

“THE BEST CHIEF CONSTABLE IN THE KINGDOM”? RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEMS IN AN EARLY ENGLISH COUNTY CONSTABULARY

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Introduction

This chapter investigates the recruitment and retention problems associated with Watch Committees having to choose from a limited range of candidates perceived to be suitable for the post of Chief Constable in the first few decades of ‘modern’ provincial policing. It details the career of Henry Goddard, the only former Bow Street officer to have been appointed as a Chief Constable following the passing of the County Police Act 1839 (hereafter CPA 1839), together with the obstacles and objections that he faced from both Tory magistrates and a Tory press opposed to the Whiggish introduction of a county constabulary.

Henry Goddard was born in Southwark in 1800.¹ After initially following his father’s trade of fishmonger, on 7 April 1824 he enlisted as a constable in the Bow Street Foot Patrol.² He was highly successful in his new choice of career, transferring by the end of 1826 to Great Marlborough Street Police Office as a plain-clothes Principal Officer (better known as ‘Runners’, though such officers rarely if ever referred to themselves as such, considering the term to be derogatory).³ This was a significant achievement, as many London Police Office constables took over a decade to gain similar promotion.⁴ In 1834 he followed the Chief Magistrate of Great Marlborough Street, Sir Frederick Adair Roe, to Bow Street (which was considered *primus inter pares* in regard to the London Police Offices), serving as a Principal Officer until the demise of the Bow Street policing system in 1839, a decade after Peel’s creation of the Metropolitan Police.⁵

¹ D. J. Cox, ‘Henry Goddard (1800-83), police officer’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/97/101097947/>.

² For further details of the Bow Street system of policing, see D. J. Cox, *‘A Certain Share of Low Cunning’: A history of the Bow Street Runners, 1792-1839*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2012, and J. Beattie, *The First English Detectives: The Bow Street Runners and the Policing of London, 1750-1840*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

³ Great Marlborough Street was one of the seven public or police offices created by the Middlesex Justices Act 1792 and modelled on the Bow Street public office.

⁴ Cox, *‘A Certain Share of Low Cunning’*, p.39..

⁵ Roe had been appointed as Chief Magistrate of Bow Street in 1832.

Goddard enjoyed an enviable reputation during his time at Bow Street, being praised on several occasions by magistrates in the provincial towns to which he had been despatched to investigate serious crimes including murder and arson (see Morris, Chapter 9 regarding the role of officers from the metropolis assisting other forces). In his *Memoirs*, he records that in 1836, following his successful investigation of an arson case, a magistrate of Tunbridge Wells sent a letter to the Bow Street Chief Magistrate containing the following laudatory comment:

Considering the very slight clue we had as to the offenders, the conduct, activity and intelligence of Mr Goddard cannot be too much commended. I can only express my own appreciation and that of the principal inhabitants of this place of his exertions in this matter.⁶

In August 1839, the Bow Street Principal Officers were disbanded and the nine men either retired or sought other employment. Whilst the majority left the field of law enforcement, Goddard (who received an annual pension of £100 per year following his enforced severance from Bow Street) seems to have decided that he wanted to stay within his profession. He consequently applied for the vacant position as Chief Constable for the newly formed Northamptonshire Police.

The Creation of Northamptonshire Police

The creation of borough and county constabularies was an *ad hoc* and long-drawn out process over several decades. Section 76 of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 required 'each chartered borough council to form a watch committee and within three weeks of their first election, to employ a sufficient number of constables to preserve the peace within the borough'.⁷ Cowley states that the chartered borough of Northampton 'jumped at the chance to put its management and subsequently its policing on a more modern footing [and] the very first meeting of the Northampton Borough Watch Committee took place on Friday 8 January 1836'.⁸

⁶ H. Goddard, *Memoirs of a Bow Street Runner*, ed. P. Pringle, London: Museum Press, p.130.

⁷ M. Stallion and D. S. Wall, *The British Police: Forces and Chief Officers 1829-2012*, 2nd edn., Bramshill: Police History Society, 2012, p.12.

⁸ R. Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire 1836-2013*, Kettering: Peg and Whistle Books, 2013, p.14. I am much indebted to Richard Cowley's ground-breaking research into both the Borough and County forces of Northamptonshire for invaluable information on the creation and day-to-day running of both constabularies.

However, it was not until the passing of the CPA 1839 that English counties were encouraged to form 'modern' county forces (there were no apparent will to enforce the implementation of the Act). Stallion and Wall comment that 'the idea of police reform in the counties was initially rejected by most of the Quarter Sessions (hereafter QS) magistrates who were responsible for the administration of the counties' due to the perceived increased burden on the ratepayers'.⁹ Between 1839 and 1856 (when the County and Borough Police Act 1856 forced all counties to create such police forces), less than half did so voluntarily.

Cowley notes that Northamptonshire was the twelfth such county to create a county constabulary under the provisions of the 1839 Act.¹⁰ In February 1840 advertisements were ordered to be placed in the local and regional press (including the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times*) requiring all 'persons desirous of becoming candidates for the situation [...] to send their testimonials to the Clerk of the Peace on or before the 30th day of March inst.'¹¹ There were certain conditions as to the eligibility of prospective candidates: they had to be under 45 years of age, be in receipt of a medical testimonial as to their good health and sound constitution, not to have been insolvent debtors and finally if they had previously been employed 'in any branch of the public service civil or military' they must 'produce testimonials from the proper authorities in such service as to general conduct whilst so employed'.¹² The attempt to ensure financial probity amongst prospective Chief Constables was prophetic; during the latter years of the nineteenth century at least one Chief Constable, Captain William C. Sylvester (previously Chief Constable of Rochdale Borough Police) was discovered to have been an undisclosed bankrupt with over £1,100 of debt when he became Chief Constable of Salford Borough Police in 1866, whilst another Chief Constable of Salford, Captain R. W. Torrens, was dismissed for taking bribes in January 1880.¹³

The minutes of the January 1840 PCM record that:

⁹ Stallion and Wall, *The British Police*, p.13. The author would also like to take this opportunity to thank the extremely helpful staff at both Northamptonshire Archives and Northampton Library for their unfailing courtesy and knowledge imparted to him during his research.

¹⁰ Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.114.

¹¹ Northamptonshire Archives QS/CC/353/1 Police Committee of Justices (or Magistrates) Minutes {hereafter NA PCM}, January 1840.

¹² NA PCM, January 1840; *Yorkshire Post*, 10 January 1880.

¹³ D. J. Cox, unpublished research, 2016.

Notice is hereby given that the Justices of the Peace for the county of Northampton will at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the said county to be held on the 9th day of April next proceed to the appointment of a Chief Constable under the provisions of the Act of Parliament 2nd and 3rd Victoria Cap: 93. The salary will be £250 a year.¹⁴

In the event, almost two dozen candidates applied for the Northamptonshire vacancy, perhaps drawn by the attractive salary of £250 per annum.¹⁵ This compared favourably with many other similar positions; the General Inspector of the Worsteds Inspectorate in Yorkshire was paid £210 per annum in the 1850s, whilst Bradford Borough Chief Constable was paid £235 per annum in 1867. There had been considerable opposition to this generous salary, Sir Charles Knightley, Conservative MP for Northamptonshire South, was particularly vocal in this respect.¹⁶

Watch Committees and other bodies concerned with the creation of constabularies in the post-1835 period were faced with something of a problem as to what type of individuals to appoint as Chief Constables. Although 'Peel clearly intended that the Metropolitan Police would offer the provinces both a model of reformed policing and a reservoir of trained officers from which senior officers for borough and county forces might be drawn', the Metropolitan Police had only been operating for a decade; therefore relatively few officers had gained the opportunity to rise to senior levels within its ranks.¹⁷ Numerous of the candidates for the post of Chief Constable of Northamptonshire proved to be from either a military or policing background, with eight being former Army personnel and three being serving police officers ; this largely accorded with the views of the proposer of the adoption of the 1839 Act, Colonel William Cartwright (Tory MP for South Northamptonshire, and the father of William Henry Cartwright, future first Inspector of Constabulary), who was of the opinion that only men with either a police background or who had been non-commissioned military officers would be

¹⁴ NA PCM, January 1840. Constables were to be paid £52 per year, whilst the Deputy Constable received a salary of £75 per year.

¹⁵ The current annual salary of the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police exceeds £135,000 – see https://www.policeoracle.com/pay_and_conditions/police_pay_scales.html. Goddard's annual wage of £250 in 1840 is equivalent in historic standard of living terms to £20,360, but the equivalent in labour earnings is £198,800 - see <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/> for details of how such figures are calculated.

¹⁶ *Northampton Mercury*, 11 April 1840.

¹⁷ D. Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997, p.142.

suitable for the post (although all of the ex-military personnel were in fact junior commissioned officers, for more discussion on previous military experience see Stevenson, Chapter 7).¹⁸

Goddard's appointment and Relationship with the Watch Committee

Northamptonshire magistrates proved unique in their choice of candidate in that they decided to employ a former senior police officer in the shape of Henry Goddard (1800-83), who had previously served as a Principal Officer with Bow Street Police Office.¹⁹ He was the only former Bow Street Principal Officer to become a Chief Constable, though another, Joseph Shackell, did join the newly formed Metropolitan Police as an Inspector, with the promise of further rapid promotion.²⁰ A former member of the less senior Bow Street Patrol, Nicholas Pearce, became a Superintendent in the Metropolitan Police.²¹

Goddard provided glowing testimonials from numerous magistrates from other counties and he was duly appointed as Chief Constable of Northamptonshire, beginning his duties on 25 April 1840. The Northamptonshire magistrates appear to have believed that a man with such a long and successful career at both Great Marlborough Street and Bow Street Police Office was eminently suitable for the new position. As Goddard's biographer Pringle stated:

The appointment is significant. It shows that the Bow Street Runners were not regarded with the suspicion and contempt they have had ever since Dickens debunked them in *Household Words*. If they had all been such rogues as Sir John Moylan has suggested, Northamptonshire would hardly have taken Goddard on. For the salary of £250 a year they could surely have got an experienced officer of the Metropolitan Police, whose rates of pay were relatively low.²²

¹⁸ *Northampton Mercury*, 11 April 1840. For a full list of candidates, see Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.123.

¹⁹ It is extremely difficult to provide an exact equation of the rank of a Bow Street Principal Officer with that of a contemporary police officer, but elsewhere the author has argued that they could be regarded as equivalent to a Detective Superintendent; they were highly experienced and professional officers who had on average served at least a dozen years in the lower ranks – see Cox, *'A Certain Share of Low Cunning'*, p.40.

²⁰ TNA HO 60/3 Police Court Entry book 1836-39, letter dated 30 September 1839. This promise was not fulfilled; Shackell was still an Inspector in 1847 – see OBP t18470405-991.

²¹ M. Fido and K. Skinner, *The Official Encyclopedia of Scotland Yard*, London: Virgin Books, 1999, p.67.

²² Goddard, *Memoirs*, p.194. Sir John Moylan was Receiver of the Metropolitan Police 1919-42. Recent research into the Bow Street Principal Officers by Cox and Beattie has challenged the veracity of Dickens' and

Goddard was no stranger to Northamptonshire, having visited the county on several occasions during his employment at Bow Street. He had successfully captured a deer-poaching gang in 1837, and revisited the county the following year to investigate the brutal murder of Elizabeth Longfoot at Easton on the hill.²³ The 1841 census shows Goddard as living at Albion Place, Northampton with four of his children (the youngest of whom, Matilda, had been baptized in St Giles Church, Northampton on 25 November 1840). He clearly wasted no time in becoming involved in local society; described in masonic records as a 'Gentleman', he was initiated into the Freemasons on 18 March 1841, at Pomfret Lodge, Northampton.²⁴

Emsley states that 'the forces established under the 1839 Act were not based on any one simple model drawn from the London experience', and it is clear that the Northamptonshire Watch Committee did not simply seek to recreate the Metropolitan Police in a provincial setting.²⁵ As Emsley has pointed out, 'the relationship between policemen and the municipal authorities was [...] different. The Metropolitan Police were directly responsible to the Home Secretary [...whereas] municipal governments, through their watch committees, kept firm control of their policemen, and the relationship was very much that of master and servant'.²⁶

A sub-committee, rather grandly entitling itself the Police Committee of Justice (hereafter PCJ), was duly formed (with a quorum of three members) and tasked with framing 'regulations for the management and establishment of the police force of the County', though in law their powers were effectively limited by the CPA 1839 to the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Constable; they had no official status with regards to the day-to-day running of the constabulary.²⁷ All other powers were at least theoretically placed in the hands of the Chief Constable, although it is clear from both QS minute books and the PCJ Minutes that the PCJ considered that their role was greater than that

other detractors' low opinion of this body of men; see Cox, 'A Certain Share of Low Cunning' and Beattie, *The First English Detectives*.

²³ Goddard, *Memoirs*, pp.137-140. The two men accused of Elizabeth's murder were subsequently acquitted, 'to the surprise and astonishment of the Judge and everyone in court', according to Goddard (*Memoirs*, p.146).

²⁴ *England, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Registers, 1751-1921*, available at Ancestry.co.uk.

²⁵ C. Emsley, 'Detection and Prevention: the old English police and the new 1750-1900', *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, no. 37, 1986: 69-88, p.77.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.76.

²⁷ NA PCM, January 1840; and Section Six, CPA 1839. The appointment of Chief Constables also had to receive the approval of the Secretary of State.

proscribed by the Act; they were the ultimate financiers of the venture and as such were determined from the start to exert financial restraint over their new Chief Constable. Surviving contemporary records detail the minutiae of such dealings; one of the PCJ's first edicts was to empower Goddard with the procurement of 43 staves, lanterns, rattles, red and white armllets and handcuff pouches, together with two leg-irons. Cowley states that similar armllets were sported by the Borough police (in that instance blue and white in colour) in order to indicate that the officer wearing the device was on duty; if an armllet was not present, the respective officer was off-duty although still in his uniform.²⁸ He also states that 'unlike the Borough Police, the County Constabulary never adopted the armllet for some reason', so it is possible that the 43 armllets procured for the county force were never actually utilised.²⁹ The PCJ also ensured that they saw any bills and other charges to the county purse by the respective Superintendents and constables on a regular basis by insisting that such bills were submitted regularly to them and ultimately to the Court of QS for approval.³⁰

Organisation of the County Constabulary

Goddard's formation of the force was described in considerable detail in the *Northampton Herald*, (hereafter *Herald*) which reproduced Goddard's first quarterly report as Chief Constable: there were to be seven divisions, each with one Superintendent and 5 constables, with Goddard stating 'I have great satisfaction in stating that I have received all the support and assistance I could have hoped.'³¹ In the same report, Goddard laid out the rules of the new constabulary; the main ones of which are reproduced below:

- Each Superintendent and Constable was to 'devote his whole time to the service of the Police', and were to 'conform to the several regulations which may be made from time to time, by the Magistrates assembled at Petty Sessions'.
- The Constables were to be paid fortnightly by their respective Superintendent from a cheque sent by Goddard.
- Each Superintendent was also to be provided with an occurrence book to be produced at request of Goddard or a magistrate.

²⁸ Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.40 and see p.38 for a photograph of a Borough constable wearing his armllet.

²⁹ Ibid..

³⁰ NA PCM, April 1841.

³¹ *Northampton Herald*, 11 July 1840.

- One of the main roles of the new force was to maintain public order, and consequently, each Superintendent and Constable was to 'make themselves acquainted with the different houses of resort of bad character, and pay particular attention to all the public-houses, beer-houses, and public lodging-houses in their district, and report the time each is closed, and how such houses are generally conducted'.
- None of the Superintendents or Constables were to 'on any account, take up their permanent abode at any public house or beer-house'.
- An amendment to the original rules (dated 15 June 1840) stated that Constables were to be on duty from 5-10am and then patrol from 7pm until 'the beer-houses are closed, or longer if necessary, and report to the Superintendent any beer-house conducted in a disorderly manner, or found open after the hours regulated by the magistrates'.
- They were also to pay particular attention to, and remove 'all vagrants encamping or pitching tents, wherever found'.³²

Rule 15 of the new force was particularly interesting in that it stated that 'the Superintendents and Constables are on all occasions to co-operate with the Parish Constables, and, as far as they can, ascertain from them the state of crime in their districts'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this idealised view of cooperation between the unpaid Parish Constabulary and the newly constituted county force was not realised. Northamptonshire was a relatively large county in terms of geography; it possessed 19 hundreds (subdivided into 286 parishes) and at the time of the creation of the County Constabulary, each of these hundreds possessed two Chief Constables, together with respective complement of parish constables.³³ A document printed in 1838 detailed some of the main duties of the parish constables:

The most essential part of your duty is a general Superintendence over the Peace and good Order of your District: your powers for this Purpose are great and extensive and your Duty compulsory. [...] On reasonable suspicion you are to arrest Felons and Rogues of all kinds and carry them before a Magistrate. It is your Duty to keep a watchful Eye over Strangers of suspicious Appearance, who continue strolling about within your District; if such are seen out of their Lodgings at unseasonable Hours in the Night, and refuse to give an Account of themselves, you may detain them in Custody till the next Morning and carry them before a

³² Ibid.

³³ NA PCM, January 1840.

Magistrate. By your Attention in this particular, House-breaking, Felonies, and many other Crimes may be prevented.³⁴

Perceived problems with the County Constabulary

These duties of parish constables were obviously similar to those expected of the new County Constabulary (although the parish constabulary was unpaid and severely limited in its ex-parochial power), and thereby illustrate one of the main reasons for the perceived lack of faith in the new force; ratepayers might reasonably suggest that the county already possessed a preventive police force and that the imposition of a county-wide force made up of less than 50 men was not good value for money. Cowley states that ‘the county at the time had a population of just over 150,000 in an area of 546,277 acres with 43 Constables in the new force.’³⁵ Therefore each Constable had about 3,500 people to look after in an area of [...] just over 20 square miles.³⁶ A comparison of ratios of officers to population for all the county forces that were fully established by the end of 1840 is given below in **Table 1**.³⁷

County force created 1839/40	Ratio of officers to inhabitants (1:)
Wiltshire	1,287
Gloucestershire	1,726
Hertfordshire	2,214
Bedfordshire	2,297
Essex	2,974
Lancashire	3,334
Hampshire	3,349
Norfolk	3,685
Northamptonshire	4,633
Durham	4,913
Worcestershire	5,693
Leicestershire	8,365

³⁴ NA QS/CC/184.

³⁵ This varies from ONS figures – see *ONS Northamptonshire Area Monitor*, available at www.ons.gov.uk/ons/.../northamptonshire/northamptonshire-area-monitor.pdf (which were taken from the 1841 census – these give a population of 199,228 and a total acreage of 646,810 acres). The discrepancy is due to the fact that the ONS statistics also include the Soke of Peterborough.

³⁶ Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.137.

³⁷ For both **Table 1** and **Table 2**, initial complements of county police forces are abstracted from Stallion and Wall, *The British Police* (except for Northamptonshire, where Stallion and Wall incorrectly record an initial complement of 29 officers). County populations and acreages taken from respective *ONS Area Monitor* pdfs – available at www.ons.gov.uk. Several other counties partially created new forces, for example South Staffordshire created a police force in 1840, but the remainder of the county did not follow suit until 1842.

Nottinghamshire	9,825
Shropshire	10,393

Table 1: County forces created in 1839/40 showing ratio of officers to population

The ratio of one officer for every 4,633 inhabitants demonstrates that the Northamptonshire county force was understaffed in comparison to most other forces created as a result of the 1839 CPA 1839. To make matters worse, the force was not evenly distributed throughout the county; the *Herald* 31 October 1840 carried a statement from Reverend Wetherall, who claimed in a QS meeting that Kettering (one of the largest divisions of the county) had a ratio of one county constable for every 4,728 inhabitants, whilst the three smallest divisions of the county enjoyed a ratio of 1: 2,731. Northamptonshire County force was also understaffed in comparison to Northampton Borough force (which enjoyed a ratio of one officer to c.850 inhabitants by the time of the 1841 census).³⁸ This ratio compares broadly with other borough forces: for example, Bradford Borough police had an average ratio of one officer to 891 inhabitants in the decade from 1857 whilst Salford Borough police had a ratio of one officer to 929 inhabitants over the same period.³⁹

With regard to the overall perception of the policing situation in Northampton and its county, it is interesting to note that the *Herald* 26 December 1840 carried a notice for the forthcoming annual general meeting of the Northampton Association for Apprehending and Prosecuting Felons, which listed over 150 members (somewhat atypically including 10 women) who each paid an annual subscription of 5shillings, suggesting that a considerable number of inhabitants of the town or county were not satisfied with the existing policing arrangements. Such associations (the first recorded example of which was established in 1693 in Stoke on Trent) were extremely popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; Eastwood calling them ‘the most significant components in a programme to deter crime in later Hanoverian England without abandoning traditional forms of communal policing’, and research has shown that several

³⁸ Force complement taken from Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.23. Population figure for Northampton Borough (21,242) taken from http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/SRC_P/3/GB1841ABS_1.

³⁹ See <http://www.familyhistorynorthants.co.uk/victorian%20northampton.html> for 1851 Northampton population figure 1851; Bradford and Salford Borough Police figures extrapolated from annual *Judicial Statistics*. See also B. Godfrey and D. J. Cox, ‘Policing the industrial north of England, 1777-1877: the control of labour at work, and in the streets’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 2016, vol. 20, no 1, 129-48.

associations were indeed active in prosecuting minor and occasionally more serious crimes.⁴⁰ Until the latter half of the nineteenth century the police were rarely responsible for the prosecution of suspected offenders; this was normally a matter left to the conscience (and purse) of the victim or his/her family/friends; such associations therefore helped defray the often considerable cost of any prosecution and also occasionally directly employed law enforcement officials.⁴¹ The situation with regard to the County force was ameliorated slightly by an increase of seven officers in October 1840 (see below for the reasons given for this increase), but still resulted in a ratio of one officer for every 3,985 inhabitants.⁴²

A comparison of ratios of officers to acreage for all the county forces that were established by the end of 1840 is given in **Table 2** below. This shows that as Cowley suggests, Northamptonshire County force was also undermanned in terms of the area that each officer had to cover as part of his duties. During the July 1842 QS it was minuted that Goddard was from now on required to state in his quarterly report the number of times he had visited each division in the interim period.⁴³

County force created 1839/40	Ratio of officers to acreage (1:)
Lancashire	2,235
Nottinghamshire	3,079
Gloucestershire	3,162
Wiltshire	4,319
Hertfordshire	5,369
Bedfordshire	6,333
Essex	8,440
Hampshire	9,609
Norfolk	9,717
Durham	10,296

⁴⁰ Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces 1700-1870*, p.140. For details of the type and number of crimes prosecuted by one society, see J. Sutton, 'The Staffordshire Society for the Apprehension of Felons', *Staffordshire Studies* vol. 14 [2002], p.51. For an overview of the development of such societies, see D. Philips, 'Good men to associate and bad men to conspire: Associations for the prosecution of felons in England 1760-1860', in D. Hay and F. Snyder (eds.), *Policy and Prosecution in Britain, 1750-1850*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, pp.113-70.

⁴¹ For details of a short-lived private police force employed in the 1810s by the Dorsey Association for the prosecution of felons, see B. Jerrard, 'Early Policing in Gloucestershire', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for 1992* vol. C (1993): 221-40, 223. At least one Northamptonshire Association has been recently revived, albeit in a modern guise, see <http://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/keeping-an-eye-on-the-village-felons-1-728596> for details of the reconstitution of the Cranford Association in 2008.

⁴² *Northampton Herald*, 31 October 1840.

⁴³ NA PCM, July 1842.

Worcestershire	11,212
Northamptonshire	15,042
Leicestershire	20,454
Shropshire	37,581

Table 2: County forces created in 1839/40 showing ratio of officers to acreage

The County Constabulary was in a state of flux in the months following its creation; in October 1840 the horses of the seven mounted constables were sold and all constables were in future to patrol on foot.⁴⁴ This appears to have been a combination of a poor choice of mounts and a lack of forethought; one of the horses died shortly after its purchase, and two more were quickly deemed unfit for police service, whilst the mounted constables were soon considered to be an unnecessary expense.⁴⁵ The loss of mounted constables was to be compensated by the employment of seven additional constables, as Goddard had requested an increase to the force due to the fact that ‘the local constables objected to patrol the districts with the police, and it was not safe for the policemen to patrol singly’, thus exemplifying the hostility between the two types of law enforcement officers.⁴⁶

Henry Sawbridge, a prominent Tory landowner and county magistrate (who had originally opposed the creation of the county force, but who seems to have been largely won over by it a decade later – see below), wrote a letter to the *Herald* on 7 May 1842 which was published a week later, suggesting that the way forward was for much closer cooperation between the professional county force and the established parish constables. He stated that:

No-one would be satisfied to fall back upon the old way of proceeding unaltered. The parish constable, usually a person engaged in business, could seldom give an undivided attention to his official duties; his own affairs could not be neglected without serious detriment. Such an officer is not sufficient in the existing state of society, which requires active policemen, skilled from practice in the detection of crime and the apprehension of offenders [but ...] it

⁴⁴ *Northampton Herald*, 31 October 1840.

⁴⁵ NA PCM, July 1840.

⁴⁶ *Northampton Herald*, 11 July 1840.

must be a force little short of an army which could patrol and watch the County of Northampton.⁴⁷

His letter went on to suggest that the parish constable be regarded as main source of information regarding the perpetration of an offence and that the County constable should subsequently act upon such information. He recommended the reorganisation of the County force into 20 stations of two men, centrally stationed to ensure that no station was more than three-and-a-half miles 'from the most distant village', and that these officers should liaise regularly with parish constables, who should be made to keep entries of any reported crimes in an occurrence book.

Sawbridge's recommendations were not adopted either by Goddard or the PCJ, and the two constabularies appear to have continued in a state of mutual distrust, but it is interesting that Sawbridge's suggestions included one in which:

the peculiar dress of the policeman should be laid aside; it impedes the performance of his duty; it is also objectionable, because it favours the notion that policemen are to be distinguished from other respectable individuals; and that the responsibility of protecting the country is to be abandoned to them.⁴⁸

This was an interesting proposition made at a time when very few police forces in Britain contained any officers who operated in plain clothes. The Bow Street Runners, the most famous of the plain-clothes detectives, had been disbanded in 1839, and whilst at least one Scottish police force (Glasgow, see Smale, Chapter 3) had employed a handful of plain-clothes officers from 1817, this was very much the exception to the rule.⁴⁹ At the time of Sawbridge's letter, even the Metropolitan Police was without a detective contingent, though following the farrago over the arrest of Daniel Good, who committed a brutal murder in April 1842 and whose subsequent escape had made a mockery of the Metropolitan Police's detective capabilities, a Detective Department was created shortly after his eventual capture and execution in late-May 1842.

⁴⁷ Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, p.121.

⁴⁸ *Northampton Herald*, 7 May 1842.

⁴⁹ D. Barrie, *Police in the Age of Improvement: Police development and the civic tradition in Scotland, 1775-1865*, Cullompton: Willan, 2008, p.154, and for further details also see A. Dinsmor, 'Glasgow Police Pioneers', *Journal of the Police History Society*, No. 15 (2000), 9-11.

Similarly, in 1848 several other magistrates called for the creation of a detective contingent within Northampton County Constabulary:

To the Clerk of the Peace of the County of Northamptonshire

Sir, Being of the opinion that it is desirable that the County Police force should be increased by the addition of four Constables, and who may act within any of the Divisions of the County, as necessity may require, as a detective force, we do hereby require you to give Notice that we shall [...] move the Court that an addition of four such Constables be made.

Dated this fifth day of January 1848.⁵⁰

There is no evidence that Goddard was part of this request, or even that he had prior knowledge of it; indeed, he appears to have made no attempt to introduce a detective element to the County Constabulary throughout his tenure. Considering his background as a senior Bow Street detective, this at first sight seems surprising, but it is clear from his *Memoirs* that old habits die hard; he was perfectly happy to continue his own detective work whilst employed as Chief Constable, and clearly did not feel the need to employ subordinates on such work, considering that his experience alone was sufficient. During his employment at Bow Street, Goddard would have worked on his own for the vast majority of cases that he investigated; previous research suggests that for provincial cases, the Runners worked independently on over three-quarters of their provincial investigations.⁵¹ Even when they did cooperate in investigations, they usually worked with another officer of equal rank (although there are few documented cases where less senior Bow Street personnel were also employed, perhaps to provide them with practical experience of how the Principal Officer carried out his work.

During his first year in office at Northampton, Goddard confirmed his detective capabilities by investigating and solving a murder on his own new doorstep. The *Morning Post* 15 October 1840 gave details of a poaching attempt ending in the murder of one of the Marquis of Northampton's gamekeepers earlier that month, and stated that 'the promptness of chief constable Goddard and his men to apprehend the perpetrators of this horrid deed reflects great credit upon them'. His detective skills were again called upon in early 1841, after a bank clerk named John Haslock

⁵⁰ NA PCM, January 1848.

⁵¹ See Cox, 'A Certain Share of Low Cunning' for further details of the provincial activities and working methods of the Principal Officers.

absconded from Whitworth's Bank, Northampton with 800 sovereigns.⁵² Goddard immediately set out in pursuit, obtaining a passport and travelling to France, where after diligent detective work, he located Haslock in Tours. Goddard was, however, frustrated in his attempt to bring Haslock to justice in England; the French authorities arrested the suspect for travelling under a false name, and he was subsequently fined 15 francs and discharged. The *Leicester Chronicle* 13 February 1841 reported that 'the most interesting feature in the affair was the refusal of the French authorities to surrender him to an English police officer, "as the English government could never be prevailed upon to deliver up a refugee from France under similar circumstances"'. Although Goddard failed in his attempt to return Haslock to face trial in England, he did manage to recover almost £500 from the suspect and return it to its rightful owners.

The PCJ also appear to have been content initially to allow Goddard a certain amount of leeway to pursue ongoing investigations instigated at Bow Street during the first year of his new post; he is recorded as giving evidence at several trials in both 1840 and 1841, for example, both the *Morning Post* 29 June 1840 and his *Memoirs* contain details of Goddard appearing as a witness in a criminal conspiracy case that took him to Rouen and Paris whilst ostensibly also fulfilling his new role as Northamptonshire's Chief Constable.⁵³ In June 1842 he requested (and received) a leave of absence for 10 days, presumably to investigate a non-county case.⁵⁴

Opposition to Goddard and the County Constabulary

The Haslock case serves to highlight two of the main problems that he faced whilst Chief Constable of Northamptonshire: Goddard's seeming inability to master the more mundane administrative aspects of the role of Chief Constable of what was a fundamentally preventive police force and the immovable and continued opposition of one of the most vociferous members of the Northamptonshire county magistracy, Reverend Francis Litchfield (1792-1876).⁵⁵ It is perhaps

⁵² For Goddard's own account of this investigation, see Goddard, *Memoirs*, pp.189-94. Goddard mistakenly gives the suspect's first name as Thomas.

⁵³ The criminal conspiracy case rumbled on until mid-1841.

⁵⁴ NA PCM, June 1842.

⁵⁵ For further details of Litchfield's life, see R. L. Greenall, 'Parson as a Man of Affairs: the Rev. Francis Litchfield of Farthinghoe, (1792-1876)', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, VIII, 2 (1990-91), 134-45. Despite professing himself to be of 'limited pecuniary means', Reverend Litchfield left over £15,000 in his will; a not inconsiderable amount in 1876 - see *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and*

significant that Goddard chose largely to gloss over his time as Chief Constable of Northamptonshire; he only mentions one somewhat pathetic case; that of the deranged Sir Francis Mackenzie, who was found suffering from delusions in Northampton and who was eventually returned to the care of his brother by Goddard (who stated that 'a handsome present' was given to him by Sir Francis' brother); although employed by the local Watch Committee, he clearly felt no qualms about accepting private recompense. In this regard, Goddard was not acting illegally; as Jennifer Hart states, the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 did not 'make it illegal for the police to receive fees or gratuities from private individuals or the public purse for services rendered or anticipated', although the Northamptonshire PCJ prohibited the receipt of rewards by County constables in March 1841.⁵⁶

Regarding the latter problem, Reverend Litchfield was an ardent advocate of Poor Law reform and a resolutely High Church Tory, and therefore immovably opposed to the Whig-backed County Constabulary from the moment of its inception. His opposition to the County Constabulary was twofold: it cost the ratepayers too much for too little return, and although he conceded in a later missive that 'the police was a very good detective force', he argued that its preventive role would have been better served by a paid parochial constabulary.⁵⁷

Despite his efforts to ameliorate the burden of the poor of his parish in Farthinghoe, where he initiated such enterprises as the Farthinghoe Provident Clothing Society, which aimed to 'convince the Poor that good conduct is in all respects their best policy' through the instigation of a subscription society to provide savings for necessary clothing, Reverend Litchfield does not appear to have gone out of his way to make friends; for example any member of the Society whose husband or wife came before the magistrates for any misdemeanour or felony was to be expelled from the Society and his or her savings forfeit to the Society.⁵⁸ In her research into early nineteenth century Northamptonshire charitable provision Lewis states that:

Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995, available at www.ancestry.co.uk). Goddard in comparison left £1,067 following his death in 1883.

⁵⁶ J. Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police 1835-1856', *English Historical Review*, vol. 70 (1955), 411-422, p.419; and NA PCM, 19 March 1841. Discretionary rewards for exceptional service continue to this day (although funded by the public purse rather than private individuals); Section 31 of the Police Act 1996 states that: 'A police authority may, on the recommendation of the chief officer of police, grant out of the police fund to members of the police force maintained by that authority rewards for exceptional diligence or other especially meritorious conduct'.

⁵⁷ *Northampton Mercury*, 12 April 1856.

⁵⁸ F. Litchfield, *Three years' results of the Farthinghoe clothing society, with a few remarks on the policy of encouraging provident habits among the working classes*, Northampton: Freeman, 1832, p.4.

In a report to the Brackley Union, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Richard Earle made the following observation: “Mr Litchfield, whose insolent, energetic temperament led him to enforce in his parish sound principles of management in a mode little calculated to create good will, became if I am to believe the evidence of his Brother Magistrates, or indeed his own testimony, the object of detestation to all classes” .⁵⁹

He was an ardent author of improving pamphlets and letters to both local newspapers and periodicals, and seems to have found something of a kindred spirit in the form of the Editor of the *Herald*, which never failed to support his views in print.

Not surprisingly, Reverend Litchfield remained a proponent of the traditional parish constabulary system (which continued throughout Goddard’s tenure as Chief Constable) to the end; the *Northampton Mercury* (hereafter *Mercury*) 12 April 1856 (some seven years after Goddard had tendered his resignation) reported that he stated:

There was a new Police Bill before Parliament, and if they could get a clause inserted into it for a paid parochial constabulary, they might effect much good [...] The parochial constabulary was one of the oldest institutions in the country, and it might now in his opinion be made one of the most useful.

Despite his constant cavilling, Reverend Litchfield proved to be in the minority regarding his views on Goddard’s initial success as Chief Constable. Goddard’s salary was increased from £250 to £325 in 1842, to £342 10s in 1846, and to £360 by June 1847.⁶⁰ It remained at £360 per year until his resignation in 1840, though there had been calls for it to be reduced, as it was considered over-generous by some members of the Watch Committee.⁶¹ There were sporadic public outbreaks of discontent with the new police force; the *Mercury* of 19 February 1842 carried a report of protests against Robert Peel, with an attempt being made to burn his effigy, during which Goddard was struck on the head by a stone.

⁵⁹ B. Lewis, *Charitable Provision for the Rural Poor: A Case Study of Policies and Attitudes in Northamptonshire in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, unpublished PhD thesis, Leicester University, 2003, available at <https://ira.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/30730/3/U601167.pdf.txt>.

⁶⁰ *Northampton Mercury*, 22 October 1842, 14 Feb 1846, and 12 June 1847.

⁶¹ *Northampton Mercury*, 1 December 1849.

Reverend Litchfield's opposition to the new force was reflected and fully supported by the bitter Tory rival to the Whiggish *Mercury*; the *Herald*. An editorial in the *Herald* 31 October 1840 argued that the parish constabulary system, whilst admittedly imperfect was not necessarily bad. It argued that it was the magistrates rather than the system itself who were accountable for most deficiencies and reprinted part of a polemic published by a Leicestershire magistrate, who opined:

To suppose that England can supply no middle class of sufficient intelligence, public spirit, and activity, to discharge the duties of a constable in a district of ordinary peacefulness, is an imputation disgraceful to the national character, and entirely inconsistent with any nation of political liberty.⁶²

Whilst the PCJ was happy to record by September 1840 that: 'so far as they have been able to make observation from the time the system has been in progress, they consider it to have worked beneficially as well in checking crime as in the speedy detection and apprehension of offenders', Goddard faced considerable opposition from the Tory-supporting *Herald* throughout his tenure as Chief Constable⁶³ The rivalry between the *Herald* and the *Mercury* often reached vituperative levels; for example an editorial in the *Herald* attacked the *Mercury* for being:

the property of a magistrate and edited by his own pen. We wish the advocate of an expensive and inefficient Police all possible joy of such a supporter. He is worthy of the cause and the cause of him'. In the simplicity of our hearts we had supposed that the Police question, which involves the high question of morality as well as property, might have been treated by the *Mercury* proprietor without party malice or personal abuse.⁶⁴

A week later, the *Herald* reported that a series of petitions against the continuance of the new police force had been received by the Northamptonshire QS magistrates.⁶⁵ This constituted one of the most serious attacks on Goddard's new force; the newspaper reported that there was a total of 97 petitions in favour of abolition of the County Constabulary and only three in favour of its

⁶² 'Observations of a Leicestershire magistrate', *Northampton Herald*, 31 October 1840.

⁶³ NA PCM, 5 September 1840.

⁶⁴ *Northampton Herald*, 9 April 1842.

⁶⁵ *Northampton Herald*, 16 April 1842.

continuance. Colonel Cartwright (a staunch supporter of the County Constabulary) reminded the magistrates that ‘it should be remembered that “petition, petition, petition” had been repeatedly urged upon the rate-payers’, but the Reverend Litchfield (who was probably the chief instigator of the barrage of petitions) replied that the use of such petitions was ‘a very legitimate, constitutional and respectful mode of proceeding, and one to which the ratepayers of the county have very properly resorted.’ He went on to state that:

the result of his enquiries and reflections was, that the present police force, after a fair experiment, was inefficient, that the benefits derived from it were not commensurate with the cost, that it was not adapted to the wants and circumstances of the county and that a force differing in many respects from the one now existing was required.

He further stated that the force ‘cost around £4,500 annually to maintain’, arguing that it was simply cost ineffective stating that ‘it could no longer be maintained that the police force was properly efficient’. Despite Reverend Litchfield’s best efforts, the petitions were largely ignored by the majority of magistrates and the County Constabulary survived, although further petitions against its continuance were received in the following year (and in 1849), and disgruntled ratepayers continued to moan about the cost of the force throughout Goddard’s tenure.

Throughout the remainder of Goddard’s time as Chief Constable, there was intermittent debate concerning the future of the County Constabulary; the *Herald* continued its implacable opposition to both the continued existence of the County force in general, and (in more veiled terms) to Goddard’s leadership in particular; his lack of social standing appears to have been a particular reason for the *Herald’s* disdain. Matters concerning the probity of his officers did not go well for Goddard; in 1848 a Superintendent was discharged for improper financial conduct, whilst another Superintendent was reduced to the ranks for misconduct and a constable in Floore district forced to resign after ‘a female of loose character had been seen to go into his house’.⁶⁶

Resignation from post

⁶⁶ *Northampton Herald*, 6 January 1849.

In early 1849 Goddard suddenly and surprisingly announced his intention of resigning his post due to an 'internal injury' received during his duties. The *Herald* immediately seized upon this announcement with barely unconcealed delight. An editorial in the *Herald* strongly implies that Goddard had never been equal to the task, stating that:

We feel ourselves justified in urging either that the Police force be abandoned at the next QS, as a failure, or that proper steps be taken to render it a very different body of constabulary, whether preventive or detective, from what it has hitherto been. We will take the liberty, also, of expressing our firm conviction that, unless some applicant of a different class should present himself, with proofs of most complete success as a Chief Constable in another county, no person but one placed far above the rank of Policemen by education and society, and that has enjoyed intercourse with gentlemen, should now be elected. Indeed, we will go further and say that, with so large a space as a county to divide and provide for, and with the absolute necessity that exists for methodical arrangements, exact discipline and moral conduct, hardly any person is likely to be qualified for such an appointment except someone accustomed to military habits and command, and with that high sense of honour and those gentlemanly feelings which would lead him to resign his office, should he at any time perceive himself to have failed in the duties undertaken.⁶⁷

Goddard's 'internal injury'; the explicit reason for his resignation, also came in for considerable scrutiny from the Tory press, with one purveyor of doggerel verse printed in the *Herald* suggesting that Goddard's hand had in fact been forced by the magistrates:

But should men desire a useless Police
No longer to live, and its cost to cease,
Get someone to urge an improper increase;

And, let such a step ignite a fire
Of resistance that's mix'd with indignant ire,
Persuade your Chief, as a ruse to retire.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Northampton Herald*, 20 January 1849.

At the next QS (April 1849) Goddard received a gratuity of £150 for his injury; he claimed this was to support his family whilst he looked for new employment, and appears to have been paid with somewhat bad grace, perhaps due to the short notice that he had given of his intention to resign, which had caused the magistrates a considerable amount of problems and inconvenience. Reverend Litchfield stated flatly that 'he saw no proof that Mr Goddard had been injured in the service. The surgeon's certificate was not at all satisfactory to him'.⁶⁹

At the same time as Goddard's resignation, the magistrates received another batch of petitions calling for the abolition of the county force, 'from 15 parishes, and signed by 1,789 names'.⁷⁰ Reverend Litchfield stated that he had a further 88 petitions to present, but the subsequent debate was somewhat overshadowed by Goddard's resignation. Mr Sawbridge strongly defended Goddard's record as Chief Constable, stating that:

Mr Goddard had been brought from a situation – he believed he did not seek it – with a recommendation from the chief of the London police of the very highest kind – he believed his language was – If you have Mr Goddard, you will have the best Chief Constable in the Kingdom. If anybody now had a charge of neglect of duty to bring against him, let them bring it now.⁷¹

It is unclear in the report as to whom the 'chief of London police' referred to Sawbridge was; it is unlikely to have been either of the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, and was far more probable to have been the Chief Magistrate of Bow Street, Sir Frederick Adair Roe, who undoubtedly held Goddard in high regard.

Goddard's successor, Henry Lambert Bayly, perhaps unsurprisingly, given the criticism that Goddard had received from certain quarters, came from a landed gentry family and had a background as an able administrator in both the East India Company and the Irish Constabulary (which he joined as an officer in 1840). He served as Chief Constable of Northamptonshire for 26 years, the Reverend Litchfield's continued opposition to the county constabulary notwithstanding.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Northampton Mercury*, 7 April 1849.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² For a brief biography of Bayly, see Cowley, *Policing Northamptonshire*, pp.145-50.

Conclusion

The 1840s had proven to be a turbulent decade; it is debateable whether any other Chief Constable would have enjoyed more success (or support) from the Northamptonshire magistrates.⁷³

Northamptonshire was not immune to the various societal, political and economic pressures experienced by the country as a whole; the sharp political divide of Whigs and Tories over issues such as the Corn Laws; the aftermath of the horrific famines in Ireland, which had led to an unprecedented migration of the starving poor to England (and a perceived rise in crime); the rise (and eventual fall) of Chartism to highlight just a few.

Goddard, whilst undoubtedly having already proven himself to be a first-rate Bow Street Principal Officer, seems to have been ultimately ill-equipped to manage successfully the day-to-day running of a county police force; his had been up to then a fundamentally self-managed and detective style of policing, and he seems to have struggled with the more mundane aspects of provincial preventive policing. He clearly took every opportunity to continue his detective work during his employment as Chief Constable and this cannot have endeared him to his opponents in the county magistracy. His occasional absences due to this aspect of his work certainly caused a certain amount of friction; for example, he was censured in March 1841 by the PCJ for not having yet appointed a Deputy Constable who would perform Goddard's duties when *in absentia*.⁷⁴

Goddard was further twice reprimanded in January 1848 for both allowing prisoners the unnecessary expense of receiving ale rather than tea or coffee and bread whilst in custody at the station houses and also not ensuring that strict records of such arrests were kept by the Superintendents.⁷⁵ In April of the same year he was severely criticised over his failure to attend the Spring QS; 'having stated that he was on business in London and no satisfactory answer given for his necessary absence', he was required to report to the PCJ who would report their findings at the next QS.⁷⁶ The PCJ subsequently accepted that Goddard had provided a satisfactory explanation for his absence, but he was required in future to report such absences in advance to the Deputy Constable

⁷³ For a readable overview of the 1840s, see S. Bates, *Penny loaves and butter cheap: Britain in 1846*, London: Head of Zeus, 2014.

⁷⁴ NA PCM, 19 March 1841.

⁷⁵ NA PCM, January 1848.

⁷⁶ NA PCM, April 1848.

and also to report upon his return. Goddard was again criticised in the June 1848 sessions for not exercising sufficient oversight of the keeping of financial records by the Superintendent of Brackley Division.

Ultimately, Goddard's time in Northamptonshire was not a successful one; he faced continued opposition due to a combination of factors: his humble origins, the widespread Tory opposition to the imposition of a Whig-inspired model county constabulary and the vituperative attacks from both Reverend Litchfield and the editor of the *Herald*. Whilst it is impossible to ascertain Goddard's feelings upon his resignation (whether willing or forced), it is perhaps not unreasonable to surmise that on his part a sigh of relief was involved.

Whatever the exact nature or extent of Goddard's 'internal injury' it did not stop him from pursuing a subsequent active career both as a private detective and a Principal Door Keeper at the House of Lords; Pringle states that 'he was certainly back in practice [as a private detective] in October 1849 [...] but I think that probably he had begun taking cases again some time before this, possibly before he went to the House of Lords'.⁷⁷ He remained active until shortly before his death on 29 October 1883.

⁷⁷ Goddard, *Memoirs*, xxiii.