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# THE SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Before 1839 Suffolk, like the rest of rural England, had only the police system supplied by the high constable of the hundred and the petty constables of the parishes and townships.<sup>1</sup> The county was divided into twenty-one hundreds made up of about five hundred parishes, several extraparochial places, thirty towns and about a thousand villages and hamlets.<sup>2</sup>

The high constable of the hundred was the officer directly responsible to the Justices of the Peace in the machinery of public order, it being his duty to keep the peace within the hundred and the petty constable did within the parish. He was appointed by the magistrates in Quarter Sessions, as, for example, was Robert Postle, farmer, 'appointed and sworn chief constable of the Hundred of Mutford and Lothingland in the room of Thomas Hunt', in October 1803.<sup>3</sup> He had to be resident in the hundred for which he was appointed and service was compulsory, originally for a term of a year but later until discharged by the Justices on resignation or death. In the early years there was no legal provision for any remuneration. The Quarter Sessional Records show that the persons serving in this office were mainly the humbler gentry and small freeholders, but even for them it entailed loss of time and extra expenses, not reimbursed.

The duties and functions of the high constable were, like his social position, intermediate between those of a Justice of the Peace and the constable of a parish,<sup>4</sup> and became more administrative in character as the nineteenth century progressed. He was the medium through which communications between the State and the parish were made, and through him the Justices gave their orders to the petty constables. For instance, at the Beccles Sessions of April 1809, it was ordered that, 'the chief constables of the several hundreds within this division be required to issue their orders to the petty constables of their several parishes desiring them to make out perfect lists of Pauper Lunatics and Idiots within their parishes

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Mather, *Public Order in the Days of the Chartists*, (1960), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Suffolk*, (1844), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, ref. 105/2, Quarter Sessions Minute Book (hereafter referred to as Q.S.M.B.), 3 October 1803. (All documents, unless otherwise stated, are to be found in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office).

<sup>4</sup> S. and B. Webb, *English Local Government*, Vol. 1, (1906), The Parish and County, p. 491.

describing each of them, and that those lists may be returned to the chief constables for the next sessions'.<sup>5</sup> As the authority of the Justices was enlarged by various statutes, it was the high constable who received the increasing commands and precepts to be distributed to the parish constables.

Although the parish constables were ordered and commanded by the high constable they were not subordinate to him and he held no authority over them by law. The Justices looked to him for their supervision and direction and therefore, as Burn points out, he was in a way responsible for their conduct as he was bound to notice their defaults, 'for neglect of which duty he is representable himself'.<sup>6</sup> It was up to the high constable to see that the petty constables observed and obeyed the orders of Quarter Sessions and he was also responsible for paying them any expenses incurred in, for example, repressing vagrancy, from money received from county funds.

The most important piece of administrative work performed by the high constable was the levying and collection, through the parish constable, of the County Rate. In several instances they were charged with financial responsibility. In July 1809 at Beccles it was ordered that, 'whereas there are considerable arrears of the County Rate . . ., the chief constables of the several hundreds within this division do forthwith issue out precepts to the petty constables . . . requiring them to discharge such arrears within one month of the date hereof so that they may be paid over to the Treasurer, otherwise they will be proceeded against'.<sup>7</sup> In the latter part of the eighteenth century the high constables were paying themselves by illicit means because increasing duties were causing high expenses. An entry in the Sessions Book of October 1763 states that high constables were charging the parish constables a shilling for carrying their presentments, and sixpence for lists of persons qualified to serve on juries. Their demand for remuneration was eventually granted and a certain 'poundage' was allowed to be deducted from the amount of County Rate collected. Until July 1809 this was sixpence in the pound, but at the Woodbridge Sessions of that month it was ordered that they be 'allowed a shilling in the pound . . . in consideration of the increasing trouble in attending to the duties and execution of their office'.<sup>8</sup> A further increase was demanded in 1832 but the court decided that 'the present allowance appears to be sufficient'.<sup>9</sup>

In 1838 a Committee was appointed to look into the remunera-

<sup>5</sup> Q.S.M.B., 10 April 1809.

<sup>6</sup> R. Burn, *Justice of the Peace and the Parish Officer*, Vol. I (1841), p. 792.

<sup>7</sup> Circular to high constables, 10 July 1809.

<sup>8</sup> Q.S.M.B., 12 July 1809.

<sup>9</sup> Q.S.M.B., 2 May 1832.

tion of high constables and each one was sent a letter asking him to state the amount he received. A typical reply was as follows: 'Respecting your question as to remuneration I receive as High Constable, it consists solely of the shilling poundage'.<sup>10</sup> Many did however take this opportunity to voice their complaints about the inadequacy of the poundage received, one man stating that his hundred contained nine parishes involving a journey of over fourteen miles to collect the Rate.<sup>11</sup> Another claimed expenses of about £12 a year.<sup>12</sup> The Committee decided to grant a further sum of 'a shilling a mile out and a shilling a mile home for each mile travelled to pay the amount of rate collected to the Treasurer'.<sup>13</sup> In December of the same year at the Ipswich Sessions the decision was changed. All fees were abolished and in lieu each high constable received £1 for every parish in his jurisdiction. But, at the same time, he was required to find a security, laid down by the Justices and paid to the Clerk of the Peace. For example, 'I, John Payne of Thingoe, in the County of Suffolk, gentleman, am held and firmly bound to James Borton in the sum of £200 of good and lawful money of Great Britain'.<sup>14</sup>

The high constable was also responsible for duties such as surveying highways and bridges, ensuring them safe for public use and inspecting, for example, 'the state of a brick arch in the Parish of Kelsale leading across the turn pike road as being out of repair'.<sup>15</sup> He had to deliver precepts to the various 'overseers, surveyors, licensees, petty constables and commissioners of land and taxes eight or nine times a quarter',<sup>16</sup> in every parish. These precepts usually consisted of warrants for arrest, warrants ordering a special County Rate for a particular purpose, such as one in 1828 for the maintenance of Pauper and Criminal Lunatics, or notice to the petty constable to present, at Quarters Sessions, lists of, for example, men 'liable and qualified to serve as Juries'.<sup>17</sup> Until 1827 the high constable was also required to make presentments of all offenders not prosecuted by private individuals. These included 'popish recusants', rogues and vagabonds, forestallers and regrators, profane swearers, servants out of place, and unlawful assemblies.<sup>18</sup> He was under obligation to bring to justice all offending against the

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Edwin Goodwyn, high constable of Framlingham, to the Committee, 1838.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Robert Bonfellow, high constable of Mutford and Lotingland, 1838.

<sup>12</sup> A. Beddel, high constable of Playford.

<sup>13</sup> Q.S.M.B., 25 March 1838.

<sup>14</sup> Bond of James Payne, 1838.

<sup>15</sup> Circular to the high constable of Hoxne, 1810.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from the high constable of Mutford and Lotingland complaining about poor remuneration, December 1838 (see note 11).

<sup>17</sup> Circular to the high constable of Beccles, 10 August 1855.

<sup>18</sup> S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

law and therefore had to stimulate the activity of the parish constables within his hundred. This meant supervising their presentments, which was no easy task. The high constable himself was not empowered to arrest anyone for breach of peace, and, as Joseph Ritson states, 'it is doubtful whether he be a conservator of the peace'.<sup>19</sup> But he was still an important figure in keeping public order.

With the establishment of the Rural Constabulary<sup>20</sup> in each division of the county the duties of the high constable gradually decreased until in 1848 it was ordered that when the office became vacant in any hundred the Magistrates were to use their discretion in reappointing such officers.<sup>21</sup> The County Rate was now collected by Boards of Guardians in each division. A high constable was exempt from jury duty and if for this reason only, he continued to be appointed in Suffolk. But in 1867 all payments were discontinued and in 1873 the office disappeared altogether.

There were originally four principal officers for the execution and fulfilment of the functions of parochial government, one of whom was the parish constable.<sup>22</sup> The high constable of the hundred issued a precept to the overseer of the parish requiring him to make out a list of men qualified to serve the office of constable, returning it to the Vestry<sup>23</sup> for election. For example, 'At the vestry meeting of the inhabitants of the Parish of Rishangles held on 27 September 1830, James Lockwood and John Lanham rated inhabitants were duly elected constables of the said Parish. At the Petty Sessions of the Magistrates of the Hundred of Hartismere held on 28 September 1830 the said persons were duly sworn into the execution of the said office'.<sup>24</sup> These men too had to be resident in the parish for which they were elected and held no power outside it. Ritson adds that, 'Common Law requires that every constable should be *idoneus homo* i.e. apt and fit to execute the said office; and he is said in law to be *idoneus* who had honesty to execute his office truly without malice, affection or partiality; knowledge to know what he ought duly to do; and ability in estate and body that he may execute his office diligently and not from impotency or poverty to neglect it'.<sup>25</sup> Every householder in the parish was compelled to serve the office, unpaid. There were certain exemptions including the aged or sick, anyone in a man's livery, a pub-keeper, attorneys,

<sup>19</sup> J. Ritson, *Office of Constable*, (1791, 2nd edition 1815), p. 78.

<sup>20</sup> See below, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Q.S.M.B., 1848.

<sup>22</sup> S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 15. The other three were the Churchwarden, the Overseer, and the Surveyor of Highways.

<sup>23</sup> A Parish Meeting; but where it existed, election took place in the Court Leet, the local criminal court of the Parish.

<sup>24</sup> Return made to Quarter Sessions, 28 September 1830.

<sup>25</sup> Ritson, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

revenue officers, dissenting ministers, apothecaries, militia-men, seamen, and naturalized foreigners, as well as any very ignorant or poor person who, if chosen, could be discharged, 'and an abler man appointed in his room'.<sup>26</sup>

Once elected the parishioner was sworn into office by the Justices for the ensuing year. The office was very unpopular, involving heavy and unpleasant duties and carrying neither status nor reasonable remuneration. It was perhaps best summed up by Andrew Moreton, writing in the eighteenth century, as, 'an insupportable hardship; it takes up so much of the man's time that his own affairs are frequently totally neglected, too often to his ruin. Yet there is neither profit nor pleasure therein'.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand those who could not afford time from their own affairs neglected the duties of the office, and 'persons of respectability' often shunned the office allowing it to fall into the hands of 'such as prefer earning a shilling or two by serving a warrant or summons than by attending their work'.<sup>28</sup> Others avoided the duties because of personal conflicts involved, for the parish constable was brought into close contact with the personal rights and liberties of the inhabitants.

As conservator of the peace, the parish constable was authorized by common law to apprehend any person who committed a felony, or was about to commit a minor offence or breach of the peace, and keep him in safe custody until he could be brought before a magistrate. Where no pound, stocks or lock-up existed the offender had to be retained in the constable's own house. It was the constable's duty to execute any orders issued by the Justices, and therefore when they authorized the conviction of a man he was bound to serve a warrant subject to a fine of £5 for neglect of duty.<sup>29</sup>

For duties performed the constable was allowed a certain fee to be paid out of the parish or county rate. At the Beccles Quarter Sessions of April 1834, 'at a period of distress and difficulty', a committee drew up a list of such expenses in an attempt to reduce expenditure. For his oath of office the constable was allowed a shilling. For every warrant issued in his parish he could claim one shilling plus sixpence for every mile beyond the parish limits. If the journey was more than five miles, but not exceeding a day's journey, he was allowed five shillings, or ten if the journey took a day; for executing a search warrant when the goods and offender were apprehended, three shillings, but only two if they were not found and this to be paid by the complainant; one and sixpence was

<sup>26</sup> Burn, *op. cit.*, pp. 793-4.

<sup>27</sup> 'Daniel Defoe', *Parochial Tyranny*, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> First Report of the Royal Commission on the Establishment of a Constabulary Force in the Counties of England and Wales, 1839.

<sup>29</sup> Burn, *op. cit.*, p. 801.

allowed if he assisted in a search on Justice's orders when the complainant was incapable of attending. For conveying a prisoner to gaol the constable could claim tenpence a mile, or sevenpence for each if there were two, and sixpence if there were three; an additional five shillings a day and two and sixpence a night was allowed as compensation for loss of time. If a prisoner was committed and had to be maintained in a place where there was no lock-up, a shilling a day and sixpence a night could be claimed for maintenance; if there was a lock-up only sixpence. A note added to this last allowance stated that it was 'considered inapplicable where the prisoner has means of supporting himself', but if the prisoner was ill the constable could double the allowance. He could only claim one day's expenses unless the Justices were satisfied that the duty had taken longer. They also pointed out that, 'in many cases demands have been made by constables upon the County Treasurer for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by them for the performance of what is strictly the business of the parish'.<sup>30</sup> It was therefore ordered that, 'whenever constables shall be called upon to act where their parishes are more directly interested than the county, the parish where the offenders are incapable . . . shall be charged with every cost to the time of commitment . . . and the county with only the mileage from the place where the commitment has been signed, to the Gaol or House of Correction, with constables' loss of time in guarding them'. But even this proved quite expensive. The constable of Newmarket St. Mary claimed £1 2s. 9d. for conveying two vagrants to the House of Correction,<sup>31</sup> and £2 4s. 6d. for conveying two felons to gaol.<sup>32</sup>

Other fees chargeable to County Rate were those paid by the coroner when a constable was ordered to attend an inquest. If he lived within two miles of the Coroner's office he was allowed a shilling for giving information and collecting a warrant for summoning a jury, and threepence for every extra mile 'to and fro' from the dead body to the office. For actually summoning the jury and witnesses and attending himself he could claim six and sixpence for 'the part or a whole of a day' and three and sixpence for an adjournment day. If the body had to be retained on the constable's own premises he could claim five shillings.<sup>33</sup>

Fees chargeable to the parish rate were for such duties as attending the Justices at Petty Sessions, one and sixpence; attending a fair, two shillings; an election day, five shillings; verifying a list of jurors, one shilling; making out a list of men to serve in the militia, £1 10s.; attending as a peace officer on any public occasion,

<sup>30</sup> Q.S.M.B., April 1834.

<sup>31</sup> At Ipswich.

<sup>32</sup> Bill sent to the Treasurer by the constable.

<sup>33</sup> Expenses of constables attending an inquest, ref. 100/1/64.

two and sixpence; and expenses incurred in cases of bastardy and offences under the Vagrant Act. In 1803 ninepence a mile was allowed for conveying vagrants and a shilling a day for subsistence of each one. The constable received nothing for seeing that shops and public houses were closed during 'divine service'.

Parish records reveal that much of the constable's time was taken up with searching for men wanted on bastardy orders. For example, a Justice's order was issued in 1809 'To the constable of the Parish of Kersey . . . Hannah Ely was delivered of a female bastard child . . . likely to become chargeable to the said Parish, and hath charged William Reeve of Kersey, servant of William Brummole, Esq., with having gotten her with child . . . I do hereby command you immediately to apprehend him and bring him before me or some other of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace'.<sup>34</sup> He was also required to remove any person 'who hath come to inhabit this Parish not having gained any legal settlement nor produced any certificate owning themselves to be settled elsewhere'; or, as in Rishangles in 1813, 'to apprehend George Crane Carpenter who has run or gone away from out of the said Parish and left his wife and three children whereby they are become chargeable to the said Parish'.<sup>35</sup> When a man refused to pay the sum required of him the constable was 'commanded forthwith to convey the said — to the House of Correction in the County Gaol at Ipswich . . . and there deliver him to the keeper'.<sup>36</sup>

The constable was authorized to inspect ale and beerhouses to ensure that correct hours were kept, and it was his responsibility to find billets for soldiers and to provide horses and carts for them if they passed through his parish. The office of constable was completely ministerial and in no way judicial, as Burn said, 'It is much the best for the constable in all cases not requiring immediate interference to obtain a magistrates warrant before apprehending a party; if he does he will be entitled to benefits<sup>37</sup> protecting him when acting under a warrant'.<sup>38</sup> The petty constables were not a united force but only scattered, uncontrollable officers each responsible for his own parish and no more. They were not adequate to maintain law and order in their own localities and the system only worked as a method of preserving order in the light of an obligation resting on the whole community to assist the constable.<sup>39</sup> For refusing such assistance in 1822 William Barton of Bury was fined £2 with a month's labour in the House of Correction.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Kersey Parish Records, Bastardy Order, 1809.

<sup>35</sup> Rishangles Parish Records, Apprehension Order, 1813.

<sup>36</sup> Little Glemham Parish Records, Bastardy Order, 1825.

<sup>37</sup> Under 24 Geo. II, c. 44, s. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Burn, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

<sup>39</sup> Mather, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>40</sup> Q.S.M.B., 21 January 1822.



Besides apprehending offenders against the law the constable was required to obey orders from the Justices, such as, 'to give notice to your surveyors to appear <sup>41</sup> to make presentments of the state and condition of their highways; to the overseers of the poor to appear with their book of accounts; and bring with you a list of men, proper persons to serve the offices for the year ensuing'.<sup>42</sup> It was his duty to collect and pay the high constable the sum levied on the parish as part of the County Rate, and in case of any other rates being levied it was the petty constables' responsibility to collect the money from all the parishioners. For example, in 1823 a claim was laid against the inhabitants of the hundred of Hartismere by one Thomas French that someone unknown had set fire to his barn, stable and sheds causing over £200 worth of damage. Each parish in the hundred was ordered to levy a rate in compensation, and in Rishangles the constable had to collect the sum of £4 3s. 9d.

In every case of emergency and actual or apprehended tumult by which public peace was endangered, one of the first steps taken by the authorities was to enrol a force of special constables. It was left to the discretion of any two Justices to decide whether a situation was an emergency, to swear in what they thought was the necessary number of men, and to determine the manner in which they were to act. Service was compulsory and men were recruited, where possible, from among the most respectable members of the community, and even those normally exempt could be called upon to serve, by the Secretary of State. Once sworn in, these special constables were invested with the powers of a parish constable and authorized to disperse mobs and apprehend offenders on a magistrate's warrant. They were usually summoned in time of riots as in 1870 when, 'gentry, farmers and tradesmen of every parish are immediately to meet with lists of such respectable persons as may be entrusted with the office of special constable' to quell a 'tumultuous assembly' in the hundred of Blything.<sup>43</sup> These constables did not have to wait for the arrival of a magistrate before suppressing a riot and, 'they may call on any and everyone to assist them . . . and will take care that all public-house keepers are cautioned to look closely after all strangers and suspicious persons'.

Special constables were also called out on public occasions when the parish constables were not regarded as sufficient to safeguard peace and order. For example, a request was made to the Justices in 1842 by an innkeeper of Newmarket St. Mary, 'that the state of the constabulary in the Town of Newmarket is insufficient for the preservation of public peace during the fair holden on the eighth day

<sup>41</sup> At the Petty Sessional Meeting.

<sup>42</sup> Circular to the high constable of Rishangles, 28 February 1831.

<sup>43</sup> Order to the high constable of Blything, 1830.

of November instant, and that this informant believes that the lives and properties of His Majesty's subjects are not secure without further protection'.<sup>44</sup> The names of seven men were included and they were sworn in to undertake the office for the space of one calendar month. They were equally active at election time, when disturbances often occurred. Special constables were not armed beyond their staves although in 1839 it was government policy to offer weapons of a more lethal character, such as cutlasses and pistols. Sir Robert Peel, however, reacted strongly against this, advising magistrates to call out troops rather than arm specials.<sup>45</sup>

In 1831 an Act<sup>46</sup> was passed 'to increase the power of magistrates in the appointment of special constables', authorizing them to 'call upon, nominate and appoint by precept in writing under their hands any householders or other persons not legally exempt from serving the office of constable, to act as special constables . . . for the preservation or suppression of any tumult, riot or felony'. Now that the office had become law, claims could be made to the county for expenses incurred for duties under the Act. At the Bury Quarter Sessions of March 1831, the court 'having taken into consideration the several claims made by special constables on account of the late riots and disturbances which took place in this County . . . orders that the following sums be paid to the various claimants; viz, to the Parishes of Cavendish £6 15s 0d, Lavenham £4 15s 0d. Monks Eleigh £1 7s 0d and Layham six shillings, and to Thomas Alley of Withersfield for thirty eight other special constables £9 4s 9d'.<sup>47</sup> Objections were made to holding this office but it was far less of an imposition than the office of petty constable, and it continues today.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 gave each borough Watch Committee, consisting of the mayor and a few select councillors, the power to appoint a sufficient number of constables, under a superintendent, to police a town. They were also responsible for framing regulations for the guidance of the constables and the only prerogative of the Home Secretary was a quarterly report of the numbers and equipment of the force and an occasional copy of their rules. The aim of the Act was to establish in the boroughs a force as efficient as the Metropolitan Police, but locally controlled.<sup>48</sup> However extensive social reform is not effected overnight by merely passing a Bill through Parliament, and many of the reformed corporations were in no hurry to comply with the requirements of the Act. The boroughs of Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich did take

<sup>44</sup> Letter to the Justices of the Peace from Charles Bottom, 7 November 1842.

<sup>45</sup> Mather, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>46</sup> 1 Geo. IV, c. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Q.S.M.B., March 1831, Treasurer's Report.

<sup>48</sup> Mather, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

advantage of the Act but a deficiency in numbers was a major flaw in the system. In 1839 Bury had eleven constables, one to every 1,120 inhabitants, and Ipswich nineteen, one to every 1,281. In 1848 Bury had thirteen constables, one to every 1,038 inhabitants, and Ipswich sixteen constables, one to every 1,916.<sup>49</sup> According to a table in J. M. Hart's article 'The Reform of the Borough Police' at least fifty-three boroughs possessed no force in 1839, and twenty-two in 1848.<sup>50</sup> In such boroughs maintenance of public order was still entrusted to the parish constables and not until the County Police Act of 1839 was a professional police force employed in the rural county relieving the parish constable of all duties, paid and unpaid.

By this time, in fact, the petty constable system had become useless for maintaining public order. One of the main reasons was that there was no officer to superintend the activities of the constables. Only the strictest discipline could render them effective and any element of control was non-existent. The office of high constable had gradually disappeared in a functionary sense and become almost purely nominal, and the Justices could not afford the time or trouble to extract service out of unwilling servants. The petty constable served at a loss unless crime was plentiful and he therefore tended to encourage rather than prevent it. A reform of the police system in the rural county of Suffolk, as in the rest of England, was desperately needed.

#### ADOPTION OF THE 'PERMISSIVE' POLICE ACT OF 1839

On 27 August 1839, a Bill was passed in Parliament, 'for the Establishment of County and District Constables by the Authority of the Justices of the Peace',<sup>51</sup> the opening clause stating that the Justices were of the opinion that, 'the ordinary officers appointed for preserving the Peace are not sufficient for the Protection of the Inhabitants and the Security of the Property in any such Parish, Township or Place . . . Justices in Quarter Sessions may report to the Secretary of State the necessity of an additional appointment of constables'. Because of its optional nature this particular Act is often known as the 'Permissive' Act and in fact, only twenty of the fifty-two counties of England and Wales established a police force in the first year.<sup>52</sup> One of these was Suffolk, which at this time was divided into two divisions for the purpose of returning two members

<sup>49</sup> Parliamentary Return, 1854. The Metropolitan Police Force had one constable for every 443 people (J. M. Hart, *The British Police*, (1951) p. 34).

<sup>50</sup> That is, 29% and 12% respectively.

<sup>51</sup> 2 & 3, Vic. c. 93.

<sup>52</sup> Return of Police Established in each County, or Division of a County, in England and Wales, under 2 & 3, Viv. c. 93, and 374 Vic. c. 88, xxxiii.

of Parliament for each division.<sup>53</sup> Section IV of the Act stated that 'When any County shall have been divided . . . it shall be lawful to appoint two Chief Constables for such a County'. So the magistrates of East Suffolk, subdivided into the divisions of Beccles, Woodbridge and Ipswich, and those of West Suffolk worked independently of each other in establishing a police force. (See map, Fig. 1).

On 30 December 1839, at the East Suffolk Quarter Sessions held in Beccles, the Justices of the Peace made it known that it was their intention 'to propose the propriety of adopting the provisions of the Act', after deciding that, 'the present system of parish constables has become inadequate to the due prevention and detection of offences'.<sup>54</sup> A report was then drawn up for the Secretary of State declaring that 'one Chief Constable, one superintendent, and seventeen constables are needed in our opinion to be appointed within this division for the purposes aforesaid'. Rates of payment thought expedient for these men were £100 per annum for the Chief Constable and superintendent, and £1 per week for each constable. At the adjourned<sup>55</sup> Woodbridge Sessions a request was made for one superintendent at £100 p.a. and one constable for every three thousand inhabitants. The Act in fact stated that there should be not more than one constable for every thousand of the population.<sup>56</sup> At the Ipswich Sessions the magistrates 'cordially' adopted the resolutions of the magistrates of the other two divisions stating that, 'a police force be now established for the division of Ipswich in union with the force agreed to be established in the divisions of Beccles and Woodbridge, and upon the same scale'.<sup>57</sup> The Secretary of State, the Marquess of Normanby, approved the arrangements and on 5 March 1840, Mr. John Hayes Hatton was appointed, at Sessions held at Wickham Market, 'to be Chief Constable for this County to act in the divisions of Beccles, Woodbridge and Ipswich'.<sup>58</sup> The necessary qualifications for this office, as drawn up by the Secretary of State and applying to all counties, were as follows:—<sup>59</sup>

1. His age must not exceed 45 (on special report of the Justices as to the fitness for Office of a person exceeding the limited age the Secretary of State will consider whether the case may not be made an exception to this Rule).

<sup>53</sup> Nine Members were returned altogether, two for both East and West Suffolk, two for the boroughs of Ipswich and Bury, and one for Eye.

<sup>54</sup> Q.S.M.B., 30 December 1839.

<sup>55</sup> Sessional meetings were begun in Beccles and then adjourned in turn to Woodbridge and Ipswich.

<sup>56</sup> 2 & 3, Vic. c. 93, s. 1. <sup>57</sup> Q.S.M.B., January 1840. <sup>58</sup> Q.S.M.B., 5 March 1840.

<sup>59</sup> Rules made by the Marquess of Normanby, Secretary of State, 7 December 1839 (ref. 50/20/12.2).

2. He must be certified by a Medical Practitioner to be in good health and of sound constitution and fitted to perform the duties of the Office.
3. He must not have been a Bankrupt nor have taken the Benefit of the Insolvent Act.
4. If he has been previously employed in any Branch of Public Service, Civil or Military, he must produce testimonials as to general conduct whilst so employed.
5. He must be recommended to the Secretary of State by the Magistrates, in whom the appointment is vested, as a Person of general good character and conduct.

Once appointed the Chief Constable was responsible for 'appointing, directing and disciplining'<sup>60</sup> the number of police constables he deemed necessary for police duties in his division, 'subject to the approval of two or more Justices . . . , and at his pleasure he may dismiss all or any of them'.<sup>61</sup> On 10 March Mr. Hatton was asked to meet the newly formed Police Committee to finalise arrangements for 'entering upon the execution of his duties'. It was decided that the headquarters of the Committee should be at Saxmundham, as being the most central point in the division, although the headquarters of the force was, for the first few years, at Yoxford.

The first members of the new constabulary force were enrolled on 12 May 1840, and consisted of three superintendents, one of whom acted as deputy chief constable, and sixty constables, allocated in thirty-three districts. In all cases the necessary qualifications were according to 'Form A',<sup>62</sup> that is:—

1. To be under 40 years of age.
2. To stand 5 ft. 7 ins. without shoes.
3. To read and write and keep account.
4. To be free from any bodily complaint, of strong constitution and generally intelligent.

'No person shall be appointed who shall be a gamekeeper, wood-ranger, bailiff or parish clerk, or who shall be a hired servant in the employment of any person, or who shall keep or have any house for the Sale of Beer, Wine or Spiritous Liqueurs by retail; and if any person who shall be appointed . . . shall act in any of the said capacities . . . such person shall become and be incapable of acting as such superintendent or constable and shall forfeit his appoint-

<sup>60</sup> W. L. Melville Lee, *A History of Police in England*, (1901), p. 293.

<sup>61</sup> 2 & 3, Vic. c. 93, s.vi.

<sup>62</sup> Rules for the Government of Constables, as issued by the Home Office, 1839 (ref. 50/20/12.2).

ment . . . and all salary payable to him'. Besides these requirements applicants had to produce a testimonial according to 'Form B'<sup>63</sup> which demanded detailed knowledge of the candidate including his age, height, eyes, hair and complexion colour, and the name and address of his last employer. The referee had to have known the candidate 'personally' for at least five years and to be able to state that, 'he is sober, honest, and of good temper, and his connections and associates are respectable'. These demands were not consistent with the low pay offered to the members of the force and did not attract the type of recruit required. In one of his quarterly reports Mr. Hatton remarked on 'the difficulty of procuring eligible persons to perform the arduous duties of their offices', adding that, 'it may be desirable to observe that half the original force has either been dismissed or retired'.<sup>63</sup> In the second quarter of 1841 six constables were dismissed and two resigned. But, in the same quarter of 1842 only one was dismissed and one reduced, for, as Mr. Hatton reported, 'The crime of drunkenness which has unfortunately led to so many dismissals in the force now rarely occurs and consequently the zealous and respectful conduct of the men is steadily progressing and gaining the estimation of the Public'.<sup>64</sup>

Despite this difficulty of procuring competent men the new force went into action and in the last quarter of 1840 held thirty prisoners in custody at a total expense of £10 17s. 7d. for pursuit, maintenance and conveyance. Under the old system such charges would have amounted to as much as £300, and Mr. Hatton, in his first report said, 'I shall leave it to the magistrates to say how far the Police have attained the objects for which they were principally intended, namely the detection of offenders, suppression of vagrancy, and prevention of crime'.<sup>65</sup> As time went on they proved themselves more, and often at dangerous odds, as at 1.30 a.m. on Sunday, 6 June 1841, when an 'armed and desperate gang of burglars', consisting of ten men, horses and carts, was surprised in the act of robbing a malt store in Higham, by two policemen on patrol. One burglar was caught, but the policeman was shot in the arm and back 'causing him to relinquish his prisoner'.<sup>66</sup> It was pointed out that this 'formidable gang' came from the Western Division of the County where no force as yet existed. But besides physical dangers encountered (Plate I), the new police often worked in an atmosphere of public defiance, and at a meeting in Beccles, in June 1841 five Justices asked the Clerk of the Peace to give notice that it was their intention 'to propose that a report be made to one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State that such a police force is

<sup>63</sup> Q.S.M.B., 23 March 1841.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 June 1842.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1841.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 June 1841.

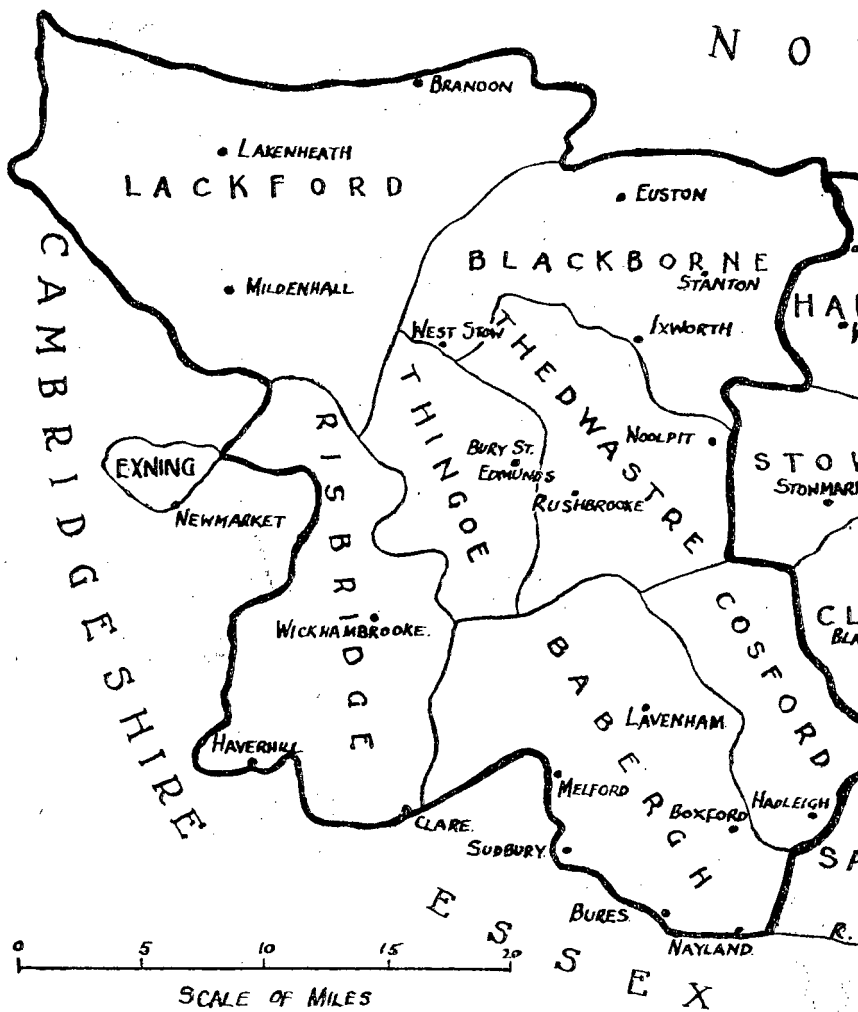
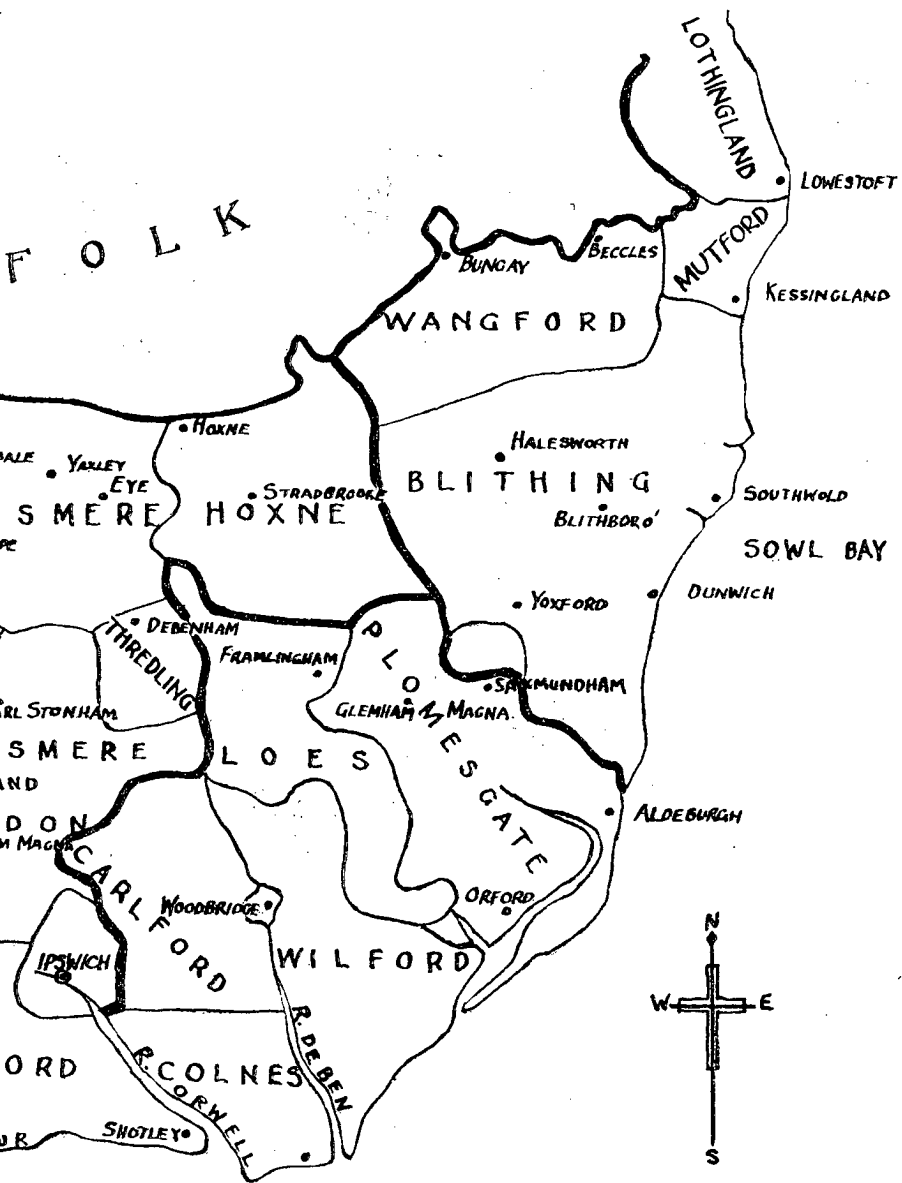


FIG. 1.—Map of Suffolk showing the Hundreds; and the four Constabulary Divisions.



C.R.W. HERVEY del

ry St. Edmunds, Ipswich, Woodbridge and Beccles. (from Suffolk Green Books, No. 12).



no longer needed in this division . . . with the request that the same be forthwith discontinued'.<sup>66</sup> The Police Committee however, decided that the establishment was steadily progressing and no such report would be made.

After the force had been in operation for about six months Mr. Hatton submitted several propositions to the Police Committee. These were:—

1. That it is most desirable for the discipline and efficiency of the Rural Police Force that ranks of inspector and sergeant be established instead of the first class constables. I recommend that four of the former and eight of the latter rank be appointed.
2. I submit the plan of a Station House with lock up and recommend that one be built at Saxmundham as a trial.
3. I deem it advisable that one account book be kept by the superintendent of each division.
4. I recommend the Committee take into consideration a scale of allowances for the purchase of horses and forage, the present allowance being inadequate to defray the expenses incurred.
5. As much inconvenience arises not only to the Service but also to the public for want of efficient men to fill up without delay the vacancies that occur, it is desirable that a preparatory reserve force consisting of at least four men be appointed at 15 shillings a week, including clothing. This arrangement would enable me to bring in men occasionally to Headquarters for instruction, and also to check the system of constables tendering their resignations when ordered to move from one station to another.

These propositions were unanimously approved although only the third was immediately adopted, the others being adjourned for 'consideration'. They were eventually agreed to and submitted to the Marquess of Normanby for his consent.

Under section VII of the Act the Chief Constable was empowered to appoint one of his superintendents to deputise for him in case of illness or absence from the County. This Mr. Hayes Hatton did at the end of 1842, and at the first Quarter Sessions of 1843 he tendered his own resignation of the office of Chief Constable in favour of a similar appointment in the County of Stafford. On 24 January of the same year John Hatton Esq.<sup>67</sup> was appointed by

<sup>67</sup> By coincidence the first two Chief Constables of East Suffolk had the same surname. They were not related.

the Justices as 'being a person duly qualified . . . to be Chief Constable for this County'.

According to Mr. Hayes Hatton's final report <sup>68</sup> to the Police Committee the force for the Eastern division included one deputy chief constable, two superintendents, three inspectors, eight sub-inspectors or sergeants, and fifty-five constables allocated in forty sub-districts. It was added that, 'there is not a single case of an aggravated nature and crime is decreasing which I attribute to the efficiency of the Police Officers and Constables who are daily becoming more conversant with their duties'. A fourth inspector was appointed in October of the same year, and in February 1844 a return was sent from Whitehall to be filled in by the county authorities, 'showing the numbers of the Constabulary Force . . . distinguishing each class or denomination, together with an account in detail of the several items of expenditure for the year 1843'. <sup>69</sup> It was completed as follows:—

	<i>Rate of pay</i>	<i>No.</i>		<i>Total</i>
Chief Constable	£300	1	£300	
Allowance for horses	£40	2	£80	
House rent	No allowance			
				£380
Deputy Chief Constable	£100	1	£100	
County Treasurer	£10	3	£30	
Clerk of the Peace			£155.4.3	
				£665.4.3
Superintendent	£100	2	£200	
Inspector	£65	4	£260	
Sergeant per week	£1	8	£400	
1st class constable per week	18/-	37	£1632	
2nd class constable per week	15/-	15	£585	
				£3742.4.3
Average yearly amount clothing, accoutrements			£363	
Horses—remount, forage			—	
Allowance to superintendent in lieu of forage	£60	2	£120	
Farriery, carts, repairs, harness—wear and tear			—	
				£4225.4.3

<sup>68</sup> Q.S.M.B., January 1843.

<sup>69</sup> Parliamentary Return, 28 February 1844.

Incidental expenses	£113
Stationery	£32.12
Postages	£20
Oil	£2.5
Subsistence of prisoners	—
Rent of Station Houses and assessed taxes	£7
Other expenses	£20
	—————
Total:	£4420.1.3

Further information asked of the Clerk of the Peace revealed that the County of Suffolk as a whole was made up of 530,430 statute acres and had a population of 316,018 of whom 173,126 lived in the Eastern Division. Within the jurisdiction of the Police the number of acres to each constable was about 2,800 and the total expense of each constable was thought to be about £50. The County was assessed at £622,458 and the Police Rate amounted to 1½d. in every pound.

Section XX of the Act stated that 'Expenses are to be defrayed out of the County Rate by the Treasurer of the County'. In March 1840 at the Beccles Quarter Sessions an increase of the sum of £168 was ordered on the Rates, 'for the purpose of an Act passed in the second and third reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria', and at Woodbridge 2½d. in the pound was allowed on the 'present assessment of one fifth the annual value'. The Ipswich Sessions granted the sum of £187.14.10½, out of the general rate of £1026.8.6, for police purposes but in the return to an address of the House of Commons dated 17 March 1840, the Clerk of the Peace estimated that the amount of pay for the one Chief Constable, three superintendents, and sixty constables from April 21st to July 1st would be £440 plus a probable allowance of £5.11.4 to each man for clothing and accoutrements, and it was on this basis that the extra rate was levied. But it was not enough. At a meeting in Woodbridge<sup>70</sup> it was shown that £1400 was needed for the purposes of the Constabulary Force. This meant an increase of £350, five twentieths of the above sum, on the Divisional Rate.<sup>71</sup> It was not popular among the land-owners. However, a Bill passed in August 1840<sup>72</sup> amended the 1839 Police Act stating in Section III that, 'so much of the first recited Act as directs expenses to be paid out of the County Rate is repealed, and Justices in General Quarter Sessions are to make a Police Rate, each District to be assessed and taxed according to a certain pound rate of full and fair annual value of all messuages, lands tenements and hereditaments liable to County Rate'. The

<sup>70</sup> Q.S.M.B., 29 June 1840.

<sup>71</sup> Beccles 6/20, Woodbridge 5/20, and Ipswich 9/20.

<sup>72</sup> 3 & 4, Vic., c. 88, 7 August 1840.

Police Committee, meeting in November at Saxmundham, resolved to raise £1,000 by a Police Rate, to be 'apportioned as under or as near thereto as circumstances will admit, and any surplus that may arise be carried to the credit of the Police Rate'.<sup>73</sup> For the last quarter of the year the assessment made for each division was Beccles £299.15, Woodbridge £257.3.9, and Ipswich £441, making a total of £997.18.9. The total expense of the force for 1840 amounted to £4,046.16.11,<sup>74</sup> and Mr. Hayes Hatton pointed out that in the last quarter of that year the cost of 'pursuance, maintenance and conveyance of 172 prisoners 1,612 miles' had only been £16.9.2 which 'when added to the preceeding quarters during which time the police have been employed will make a considerable reduction in the County Rate'. But people still grumbled. As a contemporary writer says, 'The Suffolk Constabulary Force . . . has no doubt been highly useful both in detecting offenders and preventing crime but many of the inhabitants complain of the increase it has entailed upon the County Rates'.<sup>75</sup>

The duty of collecting the Police Rate fell to the high constable of the hundred. For example, in October 1845 it was ordered that, 'the sum of £321.4.6 be raised for this division of Beccles, being the sum which appears to this court to be needed for the purpose of the said Acts; and the Court doth direct and require you, the High Constable of the Hundred of Mutford and Lothing, to issue your warrant to the respective Overseers of the Poor to levy, collect and pay you . . . the several sums of money rated, assessed and taxed on such Parishes as are mentioned'.<sup>76</sup> These were:—

	£	s.	d.
Barnby	3	8	1½
Carlton	10	19	2¼
Mutford	5	15	11¼
Rushmere	3	11	7½
Gisleham	5	7	9½
Kessingland	6	16	8½
Kirtley	3	2	10¼
Pakefield	3	7	5

and the total sum of £42.9.7¾ was paid to the Treasurer. There were penalties for not complying with the order or carrying it out before a certain date which in the above case was the fifth day of January.

In the amended Act a new clause<sup>77</sup> was added stating that 'a superannuation fund is to be provided for constables', the sum deducted from pay not to be greater than £2.10 in £100, that is, a

<sup>73</sup> Q.S.M.B., 12 November 1840.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 March 1841. <sup>75</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Circular to the high constable of Mutford and Lothingland, 1845.

<sup>77</sup> 3 & 4, Vic. c. 88, s.x.

maximum of 2½%. The fund was also to include, 'monies accruing from stoppages from constables during sickness, and a portion of the fines imposed by any Justice upon drunken persons or assaults on police constables'. At the Woodbridge Sessions of March 1841 the Police Committee recommended a rate of ½d. in the pound for the superannuation fund, adding that, 'there appears to be the sum of £13.17.9 received as the moieties of fines awarded by the police'.

Conditions for awarding sums of money from the fund were laid down in Section XI granting yearly allowances but not to exceed certain proportions. A constable who had 'served diligently' for fifteen to twenty years was not to receive more than half his pay per annum, and a constable who has served more than twenty years, two thirds of his usual pay. If the man was under sixty years of age no allowance was to be made unless he was certified as 'infirm of mind and body'. In March 1865 Mr. Hatton reported that Sergeant Robinson's health was so bad that he had been 'unable to attend duty since January 1862', and was considered incapable to discharge further duties. He was recommended as 'a proper object' for a superannuation allowance.<sup>78</sup> Any constable disabled from a wound received in the execution of his duty was also eligible for the fund but was not to receive more than his whole pay. In 1858 the Police Committee recommended that William Clerk 'disabled in performance of his duties' should receive a shilling a day compensation from the fund,<sup>79</sup> and in 1860 Sergeant Kettle, pronounced by medical certificate unfit for duty, was allowed 'all of 12/- a week'.<sup>80</sup>

The Treasurer received many different requests for allowances, and most of them were met. For example, in 1854, a Mrs. Robertson was given £10 towards the funeral expenses for her husband who died at the lunatic asylum, 'in consequence of an injury received in the execution of his duty'.<sup>81</sup> In 1861 the sum of £25 was paid to the widow of P.C. Tilbrood. He had received 'a severe cartusion on the head' which entitled his widow and children to a gratuity.<sup>82</sup>

In 1844 the Western division of Suffolk still had no established constabulary force, but at the October Quarter Sessions of that year held in Bury St. Edmunds the introduction of such a force was at last agreed upon. In consequence an advertisement appeared in *The Times* and other newspapers, stating that, 'on the eighteenth day of the present month, the Justices of the said County . . . will proceed to the appointment of a Chief Constable for the Western Division under the authority of the Act 2 & 3 Victoria c. 93'. The question then arose as to whether a second Chief Constable could legally be appointed for the 'remaining portion of the Western

<sup>78</sup> Q.S.M.B., March 1865.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1860.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1861.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, October 1858.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1854.

Parliamentary Division', as the present one had, 'carried out the provisions of the Constabulary acts in the Entire Eastern Division and a portion of the Western Division of the County'.<sup>83</sup> The magistrates went on to ask, if such an appointment should not be made, how they were to carry out the adoption of the Act in the remaining portion. They concluded that in electing a Chief Constable for the three divisions of Beccles, Woodbridge and Ipswich, the magistrates 'cannot be considered to have proceeded under the proviso of section IV<sup>84</sup> as they did observe the Parliamentary Divisions of the County; they have therefore appointed their Chief Constable for a number of Divisions, together less than the whole, under section XIX;<sup>85</sup> or they have, supposing the separate Divisions to be considered, under clause XXVIII,<sup>86</sup> distinct counties for the purposes of the Act, appointed the Chief Constable for such united divisions'. Therefore, in their view, until 'duly removed in the manner prescribed by section IV' the present Chief Constable should remain in office 'to the exclusion of any other appointee'. But if he was appointed under section XIX 'the Division about to adopt the Act' should be consolidated with the rest of the County under one Chief Constable. On 'the facts stated' they decided that the magistrates must have acted under the latter section which meant that they, the Justices of the Western Division had no power to appoint a second Chief Constable, and they added, that, 'the only modes by which the magistrates can extend the provisions of the Act to the whole County are either by appointing the present Chief Constable for the Division about to adopt the Act, or by voting his dismissal and proceeding to an election of a Chief Constable for the East and West Divisions respectively'.<sup>87</sup>

However, it was finally decided that as the two divisions functioned independently in all other matters they should do so where the police force was concerned, and in December 1844 twenty candidates were interviewed by the Committee for the position of Chief Constable for the Western Division. By a show of hands they elected Major George Darby-Griffiths, who, on 7 January 1845 took the oath for 'executing the office of Chief Constable for the Western Division of the County of Suffolk'. and was directed to live in Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>88</sup> At the same time a Police Committee of twelve members was appointed 'for the purpose of carrying the constabulary Acts into effect', and they

<sup>83</sup> Stowe and Hartismere. <sup>84</sup> See above, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> 'Constables may be appointed for separate divisions for which special or petty sessions are holden.'

<sup>86</sup> 'The word County shall be construed to mean County, Riding, or Division having a separate County, or Quarter Sessions of the Peace, or in which separate County Rates are made. . . .

<sup>87</sup> Q.S.M.B., October 1844. <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1844.

reported that the force was to consist of one Chief Constable at £500 p.a., six superintendents at £80 p.a., seven sergeants at 21/- p.w., fifteen first class constables at 20/- p.w. and twelve second class constables at 18/- p.w. making a total expenditure of £2,703 a year. Major Griffiths had already decided where to station his men, and his proposals, approved by the Committee, were as follows:— eight men in the hundred of Babergh, four in Cosford and Thingoe, three in Thedwastre, six in Risbridge, and five in Blackborne and Lackford, with 'the liberty to station them in different proportions'.<sup>89</sup>

One of the duties of the Chief Constable was to keep a daily account, according to 'Form C',<sup>90</sup> recording the 'actual state of the constabulary' and once every three months he was required to transmit a report to one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State including any reference made by a Justice as to the state of the Constabulary. In November 1848 the following account was recorded for the West Suffolk Constabulary Force:—<sup>91</sup>

*Numbers authorized to be appointed*

	Chief Constables	1
	Superintendents	4
	Constables	49
		—
Superintendents	present	4
	sick	—
	on leave	—
		—
		4
		—
Constables	present	49
	sick	—
	hurt on duty	—
	absent without leave	—
	absent with leave	—
	detached	—
	suspended	—
	on force without pay	—
		—
		49
		—

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1845.

<sup>90</sup> Rules for the Government of Constables, 1839.

<sup>91</sup> The information was recorded daily by the Chief Constable, one column for each day of the month.

Variations	resigned	—
	dismissed	—
	dead	—
		—
Horses	present	4
	sick	—
		4
		—

A monthly return of the 'Allocation of the Constabulary of the Western Division' was also kept for each subdivision. For example, the return for the Boxford division for October 1848 was as follows:—

<i>Superintendent</i>	<i>Station</i>	<i>Sergeants</i>	<i>Constables</i>	<i>Total</i>
Walter Ray	Boxford	1	1	
	Melford	1		
	Hadleigh	1		
	Lavenham		2	
	Waldringfield		1	
	Bures		1	
	Nayland		1	
	Monks Eleigh		1	
	Bildeston		1	
	Thorpe		1	
	Cockfield		1	
Gt. Cornard		1		
				—
				14
				—

In the Mildenhall division there were two sergeants and eight constables under Superintendent Fransham; in Ixworth, one sergeant and nine constables under Superintendent Smith; and in Clare one sergeant and thirteen constables under Superintendent Death.

Major Griffiths came up against the same problems as Mr. Hatton had done in recruiting the right type of man, although not to the same extent. In June 1845 Constables Carlo and Pilbrow were dismissed at Boxford for 'hiding under a table and thereby



hearing a conversation of the Chief Constable',<sup>92</sup> but in his October report Major Griffiths said that he found the members of the force 'efficient as far as their numbers will permit and some of them highly so'. The force then consisted of six superintendents, five sergeants ('I have been unable to fill up two vacant sergeant's situations satisfactorily'), and twenty-seven constables. In March 1849 a request was made for an increase in the numbers of the force but it was not deemed expedient, although the pay of sergeants was increased by 3/6 a week and that of constables by 2/6. In April of the same year the Chief Constable died and on July 7th, Colonel George Eyres was sworn in in his place. In the same month he reported on 'the general tranquil state of the different districts with the exception of Boxford in which I regret to say there has been an increase of crime in proportion to the other districts'.<sup>93</sup> This he attributed to an insufficient number of constables in such a densely populated area, and in October reorganised the force into four superintendents, six sergeants, and fourteen first, second and third class constables.

At the beginning of 1847 Colonel Eyres reported the force in an efficient state 'as will amply repay every expense the County is incurring on their account'.<sup>94</sup> As in the Eastern division, the police force in West Suffolk was paid for by a Police Rate levied on the same basis as the County Rate. In 1849 the valuation of the division was £337,699 which, at a rate of 1d. in the pound, meant a Police Rate of £1,407.1.7, and a charge of 'rather more than threepence' in the pound was levied on each parish. In the same year a Committee investigating certain items of expenditure with a view to reducing the expenses of the force reported that it would be impossible to make any material reduction unless the force was entirely remodelled.<sup>95</sup> Two years later another Committee enquiring into the 'best mode of maintaining the police force in its present efficiency and with more economy' submitted the resolutions that the salary of the Chief Constable should not exceed £300 p.a. with no extra allowances, the four superintendents should receive £150 p.a., sergeants 21/- a week, first class constables 19/-, second class constables 17/-, and the remaining constables 15/-, saving £450 a year.<sup>96</sup>

In October 1851 Colonel Eyres resigned as Chief Constable and on 10 December the Committee elected Captain Edwin Chevallier Syer as his successor. The fact that he was fifty-one years old<sup>97</sup> was disregarded because he produced excellent references from the Navy and the Irish Constabulary. The Secretary of State did not

<sup>92</sup> Q.S.M.B., June 1845.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1846.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1847.

<sup>95</sup> Report of the Committee, 9 October 1849.

<sup>96</sup> Q.S.M.B., November 1851.

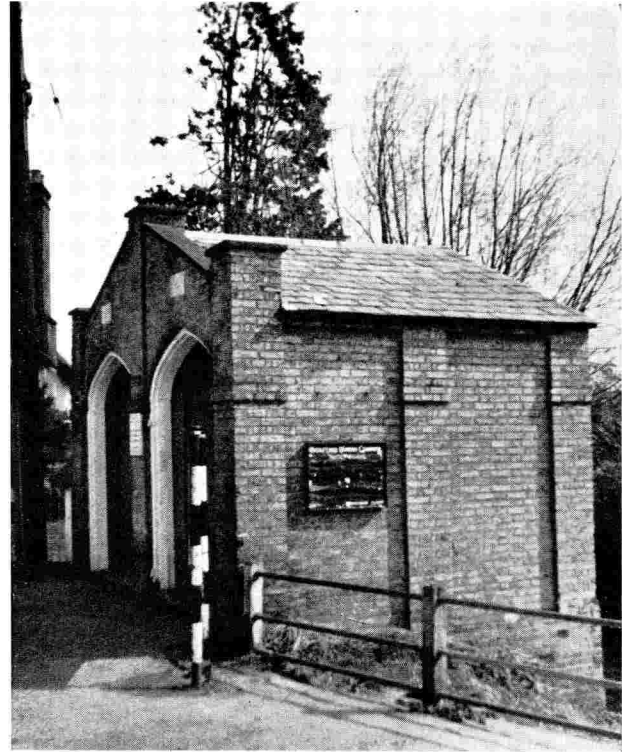
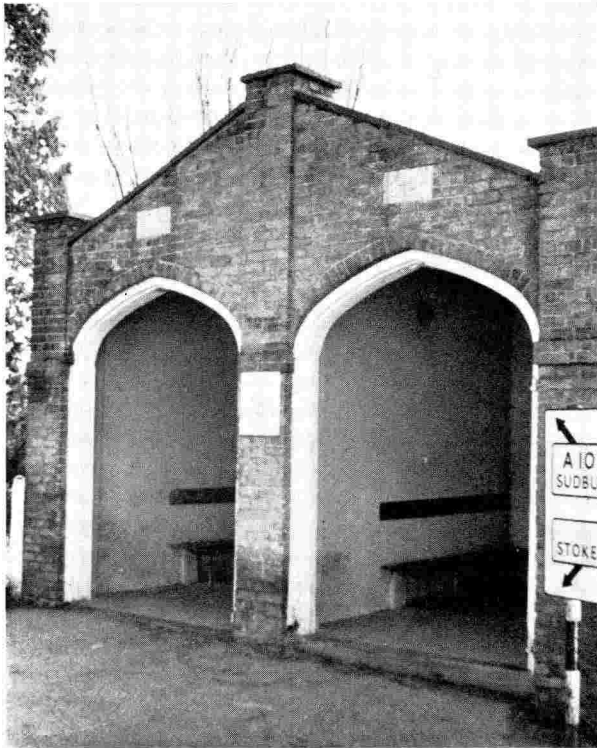
<sup>97</sup> See above, p. 11.

PLATE I



A posed photograph taken about 1855 showing a police constable in action.

PLATE II



Old gaol and engine house at Boxford.

at first approve the decision but withdrew his objection after a memorial had been sent to him stating that Captain Syer had been elected from thirty-one candidates by forty-six votes to sixteen. On 28 January 1852, he took the oath as Chief Constable. He made his first report in July and was obviously far from satisfied with the state of the force: 'I regret to state that great irregularities have existed for a long period and the force is not in a state of discipline which the County has a right to expect. For nearly two years subordination has existed at the Hadleigh Station, the sergeant and constables refusing to work together, making their private quarrels a plea for neglect of duty. To restore order I have found it necessary to direct Sergeant Davies to resign for allowing P.C. Carlo to roam about at large drunk at the Hadleigh Fair, besides which Sergeant Davies has shown he has neither energy nor ability for a station command'.<sup>98</sup> P.C. Carlo too was dismissed for being drunk, losing his hat, and disgracing himself 'by using bad language in a Fair when his services were particularly required'. In the same report it was stated that P.C. Ralling of Mildenhall, when dismissed for 'passing many hours in the beer house at night neglecting his duty', said that he did 'quite sufficient work for the pay he received'. P.C. Devereux who was with him at the time confessed that he had been encouraged by the senior constable and so was merely removed and fined £1. Several other constables were reprimanded or removed for 'not actively pursuing a felon' or being in debt, and two first class constables resigned in favour of the Essex and Cambridge forces. Following these incidents Captain Syer recommended that candidates should be taken on at 12/- a week, instead of 15/-, for one month previous to their being accepted as constables. It was hoped that this arrangement would enable the superintendents to discover whether 'any confirmed bad habits exist; and I have reason to hope it will lessen the dismissal of constables and ultimately raise the moral character of the force'. In his next report Captain Syer announced that two officers had been fined for 'disrespect and disorderly conduct', adding that, 'the many necessary qualities—good character, physical power, intelligence and some education, will always render it difficult to get good recruits'.

In 1854 the Chief Constable reported that many of his best men were resigning in favour of other Counties where pay was higher.<sup>99</sup> Although Captain Syer immediately received an increase to £420 a year the pay of the force in general was not increased until January 1857, and conduct continued to be unsatisfactory. Publicans were claimed to be largely responsible for allowing constables to

<sup>98</sup> Q.S.M.B., July 1852.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1854.

get drunk while on duty.<sup>100</sup> By this time, however, a police force was well established in both East and West Suffolk and was recognised by the public. John Glyde, writing at the time, commented that 'the advantages arising from the appointment of the Rural Police have in great measure caused the clamour with which it was originally assailed to die away . . . and the organized rural police contrast very favourably with the constabulary employed in some of our boroughs where it is notorious that the force is of very little use in the suppression of nuisances and crime'.<sup>101</sup>

#### THE NEW CONSTABULARY FORCE

Every attempt was made to maintain the standard of the new force and, after the initial enrolment,<sup>102</sup> qualifications and rules were often adapted to the needs of the County.

A candidate applying to either division of the Suffolk constabulary was required to be less than thirty years old, ten years younger than the Home Office suggested, and to stand 5 ft. 9 ins., 'unless of superior intelligence', which was two inches taller than before.<sup>103</sup> He was also required to have knowledge of the three R's, to be physically 'equal to the performance of police duty', and to be 'generally intelligent'. Besides these qualifications certain conditions of entry were laid down, particularly that 'no candidate may be approved who has more than two children depending on him'. He was also asked:—

1. to devote his whole time to the police force and therefore not to carry on any other trade, 'nor his wife keep a shop';
2. to serve and reside wherever he is ordered;
3. to appear in his police dress at all times unless given leave to wear plain clothes, or in cases when 'disguise may be considered necessary';
4. to promptly obey all lawful orders from persons in authority over him;
5. to obey all regulations of the service;
6. not to resign from his duties unless allowed to do so in writing by the Chief Constable, on a penalty of £5.

Each constable was liable to dismissal for 'unfitness, negligence of duty or misconduct', and if he was dismissed, had to give up every 'article of clothing and appointments' he had been supplied with. Anything damaged had to be paid for.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1856.

<sup>101</sup> J. Glyde, *Suffolk in the Nineteenth Century*, (1851), pp. 32–33.

<sup>102</sup> East Suffolk, 1840. West Suffolk, 1845.

<sup>103</sup> Rules and Orders governing the East Suffolk Police Force, ref. 108/1/1.7.

Once appointed to his office the constable took an oath, for which he received a shilling, swearing that he would 'well and truly serve Our Sovereign Lady the Queen in the office of local constable for the years ensuing, or until another shall be sworn in my stead, according to the best of my skill and knowledge',<sup>104</sup> He was then supplied with a greatcoat, cape and badge, a coat, two pairs of trousers, a pair of boots and shoes, and a hat and stock. In his second year he received a coat and badge, a pair of trousers, boots and shoes, and a new hat. Then in his third year he received the same as in his first year, and in his fourth the same as in his second year, and so on.<sup>105</sup> It was noted in March 1845 that extra expense would be incurred in that quarter as 'this is the year for supplying the force with great-coats'.<sup>106</sup> In January 1857 Mr. Hatton was instructed to insert an advertisement in *The Times* inviting tenders for the supply of clothing to the police force. The firm appointed was Dolan and Company of St. Martin's Lane, and a bill sent to the Police Committee in 1865 reveals the amount of clothing it supplied:—<sup>107</sup>

92 frock coats	at	26s 11d
92 dress trousers	at	15s 6d
92 undress trousers	at	11s 10d
92 hats	at	11s 3d
2 greatcoats	at	30s
6 sergeant's frock coats & chevrons	at	27s 11d
6 dress trousers	at	15s 6d
6 undress trousers	at	11s 10d
6 hats	at	11s 3d
9 inspector's frock coats	at	66s 6d
9 dress trousers	at	25s
9 greatcoats	at	67s 6d
9 hats	at	16s
1 superintendent's frock coat	at	74s 6d
1 greatcoat	at	77s 6d
1 dress trousers	at	28s
6 undress trousers	at	28s
6 caps	at	14s

<sup>104</sup> 3 & 4 Vic., c. 88, s.xvi.

<sup>105</sup> Rules of the Marquess of Normanby, 1839.

<sup>106</sup> Accounts Book, 10 March 1845, ref. 110/3/3.1.

<sup>107</sup> East Suffolk Account Book, Bill from Dolan and Co., 1865. Ref. 108/1/1.21.

This made a total of £480.17s., to which was added:—

184 pairs of constable's boots	at	10s
12 pairs of sergeant's boots	at	10s
18 pairs of inspector's boots	at	16s
12 pairs of superintendent's boots	at	24s

making a grand total of £607.13s.

Besides clothing each constable was supplied with a staff, although 'a cutlass may be supplied to any constable who is so situated that, in the opinion of two Justices, it is necessary for his personal protection in the performance of his duty'.<sup>108</sup> It was however only to be worn at night, or when a riot or serious public disturbance had taken place or was apprehended, or 'upon any sudden emergency when orders have been given by the Chief Constable that one or more of the constables should be armed'. If such action was taken a report was made to the Justice and thus to the Secretary of State. In 1866 the rules were 'revised, augmented and approved' and it was decided that no constables were to be armed with revolvers unless sanctioned by the Home Office. Other accoutrements issued to constables included a pair of handcuffs, a belt and a lantern; in 1867 Dolan & Co. supplied

24 lanterns	at	6s	6d
1 pr. spring snips	at	7s	3d
20 prs. handcuffs	at	5s	0d

The staff supplied to each constable was made of wood and generally bore the name of the police district or the constable's number, and the Sovereign's initials on the handle.

The newly appointed constable was given a pocket book of instructions concerning his duties as a member of the police force, but it was not to be understood to contain 'rules of conduct applicable to every variety of circumstance' that might occur in performance of those duties. 'Something must be left to the intelligence and discretion of the individual; and according to the degree in which they show themselves possessed of these qualities, and their zeal, activity and judgement on all occasions, will lie their claims to future promotion and reward'.<sup>109</sup> Rewards were given, such as one to P.C. Robert Ward for the capture of 'Jarrald and Ost, armed by night for unlawful purposes'. He was awarded £2.2s. and

<sup>108</sup> Rules of the Marquess of Normanby, 1839.

<sup>109</sup> Handbook of Rules and Orders for the Guidance of the West Suffolk Police Force, ref. 108/1/1.9.

recommended for showing signs of 'an active, intelligent, and rising young officer'.<sup>110</sup>

An important aid in establishing the new force was laid down in section XII of the amended Police Act, that 'Station Houses and strong rooms are to be provided'. Not only were they necessary for the temporary confinement of prisoners but they formed the core of the constabulary acting as a common centre for the constables. They were imposing buildings commanding a central position in the village and thus adding a certain status to the new and unknown force.

In 1841 and 1846 a circular 'On the Construction of Station Houses and Strong Rooms for the use of the Rural Constabulary Force' was sent to the Police Committees of East and West Suffolk respectively with a covering letter stating that the enclosed drawings and observations had been prepared for the 'use and information of magistrates . . . as specimens of Station Houses best adapted for the accommodation of the police force and security of prisoners'.<sup>111</sup> Eleven plans were included, those from A to I, 'convenient in smaller districts', provided accommodation for constables, 'the number and size of rooms to be increased according to circumstances', with two strong rooms or cells attached. Plan J was intended for larger districts and provided accommodation for an inspector or 'superior officer' and constables, while plan K was suggested for the principal Station House of a division of the County, with a guard room in which 'the whole divisional force might occasionally be assembled, and where they might sleep'. Stress was laid on the importance of proper construction of the strong rooms in regard to 'the security of prisoners and prevention of communication'. To ensure this, exact details of construction were given including the thickness of the walls, 'two feet of stone' with iron hoops in the centre at six inches intervals, the depth to which they were to be carried below ground, 'four feet six inches, to prevent undermining', and the thickness between the cells was to be not less than eighteen inches, the cells themselves to be not less than 9 ft. by 6 ft. 6 ins. by 8 ft. 6 ins. Fluted or ground glass was to be used in the windows 'through which objects cannot be distinguished' and precautions were to be taken to prevent communication by means of the flues. A memorandum on construction<sup>112</sup> recommended that a water closet and wooden bench be provided in each cell, the latter 'at least two feet wide on which a prisoner could sleep'. A Court Room was incorporated into the police stations making it easier for a constable to give evidence. He had previously had to do so in the local public house.

<sup>110</sup> Q.S.M.B., 16 March 1863.

<sup>111</sup> Printed Circular from Whitehall, 3 April 1841, (Ref. 108/1/1.22).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 1846, made by Major J. Jebb, R.E., Surveyor General of Prisons.



As soon as the police force was established the magistrates in each division authorized a committee to make the 'best arrangements in their power' to hire buildings for use as station houses and to provide temporary lock-ups until the court 'shall come to some final determination on the subject'.<sup>113</sup> For example, in Boxford 'on an open space, part of the High Road' there was a strong room, next to the Engine House, which had been erected before West Suffolk adopted the Police Act. It was then taken over by the police as a temporary lock-up, and, at a cost of £17 10s., 'stretchers, as used in military guard rooms, and preferable to straw spread on the ground' were installed, and a water closet built over the river. The sum of £50, 'being half of the cost of origin at erection', was paid by the police to the Parish of Boxford for the building (Plate II).

Once it had been decided in Quarter Sessions where Station Houses were to be built a committee of magistrates was asked to consider 'the most proper and convenient place' in that village as a site for the station, and plans based on those issued by the Home Office were drawn up. The expenses of the police stations once erected were paid for out of the police rate, the main items being for coal, oil for lighting, cleaning and general repairs. A set of Burn's *Justice of the Peace* was ordered for the use of magistrates in the court room. An allowance of 1/6 a day was granted for the maintenance of prisoners committed on remand, and 2/6 for cleaning the cells and magistrates room. In 1857 complaints were received by the Committee that the public could not find the police residences, and it was recommended that 'a white board with police station in block letters' should be placed in a conspicuous position on the premises'.<sup>114</sup>

The principal object of the force was given as 'the prevention of crime' to which end 'every effort of the police is to be directed'.<sup>115</sup> Each member of the force was to conduct himself by such 'vigilance and activity as may render it extremely difficult for anyone to commit a crime within the district under his charge'. With this ideal in mind it was thought that the security of person and property and the preservation of public tranquility would be 'better effected' than by detecting and punishing an offender after he had committed a crime. Frequency of offences in a particular area would be reason to suspect the police 'were not acting fully in that area'.

The police constable was asked to receive the orders of his superiors with 'deference and respect, and execute them to the best

<sup>113</sup> Q.S.M.B., January 1845.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 July 1857.

<sup>115</sup> Rules and Orders for the guidance of the West Suffolk Police Force, Rules 3 and 4.

of his power',<sup>116</sup> and warned to be cautious in his demeanor so that by 'sober, orderly and regular habits, respectful attention to every person and ready zeal'<sup>117</sup> he would obtain the approbation of all classes. The respect of the 'magistrates, gentry, and people' was vital to the success of the force and a constable inclined to be quarrelsome was considered unfit for service.<sup>118</sup> To maintain his image the constable was required to be 'scrupulously exact' in the care of his clothing and appointments and always neat and clean. If negligent in this respect he was considered careless and slovenly and therefore not fit to serve the office.<sup>119</sup> It was suggested that his spare time should be devoted to 'reading and writing and the general improvement of his mind' and he was to lead a 'sober, moral, steady and obedient course of life'.<sup>120</sup> He was required to attend divine service 'at all times and to show an example of due respect for, and observance of, the Sabbath Day and a strict attention to religious duties'.<sup>121</sup> On no account was he to enter a public house, except in the course of duty, or to obtain refreshment,<sup>122</sup> but he was never to receive such refreshment without paying for it. Constables were continually being fined for being drunk in public houses.

When on duty the constable was asked to make the greatest effort to be at the appointed conference points, 'marked out for him by his superintendent', on time. Twenty minutes delay was allowed but a report had to be submitted if he failed to turn up then.<sup>123</sup> It was emphasized that he should 'acquaint himself with all parts of his beat' and know each inhabitant in order to be able to recognise them, but he was not to talk to anyone except on matters relating to duty, and he was never to interfere 'idly or unnecessarily'. His most indispensable qualification was claimed to be a 'perfect command of temper' by which he was to avoid irritability and abusive language and not be moved by threats or insults.<sup>124</sup> As the legitimate police officer of his district he was vested with considerable powers with which to discharge his various duties and he was to go about in a 'calm, quiet and decided manner'. But when required to act he was to do so boldly and decisively.

Crime in the nineteenth century was described by Glyde as 'one of the most repulsive of the antisocial aspects of the age'.<sup>125</sup> In Suffolk in the year 1800 there were 51 criminals per 100,000 of the population, and in 1851, 168 per 100,000. Although this was an increase of 200% Glyde did partly attribute it to the establishment of the rural police forces affording increased means of detec-

<sup>116</sup> Rules and Orders for the guidance of the East Suffolk Police Force, Rule 46.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 47.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 50.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 54.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 48.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 77.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 54.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 49.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 53.

<sup>125</sup> Glyde, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

tion. A Summary of Convictions reveals the type of crime the police were dealing with<sup>126</sup> in the years ending:—

	1850	1851	1852	1853
common assault	183	170	177	184
damage to property	119	126	100	26
resisting police	11	10	14	8
against beerhouses	19	20	19	23
vagrants	64	82	88	62
intoxication	85	125	100	68
against Road Act	37	47	45	26
wilfull trespass	77	132	117	123
hawking without licence	1	1	1	1
families deserted	22	11	17	16
misbehaviour in service	18	17	8	1
disorderly in Union Houses	57	34	29	5
against Weights and Measures Act	37	24	29	5
Revenue	1		1	
cruelty to animals	7	6	6	15
against Salvage Act		17		
	738	822	743	588

In the half-year ending Michaelmas 1848 no less than 5,504 vagrants were relieved in the County,<sup>127</sup> but in the following year, when the police were called in, all suspected cases of simulated destitution were referred to the district inspector. The greater majority of the mendicants then inquired their way to the nearest lodging house 'not desiring to give the inspector the trouble of inquiring into his case or ascertaining the contents of his pocket'. The result was a 64% decrease in the number relieved in the corresponding half of 1849.

Glyde describes arson as an offence 'to some extent peculiar to Suffolk, infested with criminals of this class'<sup>128</sup> adding that the only other county exhibiting an equal number of such offenders was Cambridgeshire. In 1844 a report was made on 'the fearful destruction of property by incendiary fires which, notwithstanding the great exertions of the police, are a frequent occurrence'.<sup>129</sup> In 1848 a letter from Sir George Grey stated that a reward of £50 would be paid by the Government to anyone giving 'such information and

<sup>126</sup> Return of Summary of Convictions 1850-53, ref. 108/1/1.5.

<sup>127</sup> Glyde, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>129</sup> Q.S.M.B., June 1844.

evidence as shall lead to the discovery and conviction of the mercendiaries who set fire to the farm buildings, the property of Sir Thomas Gage'. A pardon would be granted to an accomplice 'not being the person who actually set fire to the Property' if he gave evidence to convict the mercendiaries.<sup>130</sup>

A large proportion of offences were thefts and in March 1861 the Chief Constable reported a particularly large number of robberies 'of an extensive nature . . . by parties in no way pressed by poverty',<sup>131</sup> of such items as sacks of grain and clover seed, chickens, lambs and cattle, as well as household objects. Poaching<sup>132</sup> was also a common offence but a decrease was noted in 1865 following the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 which seemed to be so 'thoroughly understood by the parties concerned that it has worked some extraordinary changes in the criminal population'.<sup>133</sup> The following return<sup>134</sup> reveals further offences dealt with by the police in the course of duty and includes fines awarded by the magistrates:—

<i>Name of convicted</i>	<i>Offence</i>	<i>Fine</i>		
		£	s.	d.
H. Humphrey	game trespass	1		
H. Cousins	using nets for game	1	13	
A. Guisey	drunk in charge of horse and cart	1		
J. Godden	highway offence		5	
J. Cross	master	}	3	6
A. Edwards	servant			
Philips	malicious injury	1		
W. Chinery	excise	2	10	
F. Leader	workshops			6
J. Greasy	drunk and riotous	2		
E. Cooper	cruelty to a donkey		7	6
F. Hawkins	refusing to leave beerhouse on request		2	6
R. Welham	keeping alehouse open during prohibited hours	1		
D. Golding	damage to tombstone		1	6
G. Chatters	cattle straying		5	
T. Bougham	riding without a guide		2	
J. Taylor	under poaching act	1		
C. Higgins	contagious disease	25		

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 September 1848.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1861.

<sup>132</sup> A Suffolk Proverb says that 'Poaching is the root of all evil' (Glyde, p. 127).

<sup>133</sup> Q.S.M.B., 20 March 1865.

<sup>134</sup> For the Boxford division of Babergh, 1873, and Framlingham, 1865.

<i>Name of convicted</i>	<i>Offence</i>	<i>Fine</i>		
		£	s.	d.
R. Graham	false scales	4	6	
H. Bull	keeping carriage without licence	5		
J. Wince	selling beer without licence	50		
E. Mayes	aggravated assault		6	10
S. Forsdyke	stealing growing peas		2	6
G. Wright	under vaccination act		2	6
S. Ling	furious driving		2	6
S. Peck	aiding and abetting do.		2	6
R. Haward	malicious damage	1	10	
E. Chambers	game killing		5	
R. Pipe	under Railway Act	1		
W. Burcham	straying on highway		4	
N. Cox	torturing a mare	1		
R. Bagge	permitting prostitution	1		
A. Smith	obscene language		5	
J. Woolnaugh	leaving horse and cart in street		2	6
S. Moore	leaving hackney carriage do.		2	6
W. Frost	not giving notice of Foot and Mouth disease	1	5	
J. Toller	under Cattle Plague Act			3
G. Hothin	under Refreshment Act		5	
G. Read	obstructing highway			3
C. Turner	assault on police constable	3		
H. Bloomfield	under Agricultural Gangs Act			6

The Chief Constable submitted an annual report to the Home Secretary concerning the state of crime in the County, 'according to Tables II and III'. The first of these stated the class of persons apprehended or proceeded against, male and female, all known thieves, prostitutes, vagrants, tramps and others without visible means of subsistence, all suspicious characters and habitual drunkards. The second table included the numbers of depredators, offenders and suspected persons at large in the district. This was interpreted to mean only those living by dishonest practices and not those once convicted and now honestly employed. The Chief Constable also had to state the number of houses of bad character in the district such as brothels, houses of 'ill fame', tramps lodging houses, and places such as public and beer houses and coffee shops where such bad characters congregated.

Besides his daily pay a police constable was allowed certain fees for performing those duties previously undertaken by the parish

constable. For serving summonses and attending petty sessions he was allowed 2/6 a day plus travelling expenses which if he used the railway were 1d. a mile or 2d. a mile if he had to go by road, provided the distance was over four miles each way. For serving a warrant he was allowed 2/6 plus mileage as above and a third class fare for his prisoner, or 3d. a mile by road. For maintenance of his prisoner 1/- a day and 6d. a night was allowed. In 1848 Superintendent Smith claimed the sum of £17 18s. 2d. for prosecuting Eliza Smith on a charge of arson. He began his travels in January 1848 and completed them in February 1849 after several journeys between villages in Suffolk and Norfolk by horse, hire of which was 10/10 each time.

The constable could also claim expenses for carrying out orders from the magistrates, such as inspecting ale houses for which he was allowed between sixpence and a shilling depending on the number involved. For removing Gypsies from a Parish he was allowed 2/6 and 3d. a mile 'going and returning' for conveying them to a magistrate, and if involved in a coroner's case he could claim for such duties as procuring a warrant, taking the body to the coroner's office, summoning the jury and witnesses, and attending the coroner.<sup>135</sup> If he had to keep the body himself he was allowed 5/-, as was the petty constable. It was similarly his responsibility to give notice of public meetings. For example at Beccles in August 1855 the order was made to 'affix, or cause to be affixed on the door of the Church or Chapel, or some other public or conspicuous place, a notice in writing that an adjourned Annual Licensing meeting will be held at the King's Head on September 6th next'.<sup>136</sup> On another occasion the same constable was required to give notice to the Overseers of the Poor in his 'Constablewick', to make out a list of 'a competent number of substantial householders', from which new officers could be elected, a duty vestigial from the days of the parish constable.

In 1864 a letter was received by the Committee from Admiral McHardy<sup>137</sup> requesting the assistance of the Constabulary for the Great Eastern Railway Company. It was thought very desirable to co-operate with the railway authorities and two constables were seconded to the Railway to assist in the detection of offenders. In return, constables of the West Suffolk Constabulary were conveyed free of charge by rail within the County. Constables were occasionally allowed to be seconded to firms, as in June 1865 when, on application by Messrs. Garrett and Sons of Leiston, a constable was appointed to the firm to be paid and clothed by them.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Return of fees payable to constables, 1848, ref. 109/4/7.

<sup>136</sup> Order issued to the constable of Beccles, 31 August 1855.

<sup>137</sup> Chief Constable of Essex.

<sup>138</sup> Allowed under 3 & 4, Vic., c.88, s. xix.

By common law the constable was empowered to arrest 'all persons whom he sees making riots and affrays' and was responsible for breaking up any disturbances likely to cause a breach of the peace.<sup>139</sup> In 1869 a large number of the force were involved in keeping the peace at various polling booths throughout the County during the general elections and the Chief Constable reported that this duty was 'very satisfactorily performed by the Police, and the good conduct of the people of West Suffolk at the election contests gave little or no trouble to the officers engaged in that duty'.<sup>140</sup>

But the police did not always have such an easy time. In 1844 Mr. Hatton reported the 'cruel and determined murder of P.C. James McRaddin' who was cut down 'whilst in the execution of his duty', by a shot-gun blast when he disturbed a gang breaking into a barn at Gisleham near Lowestoft.<sup>141</sup>

#### EFFECTS OF THE 'OBLIGATORY' POLICE ACT OF 1856

By the year 1856 police forces existed in twenty-five counties of England and Wales and in parts of seven others, but in twenty counties no action had been taken.<sup>142</sup> It was to these counties that criminals had migrated and the contrast between peace and order in districts where police forces were in existence, and disorder and increasing crime in districts where they were not, caused the Government to pass a second Rural Police Act,<sup>143</sup> commonly known as the 'Obligatory' Act, which required Justices to establish a paid police force for the whole of every County. Crown Inspectors of Constabulary were introduced to report the state and efficiency of the forces to the Home Secretary, and each Chief Constable was required to report annually the state of crime in his County. This Act, too, was opposed, on the grounds that it interfered with public liberty, that the inspectors would be spies, and a system of inspection would destroy initiative and local responsibility reducing England to the level of the continental 'police-states'.<sup>144</sup> These risks to liberty, however, were soon accepted, and discrepancies and differences in organization between individual forces were gradually adjusted under the influence of a scheme whereby the government undertook payment of a quarter of the basic expenses of each force subject to it being found on inspection to conform with a general standard of efficiency defined and demanded by the Home Office.

<sup>139</sup> Rules and Orders for the guidance of East Suffolk Police Force, Rule 80.

<sup>140</sup> Q.S.M.B., 12 January 1869.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 October 1844.

<sup>142</sup> Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>143</sup> 19 & 20, Vic., c. 69, 'to render more effectual the Police in the Counties and Boroughs of England and Wales.'

<sup>144</sup> E. L. Woodward, 'The Age of Reform', *Oxford History of England*, xiii, (1962), p. 448.

When this Act was passed a police force had existed in East Suffolk for sixteen years and in West Suffolk for eleven. It was therefore only the government inspection which affected the two divisions, and that to their advantage. The first 'Government Inspector of Police for the Midland and Eastern Counties of England' was Colonel Cartwright who made his first inspection of West Suffolk in 1857. With the Chief Constable, Captain Syer, he made a tour of the division visiting the main police stations where the constables of the various districts had gathered for 'parade-ground'<sup>145</sup> inspection. Police account books and records were studied before the Inspector submitted his report to the Home Office and to Captain Syer who passed it on to the Police Committee. Any suggestions were then considered and acted on if they were thought applicable to improving the efficiency of the force. In January Captain Syer, 'having found from authentic sources that the police of the neighbouring counties are serving under more favourable conditions, and communications having been received offering more advantageous employment to officers of good conduct', had laid before the Police Committee a new grade and salary scale, 'which I trust will have the effect of retaining the services of these officers of nine or ten years' service, a class of men thoroughly essential to the well-being of your police force'.<sup>146</sup> But only in consequence of a similar suggestion made by Colonel Cartwright did the Committee take action and increase the pay of superintendents to £180 per annum, inspectors to 27/- a week plus £2 p.a. for extras, first class constables to 21/- after two years' service, second class constables 19/-, and third class constables 17/-, an increase in each case of a shilling a week. A fourth class of constable was introduced, but only as a training class at 15/- a week until attached to class three.

After touring the three divisions of East Suffolk Colonel Cartwright submitted his report to Mr Hatton and commented, as in West Suffolk, on the pay received by the members of the force, adding a recommendation that the force be increased to 114 men 'by the addition of seven first class constables'. This meant that the force in the Eastern division consisted of one Chief Constable at £415 per annum, his deputy at £180 p.a., two superintendents at £170 p.a. and three at £140 p.a., four inspectors at 27/- a week and four at 25/-, five sergeants at 23/-, forty first class constables at 21/-, twenty-four second class constables at 19/-, twelve third class constables at 17/-, and eighteen fourth class at 16/-. By his first inspection Colonel Cartwright had therefore equalised the pay of

<sup>145</sup> There was a strong military influence in the formation of the New Police. One of the first Commissioners, Charles Rowan, had a military background and it is to him that the Police owe much of their organization.

<sup>146</sup> Q.S.M.B., January 1857.



the police in East and West Suffolk, and in each case the Chief Constable was able to report to the magistrates that the Inspector 'is perfectly satisfied and shall certify to the Home Secretary that the County is entitled to Government Allowances',<sup>147</sup> which, as already mentioned, amounted to a quarter of basic expenses.

In 1857 the expenses of the Eastern division of the County were £5,516.6.4 and a cheque for £1,379.1.7 was sent to the Ipswich division by the Paymaster General, where it was shared with the other two divisions. Ipswich received £602.11.8, Beccles £413.14.6, and Woodbridge £344.15.5. At the October Quarter Sessions of 1859 a committee was elected to consider the amalgamation of the three divisions of East Suffolk for business matters. It was effected in January 1860 with the result that all fiscal and administrative business previously transacted in each division separately was now transacted at one centre, Ipswich, for one division. A single treasurer was appointed and expenses of the divisions were in future met by a single rate assessed on the whole area of East Suffolk. The government grant was assessed similarly and paid to Mr. Gross, the Treasurer, at Ipswich. The division of Bury St. Edmunds remained the same with its own separate rate but was now officially designated the Western division of the County of Suffolk. The amalgamation also meant that Quarter Sessional business relating to the Eastern division was now transacted at one Sessions held in Ipswich, and, so far as it related to the Western division at the Sessions held by adjournment in Bury St. Edmunds. Any business affecting the whole county was transacted at a Sessions generally held in Stowmarket, and attended by magistrates from each division.

The two forces were inspected annually and the Inspector continued to express his satisfaction at the 'general appearance' of each force and 'its interior arrangements'.<sup>148</sup> In 1860, in his report to Mr. Hatton, he commented that 'the present mode of supplying horses and carts for public service is much felt by the superintendents and requires the attention of the court'. But it did not receive that attention as a year later General Cartwright repeated his comment in more detail, 'I beg to bring under your notice the want of horses in three of your divisions, the superintendents of Ipswich, Beccles and Lowestoft having none of their own but merely hiring the necessary. Where horses are required I find it much better to have them purchased and kept by the County as they are then made useful upon all occasions. The wear and tear of horses and carts varies in different counties but is usually reported as averaging less than £10 per annum per horse, cart and harness. When superintendents find their own horses they

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Chief Constable's Report.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 March 1860.

are passed by the Chief Constable and not allowed to be sold without his permission, and it certainly appears to be a losing arrangement to the officers at any sum under £50 per annum'.<sup>149</sup> A committee then considered the matter and estimated that the cost of purchasing and insuring seven horses and carts, paying annual forage, stable, shoeing and repair costs, would amount to £474 including £100 for 'future anticipated pursuits'. The present cost was only £461, made up of an allowance of £240 to six inspectors for horses, and £221, the cost of pursuance and conveyance of prisoners, and at the January sessions of 1862 the committee reported that in their opinion it was not desirable to 'entertain the question'.<sup>150</sup> In July of the following year General Cartwright noted that three divisional superintendents were still without horses, 'which must greatly impair their power of supervision', and in October the allowance to superintendents for horses and carts was raised from £40 to £50, and an extra £10 a year allowed to the Chief Constable for his two horses.

In May 1864, after inspecting the West Suffolk Constabulary Force, General Cartwright commented on the length of time constables remained in the third class in consequence of the number in the other two classes being limited to twenty-three. This meant that a third of the force was in the lower class until a vacancy occurred in a higher class. He wrote, 'May I recommend that any constable after two years good service in the force, if there is no vacancy for promotion, have the higher pay of another class'. This suggestion was considered by the Police Committee and adopted, and Captain Syer was 'empowered to advance seven second class constables to the rank of first class, thereby increasing the number in that class to thirty, whenever he finds he has that number of second class constables who for good conduct and length of service he considers deserving of promotion'.<sup>151</sup>

Section V of the 'Obligatory' Act permitted the consolidation of Borough forces with the County police and in December 1856 it was ordered in Quarter Sessions that, 'an agreement be entered into on the part of the County with the Mayor and authorities of the Borough of Bury St. Edmunds for amalgamating the force of the said Borough with the Western division of the County'. Permission was granted by the Secretary of State and the Borough Council, and West Suffolk Police Committee decided the consolidation should take effect from 1 January 1857. A charter of terms was drawn up in which it was agreed that the Borough should pay the County Treasurer the annual sum of £375 in four quarterly payments 'without any deduction for income tax', from which sum the

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 July 1861.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 January 1862.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 May 1864.

Justices were required to 'maintain and provide . . . one superintendent, one inspector, one first class constable, and five second class constables' to police the borough. It was agreed that the Chief Constables of the division would be responsible for 'the appointment, general disposition and government of all the said constables with the absolute power of dismissing all or any of them'. The new force was allowed to use the borough police station rent free on the condition that 'the Borough shall be represented on the Police Committee by the Mayor and one of the magistrates of the Borough.'

The new system worked very well and saved the borough about £200 a year in expenses. In October 1865 certain alterations were made to the agreement. Two sergeants at 24/- a week were employed instead of an inspector at 27/- and a first class constable at 21/- and an increase of a shilling a week was granted to the five constables to meet extra expense incurred by living in the borough.<sup>152</sup> The Borough agreed to pay a further £10 a year to cover the increased expenses, and in 1867 this was raised to £20 following a suggestion by General Cartwright that constables policing the borough should receive the pay of first, rather than second, class constables. In January 1869 Captain Syer reported that, 'an extra first class constable has been added to the police force for permanent duty in the Borough of Bury St. Edmunds, an application having been made by the Town Council for such an increase'.<sup>153</sup>

It was not only in Bury St. Edmunds that such a consolidation took place. In August 1857 the Borough of Beccles reached an agreement with the East Suffolk Constabulary Force whereby it paid the sum of £139.6.8 a year for one sergeant, and one first and second class constable to police the town.<sup>154</sup> In November of the same year the Borough of Eye agreed to pay the Ipswich division of the County £95 a year for 'two police officers stationed in the Borough'. Besides the larger boroughs the smaller ones also effected such agreements. For example, Orford in July 1860 agreed to pay the sum of £44.4.0 for one constable, and Dunwich £40 for one constable.

In January 1865 at the Ipswich Quarter Sessions a committee was ordered 'to enquire into all matters affecting the Chief Constable's duties', after certain charges were made against Mr. Hatton by the Reverend Henry Owen.<sup>155</sup> There charges were:—

1. that the Chief Constable had only inspected a few stations in the last twelve months in his division and did not appear to have visited several of them for some years;

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1865. <sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 January 1869. <sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 August 1857.

<sup>155</sup> A member of the Police Committee.

2. that he held no regular inspection of men, only seeing them yearly when General Cartwright inspected them, and he seldom examined station diaries;
3. that he had remitted to the superintendents the pay of their men two weeks earlier every quarter since directed to do so by the Committee in October last;
4. that without sufficient cause he had kept the sum of £54.12.0 awarded to Mrs. Vincent, by Quarter Sessions, from June to November last;
5. that great irregularity in one particular instance connected with arrears of pay, and involving materially the efficiency of the force, did not, when brought to the notice of the Chief Constable by letters, receive sufficient attention from him;
6. that because Mr. Hatton did not produce either a memorandum book or diary, these facts had been elicited by such evidence as it was in the power of the committee to obtain;
7. that in 1843 and 1856 he issued regulations for the management of the police by Quarter Sessions to each constable. But he had from time to time amended them without order from Quarter Sessions and without sending printed circulars to his men. It was therefore impossible for the committee to know whether the superintendents or men were acting on Mr. Hatton's instructions.

The committee pointed out that the duties of a Chief Constable were not clearly defined by either the Secretary of State or Sessional Orders, but the absence of specific rules did not exonerate Mr. Hatton from neglect of duties 'which we believe essential for maintaining the efficiency of the force', and it was recommended that the duties should be clearly defined by a Sessions Order and regulations for the management of the force be submitted to Quarter Sessions for approval.

In March the charges against Mr. Hatton were proved accurate and the committee resolved that the Chief Constable 'should conduct the duties of his office in accordance with the suggestion of the committee . . . and that the better to enable him to do so with efficiency and economy he should fix his residence in a more central and accessible position in his division'.<sup>156</sup> Ten months later Mr. Hatton, with his family, moved to Earl Soham. Referring to a revision of the rules and regulations of the force the committee pointed out that although some revision was obviously desirable, as some time had elapsed since the establishment of the force, the duty of so doing should devolve on the Chief Constable under

<sup>156</sup> Report of the Committee made in March 1865.

general instruction from the Secretary of State. In January 1866 Mr. Hatton submitted his draft of new rules.

In March 1867 serious irregularities were discovered in accounts received by the Police Committee from the Chief Constable's office. Earlier in the year the Committee had realised that certain sums of money were paid by members of the force out of their own pocket for quick pursuit and maintenance of prisoners, and that these sums were often not repaid for some months. It was decided that every quarter the Chief Constable would draw up an estimate of the money he would require each fortnight for the ensuing quarter. To this sum was added £30 from which Mr. Hatton could draw for any extra expenses, but he had to specify how the money was to be divided among his superintendents. Once approved by Quarter Sessions the Clerk of the Peace sent the estimate to the Treasurer who remitted the required sum every fortnight to a bank in each superintendent's district. The men were then paid from this and the receipts sent to the Chief Constable who had to produce fortnightly pay sheets for the Committee. It was on these pay sheets that most of the irregularities had occurred. Reporting to Quarter Sessions the Police Committee said that it was not their intention 'to impute to the Chief Constable any graver offences than those proven and implied' and asked the Sessions to deal leniently with the case and 'accept the apology and promises for future regularity tendered by the Chief Constable upon the distinct understanding that upon the proof of any such further irregularities in the discharge of his duty the confidence of the County shall be held to be withdrawn'. Mr. Hatton did in fact settle the outstanding claims, but was asked to find 'two sufficient sureties in not less than £500 each' for money held by him on public account, a step which had hitherto not been taken.

Mr. John Hatton continued in office until February 1869 when he was compelled to seek the protection of the Court of Bankruptcy. After considering the circumstances leading to this action the magistrates decided that, 'the Police force can no longer be efficiently managed by the present Chief Constable and therefore request him to tender his resignation'.<sup>157</sup> Mr. Hatton complied but said that he did so 'with deepest pain and regret' after a service of more than twenty-six years 'during which time I tried to discharge the arduous duties of my office to your satisfaction as well as to that of the inhabitants in general'.<sup>158</sup> He made a request for a 'retiring allowance' but this was refused after the committee looking into his accounts reported the evidence of 'grossly irregular practices' including four cheques stolen in January and £224

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, February 1869.

<sup>158</sup> Letter of resignation from Mr. Hatton to the Police Committee, 18 March 1869.

absconded and appropriated by his clerk amounting to a total loss of £438.16.2 from constabulary funds.<sup>159</sup>

At the same Sessions meeting, on the motion of Sir Edward Kerrison, it was resolved that in consequence of the Chief Constable's resignation, 'it is desirable that the East and West Police forces be amalgamated under one Chief Constable'. With this in mind a committee of six Justices of the Eastern division was appointed, and the magistrates of the Western division were invited to appoint a similar number to confer with them on the subject. They agreed at once. Then in April at an adjourned Sessions in Bury St. Edmunds a letter was received from Captain Syer who felt that, 'the time has arrived when I shall best consult the public interest, as well as my own personal comfort, by placing in your hands my resignation of the office of Chief Constable . . . which by your kindness I have held since February 1852'. He was seventy years old and added that 'what life remains to me should be devoted to other purposes than that of active service. I hope that the office I have so long held has not suffered while in my keeping and that the duties attaching to it have been discharged in a way to meet your approbation. I desire to leave the question of a pension . . . in your hands'. The magistrates declared their satisfaction of Captain Syer's service and granted him an allowance of £225 on his retirement.<sup>160</sup>

The office of Chief Constable was now vacant in each division and the Chairman of the West Suffolk Police Committee reported a unanimous decision that there should be one Chief Constable for the whole County but that the amalgamation of the two divisions was entirely out of the question 'at present'. On 27 April a notice appeared in *The Times* advertising the vacant office for the County of Suffolk as a whole, and stating the qualifications as laid down by the Secretary of State. There were fifty-six candidates for the post from all over England, and from Wales and Ireland, and eight of these were selected to appear before the magistrates on May 11th at Stowmarket.

Major Clement Heigham, aged thirty-nine, was elected by sixty votes to forty-seven, and, on receipt of the Secretary of State's approval, was sworn in as Chief Constable for the County of Suffolk on 2 June 1869. He was granted a salary of £400 per annum exclusive of extras for which he was allowed £150 a year, and was asked to reside at, and have his office in, Ipswich. He made his first report to the Committee in July and said that, 'although I have the honour of being appointed Chief Constable for Suffolk the police force under my command is still and must for most

<sup>159</sup> Q.S.M.B., July 1869, Treasurer's Report.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 April 1869.

purposes continue to be two distinct forces. It will however, be my anxious endeavour by assimilating the rules and regulations of the forces in the two divisions, and by every other means in my power, to procure united action of the two forces so as to obtain for the public the same efficiency as if they were not only under one command but were in reality amalgamated and formed one body'.<sup>161</sup> Major Heigham continued to make a separate report to the magistrates of each division as to the state of their own particular police force.

In October the annual government inspection of both divisions was now undertaken by Colonel Cobbe, who made two recommendations. One was that 'a Reserve Force of not less than 3% of your establishment' be introduced in each division. The object of this was that when vacancies occurred in the force through sickness, resignation or death they could be filled by men who had had some training and were known to the Chief Constable. But the proposal was rejected by the Committee of each division who considered the present training system satisfactory. Recruits could be trained at one of six stations and it took six months for them to qualify. The second recommendation, which was accepted by the two Committees, was for the assimilation of pay and allowances throughout all grades of the East and West Suffolk Police, although it was only to apply to future appointments and promotions. The scale decided on was £120 a year for a superintendent, rising to £130 and £140 after seven and fourteen years respectively, £82.2.6 a year for inspectors, £67.12.0 for sergeants, £59.19.0 for first class constables, £54.15.0 for second class constables, and £49.10.0 for third class constables. The fourth class of constable existing in the Eastern division was discontinued as was the clothing allowance to superintendents of the Western division. A uniform issue took its place, and the horse and boot allowance was fixed at £51.19.0 a year. In July of the following year Colonel Cobbe suggested that a merit class for sergeants and constables should be established with a pecuniary benefit of twopence a day as a mark of recognition for men distinguishing themselves by any act of 'skill or daring'. This was accepted.<sup>162</sup>

In March 1872 Major Heigham reported that, 'the working of the accounts, pay and dress, and general interior economy of the two forces having become identical, nothing of any great importance remains to complete the amalgamation of the two bodies except that of the superannuation funds, which measure if carried out would enable me to promote or transfer individual members of the force from one side of the County to the other, a step evidently of

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 July 1870.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1870.

greatest advantage to the County at large'. In July of that year Superintendent Ginn, clerk for the West Suffolk Police died, and the step forward was made. The West Suffolk divisional office was transferred from Bury St. Edmunds to Ipswich and one clerk<sup>163</sup> was appointed to deal with the office work of both divisions. The two divisions were then ordered by Quarter Sessions to amalgamate their superannuation funds and early in 1873 Suffolk at last had one Police Force. A new constable now joined the 'Suffolk Constabulary',<sup>164</sup> consisting of 208 men and costing about £16,000 a year. But although the two forces acted as one body for all practical purposes they were still theoretically separate in that each division paid its own men only sharing in the pay of the Chief Constable and paying a per capita amount to the Suffolk Joint Police Pension fund according to the number of police in the division. Each force continued to be inspected separately.

With the establishment of the County Councils in 1888, a single Committee<sup>165</sup> for Police administration was set up and the two forces were amalgamated to a greater degree. But it was not to last. In December 1898 Major Heigham died and the question arose as to who had the authority to appoint a new Chief Constable. It should have fallen to the Police Standing Joint Committee acting for the County as a whole, but West Suffolk agitated to appoint its own Chief Constable again and after a great deal of opposition the Home Secretary conceded that as the law stood it had the right to do so.

Once again the East and West Suffolk Constabularies resumed separate existences and remained two distinct forces until 1 April 1967, when the two divisional forces and the Ipswich Borough Police<sup>166</sup> merged to form the 'Suffolk Constabulary', a force of nearly 1,000 men and women covering an area of about 900,000 acres and a population of more than half a million, under one Chief Constable, Mr. P. J. Matthews, almost exactly a century after Major Heigham was elected the first Chief Constable of all Suffolk.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. Charman, Archivist for Ipswich and East Suffolk and his staff, for patiently supplying me with the material for this article. I owe a debt of gratitude to the West Suffolk County Library for sending me all the secondary material

<sup>163</sup> Both Divisions shared the cost of his fees.

<sup>164</sup> Instead of either the East or West Suffolk Police Force.

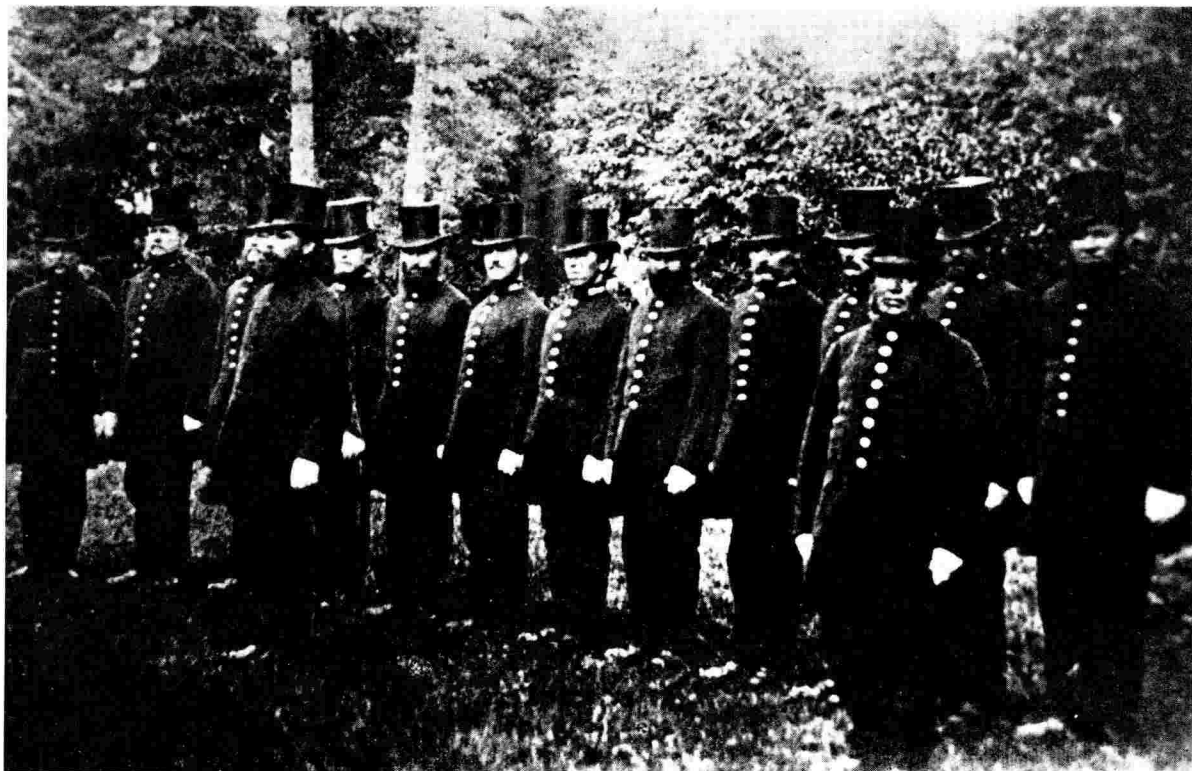
<sup>165</sup> The Police Standing Joint Committee.

<sup>166</sup> Ipswich Borough had maintained its own separate force since 1836.



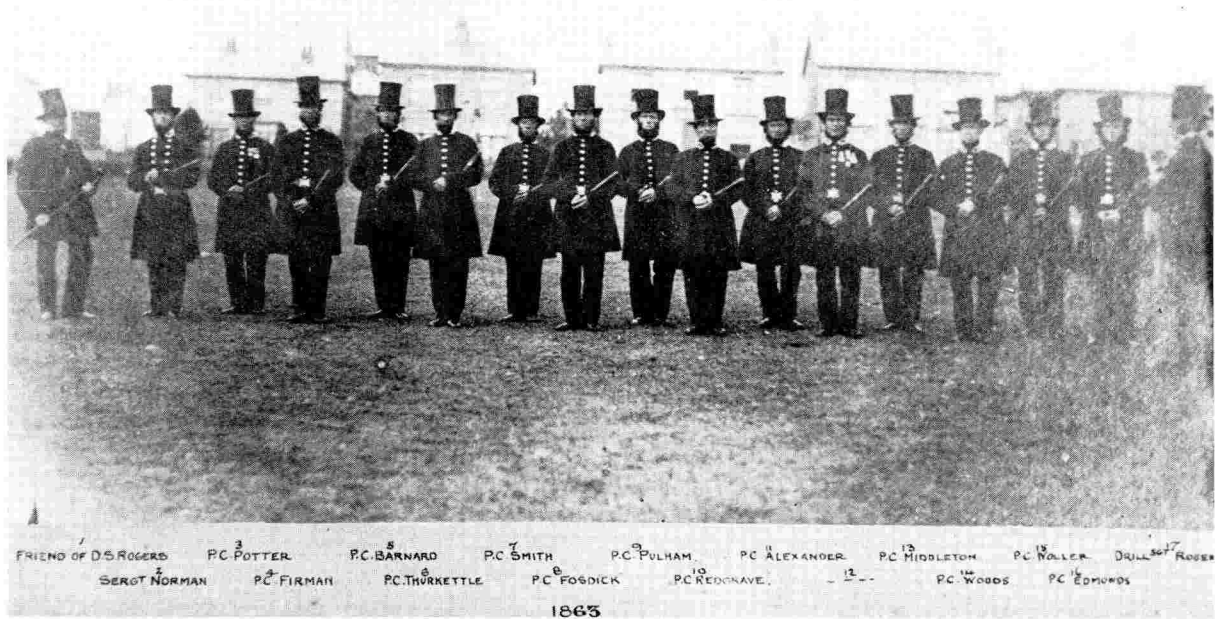
I asked for. I am also grateful to Superintendent Key of Sudbury, lately retired, for showing me his early police truncheons and handcuffs; and to the Chief Constable of Suffolk, through the medium of his Public Relations Office, for lending photographs. Chief Inspector Coleby, Inspector Shields and Sergeant Faulkner were most helpful in searching for early photographs of the police in Suffolk.

PLATE III



Yoxford Police about 1858.

PLATE IV



Ipswich Borough Police 1863.

PLATE V



Ipswich Borough Police about 1883.