845.

Even though McManus publicly asserted that no favouritism existed in the police force when promotion was being considered: 'The prospect of promotion was presented to all; neither in his own breast, nor with the members of the Watch Committee, did any favouritism exist; the sterling man would rise by his own merit - and merit alone was the passport to advancement.'²²¹ It is possible that his disciplinarian mentality and outlook generally impelled him to reject, or ignore, for promotion those policemen who had questioned his authority or judgement. Certainly this was one reason why the policemen who went on strike in 1853 did not negotiate with McManus and the Watch Committee directly. Undoubtedly McManus is not above criticism as events at the time of the police strike of 1853 indicate. The young, conscientious Metropolitan Police inspector who arrived in Hull in 1836 remained an effective policeman and outstanding leader throughout his career but occasionally he made errors at critical times. Perhaps he became too indolent for a short period in the 1850s and lost the faith of some of his men. Perhaps also his own personal views on the proper conduct of a senior police officer changed. For example, in November 1836 the Watch Committee granted him the fees due for summoning juries for coroner's inquests. At the time McManus displayed a good deal of professional idealism by declining to accept the money, which he explained in the following terms:

I beg to acquaint you for the information of the Watch Committee.

That I respectfully decline accepting any fees, for any trouble I may have for Summoning Coroners Juries. In my opinion fees are at all times bad but more especially in the Police, as there is a wide field open for malpractices.²²²

²²¹ KHPL, HA 3 May 1850.

²²² KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 15 Nov. 1836.

This, it should be remembered, was in an era when some borough police chiefs were willing, and able, to supplement their income in such a way. However McManus must have changed his view because in 1856 the Watch Committee minutes reveal that the committee raised his salary by £20 per annum with effect from 1 November to compensate him for the loss of his only source of fee income. This was derived from the granting and transfer of licenses for public houses, which he was no longer entitled to receive under the terms of the eighth section of the County and Borough Police Act 1856,²²³ it prohibiting the receipt of fees by policemen.²²⁴ Clearly this was only a very small source of fee income compared with the sums which other senior policemen earned in this way. Consider for example McManus's opposite number in York, Superintendent Robert Chalk (another former Metropolitan policeman), who had an annual salary of £155 but allegedly received additional income in the form of fees and expenses which amounted to a considerable (three figure) sum. By 1855 Chalk was an affluent man and owned an eighteen-acre farm near York, allegedly purchased with this extra income.²²⁵ Even though McManus had clearly compromised his view about receiving fee income this example does put McManus's £20 emolument into perspective.

It is illustrative to quote the minor cases of negligence and misconduct for which McManus was admonished by the Watch Committee in order to demonstrate that they were minor. The first incident occurred in 1853 several months before the police strike. The circumstances are not fully clear but it appears that the magistrates complained to the Watch Committee that McManus had acted negligently in failing to deal properly with two items of correspondence.²²⁶ The second occurred in March

²²³ 19 & 20 Vict. c. 69.

²²⁴ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 22 Oct. 1856.

²²⁵ Swift, *Police Reform*, p. 17.

²²⁶ See KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 9 Feb. 1853.

1854 when he was censured for losing an important account book detailing the fees of the magistrates' clerk. The book was subsequently found but it appears that McManus made a clumsy attempt to blame the loss on another policeman. The Watch Committee decided 'that the conduct of Mr McManus has been highly culpable, and that he has betrayed the greatest carelessness in the discharge of his duties' and requested its chairman 'to call in Mr McManus and make known to him the opinion of the Watch Committee, and to severely admonish him for his neglect on this special occasion and on his habits generally.' It is possible that during the early 1850s, especially from 1853-54 McManus may have become indolent or careless and paid less attention to police matters than was required. He was criticized in the report of the sub-committee which examined the organization of the force in the wake of the police strike (see Chapter 4). McManus' behaviour during these last two cases indicates that he made mistakes and was inconsistent like any ordinary man but this does not undermine the cardinal contribution he made to maintaining the effectiveness of the Hull Police in this era. Despite these mistakes McManus's conduct was never subjected to serious public criticism, unlike that of York's police chief, Robert Chalk. Superintendent Chalk made a promising start when he took command of the York Police in 1841, reorganizing the force to improve its effectiveness. Unfortunately in later years he became disillusioned and complacent, probably because of the council's long-term reluctance to increase the size of the force and the hostile campaign against him in at least one of the local papers, which denounced him as an outsider. Chalk personally assumed a number of paid non-police functions which made him a wealthy man. This undermined his leadership of the force and thus its overall efficiency and he had lost the confidence of many of his men before his resignation in 1862.²²⁷

Following the police strike and the other incidents McManus now had to rise to the challenge of reasserting his authority over the force and regain the respect of the disgruntled policemen

²²⁷ Swift, 'Urban Policing', pp. 219-20; Swift, *Police Reform*, pp. 10-11, 15-16, passim.

and the Watch Committee. He seems to have achieved this with the latter in a relatively short space of time. The opinions expressed about the Hull Police and the Superintendent's leadership of it at the time of Queen Victoria's visit to Hull in October 1854 can be viewed as evidence of McManus's return to favour. Following the Queen's visit, the Town Clerk, Thomas Thompson, wrote to McManus on 16 October 1854 in the following terms:

I have the commands of the Mayor to convey to you from him his best thanks for the ready and cordial assistance afforded by yourself and the Police Force under your control to himself and the Municipal Authorities of Hull, in giving Her Majesty The Queen, The Prince and Royal Family a loyal welcome on Her late visit to Hull.²²⁸

The Watch Committee could unanimously agree with this expression of thanks and praise by the royal party:

this Committee fully concur in the statement contained in the above letter, as to the ready and efficient assistance rendered by the Chief Constable and the Police Force under his control during Her Majesty's visit to Hull and request Mr McManus to convey to his men the best thanks of the Watch Committee for the exemplary conduct displayed by them upon that occasion.²²⁹

After the passage of the County and Borough Police Act of 1856, which among other things introduced a system of government inspection of provincial police forces, the Watch Committee

²²⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 18 Oct. 1854.

²²⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 18 Oct. 1854.

was made even more aware of the crucial role McManus was undertaking. A force which successfully passed its government inspection was rewarded with a Treasury grant equal to 25 per cent of the wages and clothing bill of the force. The financial incentive offered for passing a government inspection was visible for all senior police officers and watch committees to observe and in 1858 Hull's Watch Committee was gracious in unanimously recognizing the inestimable contribution which McManus had made to the force's success in obtaining the first two Treasury grants:

this Committee being desirous of recording its sense of the value of the services of the Chief Constable Mr Andrew McManus during a long period of years and especially during the last three years wherein he has under the instruction of this Committee maintained the Police Force in such a state of efficiency as to enable the Borough to receive upwards of £3,000 upon Two Certificates of the Secretary of State under the Act 19 & 20 Vict. c.69, doth hereby direct the Treasurer of the Borough to pay to him the said Chief Constable the sum of £50 as an allowance and reward to him for extraordinary diligence and exertion.²³⁰

This compliment to the Chief Constable and the grant of the money was reported in the *Hull Times* a few weeks later.²³¹ Then in 1860 the Watch Committee, without dissent, recommended that the corporation should 'increase the salary of the Chief Constable by the addition thereto of £50 per annum in consideration of his long and valuable services and the approbation repeatedly expressed by the Government Inspector of the high efficiency of the Hull Police Force.' The corporation approved and confirmed the increase.²³² When the Chief Constable's salary was increased again to £350 per annum in

²³⁰ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 15 Dec. 1858.

²³¹ KHPL, *HT* 15 Jan. 1859.

²³² KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 25 Apr. 1860; TCM 6, Hull Cor. Min., 31 May 1860.

1865 one member of the council opposed the increase but no one else was willing to support his opposition.²³³ These repeated increases to McManus's salary and the gratuities he received are some of the most convincing evidence available of the esteem in which he was held by the Watch Committee and Hull Corporation. It is inconceivable that a senior police officer who did not enjoy the confidence of his employer would receive such repeated and generous largesse.

It is perhaps a fitting testament to McManus's sense of duty that he should die still in post in April 1866 aged sixty-eight. Mrs McManus had died in January of that year and it is probable that her death hastened McManus's own demise.²³⁴ Following his death the Watch Committee unanimously recorded 'its high sense of the valuable services rendered by the late Chief Constable A. MacManus [*sic*] Esq. during his incumbency of the office and of the great loss sustained by the Borough through his lamented decease' and sent a copy of the resolution to his son.²³⁵ The arrangements which were made for his funeral, with full municipal honours, are a further indication, if another is needed, of the high regard in which he was held.²³⁶ The *Hull Times* reported that as a result of 'his death the Corporation has lost one of its most efficient officers, and the police force, its founder, and a superintendent universally respected.' The report noted how acutely the death of his wife had affected him earlier in the year and continued thus: 'Mr McManus was an excellent police officer, and to him solely is due the merit of establishing in Hull what for more than twenty years has been annually reported to be the most efficient police force in the kingdom.' The newspaper pointed out how sensitive he had been to public concerns about policing:

²³³ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 17 May; TCM 8, Hull Cor. Min., 1 Jun. 1865.

²³⁴ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jan. 1866.

²³⁵ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 11, 13 Apr. 1866.

²³⁶ KHPL, HA 11 Apr.; HT 14 Apr 1866.

One thing he well understood in the organizing of the police force, and that was the making the men efficient in the performance of their duty without suffering them to become spies. He was exceedingly careful in the maintenance of the liberty of the subject, and abhorred every form of espionage save that of watching an individual liable to arrest on some criminal charge.²³⁷

The Watch Committee now had the not inconsiderable task of finding a new Chief Constable to replace McManus. It would be extremely unlikely that any candidate would be able offer the same level of experience as McManus. How many mid-nineteenth century police officers could state that they had amassed thirty years service leading a borough police force? The issue which provoked disagreement among the members of the committee was one of locality: should the new Chief Constable be appointed from one of the officers presently serving in the force or should he be someone with experience of policing elsewhere? The senior inspectors in the Hull Police could certainly command the force and they had the advantage of knowing it better than anyone else. As well as being local men in a geographical sense they were also 'local men' in a political sense and as such one can question whether their independence from the Watch Committee would be compromised at critical moments. In other words if an internal appointment was made then the successful candidate, because he owed his entire police career to the patronage of the Watch Committee, might let his leadership be unduly influenced by what the committee wanted, rather than what was best for the policing of the town. In front of the Watch Committee would he have the strength of character to champion what was required and when it was required? An external appointee would probably have experience of leading another police force but his political independence might be regarded by the Watch Committee as a negative factor rather than a

²³⁷ KHPL, *HT* 14 Apr. 1866. Travis, the stipendiary magistrate paid tribute to McManus at the force's anniversary ceremony in May 1866 and Woodford, the constabulary inspector, did likewise at the annual inspection the following month. See *HT* 5 May, 9 Jun. 1866.

positive one: an autonomous man with an independent mind might not conform with the committee's outlook.

The issue of who would succeed McManus quickly produced disagreement amongst the members of the Watch Committee. At first the Watch Committee could agree that the salary of the future Chief Constable should be fixed at £250 per annum. However it was then moved by Alderman Bannister and seconded by the Mayor that the Town Clerk should be requested to advertise for a Chief Constable on a salary of £250 per annum, the closing date for applications being 24 April, but the motion was lost. Those members of the committee who advocated a full and rigorous selection process were outnumbered by those who favoured making a rapid appointment, within the space of a week, preferably of a local man.²³⁸ Although the Watch Committee did not advertise for the post of Chief Constable, three external candidates sent letters of application, all of whom were borough head constables. There were two internal applicants, Inspectors Henry Dorsey and Thomas Cook.²³⁹ Dorsey had been sworn in as a constable in the Hull Police on the day of its inception, 2 May 1836 at the age of twenty-two. He was promoted to sergeant in December 1837, to acting inspector in February 1845 and to inspector in November 1845. He was only severely reprimanded once, for failing to enter in the property book some property in the possession of a prisoner. Admitted to the Hull Police on 21 December 1843, Cook - also aged twenty-two - was promoted to sergeant in March 1852 and to inspector in June 1863 and it appears

²³⁸ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 13 Apr. 1866.

²³⁹ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 18 Apr. 1866. It is not known how the external applicants came to know of the vacancy. The letters of application of the four unsuccessful applicants can be found in the corporation's correspondence. See KHRO, TCC/1/5353, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from Major George Maunsell to the Town Clerk, applying for the post of Chief Constable, dated 16 April 1866; TCC/1/5939, letter from W. C. Sylvester to the Town Clerk applying for the post of Chief Constable, dated 17 April 1866; TCC/1/5343, letter from John Freeman to the Town Clerk applying for the post of Chief Constable, dated 13 April 1866; TCC/1/5338, letter from Inspector Henry Dorsey to the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors applying for the post of Chief Constable, dated 9 April 1866. No letter of application has been found by the successful candidate, Thomas Cook.

that he had had an exemplary disciplinary record up to 1866.²⁴⁰ At the Watch Committee's meeting on 18 April 1866, those in favour of advertising for applicants so that a more rigorous selection process could be held again tried to achieve this goal but they were defeated. The committee then proceeded to the election of a Chief Constable, with twelve votes being cast for Cook, one for Dorsey and there was one abstention. Cook's salary was confirmed at £250 per annum (£100 less than McManus had been earning at the time of his death) payable quarterly, with a three month period of notice required to terminate the contract.²⁴¹ The Watch Committee had made an unequivocal choice of a local man.

²⁴⁰ EYRO, Rewards[...] and Punishments Books, Hull Police, 1836-1876 & 1848-1883 [n.ref. for both].

²⁴¹ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 18 Apr. 1866. It is not known why the committee made such a clear choice between Cook and Dorsey.

THE CONTROL AND OPERATION OF THE HULL POLICE PART II, 1836 TO 1866

The Crime Statistics

Before analysing the Hull Police's record in dealing with crime in the period 1836 to 1866 it is necessary to explain the general pattern of criminality in the nineteenth century and the police's response to it. Historians must approach crime statistics with an element of caution. Historical evidence is by its very nature fragmentary but this is especially true of crime statistics. There is a very wide difference between the number of crimes committed and the number reported to the police - the dark figure. There is a further gap between those which are reported and those prosecuted. Used with caution, the statistics are a starting point of analysis which permit hypotheses to be constructed about criminal patterns and responses to them. Sensible analysis of the crime statistics can reveal fluctuations and trends in particular types of offence and comparison with economic indicators such as the trade cycle, food prices and employment levels can make them even more instructive. They must be supplemented with other types of evidence of a qualitative nature which gives an indication of public attitudes and trends in public opinion. Crime statistics are influenced by many factors, including changes in police recording practices and the targeting of certain types of crime. They are also affected by legislative changes which redefine certain types of crime and the legal procedures for dealing with them.¹

V. A. C. Gatrell has analysed nineteenth century criminal statistics in England and Wales. Although he acknowledges the problems inherent in using the statistics he believes they can still tell the historian a great deal about the pattern of law-breaking and broad trends. He argues that crime reached a peak in the 1840s and then levelled out before falling in the second half of the century. Gatrell suggests

¹ For more information see Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900* (Harlow: Longman, 1987), pp. 22-26.

that the deterrent effect of the new police and the improved supervision of the casual poor (which in part involved the police) may have partially assisted the overall decline of crime after mid-century.²

Summarizing Gatrell's findings is beneficial to gaining an understanding of what was happening in Hull in the mid-century era. Nationally Gatrell shows that theft and assault increased in the first half of the nineteenth century, with a particularly steep increase in the period 1815 to 1830 (especially in the couple of years after the end of the Napoleonic War) and then a shallower rise in the 1840s. In the second half of the century thefts and violent crimes decreased but housebreaking and burglary remained relatively constant and thus constituted a greater proportion of total crime. However, there were peaks and troughs in the figures which extended over clusters of years as well as significant annual fluctuations. Throughout the century all varieties of property crime (from simple larceny, robbery, housebreaking to burglary), constituted the great majority of all offences committed. Gatrell shows that between the late 1850s and 1914 there was a steady and extraordinary drop in the rates of many indictable crimes. The *reported* larceny rate (per 100,000 of the population) fell by 35 per cent, the common assault rate by 71 per cent, the wounding rate by 20 per cent and the homicide rate by 42 per cent. Only the rate of reported burglaries and housebreakings stubbornly resisted this trend. Although between the early 1860s and the late 1890s it fell by 35 per cent it subsequently rose to reach its former mid-century level once more.³

Up to 1857 approximately 80 per cent of all indictable committals were for non-violent offences against property such as simple larceny. This proportion fell to between 60 and 70 per cent after 1857 but mainly because more simple larcenies were dealt with summarily. If summary larcenies are

² For more information see V. A. C. Gatrell and T. B. Hadden, 'Criminal statistics and their interpretation', in *Nineteenth Century Society: essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data*, ed. by E. A. Wrigley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 336-396; V. A. C. Gatrell, 'The Decline of Theft and Violence in Victorian and Edwardian England', in *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, ed. by V. A. C. Gatrell, Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker (London: Europa Publications, 1980), pp. 238-337; Emsley, *Crime*, Ch. 2, passim.

³ V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, authority and the policeman-state', in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* 3 vols ed. by F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), III, 243-310 (pp. 290-91).

included then the proportion of property offences in the totals climbs to about 90 per cent. It therefore follows that crimes of violence against the person were relatively low. Between 1834 and 1856 violent offences against the person constituted about 10 per cent of all indictable committals and thereafter just over a tenth of all indictable offences recorded by the police. After 1857, when more accurate summary committals figures appear, minor assaults represented about 15 per cent of all summary convictions.⁴ In the 1850s certain indictable offences were transferred into summary jurisdiction categories, which had an overall effect on the criminal statistics. The passage of two Juvenile Offenders Acts in 1847 and 1850 and the Criminal Justice Act of 1855 produced a fall in committals on criminal indictments but a large increase in summary jurisdictions and thus an overall increase in criminal prosecutions. Crime had not increased overall but changes in the operation of the legal system resulted in a noticeable increase in prosecutions, especially of newly-defined petty offences.

Approximately three-quarters of offenders were male and in the first half of the century a high proportion of these were teenagers or men under the age of thirty years. Very few offenders had previous criminal convictions or more than one. In the second half of the century males and females constituted roughly the same proportion of offenders as before but the average age of offenders had risen, with more over the age of thirty. Also, a higher proportion had previous convictions and their degree of literacy had not improved from the levels recorded in the 1830s and forties, unlike that of the general population. This is the clearest indication that later Victorian offenders were becoming hardened criminals, forming a sub-stratum of the working class. Crimes committed by men began to fall in the early 1850s whereas those committed by women did not do so until the next decade, a difference which remains unexplained.⁵

⁴ Gatrell and Hadden, 'Criminal Statistics', pp. 367, 369.

⁵ Gatrell & Hadden, 'Criminal statistics', p. 374.

Gatrell's principal explanation for declining crime rates in the second half of the nineteenth century is structural change to the economy. Although there were periods of economic depression, rising unemployment and high food prices, their concurrence was not so acute as it had been in the first half of the century because of the greater diversification of the domestic economy away from over-reliance on a few staple industries, and the development of a more varied export market. Generally food prices were more stable with some falling in relation to income. Periods of unemployment were generally shorter and fewer in number and the unemployed and their dependents were better able to survive until work was found. Therefore they did not have to confront the severe subsistence problems of their forebears and thus avoided having to commit the same level of crime in order to survive.

This, Gatrell contends, is the main reason why there was an overall decline in theft and violence in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, he accepts that other factors played a part as well - such as the development of the new police in terms of its overall manpower, methods and supervisory powers, and early state attempts at urban regeneration.⁶ The corollary of this argument is that the increase in crime during the first half of the century can mainly be explained by the social dislocation and class antagonism caused by industrialization, urbanization and an unequal and uneven distribution of income, wealth and political power. A further point can be made: if the ruling class's fear of public unrest becomes magnified into a general fear of crime as well, then this will lead to more prosecutions of offences. Such a hypothesis can be clearly applied to the first half of the nineteenth century. However after 1850 fear of public disorder was palpably reduced and may have resulted in a contingent reduction in the fear of crime itself and the prosecution of minor offences.

Thus, the easiest way for the police to be seen to have some effect on crime was by acting on the streets. Such action was immediately noticeable, the easiest way for the police to be seen doing something. Nevertheless, it was a tacit admission on the part of the police that it could not counteract crime

⁶ Gatrell, 'Decline', pp. 277-78, 305-16.

which was less visible, burglary for example. Police enforcement on the streets involved criminalizing a whole gamut of working class behaviour which was at the periphery of criminal activity, behaviour which at worst was merely a minor nuisance:

the new police could demonstrate their worth by publishing the statistics of arrests. The easiest arrests to make, except where there was a positive identification of a thief or of a violent offender, were those for petty public order offences. Such offences as begging, drunk and disorderly, drunk and incapable, illegal street selling, soliciting, were generally committed in the street and were often readily observable by the beat policeman. Moreover, the removal of the drunk, the nomadic street seller, the prostitute or the vagrant was popular with the respectable Victorians who perceived these individuals as members of the dangerous or criminal classes. The creation of the new police forces saw an increase in the statistics for these offences.⁷

The introduction of a police force is likely to result in less official tolerance of behaviour which is deemed undesirable and to more concerted action to supervise and suppress such behaviour. This could range from incidents such as street brawls and drunkenness through to various kinds of popular activity such fairs, brutal sports and other forms of entertainment. The end result is likely to be many more prosecutions for summary offences, a trend which is likely to grow in the short-term until there is a qualitative change in public behaviour in response to the imposition of this regime of social discipline; or a compromise is reached in the form of greater police tolerance of some kinds of 'wrongdoing' because a stalemate has been reached with the public.

Before moving on to analyse crime in Hull in the mid-century period it is appropriate for Gatrell to offer a timely reminder of the historical and contemporary nature of crime and how it has been, and still is, perceived by the police. On the issue of crime Gatrell bluntly states that:

⁷ Emsley, *Crime*, p. 189.

The history of crime, accordingly, is largely the history of how better-off people disciplined their inferiors; of how elites used selected law-breakers to sanction their own authority; or of how in modern times bureaucrats, experts and policemen used them to justify their own expanding functions and influences. The history of crime is also always about how public fears about change and disorder were displaced on to 'criminals', even when criminals were inappropriate objects of those fears. It can never be about the real extent of law-breaking which goes on at all social levels.⁸

This conception of what crime was and is acquires even more partiality when one remembers the operational limitations under which the policeman has had to operate:

Constrained as he was mainly to police the streets, the policeman fed back into the ideology of crime a confirmation of the premise that the bottom quarter or third of the urban population were indeed the most criminal. And that self-fulfilling prophecy policemen have never been in a position to properly gainsay. Poorer law-breakers were the only ones the policeman could usually see, or was inclined to see.⁹

Despite all these reservations about the effectiveness of the police it is indisputable that it played a part in bringing about a reduction in crime in Victorian England and again it is Gatrell who pertinently reminds one that '*Qualified effectiveness in law and order is not to be discounted simply because it was less than total.*'¹⁰

Many contemporaries believed they knew what the criminal problems were in Hull. In one part of its report on policing published in 1836 the Local Acts Committee gave its opinions on crime in the borough. According to the report there was a general consensus amongst the propertied class of Hull that much crime, especially larcenies, robberies, housebreaking, and receiving, was the work of gangs of

⁸ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', pp. 245-46.

⁹ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 270.

¹⁰ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 289. Emphasis included in original.

young boys and men, vagrants, dealers in marine stores and, that putative originator of so much nineteenth century crime, the migratory criminal. Using the evidence of one of the experienced constables, the committee stated:

that juvenile delinquency has been increasing year by year; young men, notorious thieves, ply as common porters; sturdy beggars and vagrants abound, and the most active constables think that thieves take up their abode in Hull, and sally forth, as from head quarters, to commit depredations at fairs and in the neighbouring towns. Several violent outrages, on females and others, have been committed in South Myton Ward; and the want of public lights and a Police, by day and night, in Holderness Ward, has caused that district to become infested with thieves to an alarming extent[...]bad examples, in consequence of that district being the resort of loose characters, have tempted several boys to commit offences, and some have become hardened thieves.¹¹

Almost anecdotally the report also alleged the high incidence of one particular crime:

Many houses have been broken open and plundered - one person's house has been broken open and robbed four times in two years; in one case the owner, a female, saw the robber (who had stolen upwards of £80) drop from the window; had there been a Police, he must have been detected, or rather the robbery would not have been attempted.¹²

Furthermore the Local Acts Committee argued, without quoting any evidence, that thieves and others carried out their activities before the watches came on duty and after they finished and its report includes a table showing the state of crime in Hull over the years 1824 to 1835 (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 below).¹³ The table reveals a significant upward trend in the number of committals to Quarter Sessions

¹¹ KHPL, L352, *Kingston upon Hull Municipal Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report of the Committee on Local Acts, Police and the Powers, Prerogatives and Duties of the New Municipal Government' (1836), p. 5.

¹² KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43*, 'First Report[...]Police', (1836), p. 6.

¹³ KHPL, L352, *Council Reports 1836-43* 'First Report[...]Police', (1836), p. 7.

(despite falls in 1830, 1832 and 1835) but gives no information about the nature of offences and types of offender. Nor does it make any allowance for population increase. It shows that more people had been committed for trial at Quarter Sessions but it does not prove that more offences had been committed (nor that they were more serious) and so it is of little use in determining whether crime in Hull had actually increased. Although crime had probably risen during this period, using Gatrell's reasoning the increase in committals to Quarter Sessions may have been greater proportionally because of the public's general fear of crime and unrest in the era. It is clear from the report that the committee blamed some of the increase in crime on the inadequacies and inefficiencies of the old police.

Table 4.1 *Committals to Hull
Quarter Sessions 1824-1835*

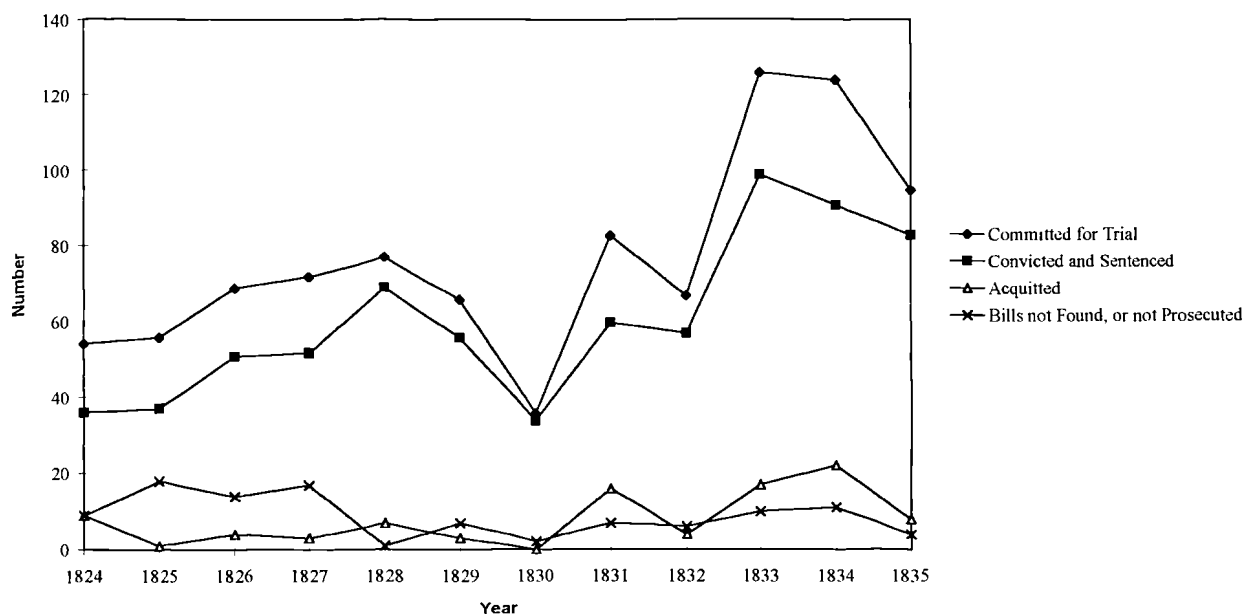
Year	Committed for Trial	Convicted and Sentenced	Acquitted	Bills not Found, or not Prosecuted
1824	54	36	9	9
1825	56	37	1	18
1826	69	51	4	14
1827	72	52	3	17
1828	77	69	7	1
1829	66	56	3	7
1830	36	34	0	2
1831	83	60	16	7
1832	67	57	4	6
1833	126	99	17	10
1834	124	91	22	11
1835	95	83	8	4

Source: KHPL, L352, Council Reports 1836-43,
'First Report[...]Police' (1836)

Moving on to the period 1836 to 1866, the concern of this study, one can see that crime in Hull both adhered to, and deviated from, national trends. Two points should be made though about Hull's crime figures. First, they cover a relatively short time period of just under thirty years when ideally a study of such data over a period of fifty years or more would reveal clearer trends. Second, they reflect the activities of a relatively small section of the national population (Hull's population grew from

approximately 58,000 to 108,000 between 1837 and 1865), when a sample of at least half a million is widely acknowledged to be the minimum necessary to make meaningful national comparisons. There are other possible causes of distortion such as a growth in police manpower which may result in a sudden increase in arrests for one or more offences. All these shortcomings mean that the Hull crime figures may not truly reflect the discontinuities in the national trends identified by Gatrell before and after mid-century. Nevertheless, with these qualifications noted it is still possible to see some interesting movements in the crime figures (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3 and Figures 4.2a-b),¹⁴ especially where they are expressed per 100,000 people, a standard comparative measure.

Fig 4.1 Committals to Hull Quarter Sessions 1824-1835



From Table 4.3 and Figures 4.2a-b it is apparent that the trend in the total number taken into custody over the period 1837 to 1865 was significantly downwards but with a sudden peak arising between 1847 and 1848, particularly during the latter year, which is likely to be a reflection of the political and economic turmoil of that year. There are two smaller peaks in 1858 and 1863 and generally the trend

¹⁴ Table 4.2 is a copy of one produced by the police in 1865, as is Table 4.4. See KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865.

Table 4.2 *Comparative Crime Figures for Hull 1837-1865*

Years	Total Number Taken into Custody	Discharged by Magistrates	Summarily Disposed of or Held to Bail	Committed for Trial	Convicted and Sentenced	Acquitted	Bills not Found, or not Prosecuted
1837	2794	1879	819	96	71	21	4
1838	2555	1494	962	99	76	15	8
1839	2611	1396	1026	189	138	43	8
1840	2611	1421	1002	188	136	38	14
1841	2500	1469	851	180	137	39	4
1842	2662	1583	864	215	151	56	8
1843	2280	1416	683	181	123	49	9
1844	2171	1266	770	135	93	35	7
1845	2139	1317	697	125	82	30	13
1846	1966	1092	747	127	77	46	4
1847	3010	1742	1093	177	117	49	11
1848	3700	2082	1401	217	156	42	19
1849	2862	1622	1012	228	152	50	26
1850	2606	1368	1034	204	149	42	13
1851	2575	1428	936	211	142	52	17
1852	2473	1312	983	178	132	28	18
1853	2119	1074	875	170	137	18	15
1854	2008	959	820	229	186	18	25
1855	2176	903	1092	181	138	28	15
1856	2503	839	1529	135	88	24	23
1857	2627	895	1607	125	99	18	8
1858	2925	965	1813	147	90	38	19
1859	2435	523	1820	92	71	17	4
1860	2143	436	1617	90	67	15	8
1861	2212	465	1651	96	72	19	5
1862	2608	580	1933	95	75	15	5
1863	2948	684	2140	124	95	20	9
1864	2354	552	1707	95	83	5	7
1865	2462	538	1829	95	76	10	9

Source: KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865

after 1854 shows a slight rise rather than a continuation of the previous fall. The number of people discharged by the magistrates generally follows the path of total arrests but with slightly less pronounced peaks and troughs. However, the line for those summarily disposed of deviates from the above pattern from 1837 to 1840 and, more noticeably, after 1854 until the end of the period, when the rise in summary proceedings is much sharper. Taking the period 1837 to 1840 first the increase in magistrate activity here is probably a direct result of the introduction of the new police as more arrested people were brought

before the justices to be dealt with.¹⁵ It is a great pity that comparable figures for arrests, discharges and summary proceedings during the years 1835 and 1836 are not available to show the effect of moving from the old to the new police.

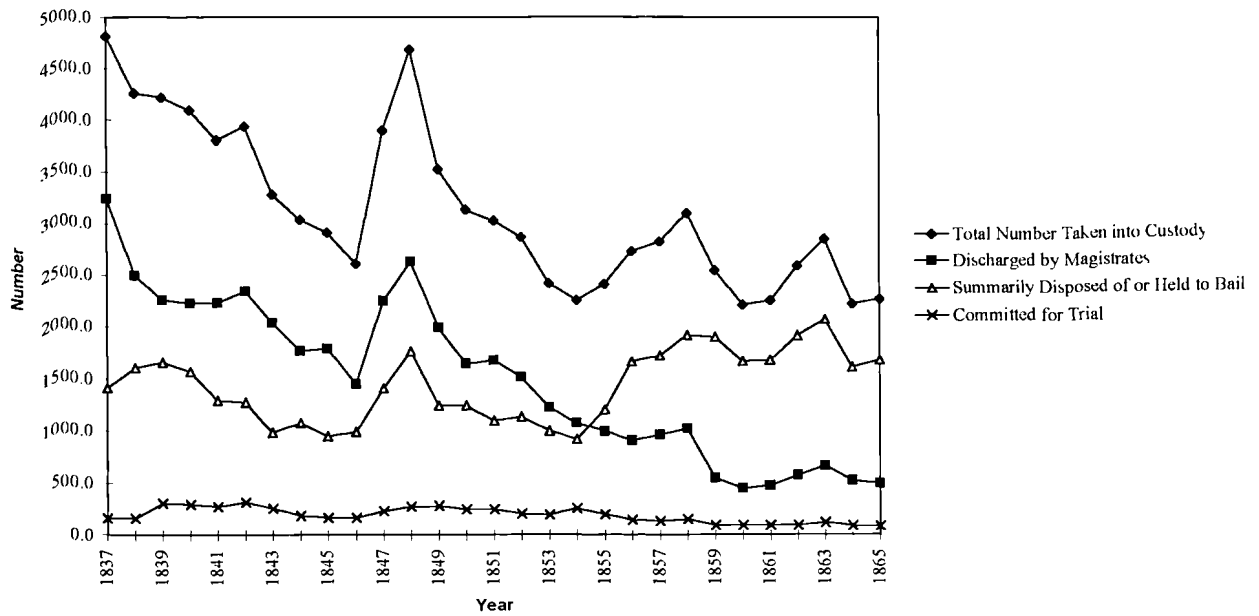
Table 4.3 *Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865*

Years	Total Number Taken into Custody	Discharged by Magistrates	Summarily Disposed of or Held to Bail	Committed for Trial	Convicted and Sentenced	Acquitted	Bills not Found or not Prosecuted
1837	4819.6	3241.2	1412.8	165.6	122.5	36.2	6.9
1838	4265.7	2494.3	1606.1	165.3	126.9	25.0	13.4
1839	4223.5	2258.1	1659.6	305.7	223.2	69.6	12.9
1840	4095.9	2229.2	1571.9	294.9	213.3	59.6	22.0
1841	3806.9	2236.9	1295.9	274.1	208.6	59.4	6.1
1842	3939.5	2342.7	1278.6	318.2	223.5	82.9	11.8
1843	3281.8	2038.2	983.1	260.5	177.0	70.5	13.0
1844	3041.6	1773.7	1078.8	189.1	130.3	49.0	9.8
1845	2919.0	1797.3	951.2	170.6	111.9	40.9	17.7
1846	2615.1	1452.5	993.6	168.9	102.4	61.2	5.3
1847	3904.9	2259.9	1418.0	229.6	151.8	63.6	14.3
1848	4684.5	2636.0	1773.8	274.7	197.5	53.2	24.1
1849	3538.3	2005.3	1251.1	281.9	187.9	61.8	32.1
1850	3147.8	1652.4	1249.0	246.4	180.0	50.7	15.7
1851	3040.5	1686.1	1105.2	249.1	167.7	61.4	20.1
1852	2876.0	1525.8	1143.2	207.0	153.5	32.6	20.9
1853	2427.7	1230.5	1002.5	194.8	157.0	20.6	17.2
1854	2266.9	1082.6	925.7	258.5	210.0	20.3	28.2
1855	2421.1	1004.7	1215.0	201.4	153.5	31.2	16.7
1856	2745.2	920.2	1677.0	148.1	96.5	26.3	25.2
1857	2840.8	967.9	1737.8	135.2	107.1	19.5	8.7
1858	3119.3	1029.1	1933.5	156.8	96.0	40.5	20.3
1859	2561.4	550.1	1914.4	96.8	74.7	17.9	4.2
1860	2223.9	452.5	1678.0	93.4	69.5	15.6	8.3
1861	2265.0	476.1	1690.5	98.3	73.7	19.5	5.1
1862	2601.9	578.6	1928.4	94.8	74.8	15.0	5.0
1863	2867.4	665.3	2081.5	120.6	92.4	19.5	8.8
1864	2233.7	523.8	1619.8	90.1	78.8	4.7	6.6
1865	2280.5	498.3	1694.1	88.0	70.4	9.3	8.3

Source: KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865

¹⁵ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

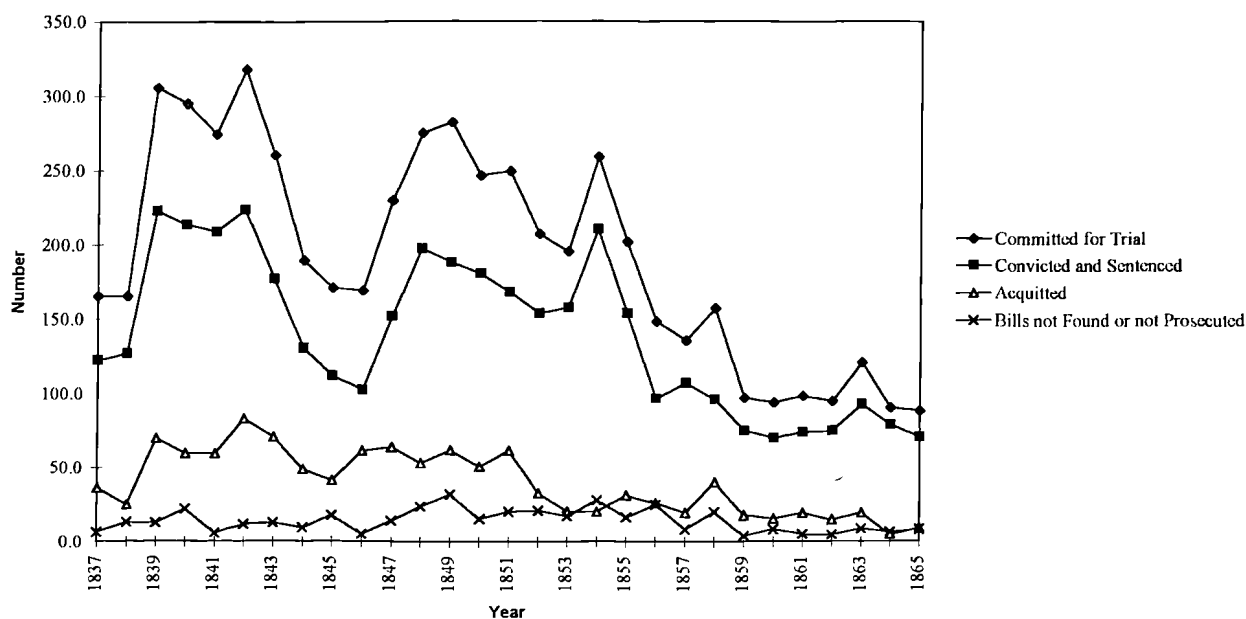
Fig. 4.2a Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865



Fortunately some comparative evidence is available from Birmingham, where a Metropolitan-style police force under the control of a commissioner was imposed on the city by Act of Parliament in 1839. Although the conviction rate in Birmingham remained the same, a parliamentary return reveals that the total of six thousand arrests for 1839-40 was more than double the figure for 1838-39. Palmer observes that by far the majority of the arrests were for the social offences of drunkenness, breach of the peace and vagrancy.¹⁶ The upward trend in summary proceedings after 1854, conspicuously from 1855 to 1858, is likely to be a result of the Criminal Justice Act of 1855 which transferred certain indictable offences into summary jurisdiction categories. Nationally this resulted in a decrease in committals on criminal indictments but a large increase in summary cases and thus an overall growth in criminal prosecutions. Moreover, since more people were being dealt with summarily after 1855 rather than being discharged with a warning it is plausible that this gave a greater incentive to Hull policemen to make more arrests, which would explain the upward trend in the custody figures over the same period. This is a good example of how legal changes can increase overall prosecutions and can convey the misleading impression that crime has also risen overall.

¹⁶ Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p. 440.

Fig. 4.2b Comparative Crime Figures for Hull per 100,000 People 1837-1865



The trend in committals was actually increasing until 1854 but with significant highs and lows over clusters of years, with 1839, 1842 and 1848-49 all visible as peaks. Doubtless it is no coincidence that these were the main years of Chartist activity (1849 can be regarded as part of the aftermath of the previous year's unrest) and despite the fact that Hull was not a centre of Chartist unrest the authorities' general fear of popular disturbance probably induced them to be tougher on ordinary criminals. The conviction rate mirrored the committal rate fairly closely throughout the period. The trend in acquittals followed a very interesting pattern, taking a gentle upward path from 1837 to 1851 but thereafter falling much more sharply.¹⁷ So later in the era, especially after 1854, whilst there was less likelihood that an arrested person would be committed for trial there was also a slimmer chance of them being acquitted if they were.

The crime figures are even more revealing when the totals for certain offences committed between 1842 and 1865 are analysed (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5 and Figure 4.3a-e). The move to compiling

¹⁷ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

Table 4.4 *Comparative Crime Figures for Hull for the Following Offences 1842-1865*

Years	Assaults Common	Assaults on Police	Larceny in a Dwelling House	Larceny from Person	Larceny Simple	Disorderly Characters	Disorderly Prostitutes	Drunkenness	Reputed Thieves	Smuggling	Vagrants
1842	79	115	119	100	286	369	37	448	8	72	530
1843	76	81	86	79	327	354	41	404	12	85	375
1844	61	96	61	56	218	333	50	448	54	140	261
1845	75	101	82	59	201	440	37	602	43	90	195
1846	52	132	46	58	149	334	37	545	42	153	81
1847	92	166	30	71	207	358	42	602	109	191	614
1848	101	213	39	78	299	544	91	646	55	181	926
1849	74	123	56	99	306	460	65	535	118	130	375
1850	98	147	59	77	304	374	90	461	66	142	341
1851	117	134	61	85	278	393	85	437	68	124	358
1852	94	139	61	96	234	478	83	427	70	125	177
1853	114	98	66	86	244	340	43	486	26	123	102
1854	79	77	59	66	270	241	38	441	22	149	84
1855	91	87	99	78	238	246	31	460	2	175	126
1856	152	101	123	87	277	335	47	556	16	232	41
1857	198	111	111	89	340	317	70	592	14	152	76
1858	218	124	91	69	299	476	169	630	41	127	128
1859	186	94	68	57	255	344	141	593	94	66	77
1860	149	93	72	52	244	240	112	572	36	86	45
1861	178	80	110	71	250	268	66	511	18	146	64
1862	218	115	105	47	318	302	92	586	19	127	175
1863	252	170	77	50	389	428	115	645	11	78	126
1864	215	107	106	53	343	287	82	617	20	56	55
1865	240	119	144	58	341	247	68	637	21	67	43

Source: KHIRO, ICW 1 4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865

comparative yearly data on certain offences was presumably initiated by McManus himself but ratified by the Watch Committee (as no one else would have the detailed knowledge and experience on which to base a data series such as this). The fact that certain offences were specifically chosen is itself intriguing. Why these offences and not others? For example, why assaults but not manslaughters and murders? Why larcenies but not robberies, burglaries and housebreaking? Unfortunately the answers to these questions remain unknown but one cannot entirely dispel the thought that the chosen offences may have presented the most favourable impression of police action. Despite these shortcomings the data on selected offences per 100,000 people does reveal some fascinating trends. Until 1853 assaults on the police regularly outnumbered common assaults and there was a conspicuously high number of assaults on policemen in the late 1840s, reaching their zenith in 1848, a pattern which was doubtlessly linked to the aforementioned circumstances of that year. The trend in police assaults was sharply downwards from 1848 to 1854 and only slightly upwards thereafter. Another noteworthy development was the growing level of common

assaults after 1854, so that over the period as a whole the two lines moved in opposite directions (see Figure 4.3a).¹⁸

Table 4.5 *Comparative Crime Figures for Hull for the Following Offences per 100,000 People 1842-1865*

Years	Assaults Common	Assaults on Police	Larceny in a Dwelling House	Larceny from Person	Larceny Simple	Disorderly Characters	Disorderly Prostitutes	Drunkenness	Reputed Thieves	Smuggling	Vagrants
1842	116.9	170.2	176.1	148.0	423.3	546.1	54.8	663.0	11.8	106.6	784.3
1843	109.4	116.6	123.8	113.7	470.7	509.5	59.0	581.5	17.3	122.3	539.8
1844	85.5	134.5	85.5	78.5	305.4	466.5	70.0	627.7	75.7	196.1	365.7
1845	102.3	137.8	111.9	80.5	274.3	600.5	50.5	821.5	58.7	122.8	266.1
1846	69.2	175.6	61.2	77.2	198.2	444.3	49.2	724.9	55.9	203.5	107.7
1847	119.4	215.4	38.9	92.1	268.5	464.4	54.5	781.0	141.4	247.8	796.6
1848	127.9	269.7	49.4	98.8	378.6	688.7	115.2	817.9	69.6	229.2	1172.4
1849	91.5	152.1	69.2	122.4	378.3	568.7	80.4	661.4	145.9	160.7	463.6
1850	118.4	177.6	71.3	93.0	367.2	451.8	108.7	556.8	79.7	171.5	411.9
1851	138.2	158.2	72.0	100.4	328.3	464.0	100.4	516.0	80.3	146.4	422.7
1852	109.3	161.7	70.9	111.6	272.1	555.9	96.5	496.6	81.4	145.4	205.8
1853	130.6	112.3	75.6	98.5	279.5	389.5	49.3	556.8	29.8	140.9	116.9
1854	89.2	86.9	66.6	74.5	304.8	272.1	42.9	497.8	24.8	168.2	94.8
1855	101.2	96.8	110.2	86.8	264.8	273.7	34.5	511.8	2.2	194.7	140.2
1856	166.7	110.8	134.9	95.4	303.8	367.4	51.6	609.8	17.6	254.5	45.0
1857	214.1	120.0	120.0	96.2	367.7	342.8	75.7	640.2	15.1	164.4	82.2
1858	232.5	132.2	97.1	73.6	318.9	507.6	180.2	671.9	43.7	135.4	136.5
1859	195.7	98.9	71.5	60.0	268.2	361.9	148.3	623.8	98.9	69.4	81.0
1860	154.6	96.5	74.7	54.0	253.2	249.1	116.2	593.6	37.4	89.2	46.7
1861	182.3	81.9	112.6	72.7	256.0	274.4	67.6	523.2	18.4	149.5	65.5
1862	217.5	114.7	104.8	46.9	317.3	301.3	91.8	584.6	19.0	126.7	174.6
1863	245.1	165.4	74.9	48.6	378.4	416.3	111.9	627.4	10.7	75.9	122.6
1864	204.0	101.5	100.6	50.3	325.5	272.3	77.8	585.5	19.0	53.1	52.2
1865	222.3	110.2	133.4	53.7	315.9	228.8	63.0	590.0	19.5	62.1	39.8

Source: TCW 1 4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865

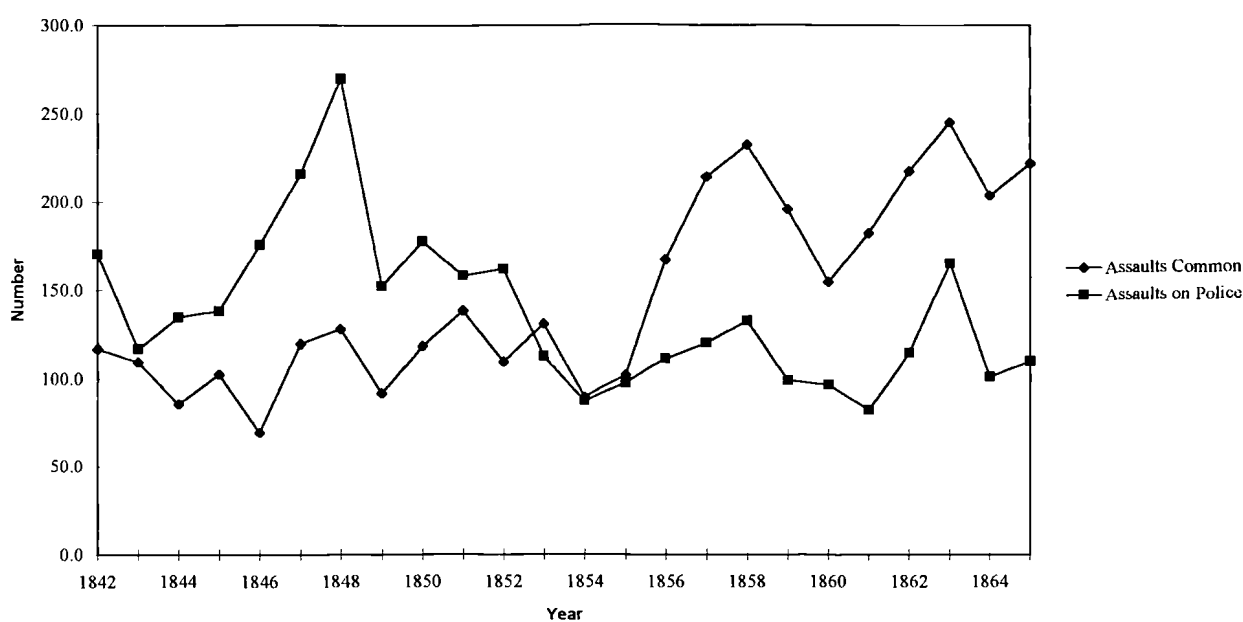
There are likely to be several reasons why the level of assaults on the police fell over the period. It is tempting to ascribe all or most of this fall to changing attitudes to the police on the part of the wider community but this cannot be proven. Arguably this only became a factor much later in the nineteenth century, after 1870, when the national picture suggests greater working class acceptance of a police presence in their communities. So why did assaults on the police decline overall? One factor may have been severer punishments for those found guilty of this offence but unfortunately it has not been possible to confirm this by a study of sentencing patterns, which is really beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, evidence has been found which indicates that in 1853 one magistrate was still concerned about the frequency and intensity of attacks on policemen. The Mayor, Henry Blundell,

¹⁸ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

speaking at the annual review that year drew on his long experience as a magistrate since the 1830s to raise the issue and urge that the police should be offered more protection:

he had felt every disposition to afford that protection to the police - when in the execution of their duty - which they had a right to expect at the hands of the magistracy. He had frequently differed with gentlemen, with whom he had sat, as to the amount of penalty which should be inflicted on persons assaulting the police, and he did not think that the bench had carried out that degree of severity, in administering punishment to such offenders, that they ought to have done. There had been several instances of late in which the lives of policemen had been very much endangered, and he trusted that those instances would have a salutary effect in evincing to the magistrates the absolute necessity of protecting the police in the execution of their duty.¹⁹

Fig 4.3a Assaults in Hull 1842-1865



Thus the fact that recorded assaults against policemen declined locally and nationally after 1850 may or may not be significant as regards working class acceptance of law enforcement agencies; but one needs to be cautious about making too many claims concerning improved police-community relations before 1870.

¹⁹ KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 6 May 1853.

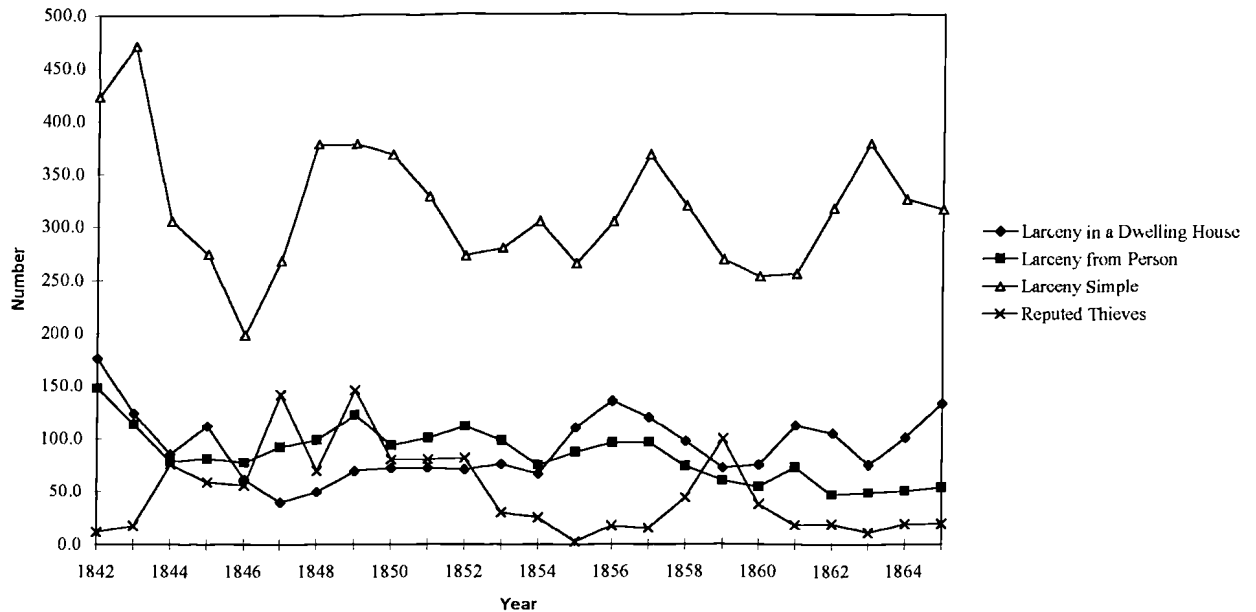
It should be remembered that historically policemen used this offence to achieve quick and simple arrests and its decline may be explained by successive experiential switches in favour of other charges more likely to result in a (sterner) conviction.²⁰ As for the rising number of common assaults the really sharp rise occurs after 1855 and may again be a result of changes in the functioning of the legal system, which resulted in a noticeable increase in prosecutions - but not as a consequence of a real increase in crime.

The prevalence of offences under the general heading of larceny varied markedly during the years studied (see Figure 4.3b). Arrests for simple larceny rose from 1842-43 but then fell swiftly over the next three years. Thereafter the trend was upward again with peaks in 1848, 1854, 1857 and 1863 - all economically difficult years in Hull (there was a national financial crisis in 1857 which may have affected the trade of the port). Revolution, war and economic dislocation on the European mainland all had a devastating effect on Hull's economy in the short-term due to its over-reliance on trade with the continent; as did the American Civil War which had a dramatic effect nationally on imports of raw cotton and exports of finished cotton goods. Meanwhile, the trends for the other larceny offences, from the person and from a dwelling house, decreased over the period, the former more sharply than the latter. It is difficult to assess how much of this fall was due specifically to police action. The crime category of reputed thieves is a difficult one to comment on because it appears to be a charge that policemen could use as and when they chose. Although it may have been used differently, for example to frustrate the activities of a hard-core of professional thieves who operated in Hull's rural hinterland. It is likely that smuggling offences and vagrancy were also influenced by economic factors (see Figures 4.3d and 4.3e). The prevailing direction of smuggling offences was upwards until 1856, with peaks in that year and beforehand in 1847-48, but this was followed by a sudden drop for the rest of the period, except for a small peak in 1861. All this suggests that there was some correlation with economic conditions. In the case of vagrancy the economic correlation is even more evident for the years 1847-48, easily the apogee for the period. The arrest figures for these two years seem to be an aberration in the context of the overall series but in fact they illustrate

²⁰ Gatrell, 'Crime[...]and the policeman-state', p. 285-86.

only too well the severity of the economic depression and the levels of unemployment and under-employment which fuelled Chartism's last upsurge.²¹

Fig. 4.3b Larcenies and Reputed Thieves in Hull 1842-1865

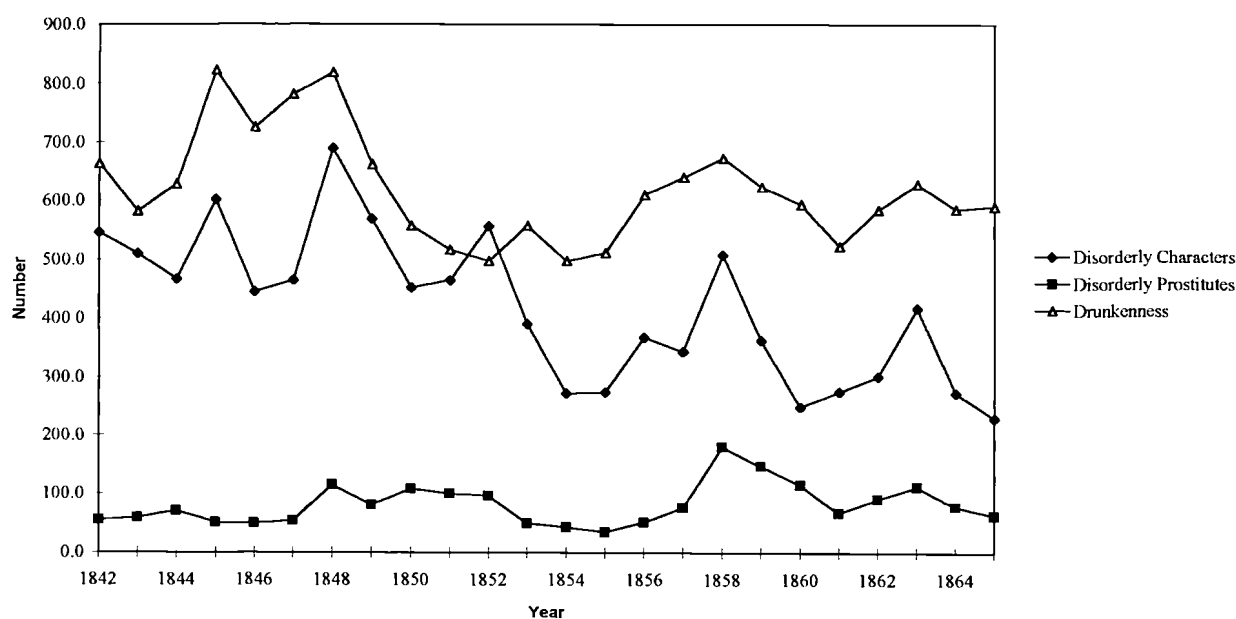


The arrest of disorderly characters (Figure 4.3c) also followed a general downward path over the period with the highest number of arrests being made in 1848, which again testifies to the prevailing tumult of that year. Meanwhile the arrest of disorderly prostitutes throughout the era was numerically much less important. There was a relatively high plateau of arrests from 1848 to 1852 but then nothing significant until a sudden and sharp upward trend beginning in 1857 which produced a high point of 169 arrests in 1858. After this date arrests fell but still remained considerably higher than they had been in the 1850s. Given the relatively low number of disorderly prostitutes arrested between 1853 and 1857, it may have been the case that the reduction in manpower forced the police to reassess its priorities and decide that arresting prostitutes was not one of those priorities. This evidence together with other data on prostitution (see below) suggests that the police began to take a greater interest in countering the activities of prostitutes after 1857 when more constables were appointed. With the exception of the years

²¹ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

1858 to 1865, when the police appear to have been more vigilant in its targeting of prostitution, only a relatively small number of prostitutes ended up in police cells.²² This may be a reflection of the difficult legal requirements governing prosecution for this offence (which is discussed below) or it may indicate something about the women themselves. Some contemporary literature on the subject, and popular histories, have disseminated the image of the bawdy harlot but this may be a simplistic representation. The prostitute had to be relatively orderly and businesslike to be successful at her work, so clearly it was not in her financial interest to attract the attention of the police and end up in the cells.

Fig. 4.3c Disorderly Characters, Disorderly Prostitutes and Drunkenness in Hull 1842-1865

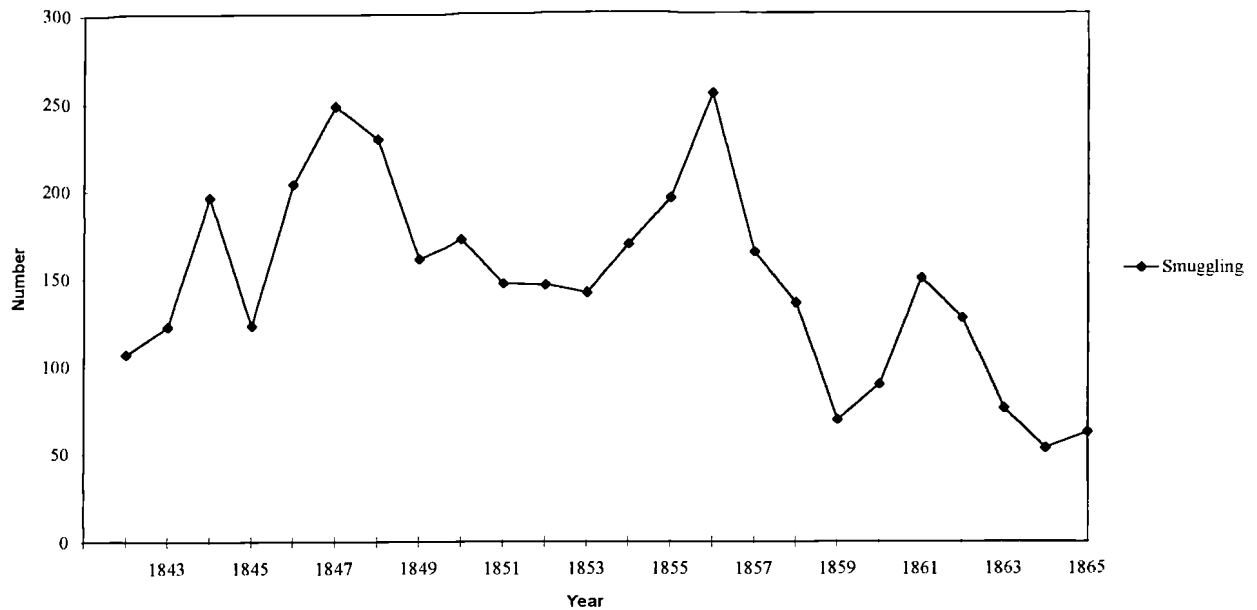


Perhaps the most intriguing set of arrest figures are those for drunkenness (see Figure 4.3c). These figures followed a rising course until 1848, peaking in that year and previously in 1845. Subsequently the path followed was a declining one but with lower peaks in 1858 and 1863. This appears to indicate some economic correlation with years of known distress in Hull, 1848 and 1863, which is striking because Gatrell and Hadden demonstrate that there is a direct correlation between drunkenness as an offence and the trade cycle. In times of prosperity the incidence of drunkenness increases but during

²² KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

depressions it decreases. However the data for Hull does not follow this pattern in these two years. There is no obvious explanation why this should be so but there is no need to dwell on this feature. In all likelihood it is simply an anomalous result, a distortion produced by the short-term nature of the study and the small demographic sample.

Fig. 4.3d Smuggling in Hull 1842-1865

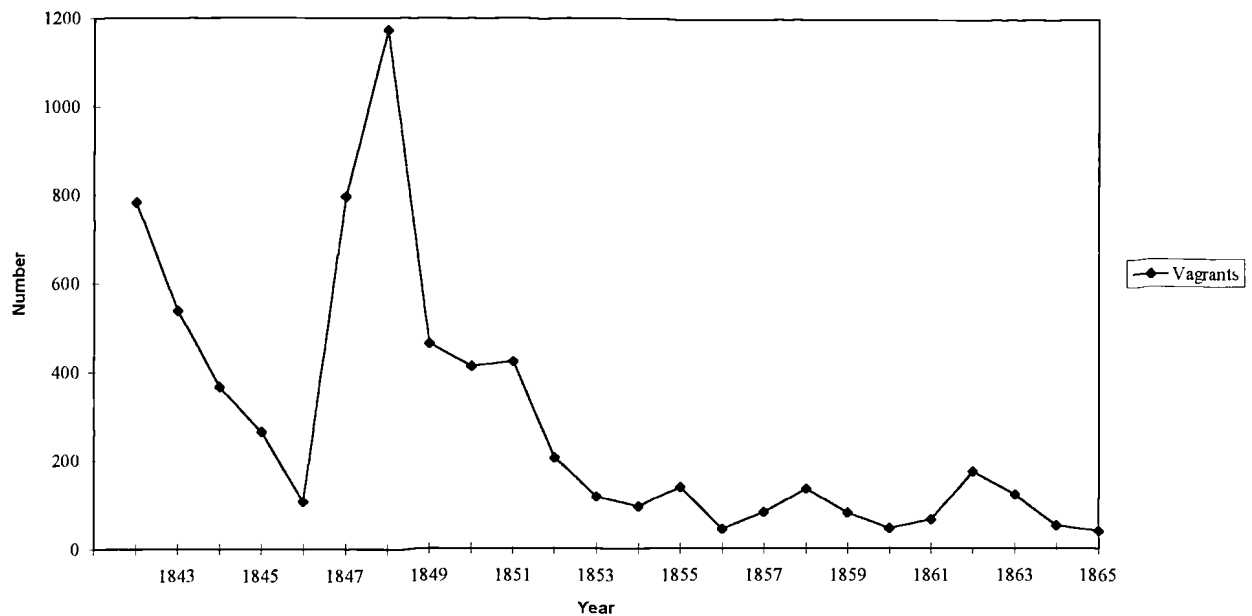


Of more interest is the noticeable downward trend in drunkenness offences from 1848 to 1865.²³ It is difficult to determine how much of this was due to police action. While the police can rigidly enforce local licensing laws if their political masters order them to do so this alone cannot stop people from getting drunk and being arrested. Moreover, it is difficult to believe that Hull's mid-Victorian inhabitants suddenly became more sober in this era, especially when it is known that as a busy seaport with a substantial transient male population the town had a relatively large number of public houses per capita. So why did arrests for drunkenness decline after 1848? Was it due to successful police action? Again this question must remain largely unanswered although there will be more discussion of drunkenness as a crime below. However, one would do well to remember Gatrell and Hadden's cautious warning that

²³ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

'national and county crime rates may mask important and perhaps contradictory movements in the incidence of criminal activity, often of a very localized character.'²⁴

Fig. 4.3e Vagrancy in Hull 1842-1865



In 1853 the Hull Police began to collect an impressive amount of data on prostitution in the town, data which it expanded in 1854 by including figures on the number of prostitutes. Unfortunately only data for certain years between 1853 and 1865 have survived and this is presented in the Tables below (see Tables 4.6 to 4.9, which are a clearer presentation of the police data, and Figures 4.4 to 4.9a-e). A key motivating factor in doing this must have been the prevalence of the trade in Hull, for reasons which will be explained in more detail below. Before moving on to an analysis of the data it is necessary to explain how it was compiled by the police, an explanation which itself illuminates their perceptions of the problem. As far as possible the police classified prostitute houses, houses of accommodation to which prostitutes resorted and the prostitutes themselves into one of three categories. All the houses were classified as either: 'First Class - Well conducted, the Girls not being Street Walkers. Second Class - Well conducted, and frequented by the Middle Classes and Youths. Third Class - Disorderly Houses, and

²⁴ Gatrell and Hadden, 'Criminal statistics', p. 362.

frequented by the Lower Orders and Thieves.²⁵ Numbers of prostitutes were classified by prostitute house as far as possible but the police were unable to link a small number with any type of house.

From this classification there is a transparent implication that the Hull Police recognized acceptable and unacceptable prostitution. Acceptable prostitution could be tolerated because being well-conducted it did not constitute a public nuisance. Unacceptable prostitution - 'third class' prostitution - was clearly associated with disorders and criminality and it is likely that the police primarily directed action against this aspect of the trade. However the police's performance appears to have been only partially effective. Admittedly, the number of first class prostitute houses and houses of accommodation fell between 1853 and 1865 but conceivably this was more the result of moral action and changing moral values than strenuous police activity. Concurrently there was a huge increase in the number of second and third class prostitute houses (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7) which would seem to indicate that prostitution as a kind of back street industry conducted from private houses was thriving effectively beyond the control of the police.

Yet the police might have been able to claim some success in bringing down the number of second and third class houses of accommodation used by prostitutes. The former increased from thirteen to thirty-nine between 1853 and 1856 before falling to eleven by 1865. The latter increased from twenty-three to twenty-five between 1853 and 1861 but declined to twenty in 1865.²⁶ At a time when the town's population grew by over 20 per cent controlling the growth of houses of accommodation used by prostitutes could have been a noteworthy achievement. However, none of this can disguise the fact that the overall number of premises used for prostitution increased during the period. It would be tempting to argue that the corollary of controlling the number of houses of accommodation was an upsurge in the number of second and third class prostitute houses as the women moved to evade the attention of the

²⁵ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

²⁶ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

police. In other words prostitution became slightly less visible to the naked eye, conducted from private residences, but still very much thriving. Unfortunately it has not been possible to confirm this hypothesis.

Table 4.6 *Houses in Which Prostitutes are Kept 1853-1865*
(by class of prostitute house)

Year	Type of House (class)			Total
	First	Second	Third	
1853	33	33	148	214
1854	22	71	129	222
1856	5	42	183	230
1861	12	39	189	240
1864	11	57	180	248
1865	12	45	209	266

Table 4.7 *Houses of Accommodation to Which Prostitutes Resort 1853-1865*

Year	Type of House (class)			Total
	First	Second	Third	
1853	22	13	23	58
1854	24	31	18	73
1856	12	39	17	68
1861	7	8	25	40
1864	3	11	16	30
1865	3	11	20	34

Table 4.8 *Number of Prostitutes in Hull 1854-1865*

Year	Type of house (class)				Total
	First	Second	Third	Not Any	
1854	45	149	190	80	464
1856	12	92	342	55	501
1861	22	86	494	54	656
1864	31	142	452	47	672
1865	26	99	494	65	684

Source for tables 4.6-8: TCW 1/4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1865

Fig. 4.4 Number and Class of Prostitute Houses 1853-1865

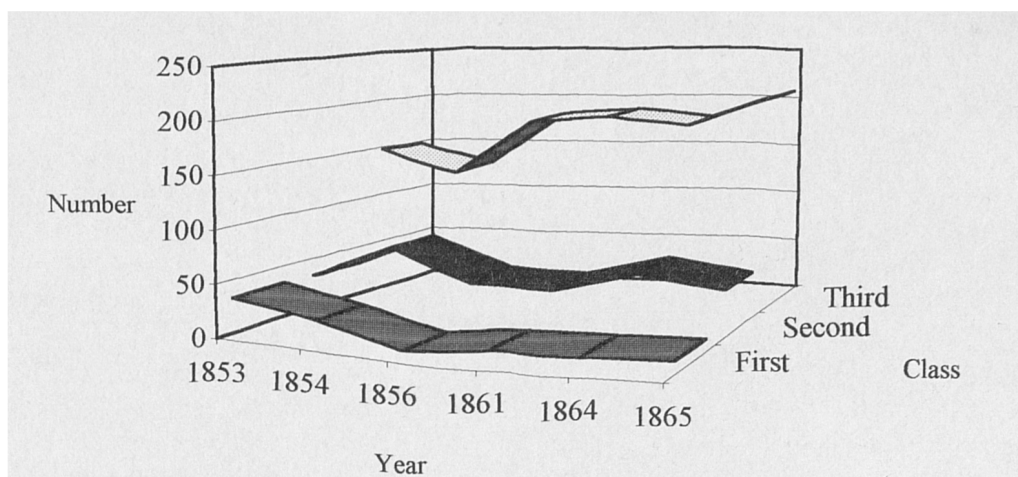
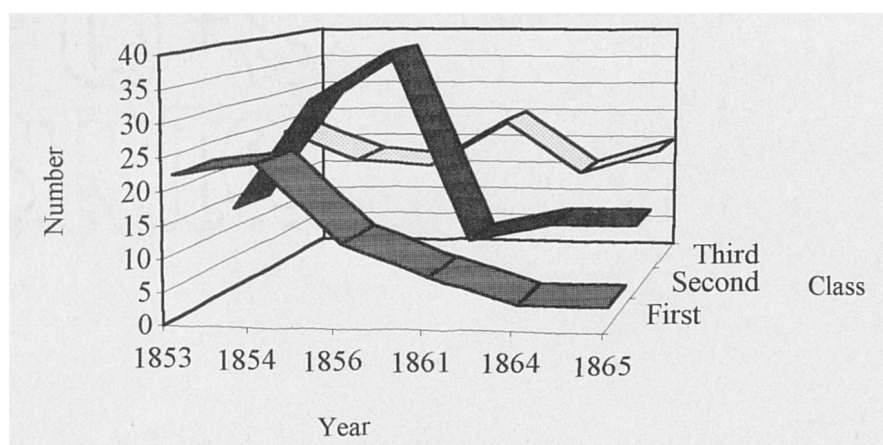


Fig. 4.5 Number of Accommodation Houses Used by Prostitutes 1853-1865



Not only did the number of prostitution premises expand, so did the number of women engaged in the trade (see Table 4.8). Indeed the number of prostitutes in Hull increased by 47.4 per cent between 1854 and 1865 while the total population grew by 21.9 per cent. In 1854 there was approximately one prostitute for every 191 inhabitants but by 1865 there was one for every 158. Moreover a higher proportion of those prostitutes were of the 'third class', 72.2 per cent in 1865 as opposed to 41 per cent in 1854. The police cannot be held responsible for this increase in prostitute numbers though, since

such growth was the result of economic circumstances beyond its control (see below for an analysis of Victorian prostitution).

Fig. 4.6 Number of Prostitute Houses 1853-1865

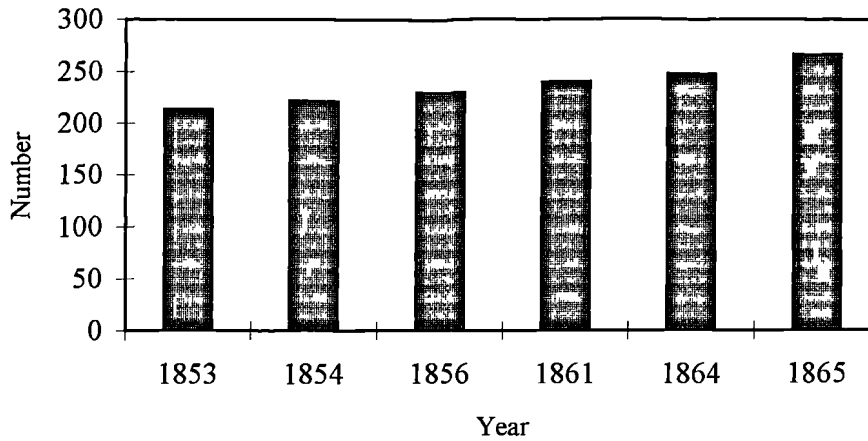
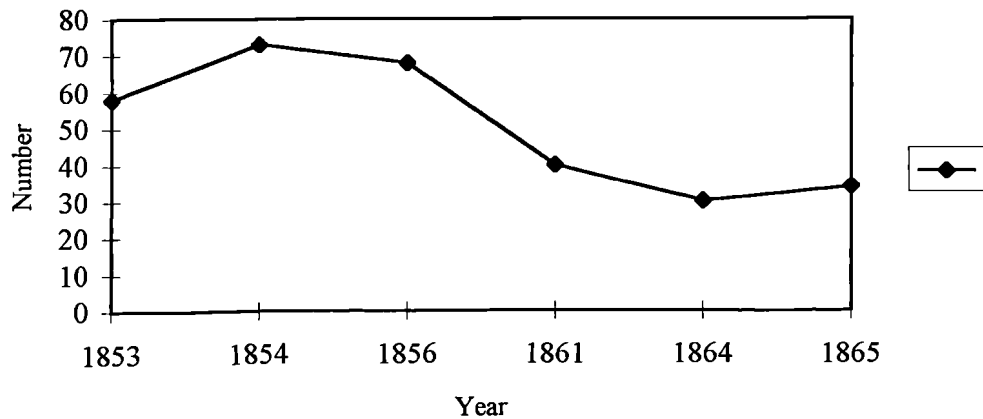


Fig. 4.7 Number of Accommodation Houses Used by Prostitutes 1853-1865

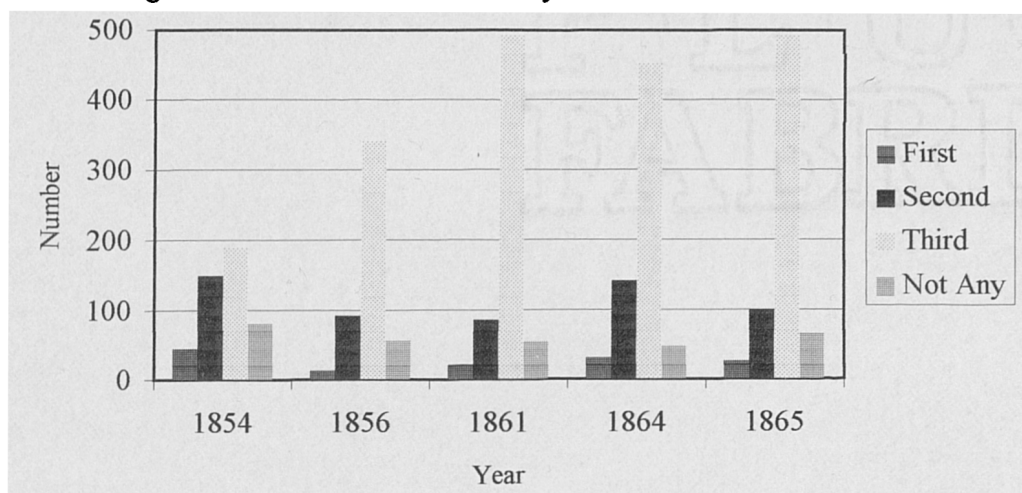


When the age of prostitutes is examined (see Table 4.9 and Figure 4.9a-e) one obvious development was the growing number of women over the age of thirty engaged in prostitution during the era, which would seem to indicate that more women were remaining prostitutes for longer.²⁷ This may have resulted in part from the limitations which were placed on female employment opportunities by the

²⁷ KHRO, TCW 1/4, Hull Pol. Cri. Ret., 1865.

economic difficulties of the town's cotton mills, one of the main users of female labour. Between 1851 and 1871 the percentage of women employed in textile production in Hull slumped from 12.7 to 3.4. In this period three out of four women who worked were employed either in domestic service or one of the clothing trades. There was no significant expansion of employment opportunities for females in Hull until the close of the nineteenth century.²⁸

Fig. 4.8 Number of Prostitutes by Class of House 1854-1865



Notwithstanding, the expansion of the older age group of prostitutes (those over thirty years of age) in the mid-century years appears not to have been as large as one might have expected, given the number of prostitutes in their twenties who could have remained in the profession. Therefore, it seems likely that a reasonably large group of younger women were somehow able to leave prostitution. It may have been the case that they were able to find some kind of alternative employment despite the obviously limited opportunities available to them. However, marriage to a former customer may have brought about a change in their lifestyle by the making of a commitment to a more long-term domestic arrangement. Whatever were the reasons for the turnover in the profession, it seems that women engaged in prostitution did not regard it as a long-term career if this could be avoided.

²⁸ Joyce Bellamy, 'Occupations in Kingston upon Hull, 1841-1948', *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research*, 4 (1952), 33-50 (Table V & pp. 39-40). See also Chapter 1.

Table 4.9 *Age of Prostitutes in Hull 1854-1865*

(By class of prostitute house. Note data starts 1854)

1854				
House Type	15 and under 20	20 and under 25	25 and under 30	Above 30 years
First	11	14	13	7
Second	25	45	61	18
Third	31	55	63	41
Not Any	11	23	31	15
Total	78	137	168	81
1856				
House Type	15 and under 20	20 and under 25	25 and under 30	Above 30 years
First	3	5	1	3
Second	17	38	16	21
Third	59	142	62	79
Not Any	15	22	9	9
Total	94	207	88	112
1861				
House Type	15 and under 20	20 and under 25	25 and under 30	Above 30 years
First	No data	7	9	6
Second	13	33	25	15
Third	71	195	114	114
Not Any	10	11	20	13
Total	94	246	168	148
1864				
House Type	15 and under 20	20 and under 25	25 and under 30	Above 30 years
First	6	12	10	3
Second	20	58	33	31
Third	73	174	101	104
Not Any	14	19	11	3
Total	113	263	155	141
1865				
House Type	15 and under 20	20 and under 25	25 and under 30	Above 30 years
First	3	8	8	7
Second	13	44	19	23
Third	59	167	126	142
Not Any	7	25	12	21
Total	82	244	165	193

Source: TCW 1/4, Hull Police Criminal Returns, 1854, 1856,

The conduct of prostitution in Hull appears to have conformed to many of the

Fig. 4.9a Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1854

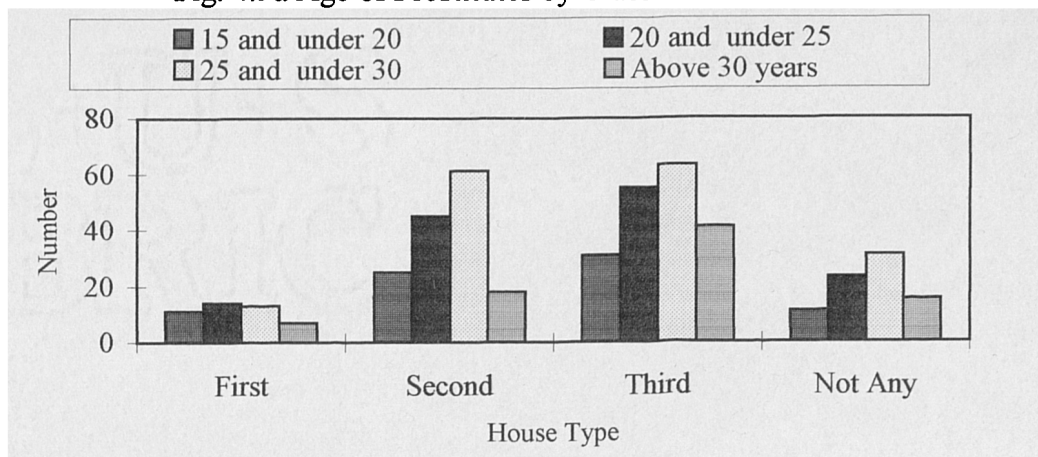


Fig. 4.9b Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1856

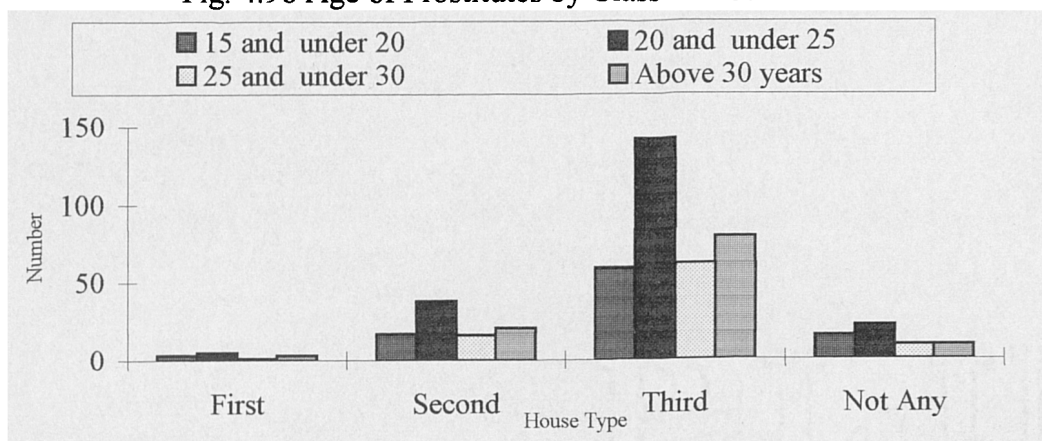


Fig. 4.9c Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1861

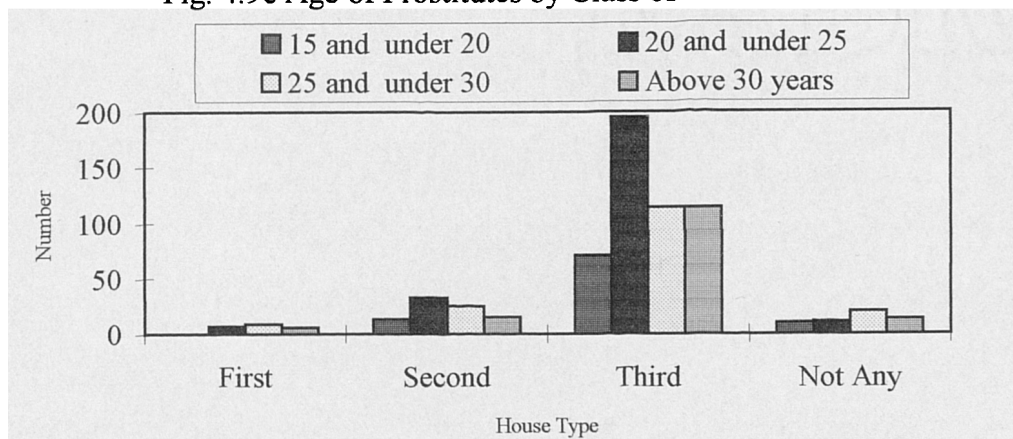


Fig. 4.9d Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1864

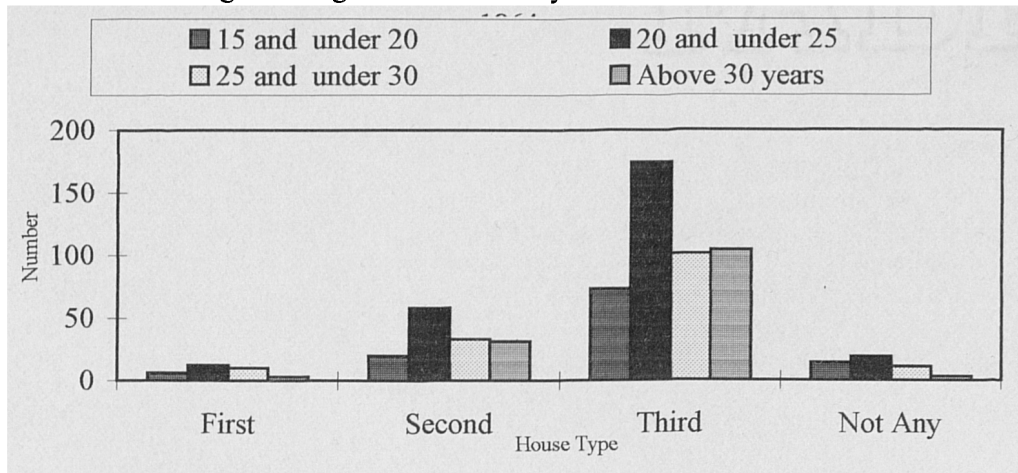
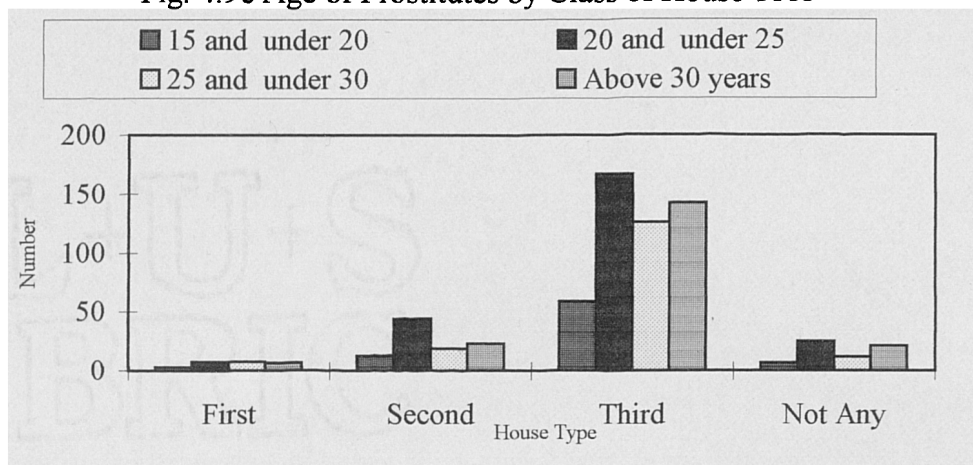


Fig. 4.9e Age of Prostitutes by Class of House 1865



characteristics of the trade in a typical Victorian seaport. The trade could flourish in such places due to the relative mobility of the local population. Street prostitution in Hull seems to have been concentrated in a particular area of the old town near to the docks but the trade may have been conducted largely from private houses. Unfortunately, little is known about the prostitutes themselves apart from their approximate ages. It is not possible to indicate how many were native to Hull nor how many were migrants. Apart from the comments of those who were arrested and brought before the police court, their perceptions of policemen have been largely unrecorded, and vice versa. Prostitution will be discussed in more detail below alongside other behaviour which was targeted for police action.

Combating Crime

More attention will now be focused on drunkenness and prostitution as offences. As two kinds of offence which were intimately linked with the whole issue of the 'condition of the streets' they merit a closer examination. Moreover, because of Hull's nature as an important port with a relatively mobile population and workforce, drunkenness and prostitution were subjects of concern to many of the respectable inhabitants of the town. The new level of deportment and order on the streets demanded by the Victorian middle class in particular meant that the police were expected to act against a variety of behaviour deemed offensive, including drunkenness and prostitution. The assault outlined below is typical of the kind of drunken and disorderly conduct which could culminate in a confrontation with the police and result in arrests. In the early hours of Sunday 12 May 1844 a group of men were drunk and disorderly in the area of Wincolmlee. According to the evidence of Sergeant Collinson before the magistrates, the ringleader in the disturbance was Francis Barker Ledran, who struck at and kicked the policemen. Although Ledran offered his apologies and said in his defence that he was very drunk at the time the magistrates fined him 20s. plus costs for the assault, in default to be committed for fourteen days.²⁹ The next day the magistrates dealt with his brother, John Ledran, and a companion who were charged with being drunk and disorderly in Wincolmlee at the same time, the early hours of Sunday 12 May. Although the press reports do not link the two incidents it is likely that Francis and John were involved together in the same incident. John was fined 5s. plus costs for being drunk and disorderly and molesting and annoying the police. The historian will never know how serious the incident actually was and whether the Ledran brothers deserved to be punished for it; but punished they were and if they did not have a criminal record already then this minor act of lawbreaking gave them one.³⁰

²⁹ KHPL, *Hull Packet* 17 May 1844; *HA* 17 May 1844. Others who were arrested at the time were also fined, some even larger sums.

³⁰ KHPL, *HA* 17 May 1844. Francis Ledran, born on 21 Feb. 1825 and who died in July 1895, is the author's great, great great grandfather.

According to temperance reformers excessive drinking by the labouring classes carried with it unacceptable social costs in terms of its effects on the individual, the family, the economy and national prestige. The drink trade denied that there was any such connection and vigorously defended itself against all the attempts of the temperance reformers to persuade the state to regulate alcohol more stringently, or even ban its consumption altogether.³¹ Faced with two such competing extremes the state could do little more than produce a compromise which, depending on one's viewpoint, either pleased relatively few people or was the least objectionable to most. Orderly pubs and clubs were largely ignored by the authorities while the full force of the law was applied by the police against those which were not. The Hull Police began to take action to curb disorderly behaviour in pubs by enforcing the licensing laws very soon after it came into existence (see below). The police campaign against drunkenness in 1836 does not appear to have been undermined by those members of the new corporation with drink interests, of which there were six. These included the Mayor, J. C. Parker, a wine merchant, and William Bettison, a brewer and member of the first Watch Committee and later its chairman from 1842 to 1846.³² Another wine merchant, William Soulby, and another brewer, Thomas Watson, joined Bettison on the Watch Committee when its composition changed in November 1836.³³ The police had a clear brief to root out drunkenness on the streets and its attack on drunkenness and disorderly conduct manifested itself in two ways. First, there was a more concerted enforcement of the licensing laws and many errant publicans and beershopkeepers found themselves in front of the magistrates. Second, the police arrested and charged large numbers of people with being drunk and disorderly on the streets. This was bitterly resented by the working class of Hull who were usually targeted for such treatment. The police was particularly concerned with enforcing the evening closing time, stamping out illegal gambling in public houses and beershops and discovering those licensees who allowed disreputable characters to frequent their premises.

³¹ For more information on the nineteenth century drink trade, temperance reform and their effects on society see Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994), passim; Brian Harrison, 'Pubs', in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, 2 vols, ed. by H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London: Routledge, 1973), I, 161-90, passim.

³² KHRO, TCM 189-90, Watch Committee Minutes, Nov 1842-Nov. 1846.

³³ The other two councillors with drink interests were both brewers. Soulby and Watson served on the Watch Committee for five and two years respectively.

Between May and December 1836 the *Hull Advertiser* reported a total of sixteen cases where licensees were charged with breaking the licensing laws in one or more ways.³⁴ The first prosecution, against a beershopkeeper called Henry Jebson, was brought in May.³⁵ At first, it appears that Superintendent McManus adopted a moderate policy of bringing publicans and beershopkeepers charged with contravening the licensing laws before the Police Court, where he requested the magistrates to impose relatively small fines on what were men and women of some means (or not to fine them at all, especially in a few cases where closing time had been overlooked because a wedding celebration was in progress). McManus was clearly hoping that this would act as a deterrent, the threat of prosecution alone being enough to convince publicans and beershopkeepers to uphold the law.³⁶ In six of the first seven cases of this kind brought by the new police the magistrates were prepared to sanction this policy. However in the case of William Roward, publican of the Turk's Head at Witham, they fined him £5 with costs - a large sum in relation to the previous fines - for permitting drunkenness and disorderly conduct on his premises after 1.00am on a Sunday morning. It was Roward's second offence and the magistrates regarded it as a serious one. There were between twenty and thirty people present in his pub at the time, including about a 'dozen women of loose character' and most of them were drunk and riotous including, it was alleged, Roward himself although he denied that he personally was drunk.³⁷ However, by September the magistrates seem to have hardened their attitude towards errant licensees. At the Brewster Sessions held that month (the annual sessions for the granting of publicans' licenses) at least four applications for the renewal of licenses were refused. Unfortunately the reasons for refusal were not made public because the magistrates ordered the police to clear their meeting room of members of the public, including journalists, so that they could continue the session in camera. Interestingly, the four publicans whose licenses were not

³⁴ KHPL, *HA* 1 May-31 Dec. 1836.

³⁵ See *HA* 27 May 1836.

³⁶ For an example of this policy in action see the case of William Thompson before the Police Court: KHPL, *HA* 22 Jul. 1836.

³⁷ KHPL, *HA* 29 Jul. 1836.

renewed had all appeared before the Police Court: William Walton Craven of the Boy and Barrel, Dagger Lane; George Barehead of the Coach and Horses, Mytongate; William Hartley of the Odd Fellow's Arms, Cross Street and the luckless Roward.³⁸ After the Brewster Sessions there appears to have been something of a police crackdown on licensees who ignored the licensing laws. Following co-ordinated police action on 24 September 1836 four publicans were brought before the police court charged with allowing disorderly conduct and/or gambling in their houses.³⁹ Again the fines imposed were light but the police were serving notice that the illegal actions of licensees would not go unpunished and there was now the threat that repeated breaking of the law could lead to a license being revoked by the magistrates. Between 24 September and the end of the year the *Hull Advertiser* reported only two more cases of licensees being convicted before the magistrates of breaking the licensing laws and in one of these cases the information was supplied by a member of the public. Perhaps the police had turned their attention elsewhere and were dealing with other problems, or perhaps their activities between May and September combined with the actions of the magistrates had convinced the publicans and beershopkeepers that it was now advisable to obey the law.

The public house attracted the attention of the police because this was where all sections of the working class came together and could be supervised. Perhaps the police overlooked the community aspect of the pub, the opportunity it offered for relaxation and entertainment, and were too eager to associate it with the feckless and the criminal. Whatever the reasons working class drunks were easy targets for police action in the early years of the new forces. Criminal statistics from the nineteenth century reveal that drunkenness was one of the most common offences dealt with by the police and magistrates and it is not difficult to understand why this was the case. The rowdy pub drunk was morally abhorred according to a hypocritical governing-class morality. The latter propagated a cynical chimera through the instrumentality of the police: 'A fiction of superior upper-class morality was preserved by a police force

³⁸ KHPL, *HA* 16 Sep., 1 Jul., 26 Aug., 2 Sep. 1836. Craven, in addition to being convicted for allowing bad characters to frequent his pub, was also convicted of having violently assaulted his wife.

³⁹ KHPL, *HA* 7 Oct. 1836.

which publicized the intemperance of the poor, while quietly shepherding upper-class drunkards to their homes without taking them to court.⁴⁰ This point was stressed repeatedly by the Chartist leader Fergus O'Connor. Speaking at a Chartist meeting in Huddersfield in November 1839, O'Connor asked:

Why were the poor of this country so often accused of immorality? Because the wealthy man's influence prevented his immorality for [*sic*] becoming known. If a poor man was found drunk in the streets the policeman would kick him in the gutter to prevent his falling [laughter] and drag him before a magistrate the next day; while a rich man under similar circumstances was passed from policeman to policeman as gently as a basket of eggs [great laughter] and at last deposited safely at his own home [true true].⁴¹

O'Connor had used similar language during a speech at Dundee in August 1839 and previously at Dewsbury in April 1838, some eighteen months before the meeting in Huddersfield. During the Dewsbury speech O'Connor said:

If a poor man got intoxicated as a temporary relief from an oppressive load of care, he was tantalized, and exposed to infamy; while, on the contrary, should his wealthy employer indulge in intoxication he would be conducted home as carefully as a man would carry a basket of eggs to the market [Cheers]. And why was it thus? The answer to the question was simple and brief - it was because the laws were generally made by the rich, and for their own protection, while the labourer was not considered worthy of a thought in the matter [Loud cheers].⁴²

The fact that O'Connor could mention this in his speeches over such a long period indicates just how popular were such attacks on the conduct of the police. The criticism that the police were the servants of the propertied and governing classes found resonance with the working class drinker. Steedman concludes

⁴⁰ Harrison *Drink*, p. 369.

⁴¹ B JL, *Northern Star* 30 Nov. 1839.

⁴² B JL, *NS* 21 Apr. 1838. For the Dundee speech see *NS* 31 Aug. 1839.

that the pattern of arrest for drunkenness in the mid-Victorian years can only be explained in class terms.⁴³ Of course drunkenness as an offence was open to interpretation by individual policemen. Quiet drunks would usually be allowed to proceed without intervention, only noisy or disorderly drunks would normally be arrested. However, even here there were other factors for the policeman to consider, such as distance from the police station, time spent in court the next morning after a night on beat duty and whether the drunk could be moved to the beat of a fellow constable.⁴⁴ It is likely that when making a decision to arrest a drunk or not the policeman considered practical considerations such as these rather than moral considerations about the 'wickedness' of drink and the condition of the drunkard. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that if the policeman was in need of an arrest then the working class drunk was an easy target and the latter's word was not likely to be believed in court against that of a policeman.

There are many reasons why the public house, drink and the drink trade were so important to English society in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ This analysis will confine itself to broad trends which affected the public house and the consumption of alcohol in the nineteenth century by looking separately at the two halves of the century to examine continuities and changes. Even so it would be helpful to appreciate that the Victorian pub was an intrinsic part of street-life, as Harrison notes:

The Victorian slum pub must be seen in the context of street-life. All but the busiest streets at that time united rather than divided the community: in working-class areas the emphasis is not so much on the individual home, prized as this is, as on the informal collective life outside it in the extended family, the street, the pub and the open-air market.⁴⁶

⁴³ Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The formation of English provincial police forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 152.

⁴⁴ Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 222.

⁴⁵ For a detailed discussion of this see Harrison, *Drink*, Chs 2, 14, 15.

⁴⁶ Harrison, 'Pubs', p. 169.

Drinking was widespread in English society at this time, particularly amongst the working class. This resulted partly from the fact that urban and rural water supplies were still largely unsafe to drink so alcoholic drinks acted as thirst-quenchers. Much water which was used for the production of alcoholic drinks was pumped from deep wells and so was relatively cleaner. If ordinary people wanted to consume water it was generally safer to boil it and consume it as a hot beverage, as tea or coffee. It was especially unsafe to drink milk in urban areas, where supplies were notoriously bad.⁴⁷

In the first half of the nineteenth century, however, alcoholic drinks were both cheaper and more accessible than non-alcoholic beverages and they were more than just thirst-quenchers. Popular belief held that alcoholic drinks imparted physical stamina and heavy drinking was conspicuously common amongst men engaged in heavy labouring trades. Of course this was partly done to quench one's thirst after a hard day's labour but drinking amongst such workers was also a sign of virility. Harrison notes that these beliefs were not completely unfounded: 'though intoxicants were no better than food for providing energy, their stimulating effects could temporarily dull the fatigue resulting from long hours and hard labour.'⁴⁸ Workers in trades which did not involve physical exertion also drank in large quantities, but for different reasons. The work environment of self-employed craftsmen and their superior earnings generally gave them the time and the opportunity to drink freely throughout the working day. Also, the initiation ceremonies of many skilled craft trades included some very rigid drink customs. Where workers were nominally under the supervision of an employer, that person had frequently still to win the workplace battle over timekeeping and discipline, which was only achieved gradually during the course of the nineteenth century, as is indicated by the slow decline of 'Saint Monday'.⁴⁹ Working people also drank for their health, which is not as illogical as one might suppose. Medical opinion lauded the medicinal effects of alcohol at this time and even if working people did not care for doctors and their expensive remedies they knew that if they were afflicted by pain drink could diminish it or remove it altogether. Perhaps they

⁴⁷ Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Drink*, p. 40.

⁴⁹ Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 40-41.

did think of the pain as the disease itself rather than as a symptom of the illness - but given the lack of medical alternatives available to them it is understandable that many should seek to drink pain away.⁵⁰

The working class needed drink in the nineteenth century but for various reasons they also needed a place in which to drink: the public house, ginshop and beerhouse, or beershop. Of these the public house was by far the most numerous and important. In the first half of the nineteenth century factors affecting the public house were a good indication of the factors affecting society as a whole. Middle class customers were becoming conspicuous by their absence. This was a trend which began in the late eighteenth century but it probably accelerated early in the following century as industrialization and urbanization opened up a gulf between the middle and working classes. The middle class withdrew from the urban public house and increasingly drank at home or in private clubs.⁵¹ Concurrently the rural pub was being patronized less by the landowning class who also had concerns about the behaviour of classes lower down the social scale. All drinking establishments had two main roles: as a recreation centre and meeting place and these often overlapped. Their recreational role resulted in part from the inadequacy of the average working class home which was typically small, overcrowded and uncomfortable, a reflection of the meagreness of many working class incomes. The amenities of the public house acted as a palliative to all this with its light, warmth, cooking facilities, newspapers (which could be read aloud to the illiterate) and sociability - all for the price of a drink. In fact it was the cornerstone of a whole class culture.

So the working man who abandoned the drinking place abandoned far more than drink alone. He was isolating himself from a distinct, earthy culture - from a whole complex of recreational behaviour[...] Sociable pleasures were precious to working men for whom alternative recreations were scarce; to abandon drink was to abandon society itself, unless some alternative grouping were provided.⁵²

⁵⁰ Harrison, *Drink*, p. 42.

⁵¹ Harrison, *Drink*, p. 46.

⁵² For more information see Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 46-50 (p. 50).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, before the advent of the railway on a national scale, the role of the public house as a meeting place was cemented most by its close association with coach travel. The coaching inn provided the coach traveller with refreshment and lodging and the equestrian traveller had access to all these as well as stabling facilities.⁵³ The decline of coach travel as a corollary of railway development had a devastating effect on some public houses, but mainly ones in rural areas which could not diversify their range of functions and were left with a small customer base.

Urban public houses were better able to adapt to this important change in the prevailing mode of transport. Urban public houses undoubtedly had a wider range of meeting place and recreational functions than their rural counterparts. As a meeting-place and recreational centre the urban pub was an ideal rendezvous for many working class organizations seeking to broaden their appeal. These could include trade unions, political reform societies and debating societies. In addition, a variety of musical, scientific, artistic and friendly societies and burial and savings clubs for working people regularly met in pubs. As publicans had access to large amounts of ready cash and relatively secure storage facilities it was common for these organizations to entrust funds to their care. The average early nineteenth century town had relatively few public buildings which could accommodate large meetings so the local pub was frequently the only viable meeting place - a fact which angered and embarrassed some early temperance societies which had no alternative but to meet in the home of the 'demon drink'.⁵⁴ Since public houses attracted trade unions and provided news, lodging and travel facilities it is understandable that they acted as proto-job centres for the hiring of casual labour. However, in the early nineteenth century trade unions were aware that meeting in pubs entailed certain risks, although they continued to do so in most cases until alternative venues appeared. Trade unions were aware of a dilemma: 'if they shunned the drinking place, they would lose a free meeting-place, together with members eager for sociability; yet by meeting there they enabled hostile social groups (who really disliked them for other reasons) to attack them on moral

⁵³ For more information see Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁴ For more information see Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 52-53.

grounds.⁵⁵ Public houses were used for a variety of economic and administrative purposes. Administratively public houses could be used by doctors, coroners, the government for tax collection and legal authorities for the temporary confinement of arrested persons and prisoners. The army and navy also used drinking establishments for recruitment and the former relied on publicans to billet soldiers on a regular basis until the Victorian outburst of barracks building was completed after mid-century.⁵⁶ Large numbers of tradesmen and hawkers conducted their business in all kinds of drinking places with or without the consent of the licensee. More importantly though the publican performed a range of economic functions which were vital to the smooth operation of the local economy. He had access to ready supplies of notes and coin which could be loaned to individuals and tradesmen. This access to cash put publicans in an ideal position to make weekly wage payments to workers on behalf of small employers. It was much easier and safer for them to use publicans for this purpose than to obtain cash from banks. Even relatively large employers in certain industries such as building and mining commonly sub-contracted all responsibility for wage payments to specific publican-paymasters. Sometimes publicans might abuse this function to encourage increased sales on pay days and stories of this abound (some having been spread by temperance reformers) but it should not be forgotten that this arrangement was frequently popular with workers themselves because of its convenience.⁵⁷

The second half of the nineteenth century saw some new developments affect the role of drinking places. Alcohol sales were affected by the improvements made in the supply of non-intoxicating thirst-quenchers such as water and milk, which became much safer to drink. Also the range of available non-alcoholic soft drinks increased and the popularity of hot beverages continued to grow substantially.⁵⁸ At the same time other developments influenced alcoholic sales. For example, the better diet of the working class reduced the debilitating effects of work-strain and the consequent recourse to alcohol to cure

⁵⁵ Harrison, *Drink*, p. 53.

⁵⁶ Harrison, *Drink*, p. 54-55.

⁵⁷ Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 54-56.

⁵⁸ See Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 291-94.

it. Medical opinion became more opposed to the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes. Working class sociability outside the pub was encouraged by the development of new forms of leisure and new public venues from around the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. Religious opinion which had earlier tolerated the imbibing of alcohol as part of a variety of religious and public occasions and festivities became highly critical of this practice, mainly because of the temperance movement's newfound strength within ecclesiastical ranks.⁵⁹ In the second half of the century class segregation according to drinking habits was even more apparent than in the previous fifty years: the working classes continued to drink at the pub or other similar establishment while the other classes drank predominantly in private, in clubs or in the family home. This was exacerbated by the steady middle class flight to the suburbs during the Victorian era to escape from the alleged 'evils' of the working class districts. The class segregation of drinkers was also aided by the development of the off-licence, an invention of the mid-Victorian era and a singularly urban phenomenon at the time. The off-licence was responsible for a marked shift in the pattern of consumption, leading to more alcohol being consumed at home but its creation was not only the product of class, religious and topographic factors. Technological developments in the drink industry also expanded the sale of bottled beers.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, in the second half of the nineteenth century the most important influence on the operation of drinking establishments and sales of alcohol was the progressive restriction of opening hours. This was the second-best solution as far as temperance reformers were concerned, who primarily wanted drinkers to voluntarily abstain or the state to close down drinking places. Although some legislation restricting the opening of beershops was passed before 1850, and a few minor acts affecting public houses, the most important acts were passed after mid-century, the significant measure being the Licensing Act of 1872. Harrison correctly points out that 'As with so much police legislation at the time, new closing regulations were made first in London and were only later applied elsewhere.'⁶¹ During the nineteenth century, the multifarious roles of the drinking places contracted and they became less important as centres for meetings, news dissemination, transportation and economic

⁵⁹ See Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 291-302.

⁶⁰ Harrison, 'Pubs', p. 167.

⁶¹ See Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 315-18 (p. 315).

transactions. By the end of the century they had gradually assumed something like their modern function as specialized social and recreational centres for the consumption of alcohol, provision of some small-scale entertainments and organization of (team) sporting activities. Until approximately the 1880s public houses - quite apart from the whole drinks trade - remained politically important at elections as the focal point of local party organization and electoral work, not least because of the importance of 'treating' electors before the poll. Such bribery of voters was a form of electoral corruption which also produced benefits for the publican. The rejection of forms of bribery and corruption such as this seems to have occurred on a widespread scale only from the 1880s onwards as party organization became more professional in the wake of legislation enforcing secret ballots and increasing the electorate.⁶² Given the centrality of the pub to all aspects of working class life in the nineteenth century it should be readily apparent why it became an obvious target for police supervision.

The zeal of temperance reformers campaigning against drunkenness was matched by moral reformers campaigning against prostitution. Prostitution itself was not a crime but the police were able to use vagrancy, improvement and licensing laws against prostitutes.⁶³ This predated the powers conferred on the police by the three Contagious Diseases Acts which applied to eighteen naval and garrison towns between 1864 and 1886 but Hull was not one of these towns. Provincial police forces utilized the law against prostitution in a variety of ways, as will be explained below, all too often failing to discriminate between real prostitutes and young women who were not involved in this work. Police estimates of prostitute numbers have always been rather conservative. In the mid-1850s the police estimated a total of 7,000 prostitutes in London and a national total of approximately 30,000.⁶⁴ More lurid

⁶² See Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 330-32.

⁶³ For more information on prostitution in the nineteenth century see Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class and the state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Robert D. Storch, 'Police Control of Street Prostitution in Victorian London: A Study in the Context of Police Action', in *Police and Society*, ed. by David H. Bayley (Beverly Hills, Ca.: Sage, 1977), pp. 49-72; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The regulation of sexuality since 1800* (Harlow: Longman, 1989); Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexual Attitudes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁶⁴ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, p. 84.

estimates by contemporary journalists and some social investigators could increase these figures by at least a factor of ten.⁶⁵ Police returns from the mid-nineteenth century indicate that in urban areas the greatest numbers of known prostitutes were found in commercial ports and pleasure resorts, while manufacturing areas (especially textile and hardware areas) generally had the lowest proportions. Prostitution was also less common in agricultural regions. Walkowitz argues that 'The relatively high concentrations of prostitutes in ports and pleasure towns could have reflected the uneven sex ratios, the limited employment opportunities open to women, as well as the presence of a transient male population that formed a ready clientele for the prostitutes.'⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that Hull fitted these characteristics in the era of this study. During most of the nineteenth century British prostitutes remained relatively independent, beyond the control of pimps, who only appear to have had considerable influence over the trade in the East End of London: 'prostitution in Victorian Britain was a trade largely organized by women rather than men.'⁶⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century moral reformers insisted that prostitution was one of the most profound social evils.⁶⁸ It was a direct attack on individual restraint, social discipline, legitimate work and most important of all the family, the very bedrock of society.⁶⁹ Rather than threatening the family, prostitution might have protected it by offering a safety valve for the release of suppressed sexual frustrations which could not be dissipated in any other way in a society which would not tolerate open displays of sexual permissiveness and promiscuity. Popular conceptions tend to imagine prostitutes working at their trade continuously but a large number probably drifted in and out of prostitution, mixing it or interspersing it with other work unless the stigma of arrest and imprisonment or local economic conditions removed other employment options. It is debatable whether the prostitute was an 'outcast' from society, especially from working class society, the class from which most prostitutes came. Indeed,

⁶⁵ Mason, *Victorian Sexuality*, p. 76. Historians disagree widely about the reliability of these various estimates and whether different types of prostitution - street and brothel - were increasing or decreasing in the nineteenth century.

⁶⁶ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 25.

⁶⁸ See Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, Ch. 2 & passim.

⁶⁹ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, pp. 84-91.

Walkowitz argues that while 'prostitutes generally maintained connections with a criminal society of petty thieves, fences, and runaway sailors, they were not cut off from general working class life, nor were they mere creatures of the male criminal element'.⁷⁰ Certainly some women had the support of their families, who regarded the trade as a necessary way of earning one's living. Prostitutes could generally reside in rough working class areas with no difficulty, where the nature of their work did not seem to upset near neighbours. Although it is known that some prostitutes lived in more respectable working class areas it is less likely that community toleration extended to include the transaction of their business in such districts. Clearly while prostitutes might live in these areas they probably had to carry out their trade elsewhere. However, there is evidence that respectable working class families involved in moral reform crusades deliberately ostracized prostitutes living in their communities, although this tended to happen later in the century when moral reform movements reached the apogee of their popularity.⁷¹

Prostitution was openly tolerated by the state until the 1860s and a prostitute's behaviour was only punished if by her conduct she outraged public decency by soliciting members of the public to their annoyance, or behaved in a drunken or disorderly manner. In dealing with prostitution the police were constrained by the limitations of the law. One of the most commonly used legal weapons against prostitutes were sections 3 to 6 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act which allowed the police to act against prostitutes wandering in a public place and behaving in a riotous and indecent manner. In addition to the 1824 Act the police also had recourse to the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847, which reproduced the provisions of the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act. Prostitution itself was not a crime and neither was soliciting unless it could be proved that it was annoying to inhabitants and passers-by. For the prosecution of a prostitute to be successful under the terms of the 1847 Act three things had to be proved in court. It was generally easy for the police to produce evidence to prove the first two: that the arrested woman was a common prostitute and she was loitering in a public place for the purpose of prostitution. However it was much more difficult to prove the third requirement, that her behaviour had been annoying, without

⁷⁰ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 25.

⁷¹ See Petrow, *Policing Morals*, p. 120.

corroborative evidence from members of the public, many of whom would naturally be reluctant to become involved in such a case. Frequently the definition of what constituted disorderly and indecent behaviour was a problem for the courts.⁷² Street prostitution, however, was only part of the problem, for once the prostitute had found her client she generally went to a brothel (or common lodging house, which could be practically the same thing) to have sex with him. The tradition in England was for the prostitute to be paid directly by the customer, and then she would settle her debts with the brothel-keeper, who charged for the room and the food and drink provided.⁷³ If the prostitute did not have a pimp, or bully, the difference between the two sums could be enough to provide for herself. As for the brothels the police could do relatively little to suppress them without the co-operation of the public, which was not always forthcoming. The concern of the police was the criminality of the brothel-keeper, not moral questions about prostitution itself. Sections 5 to 7 of the Disorderly Houses Act 1751 and section 7 of the Disorderly Houses Act 1818 required that two ratepayers had to make a complaint against a brothel for a case to come before a magistrate. It is noteworthy that a complaint had to be made by a ratepayer - a person of some property - before a case would be taken seriously by the authorities. Clearly complaints by anyone else were not regarded as worthy of legal action. The police were usually willing to assist ratepayers to make complaints but many ratepayers proved reluctant for they risked annoying the brothel keeper, or the wider community if the brothel had a loyal clientele.⁷⁴ It was during the 1860s that one of the greatest manifestations of public concern about prostitution emerged, following official concerns about the spread of venereal disease in the army and lurid press reporting of the subject. The state acted by attempting to regulate prostitution using the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869. These were applied in eighteen garrison towns and ports until 1886, when opposition groups came together to secure their repeal after it became apparent that they were victimizing the innocent and failing to have the desired effect.⁷⁵

⁷² Storch, 'Police Control of Street Prostitution', pp. 52-53.

⁷³ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, Ch. 1, passim.

⁷⁴ See *Justice of the Peace*, 42, 5 Oct. 1878, pp. 625-27, quoted in Petrow, *Policing Morals*, p. 148.

⁷⁵ For more information see Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, Chs 4-12, passim.

It is difficult to argue conclusively whether prostitution was increasing on a national scale during the nineteenth century. Storch argues that it was increasing in London from the 1850s onwards and was 'one of the few major remaining obstacles to the successful seizure of control of all urban public spaces by the police'.⁷⁶ The criminal returns compiled by the Hull Police also indicate that prostitution was expanding in Hull in the 1850s and sixties - and at a rate greater than overall population growth. However it does not automatically follow that prostitution in Hull had taken hold in public spaces and could not be removed. Prostitutes in London tended to congregate in two major areas, although the trade was practised throughout the capital. The first of these was the West End, the home of theatres and other entertainments and popular with tourists; the second was the East End around Whitechapel, 'a kind of open-air brothel',⁷⁷ where the clientele was more transparently working class. Prostitutes were an obvious and easy target for police action but it appears that many policemen did not relish taking action against them as it could be a distraction from work which was perceived to be more important (and in London it might lead to confrontations with violent pimps).⁷⁸ There may also have been an element of sympathy for the young women caught up in this business or a feeling that if the community could tolerate prostitution then why bother to act against it? Assessing the success of the Hull Police's action against prostitution is a difficult matter for two reasons. First, the police appear to have pursued a policy of containment rather than eradication. This can be inferred from the tripartite classification system which was used to classify prostitutes and the premises they used. In the opinion of the police there was tolerable and intolerable prostitution and action appears to have been directed primarily into containing the latter, third class prostitution, which was only partially effective. McManus was probably prepared to allow bawdy houses in the first and second categories to continue as long as they operated quietly and no complaints were made against them. The Hull Police's pragmatic treatment of the practice would not have met the approval of moral faddists but it was the commonsense approach. However, if a brothel was the scene of a

⁷⁶ Storch, 'Police Control of Street Prostitution', p. 50.

⁷⁷ Storch, 'Police Control of Street Prostitution', p. 51.

⁷⁸ David Jones, *Crime, Protest, Community and Police in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1982) p. 140.

disturbance then the police had to act. Similarly, if a prostitute was behaving in a drunken and disorderly manner, such as fourteen year-old Mary Lawson who was charged with being drunk in Lime Street one evening at 11.00pm. (In her defence Mary said she had been with two soldiers who had given her drink but this did not stop the magistrates from committing her to the treadmill for one month).⁷⁹ Otherwise, it would appear that the police largely left orderly prostitutes alone.

Evidence from Liverpool, another large and important port like Hull, suggests that for most of the Victorian period, with the exception of a few years in the 1890s when a disastrous policy of suppression was attempted, the Liverpool Police largely tolerated the existence of brothels as long as they were confined to certain parts of the city and did not spread to 'respectable' localities. Unfortunately, in November 1890, when Liberals won control of the council and the Watch Committee, they instructed the Chief Constable to close all known brothels. He was reluctant to do this, knowing that they were mostly located near the docks and city centre and could be easily supervised by the police. He argued that closing them would only drive them elsewhere, probably into respectable neighbourhoods all over the city which would make them much more difficult to supervise (and innocent people might be suspected of involvement in prostitution). Nevertheless, he had to carry out these orders but all this happened just as he had predicted it would. After six years the council had to admit that it had made a major mistake and accept a return to the pre-1890 system.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, in mid-Victorian Hull, as elsewhere, prostitution was a very sensitive subject which, if reported and discussed in the local press at all, was done in a circumspect way, with a degree of self-censorship being exercised. The press's middle class readership in particular could have been shocked and offended by reports of this nature and editors would have been careful not to upset bourgeois sensibilities. The relatively small amount of information which can be gleaned from the press would seem to indicate that contemporaries believed there were a large number of prostitutes active in Hull in relation to the size of the town. This was only to be expected given the importance of the port,

⁷⁹ KHPL, HA 14 Oct. 1836.

⁸⁰ W. R. Cockcroft, 'The Liverpool Police Force, 1836-1902', in *Victorian Lancashire* ed. by S. Peter Bell (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1974) pp. 150-168 (p. 159).

the amount of human traffic which flowed through the town (some of it en route for North America) and the presence of the military in the nearby citadel. Where prostitutes are mentioned in the police court reports of the *Hull Advertiser* they are often euphemistically referred to as 'nymphs of the street' or 'members of the frail sisterhood' or more simply as companions of soldiers. Public debate on the issue was restrained and it is impossible to discover whether the town population supported or opposed the police's handling of the issue.

Two cases of public complaints about prostitution - one from 1845 the other from 1860 - are recorded in the Watch Committee minutes. This is not many for a thirty year period so perhaps a majority of Hull's mid-nineteenth century inhabitants accepted prostitution as a fact of life and gave it little thought. In the first case the solicitors Lightfoot and Earnshaw wrote to the Watch Committee complaining about the number of bawdy houses in the area of Leadenhall Square, which was immediately to the south of the Old Dock (later renamed Queen's Dock in 1854), near the centre of the old town. The committee convened a special meeting on 22 October 1845 to consider their complaint and sent a letter to them in the name of the chairman, William Bettison. He informed the solicitors 'that the Police have strict orders to pay every attention to the district you have named; and that they are to use every exertion to abate all nuisances, and disorder wherever they may occur.' However, Bettison went on to point out the limited powers which the police had: 'As to Bawdy Houses, the Police, as you are well aware have no power to indict them, but if any two ratepayers will make a complaint to Mr McManus he will take the matter in hand and carry on any prosecution.'⁸¹ In August 1860 the solicitors Moss and Elliott approached the Watch Committee to complain of the increasing annoyance to the neighbourhood from the conduct of disorderly prostitutes in Leadenhall Square. Chief Constable McManus stated that every practicable means should be adopted to suppress the nuisance.⁸² There occurred a postscript to this story a few months later when Moss and Elliott, on behalf of the people living in the neighbourhood of the square, sent a letter of thanks to the committee and McManus for taking action to prevent the nuisances and disturbances which

⁸¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 22 Oct. 1845.

⁸² KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 1 Aug. 1860.

had been affecting them. These had come to an end simply by putting a policeman in the square on Sundays.⁸³ The police court reports in the Hull newspapers include cases of prostitutes involved in petty thefts or drunken disorders with their clients. Sometimes women worked in pairs to protect themselves from potentially violent customers, or to facilitate more successful larcenies from their inebriated clients. The criminality of prostitutes can be over-stated though, as can the casual nature of the relationship with their clients. Of course the basis of the relationship with the vast majority of clients was a cash payment for sexual services rendered but the apparent starkness of this work contract can obscure the extent to which prostitutes 'settled down' with one or more regular clients. Walkowitz notes that 'With working-class customers, there always existed the possibility of establishing a more intimate and enduring connection.'⁸⁴ It seems that this was particularly common among sailors' prostitutes, who could form long-term relationships with one or more sailors, living with them while they were ashore and drawing half their pay while at sea. These women could perform a variety of sexual and social services, the latter including the provision of a place to stay and somewhere to keep belongings.⁸⁵

A deeper understanding of crime in Hull and how the police dealt with it can be obtained from a study of activity during the first year of new police, 1836. The first two entries in the very first Hull Police Charge Book, recorded on 2/3 May, have survived. Their very mundaneness and pettiness as crimes is a perfect example of the routine enforcement duties which the new police was expected to perform. Both charges are excellent examples of the Hull Police's mission, at the behest of the town's middle class plutocracy, to attack the 'condition of the streets', making them safe for 'respectable' members of society. The first charge, thirty-seven year-old James Tarr, a Gunner in the Royal Artillery, was brought to the police station for being drunk and disorderly in Lowgate at 10.00pm on 2 May. He was taken into custody by Sergeant Abraham Cudworth and the incident was witnessed by PC22 Henry Meek. He was detained at

⁸³ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 19 Dec. 1860.

⁸⁴ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 29.

⁸⁵ Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 29. For contrasting opinions on the orderliness of sailors' prostitutes in Liverpool in the nineteenth century see Mason, *Victorian Sexuality*, pp. 74-76.

the station, brought before the magistrates and discharged. The second charge was twenty year-old James Twelves, of 11 High Street, who was arrested for assaulting and wounding John Graburn of North Street. He was taken into custody by PC19 Thomas Lamb. Twelves was detained and afterwards bailed at 0.30am on 3 May to appear before the magistrates, who fined him 20s.⁸⁶ These first two offences - drunk and disorderly and assault - are absolutely typical of the behaviour which the Hull police was expected to take action against.

Attempts to curb drunkenness on the streets frequently ended with the drunks themselves, and those who intervened to help them, being brought before the magistrates on charges of assaulting the police. The magistrates could and did treat this offence with great severity depending upon how much force was used against the police and how many people were involved. Several examples will illustrate this.⁸⁷ John Cook, a soldier belonging to the 30th Regiment was brought before the police court charged with being drunk in Prospect Street one evening in September 1836. A constable told the magistrates that he was trying to get Cook to move on when the soldier got hold of him and, with the help of the woman he was with, pushed him over and started kicking him. Help arrived for the constable and Cook was arrested but not before the policeman had been injured. Two witnesses corroborated the constable's evidence. Cook was fined 40s. with 3s. costs and in default was committed to one month in prison. Harriet Wilson, the woman with Cook, (and who was regarded as a prostitute in the newspaper report of the incident) was charged with being intoxicated and disorderly and was committed for one month.⁸⁸ Relations between police and soldiers were strained for many years because the latter were noted for being hardened drinkers whose off-duty recreations frequently brought them into physical conflict with the law. Policemen in turn were despised by soldiers for the assistance which they sometimes rendered in apprehending men who had deserted or were absent without leave. James Smith was fined 10s. plus costs

⁸⁶ EYRO, The first two entries in the first Hull Police Charge Book, 1836, [n.ref.].

⁸⁷ Only some of the most serious assaults are reported here. The simple assaults were generally punished with a fine of only a few shillings.

⁸⁸ KHPL, HA 16 Sep. 1836.

for being drunk in Strawberry Gardens one Sunday and 20s. plus costs for assaulting a member of the public, Robert Swift, and the policeman who arrested him. Smith's case is interesting because his fines were paid by a subscription among his companions who were attending the hearing, demonstrating the solidarity which working people showed against the police and the actions they were prepared to take to support one another.⁸⁹

Another assault involved William Gell who was charged with attacking PC George Newton. On the evening of 24 September 1836 another policeman was attempting to stop a disturbance involving four people in Great Passage Street when Newton, who was at home nearby and off-duty at the time, arrived to help. Newton took hold of one of the men and then Gell came up behind him, grabbed him and struck him several times in the face. In court Gell stated that he was drunk at the time but this had no mitigating effect on the magistrates who fined him £5 and in default committed him to two months in prison.⁹⁰ The final example of a drunken assault is relatively unusual in that it involves a woman, Jane Smith. While the newspapers and crime figures show that women were arrested for drunkenness, very few committed assaults against the police in the process. Jane Smith was charged with being drunk in High Street at 1.30am and with assaulting Inspector Vickerman and a constable. The police court report states that:

The prisoner was of Amazonian build, and had conducted herself more like a Fury than anything else. She was obliged to be handcuffed and have her legs strapped together to keep her from kicking any one she came near, and it then took five men to convey her in a cart to the station house.⁹¹

⁸⁹ KHPL, HA 12 Aug. 1836.

⁹⁰ KHPL, HA 30 Sep. 1836.

⁹¹ KHPL, HA 26 Aug. 1836.

She was fined 20s. on each charge of assault, with costs, and in default of payment committed for two months. Anthony Hackney, who had interfered with the police as they tried to arrest Smith and assaulted a constable was fined 5s. with costs and in default committed for one week.

Other assaults committed against the police while the assailants were not the worse for liquor, and incidents involving threatening behaviour, give a broader impression of community hostility towards the presence of the police in 1836. Jacob Dobson and Thomas Wilkinson were prepared to attack two policemen to save Thomas's brother William from arrest. Acting on information received, PCs Edward Stourton and Joseph Burrows went to a beershop to apprehend William Wilkinson for some offence but he managed to evade them. Later the policemen found him in the company of the two other men. They tried to arrest William but were attacked by his brother and Dobson, who were armed with cudgels. The three men then escaped by swimming a river although the policemen followed in a boat and continued their pursuit until the Mile House on Holderness Road, where they abandoned the chase. Dobson and Thomas Wilkinson later gave themselves up (William did not) and were brought before the magistrates. Dobson offered no defence but Thomas said he only became involved after the policemen hit his brother, who was resisting arrest. The two men were fined 20s. each for the assault and in default sentenced to one month in prison.⁹² The next case is absorbing because it indicates how police attempts to regulate established customs and practices could bring them into conflict with ordinary people. William Collier had been on the pier at the docks 'broking' or soliciting newly-arrived passengers to go by a particular coach to Sheffield when he quarrelled with another man and Inspector Lang asked him to leave. Collier refused and when PC Dickenson tried to move him on Collier struck him and had to be forcibly carried to the station. The magistrates fined him 10s. with 5s. costs and in default committed him for two weeks.⁹³ William Masterman was charged with inciting a riot in Blanket Row, although it was most probably only a minor disturbance because he was tried before the magistrates rather than at Quarter Sessions and the *Hull Advertiser* did not report the event in great detail. The incident involved

⁹² KHPL, HA 8 Jul. 1836.

⁹³ KHPL, HA 5 Aug. 1836.

Superintendent McManus, who was walking from his office in the Blanket Row station to the Mansion House when the prisoner decided to follow him and abuse him with 'scurrilous language'. A crowd (of an unreported size) gathered around him and Masterman was heard to say that it would be a good thing if some of the police were stabbed. The Superintendent decided that as this was not the first time Masterman had acted aggressively and provocatively towards the police he should be arrested. In his defence Masterman said he had not seen McManus that day and 'had not got his foot from his own step when he was taken.' The magistrates, disbelieving his story, ordered him to enter into his own recognizance for £10 (which indicates he must have been a man of some means) and find two sureties in £5 each to keep the peace for twelve months, or be committed instead. In reply Masterman told the magistrates that they could commit him as soon as they liked. The report did not state whether this happened.⁹⁴

The case involving the vagrant Thomas Ettridge revealed a similar contempt for the new police. Vagrancy was one condition which the middle class of Hull were determined to stamp out in their borough and the police was regarded as the instrument which could achieve this. Ettridge was a vagrant who attracted the attention of the police. Inspector Vickerman charged him with begging and took the abusive Ettridge into custody. According to the police court report, Ettridge:

was a complete specimen of the "Sturdy beggar"; under the pretence of selling tracts, he importuned persons for relief, and abused them if his requests were not granted. He said he had been 17 years in the army, had worn the cloth of Great Britain, and hoped, in consideration of his servitude, he would be let off. As to such fellows as the police, he had seen 10,000 better men than they, and had killed better.⁹⁵

Unsurprisingly all this made no impression on the magistrates who committed him for one month. One of Ettridge's friends, George Leach, also a tract vendor, was charged with obstructing Inspector Vickerman while he was arresting Ettridge. Leach was discharged on promising to leave Hull.⁹⁶ Three vagrants,

⁹⁴ KHPL, HA 9 Sep. 1836.

⁹⁵ KHPL, HA 2 Dec. 1836.

⁹⁶ KHPL, HA 2 Dec. 1836.

James Smith, Thomas Ralph and William Holdsworth, were each committed for fourteen days for being found sleeping in a stable in Witham⁹⁷ and Charles Johnson and Luke Brown were committed to hard labour for one month for begging.⁹⁸ The police were prepared to bring a charge of vagrancy against a troublesome juvenile if that was the only way he could be punished, as happened in the case of Charles Wilson, who had been in custody before and was well-known to the police. One day he was spotted in the Market Place behaving in a suspicious manner, as though intending to pick pockets. No evidence could be produced to convict him of this offence but young Charles was committed to hard labour for three months as a rogue and vagabond.⁹⁹

The most serious assault on a policeman in 1836 - which could easily have ended in a fatality - was committed by a 'respectable' shopkeeper. Joseph Forster, a gunsmith, had already ignored two summonses to appear before the magistrates to answer the complaint of his apprentice that he had not received his wages, when the Mayor issued a warrant for Forster's arrest on 9 August and sent Inspector Stephenson to serve it. (On being told that the Mayor would send a warrant if he ignored the second summons Forster was reported as saying "If he does neither one nor two policemen shall take me; I am prepared for them.") Stephenson went to the gunsmith's shop and asked a man behind the counter if he was Forster. At first the man denied this but the Inspector knew him to be Forster and laid hold of him by the shoulder. Forster brushed him off and grabbed a pistol. Stephenson took hold of Forster's hand which was holding the pistol and his collar and attempted to wrest the gun from his grip while a gentleman customer and a workmen refused Stephenson's calls for assistance.¹⁰⁰ At length the Inspector managed to get the gunsmith, who was still holding on to the pistol, into the street and threw him down. A young man passing by and a police constable came to Stephenson's aid. The obstreperous Forster was then dragged to the Town Hall, retaining the pistol in his pocket. Once there the Mayor demanded the firearm from him

⁹⁷ KHPL, HA 1 Jul. 1836.

⁹⁸ KHPL, HA 30 Dec. 1836.

⁹⁹ KHPL, HA 11 Nov. 1836.

¹⁰⁰ KHPL, HA 12 Aug. 1836.

and Forster handed it over. On inspection the Mayor found the pistol to be loaded (the report does not mention whether it had been primed and cocked). Forster was committed to the Quarter Sessions to be tried on the charge of assaulting Inspector Stephenson but was released from custody on finding bail himself of £40 and two sureties of £20 each.¹⁰¹ A few weeks later, in September, Forster's two sureties, a Mr Hemsworth and a Mr Headley, asked him to come to Hemsworth's house believing that he was about to disappear, which would have resulted in the forfeiture of their money. They must have failed to persuade Forster not to disappear because a policeman was called to take him to the station. However, at the station Inspector Lang refused to take Forster into custody because neither Hemsworth nor Headley were there to make a charge. Consequently Forster left the station and promptly disappeared. The magistrates directed some criticism at the police, particularly Inspector Lang, for not making a greater effort to take him into custody. No policeman was sent to Hemsworth and Headley to inform them that the Inspector was reluctant to take Forster into custody before receiving more information. It does not appear that Lang faced any disciplinary action following this incident.¹⁰² Forster later reappeared (his reason for returning remains unknown) and he was tried at the Hull Michaelmas Borough Sessions at the end of October. He was charged with assaulting a police officer when in the execution of his duty and with common assault and pleaded not guilty on both counts. At his trial it was established that the Mayor, acting as a magistrate at the case Forster was originally called to attend, did not have the authority to issue a warrant for his arrest and so the jury was instructed to ignore the more serious charge of assaulting a police officer. Forster then decided to change his plea on the other charge to guilty. Rather than being sent to prison he was sentenced to enter into his own recognizance of £40 to keep the peace for twelve months.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ KHPL, *HA* 12 Aug. 1836.

¹⁰² KHPL, *HA* 23 Sep. 1836.

¹⁰³ KHPL, *HA* 28 Oct. 1836. It would appear that Forster was rather prone to acts of violence because in the same year he was found guilty of assaulting his apprentices at least twice. See *HA* 2, 9 Sep. 1836.

A category of crime which was of major public concern to the people of Hull was juvenile crime. Some juvenile crime was the work of individuals, such as sixteen year old Cornelius Parker who pleaded guilty to stealing a silver spoon and one pound of lead at the Hull Michaelmas Quarter Sessions and was sentenced to six months imprisonment.¹⁰⁴ Or seventeen year-old Mary Smith who pleaded guilty to stealing a cotton handkerchief at the same sessions and was imprisoned for fourteen days.¹⁰⁵ However, the authorities were most anxious about the gangs of juveniles who stole property from the docks, picked pockets in the town centre, burgled houses and then sold their plunder to the network of fences who operated in the town. Newspaper reports continually emphasized that there was a hard-core of criminal juveniles engaged in one or more of these pursuits and the new police certainly believed this to be so. The police could claim a degree of success against the juvenile gangs by the end of 1836 but they still remained active and a problem for sometime to come. It appears that the police were able to arrest individuals who were involved in the gangs but could not break them up completely. John Taylor, a young lad who was a member of a gang known to the police, was arrested on a charge of attempting to pick pockets on the Pier. Two witnesses gave evidence against him and Taylor was committed to hard labour for two months.¹⁰⁶ Eight year-old Samuel Stamford, or Stanforth,¹⁰⁷ was another gang member who came to the attention of the police. He was brought before the Police Court in September 1836 charged with stealing wool from under the dock sheds, having been caught in the act by Thomas Pyott, a dock labourer. According to the newspaper report, a gang of boys had been selling stolen wool to a woman named Newton who lived on Waterhouse Lane. Newton was brought before the court and claimed that she had only bought a few pence worth of sweepings from children, which Pyott challenged, saying the wool was worth between 1s. and 2s. per pound. She denied having bought any wool from Stamford but claimed that a girl employed by her had. Newton was cautioned as to her future conduct and discharged. Stamford's mother then spoke, saying her son was involved with a gang of juveniles who operated from a house in

¹⁰⁴ KHPL, HA 21 Oct. 1836.

¹⁰⁵ KHPL, HA 28 Oct. 1836.

¹⁰⁶ KHPL, HA 26 Aug. 1836.

¹⁰⁷ The *Hull Advertiser* spells his name both ways.

Osborne Street. They were encouraged to steal goods by certain parties who then bought the stolen items from them. Mrs Stamford wanted her son punished and the magistrates obliged by sentencing him to solitary confinement for a week.¹⁰⁸ Young Samuel was in trouble again only two weeks later, this time for stealing brass padlocks and was committed for fourteen days.¹⁰⁹

All the assaults on the police detailed above and the variety of opposition which they had to confront in 1836 demonstrate the depth of feeling against the police which existed in a section of Hull's population. Nevertheless, by national standards the opposition was relatively mild. Resentment of the police came mostly from Hull's working class but at no time was this channelled into a concerted anti-police campaign - neither in 1836 nor afterwards. The hostility of the working class is apparent in a few isolated acts of defiance: the solidarity shown by James Smith's friends in the magistrates court, the violent language of William Masterman, and so on. Small-scale acts of defiance such as these are the most important manifestations of anti-police feeling in Hull both in 1836 and later. This is all the more surprising given the recent incidents of disorder in the town during the Acland agitation when Acland's supporters were only too willing to challenge the old policemen. However, challenging the new policemen was a completely different proposition since they were younger, fitter and stronger than the old watchmen and parish constables and had a rudimentary training in crowd control. Unfortunately, the opinions of working class people about the police have only entered the historical record when they have been arrested and brought before the courts. Such people are likely to be more forthright in their opposition to the police because of the nature of their encounter with them. The totality of working class opinion remains unknown although it was probably not significantly less hostile given that the police had the task of tackling the condition of the streets. Crucially, however, this hostility did not erupt into concerted violent confrontation. Where physical contact between the police and the people took place it was spontaneous, ephemeral and unco-ordinated. Opposition to the police from the class of people to which Forster

¹⁰⁸ KHPL, HA 23 Sep. 1836.

¹⁰⁹ KHPL, HA 7 Oct. 1836.

belonged to was extremely rare - in fact virtually non-existent - and his behaviour must be seen as thoroughly atypical.

Public Order

One of the great motivating factors propelling police reform between 1829 and 1856 - from the Metropolitan Police Act to the County and Borough Police Act - was the governing classes' fear of public disorder. The bourgeois police reformers in Hull were not exempt from this fear. Ironically Hull's only experience of widespread public disorder in the nineteenth century was the short-lived Acland unrest of 1832-33. Subsequently the town remained insulated from most of the turmoil of the Chartist era. Nevertheless the plutocracy of Hull desired their police force to be prepared to quell any riot or disturbance which presented a threat to public order. Although the Hull Police remained largely untested in this aspect of its duties one should not automatically conclude that it was unsuited to this task. Simply because the Hull Police's effectiveness as a riot control force was never tested does not mean that it would have been incapable of performing this role. Indeed, one can argue that the success of its day-to-day policing role negated the likelihood of public disorder to a very great extent. Some contemporaries believed this to be the case: for example at the annual review of the Hull Police in May 1855 the Mayor that year, Sir Henry Cooper, recalling the recent royal visit to Hull by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert said that:

the orderly conduct of the inhabitants generally was the subject of repeated remarks by both the royal guests. That was attributable to the efficiency of the police force, and they [the policemen] would, no doubt, recollect that he took upon himself to express, through the chief constable, on that occasion, such an opinion.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ KHPL, HA 5 May 1855.

Of course Cooper's comment is a personal one which explicitly connects good order with policing and it is not easy to prove it conclusively. The police may have been credited with a situation for which they were not responsible, or only partly responsible. Nevertheless, it is important to record that the Hull Police apparently could cope with some relatively large crowd control situations, such as the following example from April 1856. It was a disorder begun, characteristically, by a couple of unruly soldiers who created a disturbance one Sunday afternoon in Queen Street. The police intervened, the soldiers retaliated, a large crowd quickly assembled to watch the proceedings and the soldiers managed to escape. The crowd occupied Queen Street and Market Place 'and appeared to enjoy the discomfiture of the policemen.'¹¹¹ One man was arrested for assaulting a constable, Michael John Coupland, a sailor and second mate. The soldiers having escaped, an effort was made to disperse the crowd, which led to the arrest of three more men: Joseph Newton, of Grimsby, a labourer, James Rea of Hull, a hairdresser and John Rosindale also of Hull, a whitesmith, who were 'charged with inciting a mob to break the peace.' One of the policemen at the scene had a brick thrown at him - he did not know by whom - but at the same time about thirty yards away he saw Rea, 'whom he saw rejoicing at the "spree," which had the effect of inciting the mob to greater disorder.' Newton, also nearby, was noticed holding 'a large knuckle bone of beef in his hands, which he dropped on realizing that he was being watched by the police.' Rosindale was charged with interfering to prevent the arrest of Rea. The magistrate, Mr Travis, 'remarked upon the enormity of proceedings like these, which, if allowed, and particularly on the Sabbath-day, would render Hull infamous.' Coupland was fined 40s. and costs, Newton and Rosindale 20s. plus costs each and Rea 10s. The magistrate noted that 'wherever there was a disturbance, every person in the crowd is considered guilty, unless actually engaged in assisting the police.' Since it was stated that the help of persons had been asked for and refused, Travis gave orders that these persons should be traced and the soldiers who had originally started the disturbance identified.¹¹²

¹¹¹ KHPL, HA 12 Apr. 1856.

¹¹² KHPL, HA 12 Apr. 1856.

Even so it is necessary to remember Emsley's warning that the new police in general had profound difficulties maintaining public order during large-scale disturbances. The inability to mobilize sufficient manpower, the lack of anything but the most basic training and the absence of suitable protective equipment were all reasons why English police forces usually struggled to deal with riots during this period (and for many years afterwards).¹¹³ All this must qualify the somewhat optimistic assessment of the new police's capacity for crowd control made by Edwin Chadwick in the 1839 Royal Commission report on the proposed rural constabulary:

Of the military force it may be observed, that the private soldier has both hands occupied with the musket, with which his efficient action is by the infliction of death by firing or stabbing. The constable or policeman, whose weapon is the truncheon, or on desperate occasions, the cutlass, has one hand at liberty to seize and hold his prisoner, whilst the other represses force by force.¹¹⁴

During the first thirty years of the force's existence it was involved in suppressing one serious riot which occurred not in Hull but Grimsby (see below). The Hull Police dealt with other public order incidents outside the borough but these were all relatively minor when compared to the Grimsby election riot of 1862. Probably the most serious unrest in Hull itself in this period was a Chartist disturbance in 1843, which will be discussed shortly. Hull was a garrison town and played host to naval vessels so there was ample opportunity for conflict between policemen, soldiers and sailors, usually inflamed by the armed forces' legendary thirst for alcohol. Disturbances involving the police and the armed forces were periodic but never escalated into a major incident. One example of such a disturbance which is quoted by Storch occurred in July 1839 following the arrest of a drunken soldier from the 81st Regiment on a Saturday evening. As a result the following evening there was a confrontation between some policemen and soldiers during which one policeman was beaten up. However the magistrates discharged the arrested soldiers with

¹¹³ For more information see Clive Emsley, *Policing and its Context*, (London: MacMillan, 1983), Ch. 8, *passim*.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in D. Philips, 'Riots and Public Order in the Black Country, 1836-1860', in *Popular Protest and Public Order* ed. by Raymond Quinault and John Stevenson (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 141-180 (p. 151.).

only a reprimand which suggests that either the incident was not regarded as a serious threat to public order, the policeman was adjudged to have made a mistake, or - more likely - the maintenance of good relations with the garrison was considered more important than punishing the soldiers.¹¹⁵ Storch seems to imply that the incident was more serious than this because he writes that a large civilian crowd gathered, entered the affray on the side of the soldiers and drove the police off. However the *Hull Advertiser* reports the incident in a manner which does not suggest any form of serious active involvement by civilians.¹¹⁶

Even the Chartist disorders in Hull were trivial when set against the serious threat to public order which the movement posed in parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Midlands. As a mass working class movement Chartism was greatly influenced, indeed conditioned, by the economic and social changes ushered in by the Industrial Revolution. Yet it was also a political movement espousing a radical programme.¹¹⁷ So although economic and social factors played a major part in the stimulation of Chartist activity one needs to understand why the movement adopted political forms of agitation. The political philosophy of the Chartists emphasized the need to obtain control of the governmental system and use it, among other things, to regulate the introduction of new technology and conditions of employment. This did not represent a regression to an older paternalist ideology, nor the beginnings of an attack on existing property relations. Rather, it was a determination to include in contemporary political economy the concept of 'labour protection' because labour was a form of property and needed legal protection as much as any other possession. If a governmental system failed to provide that safeguard then it was condoning economic exploitation. Between 1838 and 1848 Chartist agitation

¹¹⁵ BJL, *The Times* 30 Jul. 1839; KHPL, *HA* 26 Jul. 1839.

¹¹⁶ Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57', *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), 61-90 (p. 73). However he seems to have used another item as his main source of evidence rather than the *Hull Advertiser*.

¹¹⁷ For more information on Chartism see: Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1986), Edward Royle, *Chartism* (Harlow: Longman, 1986), Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* ed. by idem (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), John Saville, *1848: The British state and the Chartist movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); J. R. Dinwiddy, *Chartism* (London: Historical Association, 1987); Hugh Cunningham, 'The Nature of Chartism' in *Britain 1815-1867* ed. by Peter Catterall (Oxford: Heinemann, 1994), pp. 51-57.

was so intense that it came nearer to being revolutionary than any other political unrest in modern British history. Across the country working people formed local Chartist associations, campaigned, demonstrated and established an alternative culture in an effort to secure the passage of their political programme, the People's Charter. The Charter itself was a draft parliamentary bill comprised of the famous Six Points: universal manhood suffrage, annual Parliaments, the secret ballot, payment of MPs, equal electoral districts, and abolition of the property qualification for MPs.

The only real tactic open to the Chartists was to fight a 'war of nerves' similar to that used by the Whig-middle class leaders during the reform agitation of 1830-32. The Chartists' chief weapon was the 'language of menace', the 'rhetoric of violence' and the 'tactic of bluff' which was used endlessly in speeches, pamphlets and newspapers and at demonstrations. If Chartism ever posed the threat of political revolution this was not an indication of its true significance, which was its ability to convert millions of working class people to the revolutionary idea that England should be a true political democracy. Chartism was the first mass movement of the working class, the first movement to weld popular support to a political consciousness. Chartism's strength was as an idea not a weapon and it is much easier to destroy a weapon than it is an idea, for an idea can outlive the movement which gave birth to it. Chartism's aims, the Six Points of the People's Charter were certainly radical and would have led to a reconstitution not just of the English state but also of society. However the emphasis on political change to the neglect of economic and social reform revealed the limitations of the movement's revolutionary ideology and probably limited its popular appeal.¹¹⁸ As putative revolutionaries the leading Chartists were also hampered by their innate constitutionalism and adherence to constitutional principles (albeit with some element of menace). Why else would a movement decide to call representative Conventions, collect gigantic petitions, organize local associations linked to a national parent body and hold public meetings, demonstrations and marches? If this was the work of a sect of dedicated professional revolutionaries, then it was an odd way in which to function. One of the most obvious elements of menace was the mass outdoor meeting, often by torchlight,

¹¹⁸ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 414.

a recurrent tactic. However, even at this kind of event the public message from the Chartist leadership was clearly circumscribed. The mass following should exact concessions by inducing fear; they should abstain from riot and bloodshed; they should maintain order but resist oppression; in short, if necessary they should 'arm for peace'.¹¹⁹ Chartism's fundamental problem was that throughout its lifetime it remained a hybrid movement representing old and new forms of radical protest, culture and leadership. Simultaneously the movement was backward-looking, steeped in the history and semiotics of the French Revolution, with its torchlight processions and ritualistic threats of coercion. Yet it was also forward-looking with its national petitions, central organization and proto-pressure group activities, all characteristics of modern representative politics.

As far as the Hull Police were concerned, Chartism was a public order issue. Public concern about the activities of Chartists in Hull seems to date from 1839 when the *Hull Advertiser* reported that:

the Mayor on Monday gave directions to the Superintendent of Police that two of his men should, for the future, attend in uniform at the Chartist meetings held in Hull, in order that what passed there might be communicated to the authorities. We fancy this order will have the effect of changing the tone of many of the blustering orators. At any rate the presence of the policemen will be open, so the Chartists will not be able to complain of "secret spies" being sent amongst them.¹²⁰

A Chartist meeting had been held in Hull three days earlier and given the state of the country at the time the borough authorities felt that this might lead to disturbances taking place and therefore it would be advisable for the police to ascertain what activities the Chartists were engaged in.¹²¹ However, if any Chartists were plotting a disorder in Hull they would have to be very dense to discuss the plans at a public

¹¹⁹ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 414.

¹²⁰ KHPL, HA 6 Sep. 1839.

¹²¹ KHPL, HA 6 Sep. 1839.

meeting in the presence of uniformed policemen. The most serious Chartist incident in Hull took place during the early evening of 13 April 1843. Some three hundred to four hundred people assembled round the statue of King William in the Market Place to listen to a Chartist speaker from Birmingham named West. The meeting had been called to protest at the conduct of a trial at Leicester of a man charged with sedition. According to the *Hull Advertizer*, shortly after 7.30pm the orator commenced a 'violent harangue' before his audience. The 'language he used was of so inflammatory and seditious a character' that Superintendent McManus thought it advisable to send for the Mayor, who was presiding at a meeting in the Town Hall and quickly arrived. Meanwhile the speaker's 'expressions became so unguarded and violent' that it was decided the proceedings should be terminated. Accordingly, a file of policemen led by McManus marched through the crowd to the orator:

who was desired immediately to desist from his harangue, and disperse with the crowd. Finding physical resistance to be out of the question, and his eloquence being entirely lost on the gentlemen in glazed hats, the discomfited orator was obliged to scamper off, and two minutes afterwards no vestige of the crowd remained.¹²²

In contrast, the main Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star*, reported that 'The meeting was a numerous one and remarkably peaceful' and commenting on the action of the police the paper stated that 'had not the people been peaceably disposed, no doubt there would have been a riot.' The report concluded that 'The conduct of the police has excited universal disgust among all classes' and it alleged that plainclothes policemen had been present at subsequent Chartist meetings at Dock Green.¹²³

This was not the end of the matter, for a meeting to protest about the police's action in dispersing the crowd was held in the Freemasons' Hall on 23 April 1843 to consider petitioning Parliament

¹²² KHPL, HA 14 Apr. 1843. For a short summary of the incident see Edward Gillett & Kenneth A. MacMahon, *A History of Hull* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1989), p. 322.

¹²³ BJL, NS 22 Apr. 1843.

about the conduct of the police. A deputation of complainants had previously attended upon the magistrates the day after the Market Place incident to raise the same issue but the latter had been unmoved by the complaints. The meeting at the hall attracted between two hundred and three hundred people and proceeded to pass two resolutions. The first concerned the petitioning of Parliament to investigate the recent conduct of the police and magistracy in Hull and the second called for the petition to be sent to the radical MP Thomas Duncombe and other parties and for the MPs of Hull to support it. The *Northern Star's* report of this meeting commented on the alleged hypocrisy of the Whig magistrates in permitting peaceful demonstrations in the Market Place when it suited their purposes, for example anti-Tory protests such as the burning in effigy of Sir Robert Peel.¹²⁴ The petition criticizing the conduct of the Hull Police was presented to Parliament on 9 May 1843 but it was not debated until August, at which time the supporters and opponents of the police's actions retold different versions of events. The radical MP for Finsbury, Thomas Duncombe, moved that the petitioners' claims concerning the excessive force used by the Hull Police should be investigated by a Select Committee of the House of Commons. The petitioners claimed that the meeting was on the verge of finishing when the police moved in. Supporters of the authorities argued that excessive force was not used and the police intervened to disperse the meeting because it was obstructing a public highway and darkness had fallen. Indeed the point was made that having a meeting take place in darkness was 'calculated to excite alarm and distrust in the minds of the respectable inhabitants'. In rejecting the motion by eighty-three votes to twenty-nine, MPs expressed clear support for the actions of the Hull Police and magistrates in dealing with the meeting.¹²⁵ It comes as no surprise to the historian that in 1843 the authorities in Hull, the newspapers and a majority of MPs should reject so decisively the complaints of the Chartists and their allies in Parliament. Class interest and political power were at stake here and even if it could have been proved conclusively that the Hull Police had used unnecessary force it is highly unlikely that any disciplinary action would have been taken against members of the force. Indeed, it can be argued that one of the key tasks of the new police was to quell any threat to public order and - quite simplistically - this is what the police saw Chartism as. If policemen were breaking

¹²⁴ KHPL, *HA* 28 Apr. 1843; BJL, *NS* 29 Apr. 1843.

¹²⁵ BJL, *The Times* 5 Aug. 1843.

up Chartist meetings and harassing Chartist activists then they were following the orders of senior officers and the wishes of the middle class Watch Committee. The police's flawed perception of Chartism and its perspective on public order made it an instrument of the state in the maintenance of order and control.

It was mentioned above that the most serious public order incident involving the Hull Police did not occur in Hull itself but in the nearby port of Grimsby on the southern bank of the Humber. The Grimsby Election Riot of 1862 occurred towards the end of the prescribed polling period. It seems that it was caused by the supporters of one of the candidates, the business man Mr John Chapman. It was alleged that a large number of the rioters were labourers, bricklayers and other workers connected with the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, of which Chapman was the chairman (he was also chairman of the Great Grimsby Dock Company). According to the *Hull Times* the riot began when it was rumoured that two of Chapman's supporters were being confined in a hotel to prevent them from voting by the supporters of the Liberal candidate, Mr Heneage. About fifteen drunken Chapman supporters went into the hotel and confronted the proprietor who said that he did not know where the men were being kept. The crowd inside said they would search the hotel, the proprietor objected and a fight broke out in the hall of the building. By this time there was a larger crowd of people outside the hotel who tried to enter it once the fighting had broken out. This was when the violence really escalated and a group of rioters set about searching the rooms of the hotel. No confined voters were found and the rioters began to exact their revenge on the proprietor by smashing crockery and other property in the hotel including tables, chairs, doors and windows, some of which were thrown into the street.¹²⁶ The Grimsby Police was not present while this was taking place save for two officers who watched the disturbance but did not intervene. The *Hull Times* reported that a number of special constables who had been sworn in to maintain order on the day ripped off their special hat bands and joined in the disturbance while others on duty did nothing to terminate it. Shortly after the commencement of the riot at the hotel the Hull Police were sent for. A force of fifty Hull policemen commanded by Inspectors Dorsey and Hobson had arrived in Grimsby earlier in

¹²⁶ KHPL, *Hull Times* 15 Feb. 1862. See also *HA* 15 Feb. 1862. For the allegations about who was involved see *HT* 5 Apr. 1862.

the day at about 12.30pm to assist the Grimsby Police should this prove necessary The Hull Police could not have arrived on the scene in time to prevent the destruction taking place but they emptied the hotel of the rioters.

The crowd then counter-attacked the police and the riot reached a new level of intensity. The police struck back with their staves and the rioters hurled bricks, stones, broken property and furniture and anything else they could lay their hands on. The police were driven back into the hotel by the crowd but stood their ground and drove the crowd back once more. The crowd attacked yet again, the policemen were again pelted with missiles and forced to retreat into the back part of the hotel. The crowd re-entered the hotel and completed its work of destruction while the injured policemen were attended to or ferried away. It appears that the rioters did not attack the policemen at this stage, concentrating instead on wrecking the hotel. The riot lasted between two and three hours and the ringleaders were identified early on but not one was taken into custody. According to the *Hull Times* the Grimsby Police:

took good care to keep out of the way, and the special constables rather aided the rioters than endeavoured to quell them, as to the Hull police they, of course, were disabled in an early stage of the proceedings from actively interfering any more. The consequence was, the mob had it all their own way, and they were not backward in making good use of the opportunity thus afforded them of completing a work of real and unmistakable destruction.¹²⁷

The newspaper reported in the same issue the injuries which Hull policemen had received:

Inspector Dorsey has been most severely treated. After having been felled by a blow from part of a deal, which struck him on the back of the head and neck, he had no sooner got on his feet again, than he was struck on the right eye with part of a brick, receiving most serious injury. His wounds were dressed, but he was unable to proceed to Hull until the last train, and it is likely that he will be for some time on the sick

¹²⁷ KHPL, *HT* 15 Feb. 1862. Chapman was elected by 458 votes to 446.

list. Inspector Hobson received a severe blow with a deal on the right arm, which would no doubt have been broken in consequence, had not a gentleman drawn back the arm, and thereby broken the force of the blow. He received another blow on the face, and was altogether roughly handled, but managed to retain his post. The most serious case is that of P.C. Dixon (75), who has received a severe spinal injury, which, it is not unlikely, will permanently disable him.¹²⁸

In total twenty-two Hull policemen were injured as a result of the riot in Grimsby. Seven returned to duty relatively quickly but fifteen were off work for a longer period with a variety of injuries but mainly scalp wounds, cuts and bruises and a few minor eye injuries.¹²⁹ The Watch Committee investigated how the Hull Police had come to be involved in suppressing the election riot in Grimsby. After disturbances began in Grimsby its Mayor applied for assistance to the Mayor of Hull, who immediately consulted the chairman of the Watch Committee, the Chief Constable and the Town Clerk. The latter advised him that Hull's force could legally act in Lincolnshire so the Mayor acceded to the request, directing the Chief Constable to send fifty men to Grimsby. The Hull Watch Committee confirmed that the Mayor had acted properly and thanked him for his prompt conduct in dealing with the emergency.¹³⁰

In Hull there were expressions of support and praise for the actions of the police, although an editorial in the *Hull Advertizer* criticized the decision to send the men to Grimsby.¹³¹ Some of the chagrin directed at the Grimsby authorities resulted from obvious municipal rivalry with a neighbouring town and economic competitor. Moreover, any local newspaper with a middle class readership would support the defenders of property rather than the attackers of it, and its own police force rather than strange rioters. For example, the *Hull Times* published a motion from the Market Place Ward

¹²⁸ KHPL, *HT* 15 Feb. 1862. The *Hull Times* went on to give details of injuries received by another fourteen PCs. It is believed that all Hull policemen recovered from their injuries and none suffered permanent disablement.

¹²⁹ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 19 Feb. 1862.

¹³⁰ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 19 Feb. 1862.

¹³¹ KHPL, *HA* 15 Feb. 1862. The paper also published an indignant letter by an unnamed correspondent which complained about the decision to send the Hull Police to Grimsby.

Ratepayers Association which unanimously expressed its 'admiration of the gallant conduct of the Hull Police' at the election riot and denounced the police of Grimsby.¹³² A few weeks after the incident the Mayor of Hull presented £10 to the policemen who dealt with the riot. The Watch Committee thanked him for his generosity and asked the Chief Constable to distribute the amount pro rata.¹³³ The distribution of this largesse may have encouraged the Mayor of Grimsby and the two candidates at the poll to each give £5 to the Hull Police as recognition of the policemen's efforts. The Mayor of Grimsby thought that the injured men had the strongest claim on the £15 but he left it to the Watch Committee to decide how it should be distributed. He ended his letter by thanking the policemen and expressing the hope that all of them had made a speedy recovery from their injuries and had returned to duty. The Watch Committee decided to distribute the £15 amongst all of the men sent to Grimsby pro rata.¹³⁴ Later that year in May twenty-seven men were tried at Grimsby Town Hall charged with feloniously demolishing the Yarborough Hotel, riotous conduct and assaulting several members of the Hull police and other individuals. Most were labourers or had other unskilled occupations although one was an engineer and another an engine driver, which may lend support to the accusation that many of the rioters were employees of the railway company of which Chapman was chairman. Witnesses for the defeated candidate, Mr Heneage, said that the two 'imprisoned' voters originally sought by the mob had only gone into the hotel for refreshment. The court was densely packed with members of the public who supported those on trial and frequently interrupted the counsel to applaud whenever the proceedings seemed to favour the defendants. The Hull policemen who gave evidence were greeted with hisses but on the whole the proceedings were relatively orderly.¹³⁵ The Grimsby magistrates committed sixteen of the rioters to the next Lincoln assizes charged with riot. Bail for the men was granted and the remainder of the defendants were discharged.¹³⁶

¹³² KHPL, *HT* 1 Mar. 1862.

¹³³ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 19 Mar. 1862.

¹³⁴ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 26 Mar. 1862.

¹³⁵ KHPL, *HA* 17, 24 May 1862.

¹³⁶ KHPL, *HA* 31 May 1862.

The sixteen were tried at Lincoln Assizes in the summer of 1862. In addition to being charged with 'feloniously and riotously damaging the Yarborough Hotel', they were further indicted for 'assaulting beating and wounding' Inspectors Henry Dorsey and Richardson Hobson of the Hull Police and other named individuals. Dorsey and Hobson were amongst those who gave evidence at the trial. The court heard that about fifty officers of the Hull Police only came to Grimsby because the Mayor of Grimsby had first asked, and been refused, the services of policemen from the Lincolnshire Constabulary because all available men were needed to deal with the aftermath of a recent riot in Lincoln. The Hull policemen were sworn in as special constables by the clerk to the Grimsby magistrates in the town hall and all were in police uniform. The judge at the trial evinced his surprise on learning that policemen from outside Lincolnshire had been brought into the county to maintain order. Damage to the hotel building itself had been estimated at £300 and the value of the hotel furniture which had been destroyed was estimated at a further £470. During the course of the trial the charges against a number of the defendants were dropped and they were discharged. Thus a verdict was pronounced on only seven of the defendants, of which four (three labourers and a bricklayer) were found guilty and the rest acquitted. The jury made the guilty verdict on the four men with a 'recommendation to mercy and the warmest commendation of his Lordship', the judge. The jury believed that if the Hull Police had not been brought into Grimsby no riot would have occurred. Such a statement by the jury ignored the fact that the riot had already begun by the time the Hull policemen arrived on the scene. The judge, however, concurred with the recommendation to mercy and each man was given a sentence of three month's imprisonment.¹³⁷

Policing the Docks

It was mentioned earlier that the issue of how the docks and quays would be policed affected the size of the Hull Police from 1844 (when the police first took responsibility for policing Dock Company property)

¹³⁷ LPL, *Lincolnshire Chronicle* 1, 8 Aug. 1862.

until the end of this study, 1866. Before 1844 the docks and quays, together with other property owned by the Dock Company in the borough, were not protected by the Hull Police as the company had its own dock constables and watchmen. Consequently the company and its tenants did not pay a watch rate. The history of the Dock Company's own small force of constables and watchmen went back to the time of its creation by The Hull Dock Act of 1774.¹³⁸ Under the terms of this legislation the company had the power to appoint its own constables and watchmen to protect its property. In 1801 and 1810 respectively, Sculcoates and then Hull and Myton secured the passage of Improvement Acts which facilitated the establishment of local watches but the Dock Company was able to secure the insertion of a clause in each Bill which exempted itself and its tenants from paying any watch rates on company property. In this way the company continued to make its own policing arrangements and opt-out of those which applied to the rest of the borough, even after the new police was formed in 1836. In 1844 the company was supervising the passage through Parliament of a Dock Bill which would authorize, amongst other things, the construction of an additional dock and changes to its constitution. The Watch Committee was anxious for a clause to be inserted into the Bill relating to the watching of the Dock Company's property which would compel the company and its tenants to pay a watch rate, as the rest of the borough was obliged to do, in return for its property being patrolled by the police force. Marshalling its arguments carefully and persuasively, the Watch Committee prepared its case to present to the corporation. The committee was able to point out that although the company was exempt from contributing to the watch rate:

it reaps the benefits of the police along with other parts of the Borough, whilst such other part of the Borough has to raise the whole amount of the Watch Rate.

That since the establishment of the Borough Police numerous Felonies have be committed in the said Docks, and the Dock Sheds, and from that time up to the end of July 1843 there were 379 persons apprehended by the Borough Police for felonies committed there, whilst only 21 persons have been apprehended by the Dock Company's Constables thus proving that the Dock Company derive considerable

¹³⁸ 14 Geo. III c. 56, s. 60.

benefit from the Borough Police without their Property contributing by Watch Rate to the expense thereof, as the rest of the Borough Property does.¹³⁹

The committee went on to assert that if the docks and quays had been a part of the police beats a large number of these felonies would have been prevented. The docks and quays were in the midst of the most densely populated part of the borough and if patrolled by the police like the rest of the borough, as had been found necessary in Liverpool, 'the general efficiency and good resulting from the Hull Police would be enhanced.'¹⁴⁰ Moreover, as the Dock Company would be required to pay a watch rate the Watch Committee could employ more constables and the whole town would benefit from having extra policemen. Finally, under the present arrangements the cost of prosecuting all felonies committed on Dock Company property was paid out of the Borough fund and the company contributed nothing.¹⁴¹ The Watch Committee presented its case to the corporation only a few days later and strong support was shown for the proposal to petition Parliament to secure the insertion of an appropriate clause in the Docks Bill. The corporation agreed to bring this matter to the attention of the parliamentary committee which was scrutinizing the Bill and plans were made to dispatch a deputation to Parliament.¹⁴² A written petition was sent to Parliament in the name of the corporation and the parliamentary committee was requested to hear the evidence of its agents, counsel and witnesses.

Despite the persuasiveness of the Watch Committee's argument about the police patrolling the docks, the Dock Company was not prepared to agree to this when it would result in the payment of a substantial watch rate. The company actively opposed the proposal to insert an appropriate clause in the Bill. Undeterred, the Watch Committee instructed its sub-committee dealing with the issue:

¹³⁹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 12 Feb. 1844.

¹⁴⁰ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 12 Feb. 1844.

¹⁴¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 12 Feb. 1844.

¹⁴² KHRO, TCM 3, Hull Corporation Minutes, 14, 28 Feb. 1844.

to proceed with getting the Dock Bill altered as proposed by this Committee unless some proposition to the contrary shall be made to them by the Dock Co. which they may consider to be such as would possibly be acceded to by this Committee in which case they are requested to call the Committee together.¹⁴³

Eventually on 21 May 1844 the Dock Company and Hull Corporation reached agreement on a set of proposals for patrolling the Hull docks in the committee of the House of Commons which was dealing with the Bill. The *Hull Advertiser* reported, however, that an agreement was reached only after the government intervened to break the deadlock between them.¹⁴⁴ According to the terms of the agreement, which became section 268 of the Hull Docks Act 1844, the Watch Committee would assess the sum to be paid by the Dock Company for watching its property and the amount would be approved by the corporation. The sum would be paid in two equal amounts every year, in October and April. However, if the company was dissatisfied with the sum being claimed it could appoint a barrister to challenge the ruling, who with the committee's chosen barrister, would agree a new sum. If this proved impossible to achieve then a third barrister would be appointed with the agreement of both parties and his decision would be binding.¹⁴⁵ Section 268 empowered the Hull Police to watch the docks, quays and premises of the Dock Company in 'like manner as the rest of the borough'. Although the company and the committee had come to an agreement concerning the watching of the docks the former was patently not pleased with the arrangement because the municipal feuding over the Hull Dock Act erupted in public once more before relative calm was achieved. In September 1844 the Tory *Hull Packet* ran a story attacking the Watch Committee and McManus for interfering in the watching of the docks and this prompted the Liberal *Hull Advertiser* to come to their defence by refuting the charges which it made. This was done with the help of the committee, which allowed the editor of the *Advertiser*, E. F. Collins, to inspect its minutes in order to rebut the allegations in the other newspaper.¹⁴⁶ The fact that the *Advertiser* was able to

¹⁴³ See the correspondence between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company and the above resolution in KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 13, 20, 30 Mar. 1844.

¹⁴⁴ KHPL, HA 24 May 1844.

¹⁴⁵ 7 & 8 Vict. c. 103 s. 268.

¹⁴⁶ KHPL, HP 6 Sep. 1844; HA 13 Sep. 1844; KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 11 Sep. 1844.

print evidence produced by the Watch Committee confirming its version of events could only undermine the veracity of the *Hull Packet's* allegations and its public credibility.

Meanwhile, in August 1844 the Watch Committee was calculating the sum which the Dock Company should pay as a watch rate, and the committee requested McManus to rearrange the police beats so that they included the company's property and to advise how many more men were required for the force. McManus reported that he needed only another five men to patrol the docks area but the Watch Committee decided unanimously to increase the size of the force by twelve men.¹⁴⁷ The police force became responsible for watching the company's property from the evening of 30 September 1844 onwards.¹⁴⁸ In October 1844 the Watch Committee decided that the Dock Company should pay a watch rate of £527 3s. for the year commencing 1 October 1844¹⁴⁹ but the company objected to this sum and meetings between deputations from the two sides failed to reach agreement.¹⁵⁰ Eventually, in August 1845, the matter was settled by arbitration, following a Queen's Bench ruling that the Dock Company's property had been overvalued for rating purposes by the sum of £1,435 and should instead be valued at £19,651. The arbitrator decided that the original watch rate was some £35 too high and set a new rate of £491 5s. 6d.¹⁵¹ The reduction represented less than 7 per cent of the original sum calculated by the Watch Committee and it is likely that the committee was satisfied with the outcome of the arbitration. The issue of the amount of watch rate to be paid by the Dock Company resurfaced in the 1850s (see below). The disputes between the Dock Company and the Watch Committee concerning the transfer of responsibility for policing and the assessment of the first watch rate probably set the tone for relations between the two bodies. The intensity of their disputes fluctuated but at the very least there appeared to be an undercurrent

¹⁴⁷ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 16 Aug. 1844.

¹⁴⁸ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 30 Sep. 1844. See also KHPL, HA 4 Oct. 1844.

¹⁴⁹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 26 Oct. 1844.

¹⁵⁰ See KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 4, 11, 18, 24 Dec. 1844.

¹⁵¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 27 Aug. 1845. For more information on the legal dispute see KHRO, TLV/1/3, In Arbitration the Dock Company and the Watch Committee, 1845.

of enmity in their relationship. The disputes centred on the level of policing of company property, with the first recorded complaint coming in 1847. In June of that year the Dock Company referred to the Watch Committee a letter of complaint from a firm of merchants about policing arrangements at the docks. The merchants, Messrs. S & J. H. Samuelson, set forth their allegations in a letter to the company:

We beg to draw your attention to the pilfering of Goods which is daily and hourly taking place under your Sheds; and to inform you that on account of the inattention of the Dock Police, Merchandise placed there is no safer than if it were thrown down in the Streets of Hull.¹⁵²

McManus seems to have been confident that the police were patrolling the docks properly, judging by the tone of his letter of reply to the firm which announced that the matter 'will be laid before the Watch Committee tomorrow morning at their weekly meeting[...]when they would be happy to meet any Gentleman from your firm, *to substantiate the allegations*'.¹⁵³ The Watch Committee's response to the complaint is not recorded in the minutes but, significantly, in the following weeks the committee did not feel it necessary to increase the size of the police force. In November 1849 the Dock Company itself complained about the policing of its property and the great number of thefts which had occurred. Although the Watch Committee requested McManus to compile a report the complaint does not seem to have been serious enough to initiate any change to the way in which dock property was policed.¹⁵⁴

The Dock Company's dissatisfaction with the level of policing was more understandable in the 1850s because in the wake of the police strike of 1853 the Watch Committee reduced the size of the force from 134 to a hundred, which thus had a detrimental effect on its ability to protect the borough. However the company was not immune from criticism since it made the task of the police harder by failing to make secure goods in transit; instead these were simply left on its docks and quays. The Dock

¹⁵² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 16 Jun. 1847.

¹⁵³ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 16 Jun. 1847. Emphasis added to original.

¹⁵⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 28 Nov., 5 Dec. 1849.

Company's first serious criticism of police effectiveness as a result of inadequate manpower came in October/November 1854 when the secretary of the Dock Company, Mr Huffam, wrote two letters to the Watch Committee asking for more policing of the docks and quays. The committee responded to the first letter by seeking the legal opinion of the Town Clerk and to the second, by establishing a sub-committee of five to report on the watching of dock property. However it appears that the Watch Committee failed to reply directly to Huffam after the receipt of his first letter, which probably worsened his mood.¹⁵⁵ This episode was the beginning of a protracted and bitter argument between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company over the level of policing and the company's responsibility for securing goods in transit on its property. The sub-committee formed to discuss the watching of the docks met on 17 November 1854 and Huffam's second letter was considered. It noted 'the repeated fires under the Dock sheds, and in the opinion of the Dock Directors the inadequate Police Force appointed to watch the Quays of this Company and the valuable property thereon deposited.'¹⁵⁶ Huffam continued that the Hull Dock Company Directors:

are of opinion that unless instant and stringent measures be adopted to check the frequent fires that occur under the Dock Sheds, some great calamity will happen, when the credit of Hull as a Port for the shipment of Goods, will be damaged and impaired [*sic*], to the serious loss of the whole community.

The Directors consider the late reduction of the Police Force stationed around the Docks, a measure of unwise economy. This opinion is confirmed not only by the increase of fires already alluded to, but by the constant appeals of Merchants for protection.¹⁵⁷

In particular, Huffam mentioned the repeated thefts of company property, the pilfering of goods, especially by children, and the fire risk posed by children playing with lucifer matches in the dock

¹⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 15 Nov. 1854.

¹⁵⁶ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 17 Nov. 1854.

¹⁵⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 17 Nov. 1854. Emphasis included in original.

sheds. He argued that 'The inadequacy of the Police to prevent or check these growing evils, is now a matter of notoriety.'¹⁵⁸

The sub-committee which was appointed to investigate the complaint reconsidered the Town Clerk's legal opinion after Huffam's second letter was received. This legal opinion was detailed and perfectly correct: according to section 76 of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 a sufficient number of policemen had to be appointed 'for preserving the Peace by day and night and preventing robberies and other felonies and apprehending offenders against the peace in the Borough.'¹⁵⁹ The Town Clerk, Thomas Thompson, explained that it was the task of the Watch Committee to decide how many policemen should be employed and the council could only fix their pay. In determining the number of policemen required, the Watch Committee must be aware that the function of the police was not to be confused with that of private watchmen. Thus the police did not have to watch private property except in so far as their normal duties led them to do so; or suspicious circumstances led them to believe that a crime might be committed; or extraordinary circumstances demanded more specific watching for a period. Warehouses and so on containing goods which were particularly inviting to thieves might need more watching than other private property and more watching than the police could provide but this should be arranged by the owners themselves. Large businesses employed watchmen to provide that continuous protection to property which no police could provide except under special circumstances. The sub-committee concurred fully with Thompson's legal opinion but requested Superintendent McManus to provide them with more information concerning the watching of the docks.¹⁶⁰ Amongst the information which McManus gave to the sub-committee he reported that the Dock Company owned five docks covering a total area of 51 acres and being some 7,453 yards in length (including quays, wharves and so on). Twelve policemen (ten PCs and two officers) were responsible for policing this area at a cost of £790 17s. when the watch rate payable by

¹⁵⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 17 Nov. 1854.

¹⁵⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 17 Nov. 1854.

¹⁶⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 17 Nov. 1854.

the Dock Company was £490 12s. 8d. In comparison, the area of the whole town was 5,123 acres and the total cost of the police was given as £6,656 9s. 7d. per annum or £65 18s. 1d. per man. Finally, 237 people had been apprehended about the docks from 22 November 1853 to 22 November 1854 inclusive.¹⁶¹ From the above information it can be seen that proportionately the twelve policemen watching the docks were patrolling a considerably smaller area than the rest of the force who were responsible for the majority of the borough. Therefore it was argued that the Dock Company's property was being watched relatively more than property in the rest of the borough as it was protected by more policemen per acre.

The sub-committee's next move was to arrange a meeting with a deputation from the Dock Company, which took place on 24 November 1854 in the presence of the Town Clerk. That meeting was inconclusive and five days later the sub-committee considered a further legal opinion from Thompson given in writing.¹⁶² The Town Clerk noted that section 268 of the Hull Dock Act 1844 authorized the borough police to watch Dock Company property 'in like manner as other property is watched, at the public expense' but no part of the Act prevented the Dock Company or owners of goods on the quays from employing private watchmen if more than the normal amount of watching was required to protect goods which were liable to be stolen.¹⁶³ Thompson made an unequivocal criticism of the way the Dock Company went about its business:

whenever Goods are left in exposed situations, as in open sheds, on the Quay, it is at every party's [*sic*] option whether they will leave them in such open Sheds or remove them to some safe Warehouse, but if to expedite their business or suit their convenience they choose to leave the goods exposed to more than usual risk of pilferage they should speciallly watch them at their own

¹⁶¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 22 Nov. 1854.

¹⁶² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Nov. 1854.

¹⁶³ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Nov. 1854. Emphasis included in original.

expense and not call for more special watching at the public expense from the Police than is found necessary for the other parts of the Borough.¹⁶⁴

In his conclusion, however, the Town Clerk stated quite reasonably that if inquiries found the docks to not be as well policed as other parts of the borough this situation should be remedied (but McManus's report had already demonstrated that company property was adequately protected).¹⁶⁵ After carefully investigating the matter the sub-committee passed a motion stating that the Dock Company received its full share of the services of the police as far as the general watching of the borough was concerned and the Watch Committee was not obliged to provide watching for special purposes.¹⁶⁶ One member of the sub-committee, a Mr Morley, had tried to move an amendment stating, among other things, that the present number of policemen was inadequate for the proper watching of the town but this was not seconded and the original motion was carried.¹⁶⁷ At a Watch Committee meeting a few days later, Morley and three other members voted against the recommendation of the sub-committee report that no further action should be taken concerning the policing of the docks and the size of the force. However the report was carried by a margin of five votes.¹⁶⁸ The following day, 7 December 1854, the police clerk, Inspector Yates, wrote to the directors of the Dock Company explaining that after making inquiries the Watch Committee had concluded 'that the Dock Company receive their full share of the services of the Police so far as the General Watching of the Borough is concerned.' The arguments contained in the Town Clerk's legal opinion were repeated and the Dock Company was reminded that there was nothing preventing it from appointing private watchmen to provide special protection.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Nov. 1854. Emphasis included in original.

¹⁶⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Nov. 1854.

¹⁶⁶ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 2 Dec. 1854.

¹⁶⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 2 Dec. 1854.

¹⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 6 Dec. 1854.

¹⁶⁹ See KHRO, TLV/1/4, In Arbitration the Dock Company and the Watch Committee, 1855, with a copy of Huffam's letter dated 14 Nov. 1854, which differs slightly from the copy in the Watch Committee minutes but is fundamentally the same. Emphasis included in original.

Only a few weeks after this setback for the company, the Dock Commissioners¹⁷⁰ took an interest in the issue, requesting a meeting with the Watch Committee at which their deputation raised complaints which were identical to those of the Dock Company.¹⁷¹ The deputation requested that three more policemen should be appointed to patrol the docks. The Watch Committee gave the matter considerable discussion and after a motion which would have increased the size of the force by fifteen men had been put and lost, the committee passed another motion which reiterated its earlier position: special watching could not be provided for goods left exposed on the docks and quays by their owners; the docks and quays were watched equally with the rest of the borough; as children could legally frequent the dock sheds the police had no power to remove them nor could they be arrested simply for having lucifer matches in their possession unless they intended to start a fire. A copy of the resolution was forwarded to the Dock Commissioners.¹⁷² It seems probable that the Watch Committee's rejection of the Dock Company's demand for more police officers influenced the company's decision to contest the next watch rate of £456 8s. 8d. (for the year October 1855 to September 1856) when it was announced in October 1855.¹⁷³ During the period before the announcement of the result of the arbitration, the Dock Company objected to the watch rate which was determined for the following year, October 1856 to September 1857. The arbitration ruling, which was not made until 21 April 1857, upheld the demand of the Watch Committee and found that the Dock Company was liable to pay the whole sum of £456 8s. 8d.¹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the issue of the appropriate level of policing for the docks was raised again in December 1855

¹⁷⁰ The Dock Commissioners were a body separate from the company with different responsibilities. Generally they functioned as improvement commissioners for the docks, with responsibilities for, amongst other things, the provision of lighting and removal of waste in the area of the docks. Their power declined with the passage of the 1844 Dock Act and they were less able to exert influence over the decisions of the Dock Company's directors.

¹⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 20, 22 Dec. 1854.

¹⁷² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 22 Dec. 1854.

¹⁷³ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Oct. 1855.

¹⁷⁴ For more information see KHRO, TLV/1/4, In Arbitration the Dock Co. and the Watch Com., 1855. The company had to object to the second rate otherwise it could not logically contest one rate whilst accepting the other without weakening its case before the arbitrator.

when the Watch Committee received another letter, via the Town Clerk, from the Clerk to the Dock Commissioners, Thomas Holden.¹⁷⁵ Holden had been prompted to write after receiving complaints from the Secretary of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce the previous September. In his letter Holden reported the substance of the complaints from Bradford and repeated the Dock Commissioners' opinion of the previous year that the docks and quays were not sufficiently watched.¹⁷⁶ The Town Clerk, Thompson, replied to the letter with the approval of the Watch Committee using exactly the same rebuttals which had been made previously.¹⁷⁷

Relations between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company do not appear to have improved markedly after the committee started to increase the size of the force. The addition of twenty extra constables to the force during the first seven months of 1857 does not appear to have ameliorated the tension between them. Indeed at the close of 1856, a few months prior to the manpower increase, their dispute became more public as rival newspapers aired opinions for and against increasing the number of constables patrolling dock company property, and gave conflicting accounts of public discussions on the subject.¹⁷⁸ There was no further discussion of this issue in the press at the time but conflict between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company resurfaced again in 1859 and 1861 when the Dock Company introduced parliamentary Bills containing sections which attempted to alter the law regarding the watching of the docks and the payment of watch rates. On both occasions the company was unsuccessful because the 1859 Bill was withdrawn completely and the sections on policing were removed from the 1861 Bill.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min. 5 Dec. 1855.

¹⁷⁶ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 5 Dec. 1855.

¹⁷⁷ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 5 Dec. 1855.

¹⁷⁸ The events in question were reported in the *Hull Packet* and the *Hull Advertizer* and took place in the police court one day in early December 1856. For a full report of events see KHPL, *HP* 4 Dec. 1856, *HA* 6 Dec. 1856. In essence the Dock Company wanted the Stipendiary Magistrate to appoint special constables to patrol the docks but he refused unless the company could show why this was necessary, which it could not.

¹⁷⁹ For more information see KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 29 Dec. 1858, 16, 23 Mar. 1859; TCM 194, 9 Jan., 20 Feb. 1861. For newspaper reports on the Watch Committee's opposition to the 1859 Bill and its withdrawal see KHPL, *HT* 15 Jan., 26 Mar. 1859 respectively.

The Watch Committee's argument against the sections was carefully reasoned, namely that the police were for the general good of the borough, preserved order, protected property and detected crime. All property in the borough ought to contribute to the expenses of the police including that of the Dock Company, meaning that all should be subject to the same mode of rating. Therefore there was no good case for altering the law for the benefit of the Dock Company. There were no more disputes of any seriousness before 1866 when this study ends. There is no evidence to suggest that the tension between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company had any effect on the *quality* of policing which the company received and it is important to note that the company only ever complained about the number of policemen on duty at the docks, not the quality of their work. Both sides deployed arguments which had some validity. The Watch Committee could rightly argue that the Dock Company had no right to special watching and should make greater efforts itself to secure property on the docks and quays. Conversely, from August 1853 until early in 1857 - when the Hull Police totalled a mere one hundred - the Dock Company could be justifiably concerned that the level of policing of its property was not ideal. This protracted dispute between the Watch Committee and the Dock Company was probably the committee's most serious disagreement with another organization. Yet because the dispute had no detrimental effect on the work of the force itself it is probably more important as another example of the indigenous feuds involving Hull's established institutions, which seemed to bedevil municipal politics throughout the century.

The Police Strike of 1853

The fact that the Hull Police strike occurred in July 1853 might lead one to doubt the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the town's police force but an analysis of events will reveal that a collision occurred between the Watch Committee and the policemen more because of the stubbornness of the former than any show of militancy by the latter. The Hull Police strike was not in fact a strike by policemen at all; in reality it was a forced resignation of policemen. Perhaps if the policemen had not been forced to resign they may have decided to hold a strike but they were not given that opportunity by the Watch Committee, which was fearful of how such a situation might escalate. That fear was even greater among the middle

class, propertied element of Hull's population. Possibly because of this pervading sense of fear the episode has entered the historical record as the Hull Police strike although one never took place.¹⁸⁰ Possibly also journalists were aware that use of the word 'strike' would convey more piquancy in the newspapers of the era than 'resignation', even though the latter was more accurate. However since the event has been recorded in history as the Hull Police strike it will be referred to as such. The strike was not the dramatic culmination of a decline in the effectiveness of the force, nor of the quality of its members. If the members of the Watch Committee and the senior officers of the force had become complacent about the high standard of policing achieved in Hull since 1836 then the police strike came as a sudden and unexpected crisis which dispelled such lassitude and compelled them to reassess the organization of the police and the leadership provided. The actions of the disgruntled policemen very much suggest that they felt the senior officers, especially McManus, and the members of the Watch Committee had become impervious to their opinions and indeed lost touch with their needs. On the whole, the strikers, or resigners, were relatively long-serving and experienced policemen and in the previous twelve months the force had performed well, as Alderman Robert Bean, the chairman of the Watch Committee, noted at the annual review of 1853, only weeks before the strike, when he 'commented on the very satisfactory manner in which the force had behaved during the past year[...]The inspectors, sergeants and men generally had done their duty, both with satisfaction to the Watch Committee and the town.'¹⁸¹ Since the strike generated more debate about the nature and conduct of policing in the town than at any time since 1836 this alone is a good enough reason to devote considerable attention to the public manifestations of that debate.

The drama began to unfold when the Watch Committee received a letter from Messrs Richardson and Lee, solicitors, enclosing a petition from the police constables requesting a pay rise of

¹⁸⁰ The strike in Hull has received very little attention from historians, unlike strikes elsewhere in the same period. For example, Steedman mentions the Manchester Police strike of 1853 (which occurred during the same summer) in some detail but includes considerably less on the Hull strike. There are errors in her reporting of the Hull strike and the outcome is not given. See Steedman, *Policing*, pp. 132-34.

¹⁸¹ KHPL, HA 6 May 1853.

3s. per man, per week for all ranks.¹⁸² The petition stated that the wages of the constables were 16s. 5d. and 18s. 5d. (after deductions for the superannuation and library funds, 6d. and 1d. respectively) and that the 'price of provisions and other necessaries of life' had recently increased, making it more difficult for constables to support themselves and their families. It continued by arguing that in general mechanics, workmen and labourers throughout the country had seen their wages rise while constables in other forces were paid more than Hull policemen and their wages had also risen. The petitioners also pointed out that the very least labourers could expect was 3s. per day for a working week of five and-a-half or six days, while the constables had to work seven days a week for inferior pay. Policemen everywhere saw themselves as working men, but of a specific kind. They most closely identified themselves with the skilled mechanic and aspired to occupy his social and economic position, a goal which fuelled many of the police pay claims of the 1850s and sixties.¹⁸³ When compared with this aspiration the pay claim of the Hull policemen was modest. The Watch Committee was unsympathetic to the request of the petitioners but decided to obtain more information from other police forces. The lack of sympathy can partly be explained by the method chosen by the petitioners to present their case: they used a firm of solicitors rather than appealing to the committee or Superintendent McManus directly. Also it should be remembered that as a paternalistic employer the Watch Committee would have probably felt the petitioners were showing ingratitude for everything it had done to care for the welfare of the workforce. The petitioners believed they had a good reason for choosing this course of action, as it later emerged, for they feared being singled out for disciplinary action or even dismissal. Another key reason for the lack of sympathy was that generally borough watch committees, mindful of public opinion, the rates bill and the flexibility of local labour markets, kept police wages low: 'In boroughs wages were not only subject to a finer degree of scrutiny by the ratepayers than they were in the counties but also to "the facilities of obtaining more remunerative employment, expense of living, cost of house rent"'.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 22 Jun. 1853. The petition was mentioned again in a letter from the chairman of the Watch Committee to the Home Secretary, dated 31 July 1853. For a copy of this letter to the Home Secretary see TCM 191, 24 Aug. 1853.

¹⁸³ See Steedman, *Policing*, p. 114.

¹⁸⁴ *Police Service Advertiser* 27 Apr. 1867, quoted in Steedman, *Policing*, p. 108.

Following the submission of the policemen's petition the editor of the *Hull Advertiser*, E. F. Collins, gave them his full support: 'We have read their Memorial, know a good deal about the general character of our Police force, and have no hesitation whatever in recommending that their wages be properly increased, in compliance with the prayer of their Memorial.' The editor continued by stating that the increase asked for was 'not too much for men in the prime of life, whose weeks are without a Sabbath, and whose employment is of such a nature that they cannot obtain a holiday, either by forfeiting a day's wages, or by finding a substitute.' He then repeated an assertion which his paper had been making for some years:

We have stated, over and over again, that there is not a better conducted Police force in the Kingdom than the force charged with the protection of life and property in Hull. It is for the interests of the Town that such a body of men should be well paid, and their position rendered one of comfort and respectability.¹⁸⁵

Collins ended by confidently assuring his readers that once the Watch Committee had obtained opinions on the matter the wage increase would be granted to the policemen. He continued to use the newspaper to advance the men's cause. The *Hull Advertiser* of 1 July 1853 included a letter from four residents arguing that the wage rise should be granted, a letter from the solicitors Richardson & Lee, the policemen's representatives, thanking Collins for his unsolicited support for their cause and Collins' reply to that letter. In his reply Collins explained why he had intervened: 'In what I did I was actuated by a sense of public duty towards a body of public servants, of whose good conduct I have been for years a constant and rather vigilant eye-witness, and of whose deserts I entertain a very high opinion.' Then somewhat ironically, given the actions that the policemen were shortly to take, he concluded by commenting on their strategy:

¹⁸⁵ KHPL, HA 24 Jun. 1853.

The police force of this borough, in placing the subject matter of their demands in the hands of respectable members of the legal profession, have satisfied me that such demand is a just and reasonable one, *and that they are desirous of obtaining it in such a way as may serve as a proper example to others.*¹⁸⁶

A week later Collins again supported the policemen in another editorial:

we can unhesitatingly affirm that the great preponderance of such [public] opinion is in favour of increasing the wages of the Police Force. There is not in the Kingdom a body of Police who discharge their duties more efficiently, and with less inconvenience to the liberty of the subject than the Police of Hull[...]We trust, then, that when their wages are increased it will be done handsomely, and in such terms as to make the men think more highly of themselves. And the sooner the better.¹⁸⁷

At this stage the petitioners had the public support of the Mayor (who attended the special meeting of the Watch Committee called for 20 July to discuss the issue), the editor of the *Hull Advertiser* and over ninety other citizens who signed a memorial seconding the claim for the wage increase. With this level of publicly expressed support it is not unreasonable to assume that the policemen had the support of a substantial section of Hull's middle class population. Nevertheless, the Watch Committee resolved that it could not comply with the request for an increase in wages, stressing in the process that the petitioners had misrepresented their wages, which were not 18s. 5d. and 16s. 5d. as they had claimed but 19s. and 17s.¹⁸⁸

In arriving at its decision the committee compared the pay of Hull policemen with that of policemen in other boroughs. The former appeared to be better paid than constables elsewhere and the committee concluded that no 'weight attached to the pretext set up for the demand in the alleged rise in the prices of the necessaries of life, and the demand for 3/- per week increase was looked upon as quite

¹⁸⁶ KHPL, HA 1 Jul. 1853. Emphasis added to original.

¹⁸⁷ KHPL, HA 8 Jul. 1853.

¹⁸⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 20 Jul., 24 Aug. 1853.

preposterous.¹⁸⁹ The replies from other borough forces, however, showed that the number of constables employed in Hull was greater than at other boroughs of a similar size, or larger, where policing seemed to be well conducted. Consequently the Watch Committee agreed 'that not only the demand of the men for an advance of 3/- per week should be refused, but that the Committee ought speedily to take into consideration the propriety of reducing the number of policemen', which the Mayor agreed with.¹⁹⁰ The chairman of the committee explained this view at a full council meeting the very next day and the policemen became aware of the situation when the proceedings of the council meeting were published in the local papers the day after.¹⁹¹ After the rejection of the pay claim, events moved swiftly - and equally as swiftly the disgruntled policemen lost all the influential middle class support which they had accumulated. They held a meeting that evening, 22 July. The level of attendance at the meeting is unknown, but as many men were on duty at the time it would only have been a fraction of the force. Nevertheless, the meeting assumed responsibility to act for the men generally and passed a number of resolutions. At the request of the disaffected policemen, Richardson and Lee made known the outcome of the meeting by writing to McManus, the chairman and other members of the Watch Committee. The letter revealed that the constables supporting the pay claim had resolved to 'discontinue their duties on Saturday next', 23 July at 8.00pm (the following day). The policemen's meeting would adjourn until 8.00pm on the 23rd, when the men would assemble at the Town Hall to provide the Watch Committee with an opportunity to accede to the petition for an increase in pay. None of the policemen would return to duty until their wages had been increased and all the men who wanted to serve had returned to work. Presumably this last condition was included to try to prevent the committee from victimizing any so-called ringleaders. Finally, the men thanked the editor of the *Hull Advertiser*, E. F. Collins, the Mayor and the magistrates for their sympathy and support, and their solicitors for the energetic work done on their behalf (although it is doubtful

¹⁸⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

¹⁹⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

¹⁹¹ See KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Cor. Min., 21 Jul. 1853; KHPL, HA 22 Jul. 1853.

whether these persons would have condoned the action the men were determined to take; indeed Collins and the solicitors publicly dissociated themselves from this afterwards).¹⁹²

Now the Watch Committee hastily made plans to overcome the impending threat to public order. Its chairman, Robert Bean, wrote to the Town Clerk, Thomas Thompson, on the morning of 23 July requesting his attendance at a meeting of the committee scheduled for 11.00am that day to discuss what action should be taken.¹⁹³ The committee called up for duty the men on the list of approved candidates and ordered that other suitable men should be obtained, even authorizing the display of notices at the Town Hall and elsewhere which requested applications to be made for admission to the police force. Deciding that it did not want to be confronted by a group of hostile police constables the committee pre-empted the action of the men. It ordered Superintendent McManus to parade the force on Saturday morning and then the committee called each policeman to come before it (the protests of some men that they wanted to present their case collectively were swept aside). Each policeman was asked whether he intended to resign that evening at 8 o'clock if his wages were not raised by 3s. per week. Any man answering yes was required to resign from the force immediately and return his clothing and equipment later in the day. The Town Clerk was present when these proceedings took place and gave such legal advice to the Watch Committee as the circumstances required. A total of forty constables resigned from the force in this way and a further six were dismissed for refusing to give their resignations.¹⁹⁴ The night of Saturday 23 July and all the following day passed without incident even though some of the strikers had attempted to organize a protest march which proved a dismal failure. The remaining policemen had been able to police the town without assistance. At its Monday meeting the Watch Committee decided to readmit three of the policemen who had resigned, Chapman, Weatherill and Lumley. More significantly, it

¹⁹² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 22, 23 Jul. 1853.

¹⁹³ See KHRO, TCC/1/1398, Hull Corporation Correspondence, letter from Robert Bean, chairman of the Watch Committee, to Thomas Thompson, Town Clerk, regarding the impending police strike, dated 23 July 1857.

¹⁹⁴ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 22, 23 July 1853. There is a discrepancy of one resignation in the total number given in the committee minutes of 23 July and the letter to the Home Secretary, copied into the minutes of 24 August, which probably results from poor arithmetic rather than anything else.

resolved unanimously to limit the total size of the force to a hundred - a considerable reduction in numbers when it is borne in mind that the full complement of men immediately before the strike had been 134.¹⁹⁵ The failure of the strike was clearly signalled when twenty-seven of the men who resigned applied to rejoin the police; however the Watch Committee decided, but not unanimously, that the men should not be allowed to re-enter the force at present.

Twenty of the men who reapplied were second class constables earning 17s. per week and a total of seventeen were married; twelve men were both second class and married and five of the first class men were also married. Thus a large number of the 'readmission group' had some of the lowest disposable incomes of all Hull policemen either because they earned the lowest wages, or because they were married and had dependents, or both. Only two of this group were unmarried first class men earning 19s. per week and likely to be better off.¹⁹⁶ To aid the committee in determining who to readmit, it ordered Inspector Yates, the police clerk, to make a list of the twenty-seven applicants for reinstatement showing the length of time each had been in the force, the class to which each belonged and to comment on their 'character and efficiency' as police constables. It commanded the senior inspector and three senior sergeants from each subdivision to be in attendance when the issue of readmission was discussed in order that they might give information if called upon. The committee also decided that the Home Secretary should be informed that the strike had ended with a return to work at the prevailing rate of pay.¹⁹⁷ After much careful consideration the committee decided to reappoint eleven of the twenty-seven reapplicants. In its selection policy the committee seems to have favoured the first class men, not surprisingly, as these would probably be the longest-serving and most experienced constables. Of the seven first class men who applied for readmission, four were taken back, a higher proportion than the second class men. The committee seems not to have considered the married men more worthy of re-employment, as only six of

¹⁹⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 25 Jul., 24 Aug. 1853. The figure of 134 was made up of 116 constables (equally divided between the first and second class) twelve sergeants, five inspectors, and the Superintendent.

¹⁹⁶ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 27 Jul. 1853.

¹⁹⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 27 Jul. 1853.

the eleven men reappointed had wives and as a proportion of the reapplicants more single men were taken back than married.¹⁹⁸ The committee might have been expected to give preference to the married men if it believed that they were more stable, responsible and conservative than the bachelors but this seems not to have been an overriding factor in its decision-making. Of course, its primary concern would have been the quality of a reapplicant's police work not his marital status. Even so the committee did show some latitude and generosity by reappointing the four former first class men to their old rank.¹⁹⁹

After the rejection of the men's pay claim, events unfolded so rapidly towards a confrontation and denouement that there was little time for public comment. It was only in the wake of the strike that leading players and interested onlookers could give their versions of events and express opinions. For example, Collins's opinion of the men's actions changed once they had gone on strike:

We have ever been opposed to strikes on the part of persons seeking an advance of wages[...]Nor would we wish anyone to be ignorant that mischievous and culpable as we consider strikes on the part of ordinary workmen, we regard as exceedingly more mischievous and culpable strikes on the part of police, who are the sworn protectors of the peace and order of society.²⁰⁰

Nevertheless Collins continued by criticizing the conduct of the Watch Committee as well:

But, if the Police who resigned on Saturday were in fault, the Watch Committee, in indirectly provoking them to take that step, was still more to blame[...]we affirm unhesitatingly that the Watch Committee has been more to blame for the perilous position in which the Town was placed on Saturday last than the Police Force. That the Police were badly advised, or had themselves to act in a most unjustifiable manner, we stated at the outset in terms admitting of no misconception, but their error was venial when compared with the

¹⁹⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 29 Jul. 1853.

¹⁹⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 3 Aug. 1853.

²⁰⁰ KHPL, HA 29 Jul. 1853.

dangerous proceedings of the Watch Committee. And, after all the explanations that have been made, the demands of the police were reasonable, equitable, and, ultimately, will be granted. The public voice is with them, and that voice will triumph in the end. Ten days ago we could boast of possessing the best organized and best conducted Police Force in the kingdom. We must take care and not sacrifice it to the accidental despotism of an hour, by whomsoever exercised.²⁰¹

The *Hull Advertiser* of 5 August published a letter to the editor from the solicitors who had represented the policemen, M. C. and E. A. Lee, of the firm Richardson & Lee. Probably in response to Collins's criticism of the strikers' actions and the allegation that they had accepted bad advice, the Lee's asserted that they did not advise the men to strike; it was entirely their own decision and no advice or recommendation was given them on the subject. Of the 116 constables, ninety-four signified their intention to strike and twenty-two declined to do so. The general feeling prevailing amongst the men was that they had been treated in an overbearing manner by the Watch Committee and indirectly challenged to "shew fight" [*sic*], as some of them expressed it, and therefore a strike was the only option left open to them.²⁰² The men who actually went on strike were some of the most active, intelligent and efficient men in the force. The Lee's alleged that when it came to deciding whether to strike a large number of the second class men declined to take part, believing if they remained in the force after a strike they would be promoted to the first class. Thus they would quietly obtain the wage rise at the expense of those who had borne the brunt of the battle. A week later the newspaper printed a letter to the editor from an unnamed correspondent (identified only as X).²⁰³ The tone and content of the letter are such that it could have been written by a striking policeman or someone who had been closely associated with the strikers. The letter supported the stand of the men and criticized Andrew McManus and members of the Watch Committee. The correspondent explained why the men prepared a petition requesting a wage rise with the help of solicitors rather than speaking to McManus first. The men believed that if a deputation had gone to

²⁰¹ KHPL, HA 29 Jul. 1853.

²⁰² KHPL, HA 5 Aug. 1853.

²⁰³ KHPL, HA 12 Aug. 1853.

McManus they would have been marked as malcontents or agitators and dealt with accordingly. There was difficulty in finding men who were willing to risk the displeasure of their Superintendent by joining a deputation. The correspondent proceeded to explain that the Watch Committee did not reply to the men's appeal for a whole month and then when it did, the response was given to the council first, using spurious arguments and raising irrelevant points. Finally, the response of the committee compared the policing of Hull to other towns such as Leeds, Bradford, Salford, Manchester and Nottingham but the correspondent explained that these were not ports and a better comparison would have been Liverpool.²⁰⁴

Once the Watch Committee had successfully concluded the strike to its satisfaction it agreed that a letter should be sent by the chairman to the Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, explaining the committee's conduct during the strike. The chairman, Robert Bean, was anxious to express the committee's version of events in the letter:

Various paragraphs having appeared in the London papers not consonant with facts relative to a strike of the Hull police for an increase of wages, the Watch Committee of this Borough have deemed it only proper in them, through me, as their Chairman, to furnish you, as the overlooker of our internal institutions, with a correct statement of the circumstances which have occurred.²⁰⁵

One such story appeared in *The Times* on 25 July giving a report of the events that was transparently incorrect in important respects.

An agitation has been going on for some time past in the town among the police to obtain an advance of their wages from 18s 5d and 16s 5d to 21s 5d and 19s 5d. The Watch Committee have refused to accede to the request, and the consequence is, that about 30 of the men have resigned, and about 50 refuse to do duty,

²⁰⁴ KHPL, HA 12 Aug. 1853.

²⁰⁵ This is the letter from Bean to Palmerston dated 31 Jul. 1853 referred to above. For more details see KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

but will not resign. The Watch Committee have this day [Saturday 23 July 1853] been sitting to receive applications for the vacant situations, but they have not had a single applicant - labourers not being willing to work seven days a week for 2s 6d a day. Letters have been despatched for men to Manchester and other large towns, as well as to the villages in this neighbourhood.²⁰⁶

The veracity of this article can be questioned. First no evidence has been found that fifty men refused to do their duties but would not resign. Only six men would not resign and were therefore dismissed. Second, the Watch Committee may have discussed the possibility of obtaining temporary help from elsewhere but no evidence has been found that it actually requested any help from other large towns, such as Manchester. The most that it did was to seek recruits from Hull and it may have requested the assistance of the police in Beverley.

Given these inaccuracies it is understandable that the Watch Committee should wish to refute them by writing to the Home Secretary. Nevertheless, simultaneously it sought to give a version of events which was highly favourable to itself. The letter is important, however, because it is the most comprehensive account of the strike which was produced. Perhaps the main criticism which should be levelled at the letter, is the statement that when the Watch Committee met early on Saturday 23 July a decision was taken to suspend consideration of the two items in question, namely the size of the force and the pay of the policemen, until the strike had come to an end.²⁰⁷ This part of the description of events appears rather disingenuous and a post hoc embellishment of the evidence, the veracity of which can be challenged. There is no evidence in the Watch Committee minutes to suggest that it intended to give further consideration to the issue of police wages, having rejected the men's 3s. demand and offered nothing in its place. Certainly, the issue of police pay was reconsidered after the strike had concluded in victory for the committee; but this probably occurred because the dejection of the policemen, though not total, was still strong enough to convince the committee to review the issue. The low morale of the

²⁰⁶ BJJ, *The Times* 25 Jul. 1853. It is this article from which Steedman quotes. See Steedman, *Policing*, p. 134.

²⁰⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

remaining men, if allowed to persist, would not be good for the force. On the morning of 23 July and the day before, the committee was totally immersed in the immediate problem of how to overcome the disgruntled policemen and avert a looming crisis; it addressed no other questions. In the event, the tactic which it adopted - dealing with the malcontents individually, forcing them to reveal their intention - was a brilliant one. It seized the initiative and outmanoeuvred the would-be strikers. The committee was probably right to assume that the strike meeting called by the men on 22 July was attended by a relatively small number of constables, since many were on duty. The meeting had chosen an extreme course of action and the Watch Committee was obviously nervous at the prospect of having to meet the constables at 8.00pm on the evening of the 23rd. The moderate men would be encouraged to take action by their more radical colleagues and the dispute would escalate into something much more serious. A general police strike could be imagined, with dozens of former policemen marching through the streets arousing a melange of public fear at the lack of protection and sympathy for their plight, as a way of compelling the Watch Committee to grant the wage increase. Insisting that each man came before it independently was undoubtedly the committee's crucial tactic, for it isolated the men in their moment of confrontation with the committee, forcing them to make a decision extempore, without the encouragement of colleagues to stiffen their resolve. Several individuals must have capitulated at this point, wondering just how many of their colleagues would support them if they chose the extreme course of action which had been agreed. Of course it is impossible to state what number of men would have gone on strike if they had been able to present their case to the Watch Committee collectively, as they wished. Almost certainly it would have been many more than the forty-six who actually did so and in such a situation the committee would have been faced with a severe crisis. However, events did not follow that course and the committee was able to cope, temporarily at least, with the problem of policing the town with less than ninety officers and men.

Indeed, the committee paid tribute to the constables and officers who remained at their post, particularly the latter 'who, whatever their private wishes may have been as to an advance of wages, have behaved in the most creditable manner'.²⁰⁸ The chairman of the Watch Committee concluded his

²⁰⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

letter to the Home Secretary by stating that the committee 'are now endeavouring actively, and on ascertained data, to ascertain what amount of Police Force is really necessary for the Borough, and whether the present, or any increased rate of pay would, under existing circumstances, be proper.'²⁰⁹

However, to reiterate there is no evidence that the pay issue was under consideration on 23 July, nor in the immediate aftermath of the strike. The letter also indicated that the size of the force would probably be fixed at about one hundred and the men who had applied for readmission but failed would be placed on to the list of approved candidates and considered as vacancies arose; but the committee did not commit itself to re-employing these men. The letter of reply from the Home Office to the Hull Watch Committee, dated 19 August, was concise but supportive:

I am directed by Viscount Palmerston to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st Ult. reporting the circumstances attending the late threatened strike of the Hull police force; and I am to express Lord Palmerston's approval of the measures taken by the Watch Committee of the Borough on that occasion.²¹⁰

Overall the committee could be satisfied with its handling of the strike. Certainly, it had precipitated the actions of the men with its unwise, maladroit and imperious rejection of their wage demand but it had recovered from this crisis situation, averted a full-scale strike, maintained the protection of property in the borough, magnanimously offered some of the men their jobs back and, eventually, authorized a small wage increase.²¹¹

A few days after the sending of the letter, the Watch Committee approved the appointment of a sub-committee of four, including the chairman, to inquire into the organization of the

²⁰⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

²¹⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

²¹¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 24 Aug. 1853.

police force and to report its findings; this was done five weeks later.²¹² The report dealt with four issues: the duties of the police; whether such duties were discharged efficiently; the recommendation of improvements, and whether the wages currently paid were sufficient. The sub-committee interviewed at least ten members of the police force from all ranks, including the Superintendent, generally choosing the most experienced men from each rank. In its report it explained that each officer gave an oral account of his respective duties which was later condensed into a written submission.²¹³ Each rank of the force was examined in descending order. The report's recommendations concerning the work of the Superintendent constitutes the severest criticism ever made against McManus during his thirty year tenure of office in Hull. Indeed, this was the only occasion during his command of the Hull Police that he had to endure serious criticism. After noting that McManus received his information from his subordinates either in writing or in person at fixed times the sub-committee report went on to state that:

the Superintendent's personal attendance at the central station is too short, that he is not sufficiently amongst the force, and that generally his information is obtained more through his officers than through his own investigations. The Superintendent should be in his office at 10am but the want of punctuality appears, from evidence laid before the Committee, to have caused considerable annoyance to several branches of the force.²¹⁴

The report went on to recommend times throughout the day when the superintendent should be in his office, so that he would be available to oversee the different shifts and accessible to his subordinates, explaining why his regular presence was necessary: 'the efficiency of the force would be best secured by its head officer being as often and as long as possible personally present at the head quarters, and as much as possible in contact with every branch of the force.' The criticism of McManus did not end there: 'the

²¹² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 3 Aug., 7 Sep. 1853.

²¹³ These were presented to the Watch Committee with the written report but unfortunately unlike the report, which was copied into the committee minutes, the policemen's submissions have not survived. Nevertheless, the report does summarize the most important points made by the interviewed policemen.

²¹⁴ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 7 Sep. 1853.

Superintendent should centralize in himself much more information than he at present appears to do, and considering the Salary paid to him Your Committee with confidence look to him to take upon himself a largely increased personal interest, in amount of labor, [sic] and responsibility.²¹⁵

The sub-committee then proceeded to give a summary and analysis of the duties of other ranks in the police force. Little comment was made of the role of the inspectors, the report seemingly being satisfied with their work, except for a suggestion that their hours of duty might be slightly altered.²¹⁶ The sergeants were recognized as a 'useful body of men' but the report claimed there were too many of them. The sub-committee was satisfied that the duties of the constables were properly defined but it recommended that future candidates for admission, in addition to being able to read and write, 'should be expected to be able to cast accounts, and write from dictation.' The detectives served a useful purpose but when commenting on the latter the report advised 'the utmost caution before increasing them.'²¹⁷ The most important recommendation was the confirmation of the Watch Committee's decision on 25 July to restrict the total size of the force to 100 men, although the report wished to see the number of constables (then standing at eighty-two) augmented with a corresponding decrease in the eighteen-strong officer section as soon as this could be achieved. Recognizing that a decrease in police manpower had already increased the demands on individual policemen, the committee recommended the wages of the second and first class constables should be raised by 1s. to 18s. and 20s. per week respectively, with the sergeants receiving the same rise to advance their pay to 22s. The Watch Committee resolved unanimously to adopt the report and increase the wages with effect from Saturday 10 September.²¹⁸ Indirectly the Hull Police strike did have a

²¹⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 7 Sep. 1853.

²¹⁶ It appears that this suggestion was not implemented in 1853 but two years later the committee approved a slight change to the inspectors' hours of work. Henceforth, one inspector would be on duty in the station from 9.00am until 9.00pm and another for the following twelve hours, whilst two inspectors would parade at the station at 8.45pm and patrol the borough until 6.00am, each taking a sub-division, with the duties rotating on a weekly basis. KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 5 Sep. 1855.

²¹⁷ KHRO, Watch Com. Min., TCM 191, 7 Sep. 1853. This opinion of detective work was not uncommon in the mid-nineteenth century, a time when detectives were frequently regarded as 'police spies' by a large section of the English population, but especially by the working class.

²¹⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 7 Sep. 1853.

negative effect on the method of operation of the force because of the Watch Committee's decision, taken in the wake of the strike, to reduce the total size of the force to a hundred men, a 25 per cent reduction in manpower. Although the Hull Police continued to carry out the same duties in the same way, it had to do so with considerably fewer men. Arguably this temporarily checked the further development of policing in Hull because greater burdens were placed on fewer policemen. Also the strike may have affected the collective mentality of the Watch Committee for sometime to come, making its members more anxious to protect the force, and hence themselves, from exogenous criticism.

After the failure of the strike the issue of pay did not re-emerge again for some time. It was not until 1861 that the policemen raised the matter again when they presented a memorial to the Watch Committee applying for an improvement in pay. The committee resolved, but not unanimously, that the first class and second class men should receive a pay rise of 1s. per week, taking their pay to 21s. and 19s. per week respectively. The committee also resolved that a third class should be established receiving 18s. per week. Presumably this new class was for new recruits as happened when the second class was created in 1841 but the minutes do not make this clear. The pay of the inspectors, including the clerk, was raised by 4s. per week (to 34s., or £88 8s. per annum) and that of the sergeants by 2s. per week (to 24s.).²¹⁹ The next occasion on which the men raised the issue of pay was in May 1865 when they successfully utilized the same tactic of petitioning for a wage rise and the Watch Committee granted increases identical to those approved in 1861 - and advanced McManus's salary to £350 per annum.²²⁰ These latest rises took the weekly pay of the different ranks to: 22s. for first class constables; 20s. for second class constables; 19s. for third class constables; 26s. for sergeants, and 38s. (or £98 16s. per annum) for inspectors. The two attempts by the constables to gain a further pay increase in the following

²¹⁹ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 20 Nov. 1861.

²²⁰ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 17 May 1865. The men also applied for 'increased liberty' on Sunday, which the committee ordered should be referred to the Chief Constable for him to report on. Unfortunately the outcome of this request is not known but it seems unlikely that it was granted as there is no further reference to it in the committee minutes in subsequent weeks.

year were both rejected by the Watch Committee.²²¹ Despite this the committee was not entirely unsympathetic in its approach because after it dismissed the second pay claim in June 1866 it approved two measures which it hoped would give further encouragement to the men to strive for promotion. First, the committee removed the limitation on the number of constables in each class which it had imposed in January 1865.²²² Second, it created a merit class from the first class constables and a merit class of sergeants who would receive increased pay of 1s. per week and 2s. per week respectively (the members of which would be selected by the committee).²²³ Initially, ten constables were promoted to the merit class in June 1866 with two more being added in July and concurrently the committee promoted a number of second and third class constables.²²⁴ However, the Watch Committee was willing to make an exception in the case of the plainclothes policemen by granting them special recognition. Prior to all these reforms, in May 1866, it had raised their wages by 2s. per week and that of their sergeant by 4s., to acknowledge the value of their singular role.²²⁵ It appears that the plainclothes men were the only policemen to receive a pay rise in 1866.

Superannuation

The decision by the first Watch Committee to form a police superannuation fund in 1836, at the very time that the Hull Police was created, must rank as one of the most portentous decisions taken by the town's Watch Committee that year.²²⁶ The Watch Committee can be commended for having the good sense to establish a superannuation fund in the first place because it signalled a concern to secure the future welfare

²²¹ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 31 Jan., 7 Feb., 16 May, 13 Jun. 1866.

²²² The committee had ordered that the numbers of first, second and third class PCs should be fixed at sixty, forty and twenty-four respectively. See KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 26 Jan. 1865.

²²³ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 13 Jun. 1866.

²²⁴ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 20 Jun., 4 Jul. 1866.

²²⁵ KHRO, TCM 197, Watch Com. Min., 16 May 1866.

²²⁶ Even the Metropolitan Police did not have a pension scheme at first. In 1834 its Commissioners prompted a parliamentary select committee to recommend the creation of one. See Emsley, *Policing*, p. 63.

of long-serving and retired policemen. Yet when the decision was taken it is unlikely that any member of the committee realized what far-reaching consequences it would have. By October 1836, only six months after the force's creation, the superannuation fund already totalled almost £100.²²⁷ The superannuation fund was amassed by deducting fixed sums from the wages of the policemen before payment. By order of the Watch Committee in 1836 constables contributed 6d. per week, sergeants 7d., acting inspectors 8d. and inspectors 10d.²²⁸ The contributions from policemen always remained by far the most important source of finance for the superannuation fund but between 1836 and 1866 the Watch Committee authorized that the fund should be incremented in other ways. For example, at different times smaller sums of money came from a variety of sources including: the sale of old police clothing; fines imposed on policemen for misconduct; portions of rewards to policemen - usually 25 per cent of the sum given - from private individuals and the armed forces (for apprehending 'stragglers'); moieties of some fines imposed in the magistrates court which the police were legally entitled to claim, such as fines imposed for the release of impounded handcarts, and a proportion of the fees collected for delivering summonses and orders and executing warrants.²²⁹

Relatively few police forces had a superannuation fund before 1848, when the first major piece of general legislation regarding police pension rights was approved by Parliament. This was a permissive Act which was introduced as a result of initiatives by the Watch Committee and corporation of Hull (see below). In the years between 1836 and the passage of this Act Hull's Watch Committee had been uncertain as to how it should organize and administer its superannuation fund. Such uncertainty was only to be expected given how unusual it was to have this type of fund at the time. By the late 1840s the committee was determined to resolve conclusively the issue of police superannuation, partly to encourage and reward long service in the force but also because a considerable sum of money had been accumulated.

²²⁷ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 18 Oct. 1836.

²²⁸ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 30 Apr. 1836.

²²⁹ For an example of the Watch Committee using from some of these sources see KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 22 Apr. 1863.

Contributions had been collected regularly at a fixed rate from Hull's policemen since 1836 but nothing had been done to decide how the money should be apportioned and there were no detailed statutory regulations for the Watch Committee to abide by. The want of legislation on the matter left the committee uncertain as to when policemen should become eligible for superannuation and how much they should receive. Moreover, the committee had not been able to obtain much help and advice on the subject from other boroughs in the years before it embarked on its own solution. In 1838 an attempt was made to discover more about the level of superannuation benefits which could be paid out from the fund whilst maintaining the capital sum. Three actuarial tables were received by Hull's Town Clerk from an actuary in York. However nothing further appears to have been done following the receipt of this information.²³⁰ However the Watch Committee had wisely invested the policemen's contributions and by October 1844 the superannuation fund amounted to more than £1,250.²³¹ In April 1845 the committee decided to appoint a sub-committee of three, including the chairman, to make suitable arrangements for the management of the superannuation fund and some weeks later it obtained information about the operation of police superannuation funds in London and Manchester.²³²

By October 1846 the Watch Committee had decided to follow a legislative course of action and was preparing the draft of a Bill to be presented to Parliament which would legalize the management of the superannuation fund. The Bill proposed that all policemen should have fifteen years service and be over fifty years of age before they became eligible for superannuation.²³³ It is not known how far the Watch Committee's scheme progressed. However, it ran into difficulties because the cost of securing the passage of a Private Bill through Parliament proved to be too great to continue the process. Undeterred by this difficulty the Watch Committee agreed that the issue of police superannuation still had

²³⁰ KHRO, TCC/1/204, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from Mr Newman to Thomas Thompson, Town Clerk of Hull, dated 29 Nov. 1838.

²³¹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 2 Nov. 1844.

²³² KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 16 Apr., 20 Jun. 1845.

²³³ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 26 Oct. 1846.

to be determined and in January 1847 it resolved unanimously that no further time should be lost in approving a scheme for the application of the considerable sum amassed. It was the committee's belief that the government had to take an interest in the issue. Accordingly it appointed another sub-committee, this time of five, to communicate with the government to resolve the problem. The solution sought by Hull's Watch Committee was a Public Bill (much less costly than a private one) which would permit boroughs to manage their own police superannuation schemes and provide legal protection for the funds. A report by the committee to the corporation recommending this course of action was approved. Therefore the committee appointed a deputation of three to go to London, plus the Town Clerk and Superintendent McManus, in an effort to persuade the government to introduce such a Bill, or give it support if introduced by others.²³⁴ By April 1847 matters had proceeded to a point where a Borough Police Superannuation Fund Bill was at an advanced stage of preparation and the Town Clerk advised that the deputation and McManus should join him in London soon.²³⁵ The Bill was mainly sponsored by William Hutt MP²³⁶ who, with another MP, introduced it on 15 July 1847.²³⁷ It should have received its second reading on 30 July but this did not take place. It was largely due to Hutt's endeavours that the Bill was presented again during the next parliamentary session, with some slight changes being made to its clauses in October 1847.²³⁸ In February 1848, shortly before the Bill was presented, Hutt wrote to Thomas Thompson, Hull's Town Clerk, doubting whether he should introduce it as this might impinge upon the duties, responsibilities and prerogatives of the town's own MPs. Further correspondence between Superintendent

²³⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 20, 22, 27 Jan., 26 Feb. 1847; TCM 3, Hull Cor. Min., 4 Feb. 1847.

²³⁵ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 8 Apr. 1847.

²³⁶ Hutt was the MP for Gateshead but had served as an MP for Hull from 1832 to 1841. John Markham, *Nineteenth Century Parliamentary Elections in East Yorkshire* (Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1982), pp. 49-50.

²³⁷ HLRO, Journal of the House of Commons, 15 Jul. 1847.

²³⁸ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 5 Oct. 1847; KHPL, HA 8 Oct. 1847. For more information on the council's thanks to Hutt for sponsoring the Bill's passage see TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 7 Oct. 1847.

McManus and Thompson indicates that there may have been some lobbying behind the scenes to persuade Hutt to introduce the Bill with the aid of one of Hull's MPs, Matthew Baines, which is what transpired.²³⁹

The Bill was presented in the House of Commons by Hutt and Baines on 4 March 1848 and received its Royal Assent on 22 April 1848.²⁴⁰ A week earlier Hutt wrote to Thompson as follows: 'You know I presume that the Police Superannuation Bill has passed both Houses of Parliament & only waits for the Royal assent. There has been some trifling alterations[...]but in substance it is unaltered. It has cost me many a weary hour after midnight.'²⁴¹ The Watch Committee responded to Hutt's efforts by expressing its warmest thanks to him:

for the unwearied assiduity, never failing attention, and long continued Labor (sic); which he has bestowed upon the Borough Police Superannuation Fund Bill whereby he has procured the same to be passed into a Law to the great benefit of the various Borough Police Forces of this Kingdom: and that of Hull in particular. And he is hereby requested to accept the cordial thanks of this Committee accordingly.²⁴²

In June of that year the Hull Watch Committee, as originators of the Act, recommended the adoption of its provisions in the borough, in a report to a meeting of the corporation which was accepted unanimously.²⁴³

²³⁹ KHRO, TCC/1/694, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from William Hutt MP to Thomas Thompson, Town Clerk, dated 2 Feb. 1848; TCC/1/698, letter from Supt McManus to Thomas Thompson, dated 4 Feb. 1848.

²⁴⁰ 11 & 12 Vict. c. 14. HLRO, House Com. Jour., 4 Mar., 22 Apr 1848. Steedman mentions that the 1840 Police and Constabulary Act (3 & 4 Vict. c. 88), the 1856 County and Borough Police Act (19 & 20 Vict. c. 69) and an amending Act of 1859 (22 & 23 Vict. c. 32) made some provision for police superannuation but she fails to include the 1848 Act and the Hull Watch Committee's role in its passage. See Steedman, *Policing*, p. 124.

²⁴¹ KHRO, TCC/1/730, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from William Hutt MP to Thomas Thompson, Town Clerk, dated 15 Apr. 1848.

²⁴² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 19 Apr. 1848.

²⁴³ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 21 Jun. 1848; TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 22 Jun. 1848; KHPL, HA 23 Jun. 1848. However, already a Mr Bray, the Town Clerk of Birmingham, had written to Thompson to express concern that the Act might be unworkable and to request more information about how it would be implemented by the authorities in Hull. Bray did not believe that only fifteen years of superannuation contributions could provide enough of a fund to give allowances to retiring policemen. See TCC/1/746, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from Bray to Thompson, dated 19 May 1848.

By the close of 1848 the police superannuation fund amounted to a considerable sum of money: £2,118 2s. 2d. and just over £2,010 of this was invested in the Hull Savings Bank at 3 per cent interest with the rest being held by the corporation.²⁴⁴

According to the terms of the Act the two most important criteria which a Hull policeman had to fulfill in order to qualify for superannuation were to have fifteen years service and be at least fifty years of age (sections 2 and 3). The Act authorized a Watch Committee to deduct from the wages of its policemen one thirty-sixth part of their weekly pay and use it to operate a superannuation scheme which would provide allowances according to rank (section 2).²⁴⁵ Extra sums of money could be credited to the fund from other sources, such as the sale of old police clothing, fines imposed on constables for misconduct, the serving of summonses or orders and execution of warrants. The introduction to the Act is an unequivocal statement of its intention:

And whereas it might tend to the Encouragement of such Constables to continue in such Service, and to behave themselves in an orderly Manner, if the Council were enabled to establish a Superannuation Fund in each borough, from which Fund each Police Constable, on the Events hereafter mentioned, shall be entitled to have and receive the Allowance hereinafter mentioned.²⁴⁶

A policeman with fifteen years service could not receive superannuation if under fifty years of age except if he was reported as unfit for duty by the police surgeon due to 'Infirmity of Body or Mind' (section 3). The Watch Committee could authorize superannuation for policemen who had served at least ten

²⁴⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 8 Nov. 1848.

²⁴⁵ The proportion of superannuation a policeman would receive varied according to whether he retired from the force or continued to serve. If a policeman retired after fifteen years service he was entitled to superannuation equal to half of his full pay; if he continued to serve he received his usual wage plus a third of his superannuation allowance. When a policeman accumulated twenty years service he was entitled to superannuation equal to two-thirds of his full pay but if he continued to serve he received a third of the superannuation allowance. If policemen had served in different ranks then the rate of superannuation would be altered accordingly.

²⁴⁶ 11 Vict. c. 14 Introduction.

successive years if they had been rendered incapable of further service by injuries incurred while on duty or due to infirmity of body or mind and they were eligible to receive up to half their full pay (section 4).²⁴⁷ Constables who were dismissed or who retired from the force before they became eligible for superannuation forfeited all claim to any of the fund but if they were restored to the force the Watch Committee could take into account their previous service when assessing their eligibility for superannuation (section 5). All monies credited to the superannuation fund would be invested with a council's normal Borough Fund, in government securities, or a combination of both and all the terms of the Act could apply to existing superannuation funds if a council approved this. (section 6 and 7). Finally, if the fund was exhausted then a council could advance money temporarily to cover any shortfall but it was not obliged to do so. If it refused then the superannuation payments would be reduced pro-rata until such time as they could be returned to normal and the total amount owing to the parties receiving superannuation had been paid and the Borough Fund reimbursed (section 8).²⁴⁸

Between May 1851 and May 1866 Andrew McManus and thirty-one other Hull policemen were granted superannuation because of long service in the force. This is a relatively large number of policemen to be superannuated for extended service in a single borough police force in the mid-Victorian era (see Appendix 1 for more information). The group of thirty-one was comprised of six inspectors, twelve sergeants (including one who was demoted from acting inspector between receiving superannuation and retiring) and thirteen constables. Some of these men retired immediately on becoming eligible for superannuation - not always through choice - and received their full allowance, whilst others continued to serve in the force, receiving a smaller allowance in addition to their normal pay.²⁴⁹ It is not

²⁴⁷ 11 Vict. c. 14. There were a number of policemen who had to retire from the Hull Police as a result of injuries or ill health and on occasion the Watch Committee had to decide the issue of entitlement to superannuation. Probably the most protracted of these cases involved PC75 Fewster and dragged on from the summer of 1858 until early in 1860. The Watch Committee doubted whether injury had rendered Fewster incapable of further service but ultimately it accepted a medical report which concluded that he was unfit to serve and it granted him a superannuation allowance. For more information see KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 6, 13, 20, 27 Jul., 8, 11, 16, 23 Nov. 1859, TCM 194, 25 Jan., 1 Feb. 1860.

²⁴⁸ 11 Vict. c. 14.

²⁴⁹ See KHRO, TCM 190-97, Watch Com. Min., May 1851-May 1866; EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Books, Hull Police, 1836-76 & 1848-83, [n.ref. for both].

always clear from the Watch Committee's minutes why it refused to allow some men to remain in the force when they were granted superannuation. The committee may have taken a number of factors into consideration, including the older men's general health and overall record as policemen and the need to offer the incentive of promotion to good, young policemen. In addition, at least nine constables and a sergeant retired from the force on medical grounds and received superannuation in recognition of their extended service. The first Hull policeman to be superannuated was McManus on 2 May 1851, by which time the superannuation fund totalled almost £3,100.²⁵⁰ He received superannuation money²⁵¹ in addition to his regular salary but interestingly whilst McManus fulfilled the age and service criteria he had *not* been contributing to the fund for fifteen years. This apparently was not illegal since the Act did not stipulate how long a policeman had to contribute for. The Watch Committee minutes reveal that McManus was not a member of the superannuation scheme before May 1841, when the committee agreed that if he contributed the same proportion of his income to the fund as the officers and other men he would likewise be entitled to a pension.²⁵² Shortly after McManus received his superannuation Inspector Cockin wrote to the Watch Committee applying for it on the grounds that he had amassed fifteen years of service but he was refused because he was not yet fifty years old.²⁵³ A few months later the committee granted superannuation of 5s. per week (then later a quarterly sum) to an ex-PC, John Cox, who served with the force from 1839-51.²⁵⁴ It is likely that Cox had retired due to ill health and with twelve years of service he was therefore eligible for superannuation should the Watch Committee choose to grant it to him. Certainly Sergeant George Collinson, with fifteen years service, was superannuated in March 1852, receiving the sum of 10s. 6d. per week paid quarterly, because he was incapable of further duty due to ill health.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 2 Apr., 2 May 1851.

²⁵¹ The sum of £9 15s. paid quarterly at first. See KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 4 Feb. 1852.

²⁵² KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 7 May 1841.

²⁵³ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 21 May 1851.

²⁵⁴ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 12 Nov. 1851.

²⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 3, 10 Mar 1852. It is likely that Collinson did not qualify automatically for superannuation because he had not yet reached fifty years of age.

The Watch Committee's decisions regarding Cox and Collinson may have precipitated the flood of applications for superannuation which poured in during July and August 1852. No fewer than six policemen (an inspector, four sergeants and a constable) applied for superannuation on the grounds that they had each accrued fifteen years service and in each case they were refused because none had reached fifty years of age and all were still fit and capable of performing their police duties. Sergeant Mulligan even lied about his age to try to get superannuation, claiming that he was fifty, although he could not produce any evidence. His rather clumsy and stupid attempt to deceive the Watch Committee was uncovered when a perusal of police records indicated that Mulligan gave his age as thirty in 1836 when he joined the force.²⁵⁶ After the superintendent the next serving policeman to receive superannuation was PC Anthony Thundercliffe in March 1853 (the constable who had been refused the previous August), he having reached fifty years of age that month.²⁵⁷ Many of the policemen who had served fifteen years in the force but were nowhere near fifty years of age were very aggrieved at not being eligible for superannuation (amounting to a third of their pay) and they decided to take further action on the issue. As many of them were still only in their late thirties or early forties they had no prospect of receiving superannuation in the near future despite fulfilling the service rule. The Watch Committee's decision not to grant such men superannuation caused considerable friction between the two sides for some time until eventually an agreement was reached to reconsider the issue. Despite some opposition from its members (the reasons for which are not clear) the Watch Committee agreed to join forces with the policemen to try and resolve the issue of entitlement to superannuation once and for all.²⁵⁸ Given the unfairness of the age rule and the way in which it disadvantaged policemen much younger than fifty with long service, the committee and the aggrieved policemen agreed that the matter could only be determined by a legal ruling. The committee received legal advice from the policemen's solicitors that the cheapest and best way of obtaining a decision

²⁵⁶ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com Min , 28 Jul , 18 Aug. 1852

²⁵⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min , 23 Mar 1853 He received £2 8d. paid quarterly

²⁵⁸ KHRO TCM 191, Watch Com Min , 11, 18 Nov , 13 Dec 1854

was to bring a special case before the Court of Queen's Bench and it presented a full report on the matter to the council.²⁵⁹

The Watch Committee explained the situation in full to the council, relating the terms of the Superannuation Act of 1848, the claims of the men, the legal advice given by the Town Clerk and the ensuing disagreement with the affected policemen. Then it reported the content of a letter from the policemen's solicitors, Messrs Stamp & Jackson, to the Town Clerk, as follows:

The question which has arisen on the construction of the Act of Parliament for regulating this Fund is of so much importance that it has been determined by several members of the Police Force to seek its solution by a Judicial decision.²⁶⁰

Stamp & Jackson continued by offering advice as to how the matter could be legally resolved in the most summary and least expensive way according to sections 46 and 47 of the Common Law Procedure Act 1852, with one of the affected policemen as the plaintiff and the corporation as defendant and both parties agreeing that judgement would be given without costs. In its report to the corporation the committee argued:

that this difference can have no satisfactory solution but by a legal decision and the Town Clerk is himself of opinion that a special case would be the cheapest and best mode of obtaining a judgement if it legally can be adopted[...]and as the question is one arising on the true construction of an Act of Parliament he thinks both parties should agree to bear their own costs.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 13 Dec. 1854.

²⁶⁰ KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Cor. Min., 24 Dec. 1854.

²⁶¹ KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Cor. Min., 21 Dec. 1854.

The corporation accepted the report and agreed to the matter being resolved in this way. The committee and the policemen had already agreed who the plaintiff should be: Sergeant Richardson Hobson, thirty-eight years old, and a policeman for eighteen years, (who had joined on 2 May 1836, the day of the force's creation) all but one year at that rank. He had contributed to the superannuation fund throughout this time and was willing and able to continue serving in the force.²⁶² He would claim the sum of superannuation money that he felt was owed to him from May 1851, when he completed his fifteenth year of service.

In 1855 the *Hull Advertiser* reported the details of the superannuation fund court case and the editor, E. F. Collins, commented on the issue. According to Collins the policemen would not have brought the court case had they not been urged on by certain persons, whom he did not name (but he may have been referring to their lawyers). The policemen did not have the approval of their Superintendent and this made him (Collins) oppose their actions. The purpose of the legal action was to secure an allowance for policemen who had not been superannuated. However, it was alleged by Collins that this would exhaust the fund leaving nothing to provide retirement allowances in the future. This was not understood by the policemen who supported the lawsuit, rather it was the object of their lay advisers in the affair (which may have been another reference to the lawyers).²⁶³ Collins commented it may have appeared unjust that a policeman who entered the force at twenty years of age had to serve longer before receiving superannuation than a policeman who entered aged ten years older but the remedy for this injustice was a graduated salary scale which reflected long service and good conduct. Then there would be no need to make payments to men still capable of serving in the force from a fund which should support ex-policemen in their old age. The police ought to know who are and who are not their best friends, alleged Collins and the court case was another 'cruel deception practised upon them', the second in a relatively short space of time (a clear reference to the failed police strike). He urged the men to do nothing without the approval of the Superintendent, their natural protector and channel of communication with the

²⁶² KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 13 Dec. 1854. Later promoted to Inspector, he was in Grimsby in 1862 at the time of the riot.

²⁶³ KHPL, HA 5 May 1855.

Watch Committee. He further advised that the Watch Committee should express a very strong opinion regarding 'the conduct of persons who needlessly interfered' with its control of the police force 'with the objective of rousing the men's dissatisfaction'.²⁶⁴

Regarding the court case, the allowance claimed by the plaintiff up to 15 March 1855, when the legal action commenced, was £33 17s. 6d.²⁶⁵ The town council refused to pay the allowance claimed or indeed any other allowance from the superannuation fund on the grounds that the plaintiff was under fifty years of age. The question for the court was whether, under the circumstances, the plaintiff was entitled to the allowance thus claimed by him. Although the court believed that the 1848 Superannuation Act had been badly worded and clumsily drafted it nevertheless stated that a man had to have fifteen years service and be fifty years of age to be eligible for superannuation. The only permitted exception to this rule, when superannuation could be granted (at the discretion of a watch committee), involved a policeman who was invalided out of the force with at least ten years service and who had been certified as unfit for duty by a surgeon. Whilst a man joining aged twenty-five had to serve twenty-five years before receiving superannuation a man joining aged thirty-five only had to serve fifteen years. Such irrationality could discourage younger men in their twenties from entering the police not just in Hull but elsewhere across the country where the Act had been adopted. Even though all four judges sitting in judgement on the case admitted that the Act was clumsily worded, sections two and three stated that a policeman had to have fifteen years service and be fifty years of age before becoming eligible for superannuation. Thus the judges found in favour of Hull Corporation.²⁶⁶ The discontented policemen seem to have accepted this decision for no further complaints were recorded in the Watch Committee minutes.

²⁶⁴ KHPL, HA 5 May 1855.

²⁶⁵ KHPL, HA 5 May 1855.

²⁶⁶ KHPL, HA 5 May 1855.

Indeed, only four years later the policemen in Hull had good reason to thank the Watch Committee and McManus for protecting their right to receive superannuation on the terms of the 1848 Act.²⁶⁷ In 1859 a Bill came before Parliament which would substantially alter the law relating to police superannuation. The superannuation clauses had been included at the request of many municipal corporations which feared that the present system of superannuation created by the legislation of 1848 would become inoperable because of the likelihood of a large shortfall of funds. Although the Act of 1848 provided for the first time a statutory framework for the management of police superannuation funds and legal protection for those funds, it did not end all the problems involved with superannuation. Indeed, it may have caused more problems than it solved in many of the boroughs which adopted it because these towns and cities did not possess large enough superannuation funds in the 1850s to pay eligible policemen. This was not the case in Hull, however, where a considerable sum of money had been amassed: in fact over £8,000 by 1863.²⁶⁸ In the absence of further legislation this problem could only be rectified by raising borough rates, otherwise superannuation allowances would cease. The problem had arisen because many boroughs had not created superannuation funds as early as Hull. Indeed, many boroughs only created funds in the wake of the 1848 Act and consequently their actuarial basis was not secure enough to pay the numbers of policemen who were applying for superannuation in the late 1850s. This situation was the motivating factor behind the superannuation clauses in the 1859 Bill but Hull's Watch Committee learnt that if it was enacted in its present form no policeman would be entitled to receive a superannuation allowance before the age of sixty years and the amount of such an allowance would be determined by his Watch Committee.²⁶⁹ This was a fundamental departure from the provisions of the Police Superannuation Act of 1848 - an Act procured principally through the exertions of the Hull Corporation and Watch Committee - which entitled policemen to a fixed superannuation allowance at fifty years of age after fifteen years service, with an enhanced allowance after twenty years service. Hull's Watch Committee was

²⁶⁷ For a full report of this issue see KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 1 Aug., 7 Sep. 1859.

²⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 6, 13 May 1863.

²⁶⁹ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 1 Aug., 7 Sep. 1859.

concerned that if the new Bill was enacted in its present state it would so radically alter its policemen's entitlement to superannuation that it would produce considerable dissatisfaction and anger among them. Given what had already occurred in Hull between 1854-55 regarding eligibility to superannuation, culminating in the Hobson case, and the relatively large number of Hull policemen with long service and expecting superannuation on the terms of 1848, the Watch Committee can be commended for regarding this as a grave concern. The chairman, Thomas Abbey, on the advice of the Town Clerk and Chief Constable, felt that immediate steps should be taken to alter the Bill, which was already before a Committee of the House of Commons. Therefore Hull's MP, James Clay, was quickly informed of the situation but there was not enough time to fully consult the Watch Committee because Abbey, the Town Clerk and McManus had to hurry to London to present their case.²⁷⁰

The deputation from Hull, together with Clay, had meetings at the Home Office at which the Home Secretary was present. He agreed that the Bill should be altered to protect the superannuation rights of policemen already serving. Hull's Town Clerk drew up alterations to two of the clauses which were approved. One of these dealt with the issue of policemen already serving before the Bill became law (13 August 1859), who were entitled to receive superannuation under the terms of the 1848 Act; the other amendment referred to the transfer of control of superannuation funds from one Act to the other. The Home Secretary promised that the amendments would be put into the Bill and the deputation left London satisfied. The deputation had been entirely successful in protecting the rights and interests of the Hull policemen. The Watch Committee also expressed its satisfaction with events when it received a report on the matter. Moreover, it authorized the Chief Constable to return to London to be in attendance on Hull's MPs in the lobby of the House of Commons should they require further information as the Bill completed its committee stage.²⁷¹ Thus the Act only affected the material conditions of policemen joining after 13 August 1859 (when the Act received its Royal Assent), who must serve fifteen years and be at least sixty

²⁷⁰ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 7 Sep. 1859.

²⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 1 Aug., 7 Sep. 1859; 22 & 23 Vict. c. 32.

years of age before becoming eligible for superannuation. Nevertheless, a watch committee was allowed, with suitable certification, to grant a sum of superannuation (up to a maximum of two-thirds of normal pay) to any policeman who was medically unfit to continue serving either through accident, injury or illness.²⁷² A watch committee could also grant a gratuity (not exceeding twelve months pay) to the widow of a constable who had died in the service but contributed to the superannuation fund for three years.²⁷³ The policemen of Hull acknowledged the work which McManus had done to maintain their superannuation rights when, with the approval of the Watch Committee, they presented him with a gold watch as a grateful acknowledgement of his services in preserving the right of retirement at fifty years of age.²⁷⁴ Six years later the Watch Committee had to take similar action on the issue of superannuation when another Bill was brought before Parliament. Again it sent a deputation to London which was successful in inserting a clause in the Bill. This protected the superannuation entitlement of policemen appointed before 1859.²⁷⁵ It is significant that despite all the legislation of this period policemen everywhere did not have a guaranteed legal right to a pension until the Police Act of 1890 granted this after twenty-five years of service, or after fifteen if a policeman was invalided out due to injury or illness.²⁷⁶

²⁷² It is believed that the first Hull policeman to be superannuated under the terms of section 9 of the 22 & 23 Vict. c.32 was PC58 Wolton who had served for more than twenty years in the force (but was not yet fifty years of age and so did not qualify for superannuation under the terms of the 1848 Act). Acting on the advice of the police surgeon, McManus certified him as unable to discharge his duties due to a 'general debility of constitution'. He was superannuated on a retiring pension of 12s. per week. See KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 14 Dec. 1859. Shortly after the Act was passed, the council directed that in accordance with its eighth section a weekly sum should be deducted from the pay of each constable, equivalent to a yearly rate of £2 10s. per £100 (2.5 per cent) for the credit of the superannuation fund. This replaced the sum applied under the terms of the 1848 Act, 11 & 12 Vict. c. 14, which had been repealed. See KHRO, TCM 6, Hull Cor. Min., 15 Sep. 1859.

²⁷³ For more information on police superannuation in the third quarter of the nineteenth century see Steedman, *Policing*, pp 124-30.

²⁷⁴ KHRO, TCM 194, Watch Com. Min., 28 Dec. 1859.

²⁷⁵ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 19, 26 Apr. 1865.

²⁷⁶ See Clive Emsley and Mark Clapson, 'Recruiting the English Policeman c. 1840-1940', *Policing and Society* 3 (1994), 269-286 (p. 282), Steedman, *Policing*, p. 125. The Act also ensured that police pensions were guaranteed by central government rather than local authorities.

In 1863 the Watch Committee gave much thought to the best means of investing the superannuation monies. It resolved that the Town Clerk should write to the authorities at eight cities inquiring how the police superannuation funds were invested in each place, according to the requirements of section eight of the 1859 Act and report whether the present system of investment in Hull complied with the law and the custom in other places.²⁷⁷ The Town Clerk's report to the Watch Committee did not elucidate any ideal form of investment; on the contrary, it highlighted the variety of investments which were possible within the framework of the law.²⁷⁸ He reported that according to section 8 of the Act 'the Council are directed to invest the [superannuation] fund "in such manner as the Council may direct" and the Council are bound to guarantee the security of the Superannuation Fund and make good out of the Borough Fund any deficiency or inadequacy that may arise therein.' The amount of the superannuation fund invested with the corporation in February 1863 was £5,782 19s. 10d. at 5 per cent interest. An additional sum of £2,400 was invested at the same interest rate with the Baths and Wash-houses Committee on the bond of the corporation to the Treasurer, giving a total of some £8,182 in superannuation monies.²⁷⁹ Although never stated it would be reasonable to assume that the larger of the two investments was due to mature sometime in the near future and the Watch Committee was concerned to find a new investment with a reasonable return and liquidity. Since the Act did not stipulate what investment should be made, the Town Clerk could see no objection to the committee investing the larger portion in security of the Waterworks Fund (at 4.25 per cent interest), or continuing the present practice of investing in the bonds of the corporation; he therefore recommended either of these options.²⁸⁰ However the Watch Committee appears to have had some difficulty deciding how it should invest the money because it had to establish two separate sub-committees in May and November 1863 to investigate and

²⁷⁷ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 15 Apr. 1863.

²⁷⁸ From his inquiries the Town Clerk ascertained that in Leeds, Nottingham and Newcastle upon Tyne superannuation monies were retained in the hands of the Corporation and were not invested in any other security; in Bristol and Birmingham monies were invested in Consols at 3.25 per cent interest, and at Sheffield £5,000 had been lent to the local gas company at 4 per cent interest. See KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 6 May 1863.

²⁷⁹ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 6, 13 May 1863. It is likely that a small sum amounting to a few hundred pounds was held as cash by the corporation.

²⁸⁰ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 6, 13 May 1863.

report on the issue.²⁸¹ Finally the committee approved the second sub-committee's recommendation that £5,000 should be invested in a bond of the Hull Corporation Water Works at an interest rate of 4.25 per cent, with the balance, almost £800, going to a separate account with the council's bankers.²⁸² When this decision was taken before the council for approval this was withheld until an alternative proposal for the investment of the money had been debated and rejected.²⁸³

²⁸¹ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 20 May, 25 Nov. 1863.

²⁸² KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 28 Nov. 1863.

²⁸³ KHRO, TCM 7, Watch Com. Min., 17, 28 Dec. 1863.

POLICE ANCILLARY SERVICES AND THE POLICE STATIONS 1836 TO 1866

Fire-fighting

From its inception in 1836 the Hull Police had a limited role in fighting fires in the borough, usually being called upon to help fire-fighters rescue property and persons where this was feasible. The police performed this task very effectively despite the acknowledged shortcomings of the fire-fighting services. Finally, after several years of public pressure on the issue, both inside and outside the council, the Hull Corporation and Watch Committee decided that the policemen should be given a greater role in fighting fires.¹ Eventually, after several complaints about the inadequacy of existing arrangements, the task of investigating the matter further was devolved to the Watch Committee. The latter appointed a fire brigade sub-committee whose report appeared in March 1846.² Having discovered that practices in towns and cities across the country differed considerably, the report concluded that there was no particular system which could be adopted in Hull. Nevertheless it recommended certain improvements to the existing arrangements which were accepted and these served to enhance the role of the police in fighting fires. Under the present system the corporation had one fire engine and firemen to operate it and another eight or nine engines in good condition, together with the necessary manpower, were under the control of private establishments in the town (the Dock Company had one and a couple more were operated by insurance companies). The water supply had recently been improved and the engines could now either draw water from the docks and rivers or from small reservoirs scattered about the town. The report recommended that hoses at least fifty yards long should be purchased and kept at both police stations, the Town Hall and Corporation Yard and sets of ladders about fifty or sixty feet long should be bought and kept at Sculcoates police station, the Town Hall

¹ For an example of this public pressure see KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Corporation Minutes, 9 Nov. 1839; KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 23 Apr. 1841.

² KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Committee Minutes, 23 Mar. 1846.

and Corporation Yard. A printed list should be prepared detailing where all the essential equipment was stored, keys were kept, water supplies could be obtained and important personnel lived. All the officers of the force, together with at least twenty men should be given the above information and thoroughly instructed in the use of hoses, ladders and fire engines and on how to obtain water. The report also recommended that those members of the police who acted in a fire-fighting capacity should receive extra remuneration but unfortunately it is not known whether they did.³

The fire-fighting equipment used by the police was replaced on a regular basis⁴ and the force gradually augmented its fire-fighting role in the borough. Unfortunately neither the minutes of the Watch Committee, nor those of any sub-committee which also dealt with the issue, reveal precisely how much responsibility the Hull Police had. For example, in 1855 the corporation's Property Committee supposedly gave full control of all the fire hoses in the borough to the Watch Committee but there is no indication that the police were expected to *operate* all of these.⁵ Furthermore there was no mention of taking responsibility for any fire engines operated by the council or other public bodies such as the Local Board of Health. In 1859 the Watch Committee resolved that it would apply to the council and the Local Board of Health to obtain control and management of all the hoses and fire engines in their care but no further evidence has been found on this matter; the committee may not have proceeded with the issue.⁶ However, at the same time the committee also resolved to create a sub-committee to examine and report on the condition and location of fire hoses and fire engines in the town. At the first meeting of the sub-committee only three days later, the Chief Constable gave a return of the state of the corporation's fire-fighting equipment other than that which was stored at the police stations. The return noted the number

³ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 23 Mar. 1846.

⁴ For example in 1853 a new cart was ordered for the fire hose kept at the recently opened Parliament Street police station; in 1855 150 yards of hose, two stand pipes and three hand pipes were ordered; and in 1860 two 200 yard hoses (one for each police station) were ordered. For more information see KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 21 Dec. 1853; TCM 192, 9 May 1855; TCM 194, 7 Mar. 1860; TCM 217, Central Station Sub-Committee Minutes, 5 May 1855, 3 Mar. 1860.

⁵ KHRO, TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 2 Jun. 1855.

⁶ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 26 Jan. 1859.

of places where equipment was kept, its age, condition and usage, and who was responsible for its management. The report by McManus reveals the disorganized, almost casual, way in which the corporation's fire-fighting arrangements were conducted. Although the corporation's fire engine and stand pipes were kept in good condition in a proper engine house, the fire hoses were stored in some unsuitable locations across the town and much of the equipment was in a poor condition.⁷

There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the Hull Police's record as a fire-fighting force was an impressive one by the standards of the era. For example, not only was the work of the force in this respect highly praised in the newspapers, there is also the evidence of the numerous letters sent by insurance companies and their customers - the victims of the fires - to the Watch Committee or McManus, expressing thanks and praise for the policemen's work and frequently also including gratuities for them. These letters span the period from 1846, when the Hull Police assumed a greater role in fire-fighting, until 1866, when this study terminates and many have been copied in full into the Watch Committee minutes. A representative selection of the fires tackled by the Hull Police for which they received considerable approbation are given below. For instance, in 1847 the *Hull Advertiser* reported the praise that the police received for extinguishing a fire on board the steam ship *Marshall*, owned by the Elbe Humber Steam Navigation Company. The fire had occurred some weeks ago and had been reported in the newspaper. However, a Mr George Cammell of the company later wrote to McManus thanking the policemen for their fire-fighting services and enclosing the sum of £5 to be presented to them. Cammell thanked and praised the policemen 'who exerted themselves in such an extraordinary and praiseworthy manner[...]and to whose activity and zeal it is no doubt owing that much property was saved which would otherwise have been destroyed.'⁸ The fire had begun in the vessel's rear hold while it was still at sea. The ship was steamed to Hull as quickly as possible and moored alongside the new pier. The police were called and a large body of men arrived, using their hose-pipes to extinguish the fire.⁹ In 1856, after a fire at the premises of

⁷ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 29 Jan. 1859.

⁸ KHPL, HA 10 Sep. 1847.

⁹ KHPL, HA 10 Sep. 1847.

Richardson and Sons, cabinet makers of Bond Street, the *Hull Advertiser* reported the incident and the acclaim which was heaped on the police: 'There are few - if any - better regulated and more active men than those in the Hull force. Ready and energetic at all times in rendering any public service, we wonder not to find their efforts deservedly appreciated and acknowledged.'¹⁰ The company wrote to McManus as follows, thanking the police for their efforts and the letter was forwarded to the *Advertiser* for publication: 'We beg to tender you our warmest thanks for the valuable assistance rendered by yourself and the police[...]And as an appreciation of the praiseworthy conduct shown on the occasion, we beg to enclose a cheque for £8, which you will dispose of as you think proper.'¹¹

The following year a fire occurred in premises next to those of Feame and Easten and the Watch Committee received a letter from them thanking the police for its good work in extinguishing the fire (thus saving their showrooms) and enclosing the sum of £10. The committee resolved that the letter should be sent to the newspapers for publication.¹² Later that same year the police received a £5 5s. gratuity from the Bank of London and National and Provincial Insurance Association for extinguishing a fire at the premises of Baron and Co. In the accompanying letter to the Watch Committee, its author, Mr Thomas Cave, Fire Manager at the Association's Chief Office in Threadneedle Street, London, noted 'the very efficient and active exertions of the Police and Water Works under the Superintendence of Mr Andrew McManus in confining the late fire at Messrs W. Baron & Co.'s Saw Mill to the interior of the four walls where it originated and so soon subduing the same'.¹³ The local secretary of the Association, Mr John Atkinson, also wrote to the committee expressing his approval, stating: 'The Directors feel assured that had it not been for their [the policemen's] prompt assistance combined with the excellent arrangements made by the Corporation for the extinguishing of Fires in this Town, that they might have been called

¹⁰ KHPL, HA 4 Oct. 1856.

¹¹ KHPL, HA 4 Oct. 1856.

¹² KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 8 Apr. 1857.

¹³ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 2 Dec. 1857.

upon for a much larger amount of damages'.¹⁴ In March 1865 the dock master Mr Dale Brown wrote to Chief Constable McManus expressing thanks for 'the very efficient and praiseworthy conduct of the entire police force present' at the fire on railway dock on 18 February. Brown revealed that 'I have reported the same to the Directors of this Company and shall be glad to learn that something more than a mere verbal recognition is taken of it'.¹⁵ His comments to the directors of the Dock Company must have had some effect because shortly after Mr Huffam, the secretary of the company, wrote to the Chief Constable on behalf of the directors expressing their approval of the police's conduct in assisting to extinguish the fire and enclosing the sum of £5 as a gratuity.¹⁶

The dangers to which the policemen exposed themselves in fighting fires were fully demonstrated on 19 October 1862 when PC John Redfern was killed (and PC McCormick seriously injured) fighting a fire at John Lee Smith and Sons of High Street.¹⁷ The committee now had the task of deciding how to support Mrs Redfern and her family and to its credit (after an initial delay) it made handsome provision for them. In December 1862 the committee resolved, on the Chief Constable's recommendation, that Maria Redfern should receive £54 12s. from the superannuation fund, the sum being equal to a year's pay of her deceased husband. This was the maximum which could be granted under the terms of the 1859 Superannuation Act. Already a voluntary fund had been created for the relief of Mrs Redfern and her family to which a large number of donations were made in the next few months.¹⁸ In fact, so much money was raised - over £410 by March 1863 - that the Watch Committee had to appoint a

¹⁴ KHRO, TCM 193, Watch Com. Min., 2 Dec. 1857.

¹⁵ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 1 Mar. 1865.

¹⁶ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 8 Mar. 1865.

¹⁷ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 22 Oct. 1862. Redfern had joined the Hull Police in October 1847 aged twenty-five; he was one of the constables who had resigned at the time of the police strike in 1853 and then been reappointed by the Watch Committee shortly afterwards. See EYRO, Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Book, Hull Police, 1836-1876 [n.ref.]; KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 27, 29, Jul. 1853.

¹⁸ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 5 Nov., 24 Dec. 1862; 22 & 23 Vict. c. 32.

sub-committee to decide how it should be administered. After all bills had been paid, including PC Redfern's funeral expenses, the cost of his wake, the sum of £20 had been given to PC McCormick, and £20 to a new Police Constables Reward Fund for bravery when fire-fighting, just over £299 remained. The Watch Committee accepted its sub-committee's recommendation that the remaining money should be invested and Mrs Redfern should receive, for the time being, the sum of £20 per annum, paid quarterly, until her youngest child reached the age of twenty-one in 1877, at which time the remaining monies should be divided equally between the widow and her children. If Mrs Redfern died before the youngest child reached twenty-one years of age the quarterly sum of £5 would be paid to an approved person for the benefit of the children.¹⁹

The Blanket Row Fire of 1857

Although there is an abundance of evidence indicating that the Hull Police was an extremely well-organized and effective fire-fighting force, it is somewhat ironic that the only collective charge of misconduct made against the force during the period of this study involved its actions while tackling a fire in Blanket Row in May 1857. This was a symbolic location itself, having been the site of the main police station from 1836 to 1853. Notwithstanding, an investigation of this charge will reveal that it was without substance and the result of rivalry and misunderstanding between policemen and naval personnel. In no way was it an indictment of the Hull Police's performance both in general and as a proto-fire brigade in particular. The incident took place on the night of Monday 18 May 1857 when policemen and seamen from HMS Cornwallis clashed as they both attempted to extinguish the fire in Blanket Row. A large crowd was at the scene, generally offering verbal support to the seaman in their struggle with the policemen, which in itself is a clear indication that popular hostility towards the police still existed amongst the inhabitants of the town. During the general crowd melee a thirty-two year-old merchant seaman died of asphyxiation and crush injuries. An informal enquiry chaired by the Mayor determined

¹⁹ KHRO, TCM 195, Watch Com. Min., 18, 25 Mar. 1863.

that the policemen had acted properly in tackling the fire.²⁰ The Watch Committee first discussed these events at its meeting two days later.²¹ McManus made a statement to the committee regarding the circumstances of the fire before reporters were admitted to the meeting. It was extremely rare in this era for reporters to be allowed into Watch Committee meetings so this is an indication of how seriously the members viewed what had happened. In concluding its business 'having fully investigated the circumstances' the members of the Watch Committee resolved that:

the Police under the able management of the Chief Constable would have been able to extinguish the Fire, and they are of opinion that any altercation which took place arose from the great zeal and desire on the part of the men of HMS Cornwallis to render assistance to extinguish the Fire, the Committee are also led to believe the best feeling exists between the Police and men of HMS Cornwallis and hope the feeling will continue it being very desirable such should be the case and a good understanding continue between the Civil and Naval Authorities.²²

The committee further resolved that a copy of the resolution should be sent to Captain Randolph of the Cornwallis.

If this resolution was intended to dispense with the matter entirely then the Watch Committee was sadly mistaken and had clearly underestimated the depth of feeling which the police-naval conflict had generated. Indeed the committee was compelled to discuss the events of the fire again only two days later²³ following the receipt of a critical letter from Captain Randolph to its chairman, Thomas Abbey, in which Randolph acknowledged:

²⁰ For a detailed newspaper report of the incident and the coroner's inquest see KHPL, HA 23 May 1857. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of accidental death on the seaman.

²¹ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 20 May 1857.

²² KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 20 May 1857.

²³ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 22 May 1857.

with great pain the receipt of a Resolution of the Watch Committee[...]to the effect that the services of the Officers and men of HMS Cornwallis were neither wanted nor useful at the late fire.

I could have hoped that at least the good intentions with which they were rendered might have spared them the affront, and I must remark they were not obtruded until called for by the owner of the premises first and His Worshipful the Mayor afterwards.

I demur also to that being deemed a full investigation of differences which must have been exclusively upon one sided evidence. I beg to reciprocate most heartily the desire that a good understanding should continue between the civil and naval authorities, and here again to regret that the exertions intended to promote that object should draw upon me a contrary imputation.²⁴

The chairman of the Watch Committee sent a letter of reply which was reproduced in the *Hull Advertiser* of 23 May.²⁵ Since Randolph objected to the committee's claim that the policemen could have extinguished the fire themselves, which he regarded as inferring that the services of the seamen were not 'useful', Abbey's letter of reply explained that Randolph had misunderstood the intention of the resolution. On the contrary, Abbey explained that the seamen had 'rendered very efficient service' by their 'great zeal and activity'. He continued by arguing that the committee's judgement that the police could have put out the fire did not denigrate the actions or reputation of the seamen and there was certainly no intention on the part of the committee to do so.²⁶

²⁴ The letter from Randolph, dated 21 May, was copied into the Watch Committee minutes of 29 May. See KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 29 May 1857.

²⁵ See KHPL, HA 23 May 1857. For a rough draft of this letter see KHRO, TCC/1/1964, Hull Corporation Correspondence, letter from Thomas Abbey to Captain Randolph, dated 22 May 1857.

²⁶ KHPL, HA 23 May 1857; KHRO, TCC/1/1964, Hull Cor. Cor., letter from Thomas Abbey to Captain Randolph, dated 22 May 1857, . There was a further letter from Captain Randolph dated 23 May which the committee discussed at its meeting on the 27th. Unfortunately this letter appears not to have survived. Meanwhile, Smith and Young, the business affected by the fire, sent a letter enclosing £10 as a reward for the policemen who fought the blaze. See TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 27 May 1857.

The dispute entered a more serious phase when the Mayor, W. H. Moss, received a letter from the Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, W. Massey, requesting him to inquire into the circumstances of the late fire and give his report to the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey. A representation had been made to the Home Secretary by the Admiralty complaining of the misconduct of the Hull Police on the occasion of the fire. Moss arranged for this second, more formal, enquiry to take place as quickly as possible, within the space of a few days.²⁷ With the Town Clerk assisting the Mayor and therefore unable to give advice to the Watch Committee, it turned to one of its own members for legal advice, C. S. Todd (also the Sheriff of Hull), who readily accepted its call for his services, which were offered free. A case to present to the enquiry was then prepared by a sub-committee comprised of Abbey, Todd and three others.²⁸ Meanwhile, press interest in the incident and the forthcoming enquiry was growing. E. F. Collins, the editor of the *Hull Advertiser*, declared: 'In the present excited state of the public mind[...]we consider that we shall best discharge our duty by placing all the evidence we can collect upon record, and leaving our readers to draw their own conclusions from it. Wilful and deliberate blame we attach to no individual whatsoever.'²⁹ Nevertheless, the editorial is a thinly veiled criticism of Captain Randolph of *HMS Cornwallis* and the Mayor, W. H. Moss, for the confusion which arose over who was in charge of fighting the fire. Moss was criticized for not making it clear to Randolph that the latter was in charge only until McManus arrived and Randolph was criticized for not relinquishing this role to the civil authorities and their commander, the Chief Constable, when they were in a position to take over - which he should have known was the proper course of action. According to the newspaper report the confrontation between the policemen and the naval personnel occurred when the sailors, who had the backing of the crowd, intervened to fight the fire. The efforts of the police had not yet brought the fire under control so the sailors took control of a hose which was being operated by the policemen and used it to good effect. However the water supply to the hose was terminated for some unknown reason. There was a further confrontation between the policemen and the sailors before the fire was brought under control, at which time blows were

²⁷ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 27 May 1857.

²⁸ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 27 May 1857.

²⁹ KHPL, HA 23 May 1857.

exchanged and threats were made by both sides. At some point an officer of the *Cornwallis* drew his sword and threatened a policeman, an incident which was subsequently ignored by the borough authorities. The newspaper report generally supports the version of events retold by the policemen.³⁰ After the fire there was an informal enquiry which was attended by the Mayor, magistrates (including the stipendiary) and officers from the *Cornwallis*. Captain Randolph alleged that the water supply to the hose used by the sailors had been deliberately switched off and that hoses operated by policemen were directed against certain seamen and their officers who were attempting to bring the fire under control. The *Hull Advertiser* gave a lengthy and detailed report of this informal inquiry chaired by the Mayor, and of the course of action pursued by the Watch Committee. At no stage did the newspaper suggest that the Hull Police had acted improperly in fighting the fire. Furthermore, the chairman's letter to Captain Randolph of 22 May was reproduced in the report and overall the newspaper tried to stress that the Watch Committee was being conciliatory in its communications with Randolph.³¹

A week later, after it had been announced that the Home Secretary had ordered a formal inquiry into the incident the editor of the *Advertiser*, Mr Collins, further supported the police by explaining why, in his opinion, further investigation was unnecessary:

A complaint was made by Captain Randolph - some four or five magistrates inquired into it - there was a further investigation by the Watch Committee - and the result of the whole was a general conviction that the Police and the crew of the *Cornwallis* did their best to extinguish the fire, and that, in their drenching and struggling with each other, there was more competitive zeal than personal ill-will. The Police authorities have certainly shown no vindictiveness in the matter. Nothing has been done by the Watch Committee to call to account the conduct of the officer who, in a moment of forgetfulness, remembered that he was not weaponless. Indeed the forbearance of the Civil authorities has been most exemplary.³²

³⁰ KHPL, HA 23 May 1857.

³¹ KHPL, HA 23 May 1857.

³² KHPL, HA 30 May 1857.

Once the second enquiry chaired by the Mayor began, Collins made more criticisms of Captain Randolph's behaviour and, less directly, he criticized the Mayor's conduct in the affair.³³ When the official inquiry was suddenly and unexpectedly terminated by the Mayor following the *withdrawal* of the complaint by Captain Randolph, the editor expressed his approval of this decision, having steadfastly maintained his support for the police throughout the inquiry.³⁴ The Watch Committee, however, was determined that it would not abandon the issue until it had fully restored the reputation of the Hull Police, which had been publicly questioned by the investigation of the complaint. Therefore the Watch Committee decided to appoint a special sub-committee charged with the task of restoring the good name of the Hull Police. The sub-committee presented its report on 13 July, having analysed the evidence taken at the official enquiry held before the Mayor and also statements made after its termination by 'respectable and competent parties who were present at the fire.'³⁵ The Watch Committee unanimously agreed that the report should be received and adopted. It also agreed that a copy of the report should be forwarded to the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, via the borough MPs, who should be 'respectfully requested to urge upon the Home Secretary the desirability of its early consideration' - a decision which the editor of the *Hull Advertiser* fully supported.³⁶ Two days later the committee resolved that McManus and Todd should act as a deputation from Hull, accompanying the MPs on their visit to the Home Secretary to present the report and memorial.³⁷

Todd and McManus reported in considerable detail to the Watch Committee on 24 July the result of the meeting at the Home Office and the narrative of events reveals how exceedingly

³³ KHPL, HA 6 Jun. 1857. There is also a lengthy report on this inquiry in the newspaper.

³⁴ KHPL, HA 13 Jun. 1857.

³⁵ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 13 Jul. 1857.

³⁶ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 13 Jul. 1857; KHPL HA 18 Jul. 1857.

³⁷ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 15 Jul. 1857.

determined all involved were to restore the good name of the Hull Police.³⁸ In all, four men assembled at the Home Office for a meeting with Mr Massey, the Under Secretary - Sir George Grey having been called away on Cabinet business. They were McManus, Todd, James Clay, one of Hull's MPs, and Samuel Warren, the Recorder of Hull (the judge of the Court of Quarter Sessions) and MP for Midhurst. Clay handed in the memorial and stated the object of the Watch Committee in seeking an interview with the authorities at the Home Office. He gave details of events of the fire, the subsequent complaints by Captain Randolph to the Admiralty, and the outcomes of the various formal and informal inquiries. Warren, following Clay, represented the Hull Police as being one of the best ordered bodies of police in the Kingdom, basing this statement on his judicial experience in Hull. He was confident that a perusal of the facts would not support the criticisms being made against the police. The Recorder continued by stating - and this is entirely plausible - that with two such bodies of men as the constables and the sailors, each anxious to do their best to extinguish the fire, a collision between them was almost inevitable. No serious blame could be attributed to either party and a conflict like this 'ought never to have been scanned with too much nicety or weighed in golden scales'. Warren 'represented the whole affair as[...]arising out of an excess of zeal on both sides, and one to have been treated as a matter of no serious moment whatever.' The Recorder also noted 'the natural eagerness of the members of the Watch Committee to have Justice done to the men under their charge, and not to leave a force of which they were the guardians with any imputation whatever hanging over them'. For these reasons Warren felt confident that the Home Office would declare the charge made against the Hull Police to be absolutely groundless.³⁹

The deputation, Todd and McManus, then drew attention to the efficiency of the police force as a fire brigade by stressing that since it began to act in this capacity for the borough it had been totally successful in confining fires to the building in which they began. Although it is impossible to substantiate this claim, if it is a veracious statement it would be a remarkable testimony of the Hull Police's

³⁸ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

³⁹ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

effectiveness as a fire-fighting force. The deputation explained that the Watch Committee, in presenting its memorial, were actuated by the wish to obtain simple justice for the force under its control and to show that the Hull Police was not only free from blame for the incident but:

was as efficient for all purposes whatsoever as any other constabulary force in the Kingdom. The Watch Committee further felt anxious that any blame attaching to the police of Hull would equally attach to themselves, as having the management of the force, and as being the parties to whom the public looked for its maintenance of good order in the Borough.⁴⁰

The deputation wished the Home Secretary to declare that either 'no imputation rested on the conduct of the police' or to reopen the Mayor's inquiry and permit the police to utterly refute the charges preferred against them. The Under Secretary, Mr Massey, declared that no imputation whatever rested on the conduct of the Hull Police as the complaint made against the force had been withdrawn. He inquired what form of redress would satisfy the deputation, who replied that a letter addressed to Mr Clay would suffice stating, for the benefit of Hull's Watch Committee and citizens, the substance of what had just been said to them. Massey readily assented to writing such a letter. His letter to Clay, dated 20 July, is copied into the minutes of the Watch Committee meeting and contains the endorsement of the Hull Police which the deputation sought:

I do not understand that any imputation rests on the conduct of the Hull Constabulary in respect of the transaction with reference to which a correspondence has recently taken place between this department and the Mayor of Hull[...]I have no difficulty, therefore, in repeating to you in writing at your request, what I stated to you on Saturday, when I had the pleasure of seeing you here, accompanied by the Recorder, the Sheriff and the Chief Constable of Hull, that this result has been quite satisfactory.⁴¹

⁴⁰ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

⁴¹ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

The next day Warren wrote to Todd summing up his thoughts on all the events which had occurred during and since the fire on Blanket Row, a letter which Todd laid before the Watch Committee as part of the report. In all probability it is the fairest and most perceptive analysis of the causes of the fracas between policemen and seamen on that fateful night and the impetuosity with which charges were subsequently preferred and investigated.

It was only natural that they [the Watch Committee] should seek to remove a slur momentarily attached to the Police Force in respect of their discharge of a most responsible and harassing duty, rendered doubly so by the eager interference, from the most praiseworthy motives, of the sailors of the Cornwallis.

A better ordered body of Police than that at Hull I know not any where, and I speak from the judicial experience which I have had for nearly twenty four Sessions. I have frequently had publicly to express my high approval of their conduct individually, and as a force, under the able direction of Mr McManus.⁴²

Adopting a pragmatic position which can be commended, Warren went on to state:

I do find that the imputation on the force with reference to the fire in Blanket Row is not justified by the facts. In a moment of such eagerness and anxiety and with two bodies of men rivalling each other in efforts to subdue a great fire, nothing was more likely than that momentary collisions and rough interchange of language should occur. But such acts and expressions should not, under such circumstances, be critically scanned or weighed in golden scales. Nothing could be more mischievous and absurd.⁴³

Finally Warren commented on the actions of the Mayor, W. H. Moss, and Captain Randolph and the conduct of the Hull Police:

⁴² KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

⁴³ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

I entirely approve of the Mayor's determination to close an inquiry which he had no longer, if in point of law, which I greatly doubt, he ever had, competent authority to institute or conduct. The withdrawal of Captain Randolph from the inquiry at all event put an end to the whole matter, and he seems to have regretted the interception of friendly relations between himself and those under his command and the Municipal Authorities and the towns people of Hull[...]and I rejoice in having had the opportunity then afforded me of testifying to the exemplary conduct on every occasion which has come under my notice of the Hull Police Force.⁴⁴

Having achieved all it had striven to achieve the Watch Committee gratefully resolved unanimously to receive and adopt the report given by its deputation and send copies of it to the newspapers.⁴⁵ It only remained for the committee to thank the sub-committee charged with defending the record of the Hull Police for its able work, and especially C. S. Todd, for his gratuitous professional services and essential role throughout.

The episode of the Blanket Row fire and its aftermath illuminate the extent to which the Watch Committee would go to protect the stature of the Hull Police. It should be remembered that this was not a police force which had a tarnished public image. If one wanted to quote an example of a mid-nineteenth century police force with an enviable reputation there would be few - if any - which could surpass that of the Hull Police. Therefore it is understandable that Hull's Watch Committee should want to do its utmost to maintain the exemplary status of the force under its control. Undoubtedly the committee believed it had responsibility for one of the best borough police forces in England. Its members believed that defending the good name of a high status police force was an absolute priority. Consider the lengths which the committee went to after the official enquiry had been terminated by the withdrawal of the

⁴⁴ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857.

⁴⁵ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 24 Jul. 1857. The content of the Watch Committee report was printed in the *Hull Advertiser*. See KHPL, HA 25 Jul. 1857. The details of the fire and the subsequent investigation can also be found elsewhere. See *Hull Times* 23 May, 6, 13 Jun. 1857. Further evidence concerning the inquiry into the fire in the form of a number of unbound manuscripts pages, including a diagram, can be found inside the back cover of TCM 189.

original complaint. The whole issue could have ended there but such a conclusion was not satisfactory to the Watch Committee; it had to pursue the matter until it was satisfied that the reputation of the Hull Police had not been undermined. Using the evidence of the terminated enquiry, plus statements it obtained from witnesses at the scene, it compiled a report which was presented to the Home Office by a deputation and other interested parties. Then when a just response was received from the Home Office it released all the evidence to the press. There is a diligence of duty here on the part of the Watch Committee which is noteworthy and striking.

Police Stations

If the performance of the Hull Police was undermined in any way during its early years of operation then one important reason for this was the inadequacy of its two station buildings. Whilst many borough police forces would have been satisfied to have the use of buildings such as those used by the Hull Police, they proved to be unsatisfactory for the latter within a relatively short period of time. The wish of the Watch Committee, on the recommendation of Superintendent McManus, to accommodate a number of constables in the police stations was part of the problem, as this obviously created spatial and health concerns. However, another important issue was the condition of the cells and the facilities for keeping prisoners. In 1836 the two police stations, in Blanket Row and Jarratt Street, were just about adequate for their purpose after the Watch Committee authorized the carrying out of various modifications and improvements, especially to the latter. However, it was not long before serious criticisms were being made of the facilities on offer in the stations and this remained an on-going issue for more than fifteen years. For example, in August 1840 a letter from the magistrates and a report by the Inspector of Prisons commented on the 'unfit state of the station houses in the borough'.⁴⁶ The result of a survey revealed that the Blanket Row station needed three new cells and the Jarratt Street station two at a total cost of about £100. The Watch Committee immediately established a sub-committee of five to investigate the criticisms and, if

⁴⁶ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 19 Aug. 1840.

valid, negotiate for longer leases over the station houses so that the necessary alterations and improvements could be made.⁴⁷ By October of that year the alterations were well under way and the Watch Committee resolved that a report of the work being undertaken, together with the usual annual return about the state of policing in the borough, should be sent to the Home Secretary. Possibly the committee did this to counteract any criticism that might be made against it or the police as a result of the report by the Inspector of Prisons.⁴⁸ The following May the Watch Committee resolved that the police stations should be cleansed and whitewashed and the Blanket Row station painted outside.⁴⁹

In 1846 the Watch Committee appointed a further sub-committee to investigate the station houses and its report was presented in December of that year. The report described the policemen's bedrooms at Blanket Row as insufficiently ventilated and inconveniently small. Moreover, there was no day room for the policemen, except a small kitchen which also had to be used for cleaning equipment, and no yard for exercising. The sub-committee was unanimously of the opinion that 'the premises are altogether too confined for the purposes required by the Police force and recommend no further outlay of the public Money upon them, beyond what is absolutely necessary.' The report was equally scathing of the Jarratt Street station, which was described as having no sitting room except the reserve room and no cooking room. The access to the bedrooms was 'particularly objectionable and the arrangement altogether inconvenient.' The report recommended 'the erection in some central and suitable situation a Police Station and Offices fully adequate to the necessary wants of the Borough.'⁵⁰ The Watch Committee should have discussed the report at its plenary meeting on 16 December but only eight of the fifteen members attended so the matter was deferred for the time being.⁵¹ Inexplicably the issue of police stations was not discussed

⁴⁷ The council accepted the Watch Committee's report. See KHRO, TCM 2, Hull Cor. Min., 30 Sep. 1840.

⁴⁸ For a fuller account of Watch Committee action see KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 19 Aug., 9, 30 Sep., 28 Oct. 1840. However, the Inspector of Prisons report for that year did not contain criticisms of the police cells in Hull. See BJL, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1841 Session 2 (339), V, Reports of the Inspectors of Prisons.

⁴⁹ KHRO, TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 19 May 1841. The total bill for altering and painting the two stations in 1840-41 came to £186 17s. 1d. See TCM 189, Watch Com. Min., 11 Aug. 1841.

⁵⁰ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 2 Dec. 1846.

⁵¹ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 16 Dec. 1846.

again in a plenary meeting of the committee until May 1847, when a motion was carried requesting the borough surveyor to furnish a plan and estimate of a station suitable for the police (based on recommendations made by McManus). He was also asked to report any building in a central location which could be converted to such use.⁵² Two months later yet another sub-committee (of three this time) was formed to organize the further cleansing and repair of the station houses, probably as a result of comments made by the chairman of the council's Property Committee - which were reported in the *Hull Advertiser* - about the filthiness of the Blanket Row station.⁵³ In August the Watch Committee considered the surveyor's report, agreeing that none of the sites mentioned in it were sufficiently central and requesting him to find a site as near to the docks and town hall as possible. The committee did, however, authorize the making of water closets at the Blanket Row station at a cost of £25, although being mindful of the public purse it decided to ask the landlord if all but one could be removed when the tenancy expired.⁵⁴ A year later, plans for a new station had advanced no further and the stations sub-committee was still arranging for various repairs and improvements to be made at Blanket Row and Jarratt Street⁵⁵. This was despite a blistering attack by the *Advertiser* on the conditions of the cells in the Blanket Row station during the winter of 1848:

The attention of the Watch Committee should be paid to the warming of the cells at the Blanket Row station. This would be a "sanatory [*sic*] regulation" of great value. More instances than one have been brought under our notice, in which offenders subject to a night's starvation in these ice holes, have received

⁵² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 13 May 1847.

⁵³ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 13, 21 Jul. 1847; KHPL, HA 16 Jul 1847.

⁵⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 4, 6 Aug. 1847. The installation of the extra toilets at Blanket Row together with further cleansing, painting and whitewashing was carried out a few weeks later. See KHPL, HA 3 Sep 1847.

⁵⁵ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 28 Aug. 1848. By November 1848 the Blanket Row station was accommodating one inspector, the police clerk (who each paid a weekly rent of 2s.) and twelve unmarried constables (who each paid 1s.) It contained four cells, three for men and the other for women. The Jarratt Street station housed one inspector (paying 2s. weekly), one sergeant (paying 1s. 6d.) and eleven single constables (paying 1s. weekly). It had three cells, two for men and one for women. See TCM 190, 8 Nov. 1848. The number of constables housed in the stations had dropped since 1836, presumably because more higher ranking policemen had moved in, occupying their own private quarters.

physical injury to an extent from which they have with difficulty recovered. The expenditure of a few pounds in the appliance of warming apparatus would effectually remedy the evil.⁵⁶

There were other concerns, for example the daily procession of prisoners under police escort going from the Blanket Row station, through the town centre, to the police court at the town hall was regarded by some influential citizens as a disgusting exhibition and public nuisance which could be remedied by moving the main police station to the immediate vicinity of the town hall.⁵⁷ In November 1849 the Inspector of Prisons requested several alterations to the police cells and station houses and also the removal of prisoners until this was done.⁵⁸ The Watch Committee established a sub-committee of eight to investigate the matter and report back, which it did just over a week later after it had visited the two police stations. The report was particularly critical of the Jarratt Street station, stating that: 'The premises are considered by the committee quite unfit for the Police Force and are of opinion that they cannot be made so.' The Blanket Row station was considered little better and the report concluded:

Notwithstanding that various alterations and improvements have been made since the last report on the Station Houses: this committee is unanimously of opinion that an entirely new Station House is absolutely required for the force; and fully corroborate the report made by the Station House Committee on 2 December 1846.⁵⁹

This latest report was presented to the council at its next meeting with the request that further action should be taken immediately.⁶⁰ One is left wondering why three years had elapsed between 1846 and 1849 in

⁵⁶ KHPL, HA 28 Jan. 1848.

⁵⁷ See for example the council discussion of the matter in the *Hull Advertiser*, KHPL, HA 4 May 1849.

⁵⁸ Again these comments to the Watch Committee were not reported in Inspector's annual report. See B JL, PP, 1850 (1167), XXVIII, Reports of the Inspectors of Prisons.

⁵⁹ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 28 Nov., 7 Dec. 1849. Three of the men on the 1846 committee served on the 1849 committee.

⁶⁰ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 12 Dec. 1849.

which very little had been done to improve the police stations when the problems had already been identified and made known to the Watch Committee. It is impossible to state categorically why no action was taken after the 1846 report was compiled. Whatever the reason, one can seriously criticize the members of the Watch Committee for their delay in dealing with the situation and their tardy response to this escalating problem.

Further damning criticisms of the stations' cells were made in November 1849 by the Inspector of Prisons, Frederick Hill, in two letters to the Mayor which were forwarded to the Watch Committee for investigation. The committee considered the letters at its meeting on 3 December 1849, agreeing a date on which a deputation would inspect the police stations. In his most important letter, Hill commented on the unsuitability of the cells because of their coldness, dampness, lack of ventilation, close proximity to one another (which allowed communication between prisoners) and distance from the court (which meant that prisoners had to be marched through the streets) - all criticisms which the authorities had known about for some time. Under these circumstances he had no hesitation in recommending that:

a new and general Police Station be built on ground contiguous to that on which the Mansion House stands. This station to contain a considerable number of small separate cells with two rooms for drunken prisoners of both sexes, a room for a sick prisoner and two large rooms to be used on extraordinary occasions when the number of prisoners is very great[...]The details in the construction of this new Station House I have explained to the Town Surveyor so that if the Town Council should determine to erect it[...]Mr Thorp [the surveyor] may be ready to prepare plans.⁶¹

Meanwhile, Hill expressed concern about other aspects of the day to day care of prisoners, urging:

⁶¹ Hill's most important letter is copied into the corporation's minutes. See KHRO, TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 10 Jan. 1850. But see also TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 7, 12 Dec. 1849. In 1848 Hill had made a similar suggestion to the authorities in York who dismissed it contemptuously. At least in Hull his comments received careful consideration. See Roger Swift, *Police Reform in Early Victorian York, 1835-1856* (York: University of York Borthwick Paper, 1988) p. 14.

an immediate improvement in the management of the present police cells. I recommend that every prisoner be required to wash himself thoroughly before he is allowed to have any food, either from his friends, or at the cost of the Borough; and that the food to be supplied by the Borough shall consist of a pound and a half of bread and a pint and a half of warm milk, oatmeal, gruel or coffee, to be given in three equal meals each day.⁶²

Finally, Hill requested to be informed of the responses his recommendations received. Following the inspection of the police stations by the members of the Watch Committee a written report was produced on the subject which confirmed that a new station was absolutely required.⁶³ Moreover its members resolved to request the corporation to create a special committee to consider the propriety of providing a new police station. At a plenary meeting early in January 1850 the corporation agreed to adopt the course of action recommended by the Watch Committee.⁶⁴

Although the Watch Committee found the new station building which it wanted in 1850, three more years were to elapse before the policemen and prisoners actually moved into it and thus felt the benefit of improved conditions. The building in question was the old workhouse, otherwise known as Charity Hall, on the corner of Parliament Street and Whitefriargate, which the Poor Law Guardians agreed to sell to the corporation for the sum of £7,225. The building was regarded as ideal because of its ample

⁶² KHRO, TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 10 Jan. 1850.

⁶³ See KHRO, TCM 190, 7, 12 Dec. 1849.

⁶⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 12 Dec. 1849; KHRO, TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 10 Jan. 1850. The membership of this ad hoc committee was mostly dominated by the Watch Committee anyway so effectively it was the latter which played the leading role. Shortly after this the authorities' concerns about the welfare of prisoners in the police cells may have been heightened by the case of John Bailey, a twenty-eight year-old coal porter who died in Hull Gaol in May 1850. A coroner's inquest determined that he had died of an inflammation of the lungs. Bailey had been held in the cells at the Blanket Row station before being sent to the prison. Unfortunately it is not known how long he spent in each place, nor what his physical condition was when he was arrested; but a witness at the inquest, a Richard Carter, who was a prisoner working as a nurse in the prison infirmary, gave evidence that Bayley had 'complained when he came in of the cold he had got at the station house.' It is impossible to confirm the accuracy of Carter's evidence because the gaol's staff, including its surgeon, would be no less concerned than the police to show that they had done everything within their power to care for a recently-deceased prisoner before his demise. See KHRO, CQB/234/355-56, Quarter Sessions Bundles, Midsummer 1850.

size and central location, in the very heart of the old town, close to the Town Hall. The Watch Committee acted on behalf of the council during the negotiations with the guardians and the purchase was subject to a number of conditions, mostly of a minor nature, except for one which would delay the transfer of the building. The purchase of the property would be completed and possession of the property given to the corporation within two years of the date of the contract between it and the guardians. There was every likelihood that possession would be considerably delayed since there was no new workhouse building available for the pauper inmates in 1850. One had not been built and in fact the guardians and the workhouse governor had yet to choose a suitable plot of land. This fact notwithstanding, the council readily approved and adopted the report of the Watch Committee, effectively confirming the view that the building was ideal and worth waiting for.⁶⁵ The suitability of the building is likely to be the overwhelming reason why the Watch Committee and council were willing to endure a potential two year delay before taking possession of the building. Even so, it meant that the policemen and their prisoners had to endure the unsatisfactory conditions at the Blanket Row and Jarratt Street stations for substantially longer. The council did not take possession of the property until the summer of 1852, almost two years after the contract was signed. However, the police were not able to move into the building until the summer of the following year, after some renovation work had been completed. Somewhat sadly the Hull Police moved into the building following the police strike, which may have muted any sense of celebration among the policemen about obtaining a satisfactory station at long last. Nevertheless the Parliament Street station proved to be good home for the Hull Police for many years.⁶⁶

Once the council took possession of the building, events began to unfold relatively quickly. In August 1852 the Watch Committee instructed the Town Surveyor to furnish plans for its use.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ KHPL, HA 1 Nov. 1850; KHRO, TCM 4, Hull Cor. Min., 9 Nov. 1850.

⁶⁶ When the Parliament Street station also became cramped and inadequate, the police eventually moved to a new headquarters on Alfred Gelder Street in 1904. See A. A. Clarke, *The Policemen of Hull: The Story of Hull Police Force 1836-1974* (Cherry Burton: Hutton Press, 1992), p. 70.

⁶⁷ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 11, 13, 18 Aug. 1852.

In October 1852 the committee approved a plan for the renovation of Charity Hall and over the next few months lobbied successfully for the implementation of it despite attempts by the Appropriations Committee to obtain approval for a cheaper plan.⁶⁸ At its meeting in January 1853 the corporation voted to accept the original, more expensive, plan favoured by the Watch Committee and entrust the renovation and refitting of the old workhouse to it, with the proviso that it had the power to spend up to £700 before seeking further approval.⁶⁹ Later that month the Watch Committee decided to establish a sub-committee of five (including the chairman) to consider the implementation of the renovation plan and the latter accepted a tender of £665 for the alteration and completion of the new central station house, later spending a further £56 in May 1853.⁷⁰ The Hull Police moved into its new station on Parliament Street on 3 August 1853 after the Watch Committee had examined and approved it for police use.⁷¹ The station provided enough accommodation for all the single men of the force plus ten married men and their families (each family having two rooms). In 1857 it had quarters for a total of seventy two men.⁷² There were also kitchen and wash-house facilities, an extensive yard for parade purposes and twelve cells. Some fire-fighting equipment was also stored at the station.⁷³ The new cells were described by the *Hull Advertiser* as:

⁶⁸ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 27 Oct., 14 Dec. 1852, 5 Jan. 1853. The Appropriations Committee had been formed to consider the plans for renovating the old workhouse and it consisted of an equal number of members from the Property and Watch Committees. It appears that the members of the Appropriations Committee who had been drawn from the Property Committee used the former to oppose the most expensive renovation plan favoured by the Watch Committee and press instead for their own plan to be adopted.

⁶⁹ KHRO, TCM 5, Hull Cor. Min., 6 Jan. 1853.

⁷⁰ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 19 Jan. 1853; TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 31 Jan., 18 May 1853. The sub-committee which was created to implement the plan became a permanent station sub-committee which generally met on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to inspect the Parliament Street station and deal with other matters, such as the management of the police library and some of the fire-fighting arrangements (e.g. the purchase and storage of new equipment). For more information see TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 19 Jan. 1853-3 Mar. 1866; TCM 218, 7 Apr. 1866-23 Mar. 1875.

⁷¹ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 3 Aug. 1853.

⁷² BJL, *PP*, 1857-58 (20), XLVII, Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended 29 Sept. 1857.

⁷³ KHPL, *HA* 12 Aug. 1853.

fitting receptacles for human beings, and not like the filthy dens at the old Station-houses. They are, moreover, warmed by hot air pipes, and made as comfortable as is judicious. The offices, too, of the establishment are all closely grouped together, and, indeed, the place is altogether a convenient one.⁷⁴

The Blanket Row station was completely vacated but the police continued to use Jarratt Street as an auxiliary station for the transaction of ordinary police business and a repository for some fire-fighting equipment. On the recommendation of Superintendent McManus, the Watch Committee approved the stationing of two sergeants and two constables at Jarratt Street the following month.⁷⁵ However, between 1857 and 1858 there was a dispute between the Watch Committee and the corporation regarding the use of the Jarratt Street station and the overall number of police stations in the borough. The dispute began when the committee tried to discontinue police occupancy of the Jarratt Street station and just use it as a store for fire-fighting equipment. Shortly after the corporation approved a resolution calling for three additional police stations. The call for extra stations was resisted by the Watch Committee but early in 1858 it had to concede the reopening of the station on Jarratt Street for the transaction of normal police business when the corporation issued an instruction to this effect. The Hull Police were still using the station in 1866 when this study ends.⁷⁶ It should be pointed out that while the Hull Police had to cope with unsuitable police stations for many years this hardship was not unusual among borough police forces. Indeed, Hull's problems in this respect were not as acute as those of other towns and cities. For example as late as 1856, the York Police's first annual inspection by the Inspector of Constabulary, Colonel Woodford, highlighted the inadequacy of the police station on Silver Street. Woodford stated 'it is in my opinion almost impossible to speak in terms too highly condemnatory of this station-house and cells'.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ KHPL, *HA* 12 Aug. 1853.

⁷⁵ KHRO, TCM 191, Watch Com. Min., 21 Sep. 1853.

⁷⁶ KHRO, TCM 217, Cen. Sta. S-Com. Min., 7 Mar. 1857; TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 8 Apr., 17, 20, 24 Jun., 1857; TCM 6, Hull Cor. Min., 4 Jun. 1857, 14 Jan. 1858; KHPL, *HT* 16 Jan. 1858.

⁷⁷ Roger Swift, 'Urban Policing in Victorian England, 1835-56: A Reappraisal', *History* 73 (1988), 211-37 (p. 223).

6

THE CAREERS OF HULL POLICEMEN 1836 TO 1866**Policemen's Health**

In 1859 the then surgeon to the Hull Police, a Dr Henry Munroe, produced a medical report on the health of the borough policemen which had been compiled over a two year period from 1857 to 1859.¹ The report provides a fascinating insight into the illnesses and ailments which affected policemen as they went about their normal everyday duties. Munroe's declared purpose in presenting the report was:

to show, in a condensed form, the amount of sickness experienced by the Hull Police Force during the past two years; to point out those diseases to which Policemen are mostly liable during the different months of the year; the age and standing in the Force of those so afflicted; and to make comparison between the amount of sickness experienced by Policemen and operatives of similar ages living in large towns.²

The doctor was unable to obtain similar medical information relating to the health of policemen in any other force, nor from any of his predecessors as police surgeon in Hull. Therefore he had to depend entirely upon his own observations, experience and condensed tabular statements from the previous two years rather than copious comparative analysis. In 1859, when the report was compiled, the force totalled 123 men³ and before presenting his evidence Munroe observed that:

¹ KHPL, L352.2, Henry Munroe, *Medical Statistics of the Hull Police Force from November 19th 1857 to November 19th 1859* ([n.p.: n.pub., 1859]). Munroe had been the police surgeon for those previous two years but his other position was that of Lecturer in Medical Jurisprudence and Histology at the Hull and East Riding School of Medicine. Munroe's detailed medical statistics on the Hull Police were reported quite thoroughly in the press. See KHPL, *Hull Times*, 17 Dec. 1859.

² KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 3.

³ It was then comprised of one chief constable, one police clerk, five inspectors, ten sergeants and 106 constables.

The situation of a Policeman is one of a harrassing [*sic*] character, both of mind and body. He must be able to perform his duties efficiently either by night or day, but principally by night; he must be able to withstand the effects of rain, heat, cold, and storm; and although firm and persevering in his duties, he must, nevertheless show no evidence of a rash temper.⁴

The tabular evidence in Munroe's report, which is reproduced below, shows that policemen were mostly afflicted by the illnesses cold, fever, rheumatism, diarrhoea, and dyspepsia, occasioned (according to the doctor) by their exposure to night air, rain and sudden alterations in the temperature. They also received injuries, wounds and bruises from violent prisoners and suspects and were susceptible to accidents because of their attendance at fires and other catastrophes where lives were at risk. According to Munroe's calculations from November 1857 to November 1858 there were 385 cases of sickness covering a period of 1761 days. In the following year the number of cases increased by forty-four to 429 but the total of days sick fell by fifty-two to 1709. Table 6.1 below indicates that the six months with most sickness cases in the first year were August (42 cases), November (41), October (37), May (36), April (34), and July (33). The months with most sickness cases in the second year were March (52 cases), July (45), December (45), April (40), November (39), and August (38).

Munroe emphasized the number of cases and days sick resulting from the five most common illnesses, which are listed in more detail in Table 6.2 below. He linked the instances of cold and rheumatism with inclement weather and those of fever with hot weather. Diarrhoea and dyspepsia were problems all year round. Perhaps exhibiting a degree of polite restraint, Munroe merely explained that diarrhoea 'will be found to spread over the whole of the year - cases occurring not only in the Summer months but in the Spring and Autumn, occasioned principally by the sudden changes of the weather.'⁵ He gave a more meticulous and effusive description of the causes and effects of dyspepsia:

⁴ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 4.

⁵ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 6.

Table 6.1 *Number of Cases of Sickness per Month 1857-1859*

Months	1857-58	1858-59
January	28	31
February	27	30
March	26	52
April	34	40
May	36	27
June	25	23
July	33	45
August	42	38
September	30	28
October	37	31
November	41	39
December	26	45
Totals	385	429

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, Medical Statistics, p.4

DYSPEPSIA does not hold so prominent a place as either cold or fever; yet, like diarrhoea, spreads over the whole of the year, and is somewhat occasioned by an alteration of the time of meals in changing from night to day duty, and *vice versa*. The prevalence of this disease may, in a physiological point of view, be in some measure accounted for. The quantity of food required is regulated by the number of respirations, and by the temperature of the air. A Policemen usually takes a large meal just before going on duty, which is principally at night time - often in the cold and rain[...].his steady walk prevents active exercise being taken, and, as the carbonic acid giving off from the lungs is much less during the absence of light than during the day, the food does not get properly assimilated, and the blood becomes laden with effete matter.

Table 6.2 *Most Common Illnesses Affecting Hull Policemen 1857-1859*

Illness	1857-58		1858-59	
	Cases	Days Sick	Cases	Days Sick
Cold	119	305	138	323
Fever	74	485	60	377
Rheumatism	21	155	22	202
Diarrhoea	46	131	72	178
Dyspepsia	38	94	72	163
Totals	298	1170	364	1243

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, Medical Statistics, p. 6.

Munroe was also keen to emphasize that the incidence of dyspepsia could be linked to alcohol consumption:

One cause of dyspepsia, which should not be overlooked, is the erroneous practice of taking spirituous liquors during cold and rainy nights. The temperature of the body falls for some hours after taking spirituous liquors, and the carbonic acid of the respired air is diminished, inducing a train of evils the body is little disposed to bear. Moreover, in nearly all these cases of dyspepsia the urine is laden with urates, indicative of the blood being surcharged with waste material.⁶

During the first year of the study, 1857-58, sickness affected the older members of the force, those with at least fifteen years service, more than it affected the younger members but in the second year it affected older and younger policemen more equally.⁷ Munroe provided a detailed analysis of his findings for the second year. Of the 429 cases of illness in 1858-59 twelve were of a serious nature and extended over a period of 723 days (42.3 per cent of the total number of days sick). They are listed in the Table 6.3 below.

From his investigations Munroe made a startling discovery about the health of policemen compared with that of the working class in general:

On calculating the amount of sickness experienced by the working classes living in towns, from the very valuable tables of "H. Ratcliffe on the rate of Mortality and Sickness existing among Friendly Societies," for each Policeman in the Force, according to his age, I find that the sickness experienced by the Police Force is double the amount of that experienced by operatives living in large towns. The number of days' sickness in one year, experienced by persons of various trades in large towns, calculated from the ages of our Policemen, amount to 812. The number of days' sickness during the past year - though less than the year previous - was 1709, being 897 days more than the sickness of our working classes in towns.⁸

⁶ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, pp. 6-7.

⁷ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 10.

⁸ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 11.

Table 6.3 *Twelve Most Serious Cases of Illness or Injury 1858-1859*

Illness	Age of Policeman	Rank	Years in Force	Days Sick
Phthisis Pulmonalis*	39	PC	17	117
Fever & Cold	45	PC	20	82
Pneumonia	28	PC	1.5	73
Rheumatic Fever	24	PC	1	71
Rheumatic Fever	45	PC	11	60
Knee Injury#	44	PC	15	55
Rheumatism	49	PC	10	55
Foot Injury	31	PC	6	50
Ophthalmia & Dyspepsia	27	PC	2	50
Cold & Diarrhoea	47	Sgt	22	41
Diarrhoea	28	PC	2	37
Fever	50	Sgt	18	32
			Total	723

* This PC died from his illness

This PC (Fewster) was superannuated. He had already been off work 130 days in the last 12 months

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 10.

It was noticeable that the health of the policemen varied tremendously according to their rank. Although the average age of the five inspectors was forty-seven years and all had been in the force for more than twenty years, only one who had recently retired had not experienced good health. Munroe ascribed their relative robustness to the nature of their duties, which were less physically demanding than those of the constables and sergeants.⁹ The average age of the ten sergeants was forty-four years and they had amassed between thirteen and twenty-three years service. They had suffered from slightly more sickness in the second year than in the first and about a third more sickness than operatives in large towns. However it was among the constables that the incidence of ill health was most serious. Munroe calculated that the 106 constables, whose average age was thirty-two, should have experienced six days and two hours of sickness during the past year according to Ratcliffe's tables when in actual fact their mean period of sickness was fifteen days and four hours.¹⁰ During the last two years seventeen policemen in each year had been free from illness (see Table 6.4 below) but only three sergeants and five constables had suffered no periods of illness between November 1857 and November 1859.

⁹ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 11.

¹⁰ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 11.

Table 6.4 *Number of Policemen Unaffected by Illness 1857-1859*

Rank	1857-58	1858-59
Inspectors	0	1
Sergeants	4	3
Constables	13	13
Totals	17	17

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 12.

Whilst presenting his conclusions Munroe made an observation that many senior police officers would have readily corroborated, even though their evidence would be more anecdotal than empirical:

I find from experience that those policemen who have been labourers, especially from country districts, are the healthiest subjects, and do their duty with the least amount of inconvenience; whilst, on the other hand, those who have been engaged in indoor employment suffer more in health and do their duty with more inconvenience.¹¹

The complete tables on the incidence of disease and illness amongst Hull Policemen produced by Munroe for the years 1857 to 1858 and 1858 to 1859 are reproduced below (see Tables 6.5 and 6.6). It appears that there have been few if any historical studies of the health of nineteenth century policemen although some evidence does exist. For example, in 1862 a Dr William Farr prepared a report for the Home Secretary in which he concluded that over 25 per cent of the Metropolitan policemen pensioned for disability between 1840 and 1860 had respiratory or rheumatic complaints, while a further 10 per cent were suffering from injuries received in the line of duty.¹² The Metropolitan Commissioners, Rowan and Mayne, reported that from 1 January to 16 October 1847 the Metropolitan Police had lost 1,475 man days because of the injuries which constables had received as a result of being assaulted. Eight hundred and

¹¹ KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, *Medical Statistics*, p. 12.

¹² Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 213; Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900* (Harlow: Longman, 1987), p. 192.

thirty-five persons had been charged with assaulting policemen over the same period, of whom 764 had been convicted.¹³

Table 6.5 *Illnesses, Injuries and Wounds of Policemen 1857-1858*

Illness/ Injury/ Wound	Number of Cases													Total Cases	Total Days Sick	
	1857		1858													
	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.			
Abscess									1	1	1		1		4	82
Cold	2	8	4	9	16	12	11	8	12	8	8	16	5	119	305	
Cough	3	1	1	2	1		2		1					11	29	
Blistered Feet	1	2			1	1	3		1		1		1	11	33	
Bronchitis													1	1	2	
Debility	2	1												3	8	
Diarrhoea	1	1	6	6	2	3	3	2	2	8	4	6	2	46	131	
Dyspepsia	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	6	2	5	6	4	3	38	94	
Erysipelas											1			1	13	
Eruptions							1			1				2	7	
Fever	8	10	2	2	2	7	3	8	9	14	2	7		74	485	
Haematemesis									1					1	2	
Haemorrhoids	1									1				2	8	
Hernia													1	1	3	
Injuries		2	2	3	1	2	2				3	1	1	17	173	
Jaundice	2													2	19	
Lumbago								5						5	8	
Ophthalmia	1		1	1		4							1	8	119	
Pleurisy		1											1	2	3	
Pneumonia					1									1	38	
Rheumatism		1	6	2		1			3	2	4	2		21	155	
Sore Throat	1		1							1				3	18	
Spasms	1													1	1	
Teeth Extrad.			1	1										2	3	
Wounds	2					1	4		1	1	1			10	22	
Totals*	26	28	26	27	26	34	36	25	33	42	30	37	16	386	1761	

* In the original the totals for Dec. 1857 and Jan., Nov 1858 and total cases are wrong by one or two.

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, Medical Statistics, p. 8.

It is likely that the appointment of a police surgeon enabled medical attention to be given to policemen relatively quickly. There is no evidence to suggest that there were grave inadequacies with the way in which the different police surgeons provided their medical services. From 1836 to 1866 the

¹³ Emsley, *English Police*, p. 214.

Watch Committee did not find it necessary to radically alter the terms and conditions of service of the police surgeon, other than to raise the salary of the post from time to time. Generally the different police surgeons performed their duties satisfactorily, although on one occasion the Watch Committee made a veiled criticism of the surgeon in post in 1864, Dr Dossor, for his failure to attend the bedside of the terminally ill PC24 Procter as he lay dying.¹⁴ The Watch Committee's standing sub-committee first investigated Procter's death, interviewing his father William Procter, his sister, a Mrs Dent, who was with him when he died, and Dr Dossor. Dossor did not attend Procter in the two hours immediately before he died despite being asked to do so twice by Mrs Dent. The sub-committee unanimously resolved that it 'cannot but express its deep regret that such neglect of attendance should have occurred and they request that all cases of illness of the police requiring immediate attention should be attended to by him [Dr Dossor] with proper promptitude.'¹⁵ This was a remarkably forthright criticism of Dossor but he attempted to counter it by asking William Procter if he was satisfied with the care his son had received prior to these events and Procter said he was.¹⁶ Dossor's answer to the accusation was that he was not at home when the messages were received and his servants did not convey them to him quickly.

At the next plenary weekly meeting of the Watch Committee it decided that the minutes of the sub-committee of 2 June should be postponed until the following Wednesday, 15 June, when a special meeting of the full committee would take place to investigate the case of neglect made against the police surgeon.¹⁷ At this meeting the Watch Committee resolved that it 'cannot but express its deep regret at the occurrence which has taken place [the death of PC Procter]. The Committee would advise Mr Dossor to secure more promptitude in future by his servants.'¹⁸ This was clearly a more veiled criticism by

¹⁴ For the first report of Procter's death see KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Committee Minutes, 1 Jun. 1864.

¹⁵ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 2 Jun. 1864.

¹⁶ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 2 Jun. 1864.

¹⁷ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 8 Jun. 1864.

¹⁸ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 15 Jun. 1864.

the committee and it is probable that it was deliberately intended to be thus, although one can only speculate why the committee decided to adopt this position. Perhaps it genuinely accepted Dossor's explanation about the delay in receiving the messages, or perhaps it could not prove that he was telling untruths. Whatever the committee's reason for its review of the matter it still reappointed him as police surgeon for a further year in November 1864.¹⁹

Table 6.6 *Illnesses, Injuries and Wounds of Policemen 1858-1859*

Illness/ Injury/ Wound	Number of Cases													Total Cases	Total Days Sick
	1858		1859												
	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.		
Abscess			1						1	1			1	4	27
Albuminuria						1								1	19
Cold	10	25	12	14	13	20	6	4	2	1	8	15	8	138	323
Cough	1	4	4		3		1		1	2			1	17	69
Blistered Feet					1		1		4			1		7	35
Debility					1				1	2	1			5	5
Diarrhoea	1	3	4	4	7	4	1	2	17	16	8	3	2	72	178
Diphtheria									1					1	6
Dyspepsia	3	2	4	6	16	5	8	4	7	7	1	5	4	72	163
Eruptions				1										1	5
Fever	1	6	3	1	6	4	4	10	6	7	4	4	4	60	377
Heart Disease			1											1	2
Injuries	2	3	1					1	1		1			9	136
Jaundice						1								1	3
Lumbago		1												1	9
Ophthalmia					1						1			2	21
Phthisis															
Pulmonalis*						1								1	76
Pneumonia									1					1	9
Rheumatism		1	1	4	3	3	4		2		2	1	1	22	202
Sore Throat					1	1	1							3	12
Sprains							1				1			2	3
Tic Doloieux										1				1	5
Ulcerations	1									1	2	1		5	7
Wounds								1		1				2	16
Totals**	19	45	31	30	52	40	27	23	45	38	28	31	20	429	1708

* The days sick for this PC only include the final stage of his illness when he was permanently absent.

** In the original the total of days sick is wrong by one.

Source: KHPL, L352.2, Munroe, Medical Statistics, p. 9.

¹⁹ KHRO, TCM 196, Watch Com. Min., 16 Nov. 1864.

The Early Policemen

Relatively little is known about the early policemen of Hull, especially their social origins, reasons for becoming policemen and reasons for leaving the force voluntarily. Some evidence about the careers of the early policemen has survived but this tends to focus on disciplinary matters or meritorious conduct.²⁰ Therefore behaviour at opposite ends of the spectrum can be studied - although this could give a misleading impression of what life was like for the early policemen. If policemen only came to the attention of the Watch Committee when they transgressed rules and regulations or behaved commendably this ignores the onerous, routine and unglamorous duties which they had to perform, such as patrolling during the hours of darkness in all weather conditions, being responsible for prisoners held in police cells, frequently working seven days a week without a rest day, and being on call even when off duty (effectively for twenty-four hours a day). Moreover, the evidence regarding the careers of the early policemen obviously yields more about the long-serving policemen, whilst those who served in the force for only a few days, weeks or months are barely mentioned. The distorted image of policing as a career which this produces cannot be corrected; the policemen with very little service will remain in the historical background, barely visible to the naked eye. Many of these ephemeral policemen joined the police to escape the effects of unemployment. Emsley and Clapson note that in the early years of English police forces short-term unemployment appears to have been a major reason for becoming a policeman. This meant that the turnover of men could be inflated by those who resigned to take up their previous trade once economic conditions improved.²¹ So inevitably any analysis of the careers of Victorian policemen will concentrate upon those with relatively long service.

²⁰ For example see EYRO, Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1836-1876, [no ref.]; Rewards for Good Conduct, Crimes and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1848-1883, [no ref.]; Rewards and Commendations, Offences and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1860-1920 [no ref.]. Disciplinary cases and some examples of meritorious conduct are also mentioned in the committee minutes. See KHRO, TCM 188-197, Watch Com. Min., 29 Feb. 1836-31 Dec. 1866. Some evidence concerning policemen who enlisted in the Hull police between the 1850s and c. 1930 is available at the data archive of the European Centre for the Study of Policing at the Open University.

²¹ Clive Emsley and Mark Clapson, 'Recruiting the English Policeman c. 1840-1940', *Policing and Society*, 3 (1994), 269-286 (p. 282).

This is especially true of the forty policemen who enlisted in the Hull Police between 1855 and 1866 and whose service records have survived. No fewer than thirty-six served long enough to receive superannuation, another was pensioned probably due to ill health, two died whilst still in service and the fate of one is unknown. Clearly these were men who regarded policing as their career, with thirteen of them attaining the rank of sergeant, four reaching inspector and one becoming a superintendent. Even so, over half retired as ordinary constables. Nine of the forty had previous police service including two who had formerly served in the Hull Police, resigned and then rejoined. Only five gave their birthplace as Hull or East Yorkshire. Seventeen had been born in Lincolnshire, eight came from elsewhere in Yorkshire, five were born in Ireland, four in Norfolk and one came from Kent. However, such information does not reveal how long they resided in Hull before they joined the police. Since the level of migration into Hull in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was relatively high, many of the recruits may have spent some time living and working in the town before they enlisted. Equally, as thirty-three of the men gave their trade as labourer they could have been ex-agricultural labourers who came to Hull with the sole aim of joining the police. Of the other seven only two, a shoemaker and a tailor, had any level of skill (the others were a gamekeeper, a brickmaker, a boot closer and two grooms).²² The average age of the forty was reasonably low at twenty-four years and three months but all were between twenty-one and twenty-nine years of age when they first joined the Hull Police; although one man who had joined aged twenty-five and later resigned was allowed to rejoin aged thirty-three (and another may have been thirty when he too rejoined after resigning).²³ Nevertheless, as was noted above one should be aware of the unrepresentativeness of this group of policemen. All were long-serving policemen who made policing their career and all had enlisted after 1854. They were not, therefore, part of the first generation of policemen who had to impose an alien concept of law and order on the working class districts of Hull. In

²² Information obtained from the data archive at the European Centre for the Study of Policing at the Open University. I am grateful for the help of Clive Emsley and Mark Clapson in obtaining this evidence.

²³ Information obtained from the data archive at the European Centre for the Study of Policing at the Open University.

many respects the task which these later men had to perform had been made easier by the pioneering work of their antecedents. Unfortunately, only a fleeting glimpse can be seen of the earliest policemen, those who enlisted in the Hull Police in the 1830s and forties.

Some of the earliest long-serving policemen could have tessellated careers, being promoted, demoted, rewarded, fined, and even dismissed and reinstated. Although a small number of Hull policemen were readmitted into the force after dismissal it must be stressed that the Hull Police was not a force which acquired a bad reputation by reinstating many dismissed policemen. One such reinstated constable was PC30 John Lyth, who had been in the Hull Police eleven years when the £80 gratuity was shared out in 1847, having joined on the day the force was created, 2 May 1836, aged thirty-one. He received small gratuities on several occasions for diligent and meritorious service and by the standards of the day Lyth must have been one of the better constables in the Hull Police. However, on 7 March 1851 Lyth was dismissed for being drunk at 8.30pm the previous evening in Waterhouse Lane. Following his dismissal the Watch Committee received a petition from ninety-three ratepayers recommending his reinstatement and it decided that he should be given the first available vacancy in the force. However, the committee also confirmed that its sub-committee was correct in dismissing him in the first place. Lyth did not last much longer in the force: in May 1851 he was disciplined for being unfit for duty and then on 4 June 1851 he was again dismissed for drunkenness.²⁴ It was a somewhat inglorious end to a fifteen year career. Lyth was rewarded for good conduct five times between 1836 and 1847 (this was in addition to the gratuities he received). However he was disciplined a total of twenty-five times between 1836 and March 1851 when he was first dismissed for drunkenness - and he received no commendations for good conduct after 1847.²⁵ If Lyth's departure is a sad example of personal decline then the fall of the first police clerk, Acting Inspector Freeman, was dramatic and spectacular. On 4 June 1847 the Watch Committee severely reprimanded Freeman for being drunk in a bawdy house and warned him that he would have been

²⁴ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 7, 12 Mar., 29 May, 4 Jun. 1851.

²⁵ EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1848-83 [n.ref.].

dismissed had it not been for his eleven year unblemished record up to that point. On 27 August Freeman went absent without leave, abandoning his four children (his wife had died a few months earlier) and the committee was left with no alternative but to dismiss him. Unknown to McManus and the committee it appears that Freeman was heavily in debt to some policemen, other persons outside the force and money clubs and had fled to America to escape his creditors. The scale of Freeman's personal problems did not become apparent until after he had left Hull.²⁶ Subsequently the Watch Committee appointed a different type of person to the post of police clerk. Freeman had been a clerk who simply took the oath of constable and continued to work as a clerk but for the police. Later holders of the post - rather than being clerks by profession - were long-serving police officers, usually inspectors or sergeants and, although they worked purely as the police clerk they came to the job after several years of normal police work, with the accumulated experience which this had given them.

A study of the career of Patrick Coulehan reveals a man who demonstrated considerable capability as a policeman but failed to make it to the pinnacle of his profession because of errors of judgement. Coulehan, aged thirty-one, was the first man sworn in as a new police constable on 2 May 1836 and he was immediately promoted to sergeant.²⁷ Although he was demoted to constable in September 1836 for neglecting to visit the greater part of his men for two hours, failing to take them off their beats and being asleep in a 'privy' in Mytongate the worse for drink, he regained his sergeantry only five months later.²⁸ He became an inspector in June 1839, having been promoted to acting inspector only the previous October.²⁹ He remained an inspector until 1850 and proved to be an effective police officer, although he received a severe reprimand in 1849 for trying to borrow money from a constable, an unwise act following the Freeman case.³⁰ However, he could not avoid demotion to sergeant in May 1850 when it

²⁶ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 4 Jun., 1 Sep. 1847; KHPL, *Hull Advertiser* 3 Sep. 1847.

²⁷ EYRO, Hull Police, Police Constables' Statutory Declaration Book, 1836-1957 [n.ref].

²⁸ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 1 Sep. 1836, 16 Feb. 1837.

²⁹ KHRO, TCM 188, Watch Com. Min., 6 Oct. 1838, 9 Jun. 1839.

³⁰ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 16 Sep. 1849.

emerged that he had neglected to report some lost property in his possession for over a year.³¹ He was probably fortunate to receive only another severe reprimand in 1851 when it was discovered that he and three other policemen had been in a house where a robbery had been committed and not reported it.³² Coulehan retired from the Hull Police at the rank of sergeant after twenty-one years service on 1 June 1857. He was fifty-two years of age and had been granted a pension of £11 5s. 4d. per quarter.³³ James Sheeran joined the Hull Police in July 1849 aged 26 years. He was disciplined three times between then and July 1853, when he was dismissed at the time of the police strike. He rejoined the force in July 1854 but was dismissed in September 1855 after a dram shop owner complained to the Watch Committee that Sheeran had allowed a drunken man to take a picture from his shop claiming that it had been stolen from him. The shop owner had protested that this was not the case but Sheeran threatened to arrest him if he did not comply.³⁴ Sheeran rejoined again in May 1856 and was disciplined seventeen times between then and March 1867. His career after 1867 is not clear although it is known that he retired from the force in 1872 with a superannuation allowance.³⁵ Meanwhile, Joshua Fitch Bentley joined the Hull police in 1840 at twenty-one years of age and served until 1869, being disciplined a total of twenty-four times. He eventually managed to reach the rank of sergeant in 1862 but two years later he was demoted for drunkenness and being unable to account for his men. He retired as a second class constable (due to a further demotion) in May 1869, also with superannuation.³⁶ Were PCs Sheeran and Bentley good policemen? It is an impossible question to answer although their careers do exemplify the way in which policemen could be dismissed and reinstated, promoted and demoted. Neither man appears to have been rewarded for a particularly steadfast or intrepid piece of police work but this should not be viewed as a criticism of them. It is no indication of their effectiveness as policemen.

³¹ KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 15 May 1850.

³² KHRO, TCM 190, Watch Com. Min., 5 Mar. 1851.

³³ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 6 May, 1 Jun. 1857. See also A. A. Clarke, *The Policemen of Hull: The Story of Hull Police Force 1836 to 1974* (Cherry Burton: Hutton Press, 1992), pp. 52-53.

³⁴ KHRO, TCM 192, Watch Com. Min., 26 Sep. 1855.

³⁵ EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c.1848-83 [n.ref.].

³⁶ EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Book, Hull Police, c. 1848-1883 [n.ref.].

This issue of why some men remained in the police while others resigned relatively soon, why some men were dismissed quickly yet others were repeatedly disciplined but went on to accumulate several years of service, is a critical one to consider. It is not too difficult to understand why some men found the rigours of police work too demanding and left the force after relatively short service. Nor is it too difficult to understand why some men - a minority but a large minority in the case of the Hull Police - went on to serve for a considerable number of years. The availability of a pension after a given period of service must have influenced some. The weekly income, while less than that of skilled workers, was similar to that of semi-skilled working men but appreciably better than that of unskilled industrial and agricultural labourers. Perhaps more important was the regularity of the policeman's income. A policeman was guaranteed seven days wages for seven days work (as long as he was not fined for misconduct); there was no such thing as casual work in policing, unlike many other occupations in which workers might only have paid work for part of the week.³⁷ This would apply especially to much of the unskilled dock and agricultural labouring work available in Hull and its environs, where there was likely to be an overstocked labour pool for employers to draw from. The job of a policeman could have other attractions for some. For young single men the requirement to live in a station house, while fulfilling senior officers' wishes to reduce the temptations to indulge in immorality and misconduct with the wider community, could lead to a comradely atmosphere of rowdiness and horseplay. A group of young single policemen all living together could be an open invitation for them to indulge in pranks, practical jokes and generally test the limits of police rules and regulations. The camaraderie of the police station could foster a rough masculine culture.³⁸ This is entirely understandable. A sociologist who interviewed policemen in Islington in the 1970s noted the extent to which they valued the comradeship of the police and how this was reflected in the community atmosphere of the section house:

³⁷ For more information on all these various factors see Emsley, *English Police*, Chs 9, 10, *passim*.

³⁸ Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 193-94.

While they displayed deference to the symbolisms of Authority, these working-class youths were quite active in a whole culture of insubordination, with its own quite elaborate rituals of misrule. All this seemed to be officially tolerated, though not encouraged, as a necessary safety valve for young men subject to rigorous discipline at the bottom of the command structure[...]Just as it served as a defence against what was perceived as social ostracism by the local community.³⁹

One can readily accept this analysis being applied to the policemen of the nineteenth century. All the right ingredients were there: a hierarchic male work organization, with the most junior members of it living together, insulated and isolated from, and precariously linked to, the local community.

Even so, the rigours of the job could be too much for some policemen because restrictions did not only apply to themselves but also to their wives, who could be prevented from earning money in most of the ways which were available to working class women in the nineteenth century. Many Victorian police forces had regulations which effectively prevented policemen's wives from obtaining paid employment altogether by forbidding them from taking in washing, working in a shop, cleaning and seamstressing. This was done for at least three reasons: first to prevent a wife from possibly neglecting her family to its detriment; second, to reduce the likelihood of a police family associating with bad characters; and third, to foster the somewhat illusory image of the 'Victorian family', with its paterfamilias as the sole provider and his wife as the 'angel of the house'. Some forces began to relax a few of the restrictions on policemen's wives working before the First World War but it really took the onset of the Second World War to achieve their removal altogether.⁴⁰ Undoubtedly the harsh discipline was the major reason for the high turnover of police recruits, but this could be compounded by bullying on the part of higher ranks:

³⁹ Phil Cohen, 'Policing the working-class city', in *Capitalism and the Rule of Law: From deviancy theory to Marxism* ed. by Bob Fine and others (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 118-136 (p. 135).

⁴⁰ For more information see Emsley, *English Police*, p. 195.

As in any hierarchical institution, some men who achieved senior rank were tempted to abuse their authority and bully some subordinates while showing favouritism to others. Again, it is impossible to assess the incidence of such behaviour but complaints, concerns and even disciplinary cases against senior officers can be found testifying to its existence. From early on there were complaints about the oppression of sergeants and other more senior officers in the Metropolitan Police.⁴¹

It is unlikely that the Hull Police was exempt from such practices. Other advantages of being a policeman cannot be measured precisely although there were obvious financial incentives. The grant of a new set of clothes (albeit in the form of a uniform), greatcoat, cape and boots on a regular basis may have been an attraction to some. Even more important in a time of relatively primitive and costly medical services for the working class may have been the right to medical treatment from the police surgeon and the guarantee of a full wage if injury in the line of duty prevented one from working (and almost a full wage if illness was the cause of absence). If a policeman was unfortunate enough to be incapable of further duty due to his injuries, Hull's Watch Committee demonstrated a willingness to make some financial provision for him. Furthermore, if a policeman wished to dwell on his possible death whilst in service he could draw some comfort from the fact that the Watch Committee would almost certainly make some financial provision for his widow and orphans, including the payment of funeral expenses. A Hull policemen dying in this way should not have needed to worry about ending up in a pauper's grave. At retirement, a superannuated policemen in his fifties could generally count on a good pension allowance and a useful reference from his head constable to help him obtain a less physically demanding job.⁴² Although legislation in this era did not compel Hull's Watch Committee to grant any of these financial benefits it gained a good reputation among its men for doing so.

The job of a policemen also had perks which are again difficult to quantify in monetary terms but were nevertheless appreciated by the recipients. Some were officially organized such as the

⁴¹ Emsley, *English Police*, p. 199.

⁴² Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 200-01.

dinner and refreshment for the force following the annual parade. Others resulted from policing a public event such as a race meeting, fair or fete at which lunch and a free drink would normally be provided. However, most perks were unofficial and could involve a breach of police rules, such as the enjoyment of a free pint of beer served at the back door or window of a pub, or the accepting of food and drink from servant girls and shopkeepers, or the collection of cash for 'knocking-up' early morning workers.⁴³ These can be criticized as an abuse of power but they may have produced some practical benefits for the policeman during his daily work. For example, in addition to obviously satisfying his thirst and filling his stomach the acceptance of small gifts of food and drink probably contributed to the policeman being accepted by the community, signalling his willingness to conform to some of its norms and standards. Having a friendly place at which to rest also broke the tedium of patrolling, gave him the opportunity to talk and relax with others and gather information which might be useful.⁴⁴ Of course much of this behaviour was common knowledge and nineteenth century stories of policemen who were more eager to quaff a pint of ale or warm themselves in front of a fire rather than patrol on a cold night are legion. For example, it was a popular joke among both the middle and working classes that police constables spent too much time in the servants' quarters of houses when they should have been on their beats. Not surprisingly it was *Punch* which raised this point on behalf of the middle class, referring to the police as 'those invisible blue-bottles that haunt our larders a great deal more than our streets'.⁴⁵ Steedman has argued that policemen were an easy target for humorists as they represented a group relatively low on the social scale who:

⁴³ For more information on this last practice see Clive Emsley, *Policing and its Context 1750-1870* (London: MacMillan, 1983), pp. 158-59. He makes the point that this 'service' would not have been sought if the police were totally alienated from the local population.

⁴⁴ Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 224-25.

⁴⁵ *Punch* 6 Sep. 1856 quoted in Rob Sindall, *Street Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), p. 107.

could be laughed at because as working men it seemed that they had sought entry to a wider sphere, and had tried to become among those who govern and manage. The gap between aspiration and reality was evident - and funny - as maidservants aping their mistresses were deemed funny by *Punch* cartoonists.⁴⁶

Yet amid all this discussion of perks one should remember that there was - and still is - a fine line between perks and extortion and clearly some policemen crossed that line, were found out and had to be punished for their actions. The policeman who occasionally received a free drink from a publican could eventually regard its presentation as a right and make demands to that effect.⁴⁷ Where extortion took place it could evolve into the more serious practice of taking bribes. For example Jones notes that the Swansea and Cardiff watch committee minutes reveal that some policemen received 'hush-money' from prostitutes, pawnbrokers and runaway seamen, or committed perjury. He remarks that 'The abuse of police authority was probably greater than we will ever know, as the newspapers implied when discussing Cardiff cases in 1860, but as the years passed the forces learnt how to close ranks.'⁴⁸ It is impossible to determine how commonplace this was both in Hull and nationally. Nevertheless, the existence of obvious 'perks' and 'fiddles' (as opposed to bribes) resulting from work indicates that the police was acting as any ordinary workforce would. Similarly, the exuberance and boisterousness of the station house was a way of defying the authority of the boss. Some policemen did consciously decide to break the law for their own advantage, thus abusing the power of their office, whilst others only went as far as bending the rules.⁴⁹ All this reinforces the view that policemen are just as fallible as the rest of the population.

⁴⁶ Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 162. For more on this issue see Christopher Pulling, *Mr Punch and the Police* (London: Butterworth, 1964).

⁴⁷ Emsley, *Policing*, p. 159.

⁴⁸ David J. V. Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992) p. 216.

⁴⁹ Emsley, *English Police*, pp. 225-28.

CONCLUSION

The modern English policeman was conceived, delivered and raised by the state in its different guises, national, county and municipal. Generally speaking he was an exceptionally obedient child who followed his parents' commands. Whether he was well-behaved or not is a matter of historical dispute. The policeman was born out of a necessity to maintain order in an increasingly unruly society which could not be restrained by the traditional means any longer. He was destined to work full-time in a role which the propertied classes no longer wanted to perform on an ad hoc basis, namely the responsibility for maintaining law and order, particularly during times of profound unrest:

The new demands for civil order in nineteenth century England produced a novel type of surrogate to replace older and perhaps more personal lines of authority and deference which were now conceived to be moribund. The police, 'a bureaucracy of official morality,' were produced to try to fill this vacuum and to act as a lever of moral reform on the mysterious terrain of the industrial city's inner core.¹

The policeman was also needed to address the condition of the streets and those aspects of working class culture which offended middle class sensibilities simply because they were conducted in the streets. For example, the policeman walking his beat every day was in a position to clear traffic jams, stop dangerous drivers, remove blockages from the public footpath and street nuisances, discourage vagrancy and deal with illegal street traders, street gamblers and prostitutes. A majority of the governing classes became converted to the need for police reform as a result of the turbulent events of the years from 1770 to 1840, when to many it appeared that the whole fabric of English society would be ripped asunder. Unprecedented economic and social development, a growing crime rate, profound popular disorder and debilitating foreign wars all imperilled the established order of society. With such duties to perform the police became, and have remained, politically partial instruments of the state. Policemen are:

¹ Robert D. Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880' *Journal of Social History*, 9 (1976), 481-509 (p. 496).

required to maintain the dominant conception of public order. This, in itself, in broad terms is a political activity. What the traditional police historians, the politicians, and the constitutional lawyers have meant by the English Police being non-political relies on the very narrow definition of 'political' as party political organization and the administrative apparatus of the state.²

This shallow conception of 'political' was never tenable in the first place but now it is only adhered to by a tiny minority of conservative legal and constitutional theorists.³

For the reasons given above, the police were most needed in the rapidly growing urban areas of the north of England which were being transformed by the effects of the Industrial Revolution and which had the most alarming incidence of unrest. It was precisely in these areas that meaningful police reform was most likely to be carried out.⁴ Here, police reform could arrive as a part of a broad movement of urban improvement and administrative progress. The urban working class, then, had to adapt to the presence of policemen who wanted to gradually assert control over all aspects of their daily lives including trading, drinking, gambling and rough sports, and to closely supervise and act against their political and industrial movements which constituted a threat to public order. Yet, absolute control was impossible to achieve because of the stubborn resistance mounted by some working class communities (which sometimes escalated into serious physical violence) and both the police and the working class had to negotiate on the streets about what degree of control was acceptable.⁵ This involved the police in

² Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 238.

³ Robert Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, 2nd edn (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 2.

⁴ A fact recognized by Swift, who notes that the greatest progress in police reform was likely to be made in industrial and mining areas. As long as Swift uses a broad definition of industrial which encompasses trading and commercial centres as well as manufacturing ones he is entirely correct. See Roger Swift, 'Urban Policing in Victorian England, 1835-56: A Reappraisal', *History* 73 (1988), 211-37 (p. 236).

⁵ For more information see Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57', *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), 61-90, passim; idem, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', pp. 481-509, passim.

compromise and meant that the letter of the law would sometimes be contradicted or ignored, for example when dealing with prostitution. The most pragmatic senior police officers regarded this as inescapable. Of course members of other classes objected to the imposition of the police for a variety of reasons, mainly on the grounds of cost, or because of concepts of individual liberty and rights which were rapidly becoming anachronistic. Their opposition proved to be of far less long-term importance than that of the working class. The way in which Victorian policemen were ordered to police working class communities, and their nebulous relationship with members of that class, encouraged their acceptance of imperious practices and norms of respectability which were unfamiliar in those communities. The policemen became 'domestic missionaries' compelling the working class to adopt middle class codes of public behaviour and concepts of law and order. These efforts met with only limited success and accompanied wider middle class endeavours to alter working class conduct. 'In northern industrial towns of England these police functions must be viewed as a direct complement to the attempts of urban middle-class elites - by means of sabbath, educational temperance, and recreational reform - to mould a labouring class amenable to new disciplines of both work and leisure.'⁶ The supreme irony was that the policemen who performed these tasks were working class themselves but alienated from its social milieu by the very nature of their work.

However, in the opinion of many working people policemen were *former* workmen who were no longer employed. Instead they walked around all day simply observing what others did and received a handsome wage as a result - a wage which was comparable to that of semi-skilled workers and considerably better than that of unskilled labourers. Moreover, working class people who had to contend with periods of unemployment or under-employment frequently resented the perceived job security of policemen, even though this was dependent upon the latter's adherence to a disciplinary code. Such hostility could anger policemen, who reasoned that their working class critics would soon shut up if they had to walk up to twenty miles a day in all weather conditions, work continuous eight hour shifts and be denied a regular weekly day off.⁷ In many respects it is still remarkable that so many nineteenth century

⁶ Storch, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', p. 481.

⁷ Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p. 450.

working men were prepared to become policemen let alone make it their career because the demands of the job were so great. Steedman observes that the surviving evidence of their employment is fascinating for two reasons:

In the police and constabulary records of the English provinces lies important evidence not only of individual working lives, but of the means by which several thousand mid-Victorian working-class men played a positive and active part in a social process that, as part of a wider pattern of legal and social discipline, was finally to contract working people to the state, and make them participants in the restrictions placed upon them.⁸

How successful were the police in fulfilling the domestic missionary role to which they had been assigned? According to Storch the police confronted a number of grave problems in the discharge of their moral reform mission. The stubborn persistence of some behaviour caused police authorities to recalculate the true effect of their interventions. Despite the fact that the police could not completely fulfil the mission for which it had been created, it was partially successful in curbing street offences such as larceny and minor assault. Moreover, it developed a modern and ordinarily effective method of preserving public order. This depended upon deploying enough policemen in the heart of working class communities for them to usefully observe, oversee and collate information on multifarious aspects of daily life. It became most difficult for the police to supervise the free leisure activities of the working class - but then middle class moral reformers also shared in that failure - although the basic methods of surveillance in the urban place proved to be worth retaining. With substantial adaptation, these essential techniques of policing enjoyed considerable longevity as standard police operational procedure until well into the twentieth century, surviving in fact into the post-war era.⁹ However, important qualifications must be made here about the police's relationship with the working class. First, influential

⁸ Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: the formation of English provincial police forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge, 1984) p. 161.

⁹ Storch, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', p. 496.

members of the working class, including some of its political and industrial luminaries, were willing to cooperate with the police if they believed this would result in advancement for their class, for example by encouraging rational recreation and teetotalism. Second, a large section of the working class demonstrated a willingness to use the law, as prosecutors, to protect their possessions and themselves even though it was biased in favour of privilege, property and profit. Therefore, they must have had some confidence in the police and the legal system which went beyond mere resignation, submission or hypocrisy before the supremacy of the law. At the same time this indicates that the police's alienation from the working class community was not immutable and may have been better than a conflict model of history would suggest.¹⁰ Even so, certain problems remain. Manifestly, the forces of law and order encouraged the demonization of certain exogenous groups, large minorities who were already on the margins of Victorian society, such as the Irish and the urban working class who, towards the end of the century, became the 'residuum'. The actions of the police expelled them further away from the rest of society during the nineteenth century. Their antipathy to the police is relatively easy to discern but a more complex problem remains: the issue of working class acceptance of law and order institutions within the context of the operation of the legal process itself. This is something which a consensus model of history has never properly addressed in the context of police history. The consensus model deflects the question of how the working process of the law is the circuitry which enables the machinery of social power to function, and the machinery works to the satisfaction of its operator as long as all the 'social components' operate as they should. The maintenance of the hierarchy of social power cannot be divorced from the working process of the law, they are connected and complementary.

Another problem with the working class's relationship with the forces of law and order which the consensus model does not properly appreciate is the extent to which its attitudes varied not just over time and space and with the individual, but also *within the same individual*. This was directly conditioned by the specific action which the police was performing, for example: enforcing the evening

¹⁰ For a detailed consideration of this view see amongst others Emsley, *English Police*, Chs 9, 10, passim; Reiner, *Politics of the Police*, Chs 1, 2, passim.

closing-time of a pub, arresting drunks, prosecuting prostitutes, interfering with striking workers, stopping an organized dogfight, breaking-up a public meeting, inspecting a lodging house, suppressing illegal gambling, and removing illegal traders, to name only a few. There is a strong likelihood that the average working class person would disagree with more than one of these and such disagreement could have a disproportionate influence on their opinion of the police. Essentially the problem here involves striking the right balance between conflict and consensus models of police history. Conflict models can too easily over-emphasize the use of the policeman's truncheon while consensus models can exaggerate his role as a well-meaning public servant. Neither extreme is satisfactory but in recent years revisionist historians who stress the importance of the consensus approach are in danger of discounting the importance of class conflict in the middle third of the nineteenth century and how it fundamentally shaped the structure of English policing. Evolving conceptions of the proper role of the state and its functionaries in a modernizing society paved the way for the gradual creation and extension of English police forces on a national scale. In Hull in 1836 the authority of the state at a local level grew tremendously when a new police force on the Metropolitan model was created. The extension of municipal, or local, state power in this way was acceptable to supporters of police reform everywhere if control of the police was firmly vested in local hands, and if it resulted in the sustention of improved levels of order and social discipline. The mandate of the new police was very sweeping, including as it did the requirement to prevent and detect crime, supervise diverse aspects of working class culture and neutralize any threat to public order which was posed by proletarian political or industrial movements. Not surprisingly the working class remained deeply angered by, and suspicious of, the police well into the second half of the nineteenth century; although physical confrontation gradually faded away.

This study shows that the new policing initiatives brought to Hull in 1836 under the terms of the Municipal Reform Act had a major effect on the town. The three watches which had previously patrolled only parts of the town were abolished and none of the former watchmen were appointed to the Hull Police. It seems likely that the parish constables were also largely excluded. The new Watch Committee set an upper age limit for PCs of thirty-five years from the start and there is only one known

case where this rule was waived in 1836. Thus the new Hull policemen were a great deal younger, fitter and stronger than the elderly watchmen who they replaced. The profound police reforms made in Hull in 1836 resulted from four major influences. First, the economic and social structure of the town which, as a thriving port, had to cope with a large amount of human traffic passing through it. It was a major entrepot, centre of the east coast fishing industry and passenger terminal for European and inter-continental travellers, as well as the site of associated waterside and manufacturing industries. Second, the radical disorders in 1832 had deeply worried the town's middle class population and starkly revealed the inadequacies of the old police system. They did not want to see a repeat of what they regarded as a descent into anarchy brought about by the activities of mobs of low, rabble-rousing radicals. Probably these disorders, more than anything else, convinced Hull's middle class that police reform was necessary. Third, reform could not have been possible, or quite so easy, without the outstanding success of the Whig-Liberal reformers in the municipal elections of 1835, who won forty-one of the forty-two council seats. The consensus among the members of the reformed Hull Corporation on the subject of police reform was quite remarkable and public opposition outside the council was limited to a few die-hard Tories who objected on grounds of cost and the effect on individual liberties. The amount of noise which they made was disproportionate to their political following. Fourth, the newly-created Watch Committee recommended, and the Hull Corporation approved, the appointment of Andrew McManus as Superintendent of the new police. McManus was an experienced Metropolitan Police inspector and he devised the structure of the Hull Police, clearly basing it on the organization of a Metropolitan Police division. Thus, Hull had in place by May 1836 a single, full-time, twenty-four hour patrolling constabulary which functioned virtually as a detached and self-contained division of the capital's police force. Such causal factors confirm an observation by Swift, which complements a similar finding by Weinberger, that the process of local police reform must be situated within the context of local government structures and local socio-economic characteristics. Thus events in Hull's recent history convinced reformers that sweeping police reforms were absolutely required.¹¹

¹¹ Swift, 'Urban Policing', p. 236; Barbara Weinberger, 'The Police and the Public in Mid-Nineteenth Century Warwickshire', in *Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. by Victor Bailey (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 65-93 (p. 88-89).

In Hull, the police force, under the control of the Watch Committee and the corporation, was an instrument which dramatically increased the municipal authority's power over its own citizens. Developments in Hull in 1836 are all the more amazing when one remembers that in most other boroughs the Municipal Corporations Act did not have a far-reaching effect on policing. All too often the watchmen and municipal functionaries who constituted the old police forces simply acquired a uniform, or a partial uniform, and the new name of 'policemen'. Only a tiny minority of boroughs hired significant numbers of new men to undertake police work. Yet, in spite of the acknowledged flaws in the legislation the reformers in Hull created a new police which was remarkable for its era. It was the organization and structure of this new police force which was remarkable. In the year in which the force was created a superannuation fund was also conceived. Subsequently, Hull's Watch Committee was the prime mover behind the first piece of legislation which dealt with superannuation for borough policemen. Although the Act was flawed, it was a benevolent attempt to encourage long-service in the police and reward this achievement. The Act could work in Hull because a superannuation fund had been started early enough for a sizeable sum of money to be amassed by the time men were eligible to claim. In other boroughs, however, this was not the case. Between 1851 and 1866 over thirty Hull policemen were superannuated for long service and at least a further ten had enough years of service to be superannuated on medical grounds. The prospect of superannuation in their old age was something for long-serving policemen to look forward to but all policemen, even those who did not see policing as their career, could be rewarded for meritorious conduct from the fines fund, which was also established in 1836. Here was another incentive to treat the job of a policeman seriously. Also in 1836, a sick fund was instituted to pay for a surgeon to minister to the policemen's medical needs, another progressive characteristic of police organization in Hull.

However, a borough police force in an expanding port town could only remain effective if its manpower also grew in line with the local population. From 1836 to 1853 the Watch Committee sanctioned such growth and in the process maintained a remarkably stable police to population ratio which looks strikingly like a proportional plateau. It cannot be stated definitely that this was the policy of the

committee but, nevertheless, the evidence is indicative of some commitment to maintain a relatively low and stable ratio. Unfortunately in 1853, in the wake of the police strike, the Watch Committee decided to cut police manpower which sent the police to population ratio dramatically upwards. From 1857 onwards, increases in police personnel did much to restore the effectiveness of the force to its former state and the police to population ratio came down but it did not quite regain its pre-1853 level. In making its decisions to augment police manpower once again, the Watch Committee was aided by the advice of Colonel Woodford, the Constabulary Inspector, whose reports on the state of the Hull Police between 1857 and 1866 reveal a high degree of satisfaction with its leadership, organization, functioning and general performance. Woodford's opinion of Chief Constable Andrew McManus was especially high. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that the Hull Police would have developed in the way in which it did without the leadership of McManus over a thirty year period. He moulded and guided the police, making it into the force which it became. Of course all this should not obscure the man's faults, his errors of judgement and particularly his negligent behaviour in the period preceding the police strike. Nor should it obscure the fact that as an individual, McManus was merely the most visible professional representative of Hull's middle class inhabitants who wanted an organized and effective police force in their borough.

The task of the Hull Police was helped by middle class perceptions of the force which were usually positive and praising. There was relatively little public criticism of the police in the period from 1836 to 1866 and it was certainly not subjected to any concerted campaign of press criticism or critical scrutiny. Whilst some Tories made public criticisms of the police in the first twelve to eighteen months of its life, many of these criticisms were motivated by political pique and they became far more muted after 1837. It is noteworthy that when public criticisms were made between 1836 and 1866 - and these were quite rare - a majority of them were mainly concerned with the conduct of individual policemen, who were punished for breaches of discipline, or the actions of the Watch Committee (for example on the occasion of the police strike). However, even the members of the Watch Committee deserve some praise for the diligence with which they performed their role. Many members of the committee gave it long years of service which enabled them to gain a good understanding of the nature of

police work. They, together with McManus, did their utmost to maintain a strict disciplinary regime which was modelled on the regulations of the Metropolitan Police - and by the standards of the era discipline within the Hull Police was strict. Of course the Hull Police had the same problem as other police forces at this time of finding enough suitable recruits. The turnover of men within the force was high but is noteworthy that in Hull a cadre of career policemen was beginning to emerge by the 1840s: men who had already accumulated several years of service and would go on to claim superannuation over the next twenty to thirty years.

One handicap to the operation of the Hull Police during the first seventeen years of its life was its police stations. However, this problem partly resulted from the progressive way in which the police used the buildings, as quasi-barracks for a large number of single men in the force. This gave rise to spatial problems amongst other things until the whole issue was solved by the opening of the new station in 1853. Many borough police forces simply did not use their police stations in this way so would not encounter such a problem. The Hull Police's practice of concentrating men in its stations enabled large numbers to be deployed quickly to deal with emergencies such as fighting fires, which the police rapidly gained a reputation for doing well. Nevertheless, the Hull Police was first and foremost a body for dealing with crime and disorder. The absence of serious disorder in Hull from 1836 to 1866 may be the best evidence of the police's effectiveness as a riot control force, and some contemporaries certainly believed this to be the case. Unfortunately, unlike some branches of economic history, it is not possible to indulge in counterfactual police history so there is no way of testing this situation. Therefore, one is left to judge the evidence left by contemporaries, which overall is positive as regards the work of the Hull Police to maintain order. Meanwhile, the Hull Police's record on dealing with crime must be judged, in part, using the crime statistics, despite all their inherent weaknesses which are well-known to historians. From the available evidence it would appear that the Hull Police had some success in dealing with a number of street crimes such as drunkenness, vagrancy, larceny and assault, and with prostitution which was openly conducted on the street - but not prostitution practised behind closed doors, especially in private residences. The police's performance in dealing with other categories of crime is more difficult to assess. In part, the work of the

police was helped after 1850 by improving economic conditions and changing moral values concerned with public behaviour. Therefore, the success of the police in dealing with crime needs to be qualified but one should remember Gatrell's maxim not to discount qualified effectiveness in law-enforcement merely because it was less than total.¹²

The findings of this study of the Hull Police raise a crucial question about the juxtaposition of Whig, or Reithian, and Storchian analyses of police history.¹³ Here is a police force which appears to correspond to many of the Reithian principles of policing in terms of its organization, operation and the way in which it was controlled. Police reform in Hull was a far-sighted and pragmatic solution to a complex interplay of local circumstances and problems. Included in this equation were concerns about rising crime and public disorder, the latter being expressed simultaneously in terms of the fear of riot and falling moral standards. To what extent these concerns were justified is still a matter of heated debate. However, this all formed the background to the stage which the new police entered. According to the Reithian, view the new police was a disinterested organization of bureaucratic professionals who administered the law impartially and directed their activities towards preventive policing. In reality all these are ideal characteristics rather than actual features - a blueprint rather than the finished product - but at least some of the Reithian police principles can be discerned in the Hull Police. It is probably more accurate to say that the Hull Police in the period of this study is best understood in terms of an unusual marriage of Reithian and Storchian principles of policing, with the professional idealism being tempered by a more practical assessment of what was needed in order to be seen as successfully fighting crime and maintaining order. Perhaps being perceived to be successful was ultimately more important than being successful. This was because a large element of the local population did not want to acquiesce in being policed on Reithian terms, for they saw nothing in it for themselves. Such a popular mood is indicated by various events, for example the crowd's support for the sailors at the Blanket Row fire and the (attempted) rescues of police prisoners, which frequently resulted in attacks on the police. Of course one can debate the

¹² V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, authority and the policeman-state', in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, 3 vols, ed. by F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), III, 289.

¹³ This question is debated thoroughly by Reiner, *Politics of the Police*, Ch. 1.

extent to which this synthesis of Reithian and Storchian perspectives is appropriate or productive in terms of scholarly enquiry into nineteenth century policing.

Conventional historical wisdom is generally sceptical about the performance of the reformed borough police in the years after 1836. Most modern historians of the police conclude that the Municipal Corporations Act was not the successful measure of police reform which the older whig historians, such as Charles Reith, claim. Radzinowicz argues that the Act 'failed to meet some of the most pressing needs and it prejudiced future developments.' Furthermore, he goes on to state:

the very fact that separate police forces were established in so many quite small boroughs prejudiced in advance the development of a unified police for the counties, let alone for the country as a whole, in subsequent years. A new and very stubborn vested interest had been created to replace the old.¹⁴

This echoes the conclusion reached a few years before Radzinowicz by Hart in a much-quoted passage:

The impression gained from looking at the evidence is often that in the boroughs one is much nearer to the old world of early nineteenth century watchmen earning a few shillings by casual police work than to the new world of professional, full-time, carefully recruited and supervised Metropolitan police officers.¹⁵

Writing more recently, Weinberger¹⁶ merely paraphrases the opinion of Hart - and Palmer arrives at conclusions which support those of Hart and Radzinowicz:

borough ratepayers, proud of their municipal rights and liberties granted in 1835, nurtured them by keeping the local police weak and constitutional. Working-class antipolice sentiment intersected with ratepayers'

¹⁴ Sir Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law*, 4 vols (London: Stevens, 1968), IV, 215.

¹⁵ Jenifer Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police, 1835-1856', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 411-27 (p.421).

¹⁶ Weinberger, 'Police and the Public', p. 67.

traditional fears of a powerful police. But the pressures from below were not so intense that the local authorities felt any urgency to establish strange, strong new civil forces of order.¹⁷

Meanwhile Steedman argues that 'on the question of police and policing, the boroughs were not innovators, and did not provide a pattern as they did in so many other aspects of mid-Victorian legislation.¹⁸ Whilst not wishing to reject completely the conclusions of Radzinowicz, Hart, Weinberger, Palmer and Steedman, it must be made transparent that the reality was more intricate than they suggest. After all, as this study demonstrates the experience of police reform in Hull in the middle third of the nineteenth century is a considerable exception to the pattern they describe. It is necessary to qualify, or modify, their conclusions to take into account what has been discovered about the Hull Police.

The quality of borough policing in the nineteenth century, especially before 1856, was at best highly variable and most historians of the police, old and new, agree with that assessment. Revisionist historians, like their whiggish predecessors, still generally regard borough forces as backward, undermanned and ineffective and they argue that the most progressive features of policing are to be found in the county forces created between 1839 and 1856. As a generalization the correctness of this statement is not disputed but it tends to denigrate all borough forces and obscure the progressive ones. However, this thesis has discovered an example of a borough police force with a number of very advanced characteristics. The thesis now stands as part of the corpus of revisionist histories of English policing. At the same time it is seeking to extend the scope of the revisionism by implying that more research needs to be done into the history of nineteenth century borough police forces, particularly those which operated in major ports such as Liverpool, Bristol, Newcastle, Plymouth, and elsewhere. The social, economic and political structure of Hull all influenced the drive to reform the police. The social conditions of the town convinced reformers, rightly or wrongly, that police reorganization was necessary; the economic importance of the port, and the municipal revenue it generated, provided the funds for this; the political

¹⁷ Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 402.

¹⁸ Steedman, *Policing*, p. 42. Emphasis included in original.

will existed to revolutionize policing by establishing a Metropolitan-style police force. All this does not accord with the orthodox history of nineteenth century borough policing and serves to highlight the need for a greater understanding of the complex network of local police forces.

By voluntarily adopting the Metropolitan model for its own police force, the Hull Corporation was signalling its desire to innovate on policing issues; and this occurred in a medium-sized provincial town, almost two hundred miles from the capital, on a river estuary on the edge of rural Yorkshire. The middle class of Hull were worried by the threat from below, from the working class, and acted to protect their position. In the process they were willing to permit the powers of their own municipal government to be considerably enhanced in the certain knowledge that the reformed council, and hence its police force, remained accountable to them, the new plutocratic electorate. The reformers in Hull were able to reorganize the police because the Whig government included in its Municipal Corporations bill measures for the reform of borough policing. Ultimately the Whigs' proposals passed into law, despite fears about a possible threat to liberty, because a majority of the governing classes were *more* worried by the threat of working class unrest and the spread of crime. The Act was a symbol of the government's faith in the willingness of local authorities to combat public protest and criminality. Probably the government's most important mistake during the passage of the legislation was to believe that all the incorporated boroughs thought as it did and would therefore create organized borough forces on the Metropolitan model. Notwithstanding the Act's deficiencies, Hull's enthusiastic reformers - the business and professional men, manufacturers and shopkeepers inside the council - seized the opportunity provided by the Act and implanted a Metropolitan-style police force in their borough. The supporters of the legislation in Parliament could not have wished for a better response to their Act than that which it received in Hull. Both they and the reformers in Hull were of a like mind: an effective borough police force was a necessary instrument for the imposition of social discipline, the maintenance of public order and the prevention of crime. Having created its police force the corporation and Watch Committee went to great lengths to maintain its effectiveness in subsequent years by a series of structural, administrative and personnel reforms. As an example of an early Victorian borough police force, the Hull Police was highly unusual.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Hull Policemen Receiving Superannuation for Long Service and on Medical Grounds from May 1851 to May 1866

See KHRO, TCM 190-97, Watch Com. Min., May 1851 - May 1866; EYRO, Rewards[...]and Punishments Books, Hull Police, 1836-76 & 1848-83, [n.ref. for both].

1851

Supt Andrew McManus, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 190, 2 May 1851.

PC Cox, received superannuation and retired on medical grounds. TCM 191, 12 Nov. 1851

1852

Sgt Collinson, received superannuation and retired on medical grounds. TCM 191, 3, 10, Mar. 1852.

1853

PC28 Thundercliffe, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 191, 23 Mar. 1853.

PC62 Akester, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 191, 19, 26 Oct., 16 Nov. 1853.

Sgt Mulligan, received superannuation and retired. TCM 191, 19, 26 Oct., 16 Nov. 1853.

1854

No superannuations

1855

Sgt Coulehan, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192, 9 May, 1 Aug. 1855.

1856

Chief Con. McManus, received increased superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192, 23 Jul. 1856 (see also 1851).

Sgt Coulehan, received increased superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192, 23 Jul. 1856 (see also 1855).

PC28 Thundercliffè, received increased superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192 30 Jul. 1856 (see also 1853)

PC62 Akester, received increased superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192, 30 Jul. 1856

1857

Act Ins. Farrow, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 192, 7 Jan. 1857.

Sgt Farrow, retired on superannuation. TCM 192, 1 Apr, 6 May 1857 (see above, he had just been demoted)

Sgt Coulehan, retired on superannuation. TCM 192, 6 May 1857 (see also 1855 and 1856).

PC62 Akester, retired on superannuation. TCM 192, 12 Aug., 2 Sep. 1857 (see also 1853 and 1856)

PC28 Thundercliffè, retired on superannuation. TCM 192-93, 6 Oct. 1857, 27 Jan. 1858 (see also 1853 and 1856)

PC26 Darby, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 193, 4 Nov. 1857, 27 Jan 1858.

PC14 Coulson, received superannuation and retired on medical grounds. TCM 193, 4 Nov 1857.

1858

PC48 Greaver, retired on superannuation. TCM 193, 19 May 1858.

Ins. Cockin, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 193, 16 Jun, 28 Jul. 1858.

Sgt Hunter, retired on superannuation. TCM 193, 7 Jul. 1858.

PC26 Darby, retired on superannuation. TCM 193, 3 Nov., 26 Jan 1859 (see also 1857).

1859

Sgt Kilburn, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 193, 6, 27 Apr. 1859.

Ins Cockin, retired on superannuation. TCM 193, 31 Aug., 12, 26 Oct. 1859 (see also 1858).

PC58 Wolton, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 194, 14 Dec. 1859.

1860

PC75 Fewster, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 194, 1 Feb. 1860.

Sgt Holmes, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 194, 19 Sep., 17 Oct. 1860.

PC66 Hatfield, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 194, [no date] Oct, 1860, 30 Jan.

1861.

1861

Sgt Kilburn, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 9 Jan. 1861.

Sgt Holmes, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 6 Feb, 24 Apr. 1861 (see 1860).

Ins Robinson, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 194, 13 Feb. 24 Apr. 1861.

PC66 Hatfield, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 24 Apr., 12 Jun. 1861 (see 1860).

Sgt Foster, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 29 May, 12 Jun. 1861.

PC Monkman, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 194, 12, 26 Jun. 1861.

Sgt Butler, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 7 Aug., 9 Oct. 1861.

Sgt Edgecombe, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 28 Aug, 9 Oct. 1861.

Ins. Morgan, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 194, 4 Sep., 9 Oct. 1861.

Ins Robinson, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 2 Oct., 13 Nov. 1861 (see above).

1862

Sgt Blackburn, retired on superannuation. TCM 194, 5 Feb. 1862.

Sgt Holgate, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 195, 10 Sep. 1862.

PC William Pearson, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 195, 3, 10, 17 Dec. 1862.

1863

Ins Yates, retired on superannuation. TCM 195, 27 May 1863.

PC71 Butler, retired on superannuation. TCM 195 30 Sep. 1863.

PC Smith, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 196, 25 Nov. 1863.

1864

Ins Dorsey, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 196, 27 Jan. 1864.

PC43 Burton, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 196, 19 Oct. 1864.

1865

PC81 Benson, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 196, 4 Jan. 1865.

PC63 Dawson, retired on superannuation. TCM 196, 8 Mar. 1865.

PC68 Moorhouse, retired on superannuation. TCM 196, 10 May 1865.

Ins Hobson, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 196, 17 May. 1865.

PC87 Clarke, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 196, 6 Sep. 1865.

PC90 Coverdale, retired on superannuation on medical grounds. TCM 196, 18 Oct. 1865.

PC91 Revill, retired on superannuation. TCM 197, 27 Dec. 1865.

1866

Sgt Scott, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 197, 31 Jan., 28 Feb. 1866.

PC51 Wilson, retired on superannuation. TCM 197, 9 May, 25 Jul. 1866.

PC41 Dann, received superannuation and continued to serve. TCM 197, 9 May, 25 Jul. 1866.

Appendix 2: The Police Budget of Hull Corporation 1836-1866*

The vast majority of the total raised for policing was derived from the annual watch rates which were set by the corporation. From 1839 until 1848 the corporation set the maximum possible watch rate of 6d. in the pound but thereafter it set a rate of 4d. Relatively small sums were raised from other sources, such as

the amounts received for lodging policemen in the stations. Most of the spending on the police went on salaries and wages, with the cost of clothing being the second highest item of expenditure. The total overspend on the police per annum did fluctuate but it remained considerably higher than the sums raised each year throughout the whole of this period.

Year	Total Spent on Policing	Total Raised for Policing	Total Overspend
1/1836-9/1836	2476	0	2476
9/1836-9/1837	6011	1880	4131
9/1837-9/1838	5811	2259	3552
9/1838-9/1839	5545	2103	3442
9/1839-9/1840	5945	3012	2933
9/1840-9/1841	5861	3070	2791
9/1841-9/1842	5999	2988	3011
9/1842-9/1843	6430	3029	3401
9/1843-9/1844	6366	2949	3417
9/1844-9/1845	6937	3406	3531
9/1845-9/1846	7146	3927	3219
9/1846-9/1847	6908	3914	2994
9/1847-9/1848	7681	4069	3612
9/1848-9/1849	7209	4056	3153
9/1849-9/1850	7883	2647	5236
9/1850-9/1851	7826	2977	4849
9/1851-9/1852	8132	2609	5523
9/1852-9/1853	8539	2809	5730
9/1853-9/1854	6656	2734	3922
9/1854-9/1855	6368	2744	3624
9/1855-9/1856	6497	2680	3817
9/1856-9/1857	6844	3284	3560
9/1857-9/1858	7925	4560	3365
9/1858-9/1859	7769	4804	2965
9/1859-9/1860	7968	4778	3190
9/1860-9/1861	8358	4868	3490
9/1861-9/1862	9669	5353	4316
9/1862-9/1863	9428	5751	3677
9/1863-9/1864	9781	5728	4053
9/1864-9/1865	9534	5829	3705
9/1865-9/1866	10546	5645	4901
Average Overspend on Policing 1836-66			3729

* All amounts have been rounded to the nearest £

Source: KHRO, Hull Corporation Accounts, 1836-66 [n.ref.]

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