



**Police
History
Series**

Armed Burglars – The 1880s

Mike Waldren QPM



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The Blight Of Armed Burglars

The provision of firearms so that the police could deal with armed terrorists on equal terms had come to a head in the 1860s (see *Early Police Firearms*). Next it was the turn of armed criminals to bring about changes. By the late 1870s the newspapers were full of stories

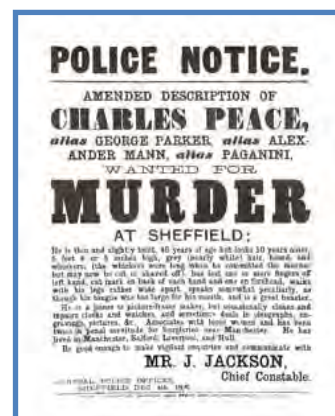


Peace when released
on ticket of leave from
Millbank Prison in
June 1864

about ‘the blight of armed burglars’, the most notorious of whom was Charles Frederick Peace. Born in Sheffield in 1832, Peace found himself being sentenced to longer and longer terms of penal servitude each time he was caught and after his release from yet another prison term in 1872 he made up his mind that he would never let himself be arrested again. When, in August 1876, he was found burgling a house in Whalley Range, Manchester, he shot and killed Constable Nicholas Cock in order to make his escape. He was not identified at the time but he became a wanted man after he shot and killed an acquaintance of his named Arthur Dyson in Sheffield during an argument in November 1876. To avoid

arrest he eventually headed south to London where he settled in Peckham and on resuming his nocturnal profession he made sure that he always had his revolver securely tied to his wrist.

In October 1878 he was caught breaking into a house during the night in Blackheath. In the official version Constable Robinson saw a suspicious light in a house and went looking for another officer before investigating. He met up with Constable Girling and their section sergeant and the three went back to the house. What actually happened was related by Robinson just before he died in 1926. Robinson and Girling were enjoying a quiet smoke when they were caught by their sergeant who was in the process of berating them for being absent from their respective beats when they saw a light in a nearby house. From now on the two versions coincide. Knowing that the occupants were supposed to be away, the sergeant went to the front door and knocked while the two officers climbed over the garden wall at the back. Peace jumped out of a ground floor window and fired four shots at Robinson but they all missed. Taking careful aim he fired again and Robinson used his arm to cover his face. The bullet hit him in the elbow.



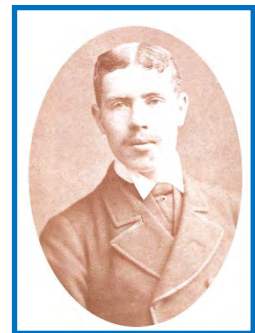
All three now struggled on the ground and Peace was finally knocked senseless by what was described as a 'sweeping downward blow' from Girling's truncheon. In November 1878 Peace was sentenced to life imprisonment for the attempted murder of Constable



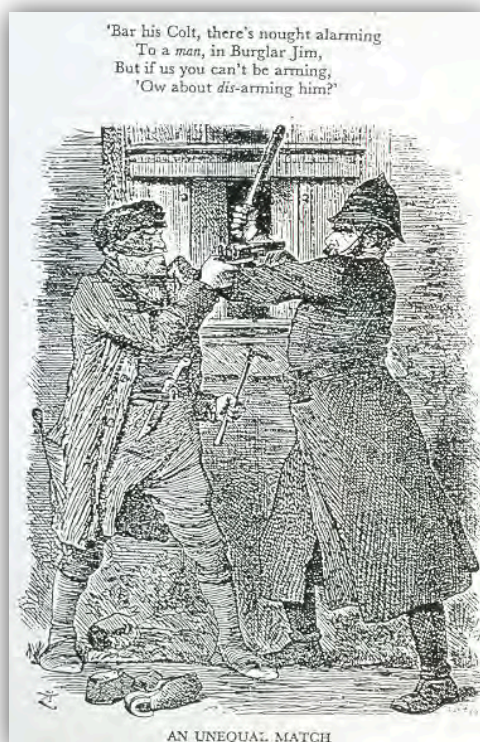
Peace is knocked senseless by a 'sweeping downward blow'

Robinson and he was then taken by train (from which he tried to make a daring escape by jumping out of a window) to Leeds Assizes to stand trial for the murder of Arthur Dyson. He was convicted and sentenced to death. Prior to his execution he confessed to the murder of Constable Cock.

Peace was not alone in carrying a firearm. In November 1878 Sergeant Jonah Sewell of Lancashire Constabulary was shot and killed by a man he was questioning in the street and in July 1879 Constable Joseph Moss of Derbyshire Constabulary was shot and killed by a prisoner he was searching in a police station. However it was the murder of Constable Frederick Atkins in September 1881 in London that really ignited the fuse. Atkins was on night duty in the neighbourhood of Kingston Hill when at about 1.15am he made a routine call to one of the large houses on his beat. It was common



Atkins



practice in those days for officers to check the security of larger residential houses and as he walked up the drive he was ambushed by an unseen gunman who shot him in the abdomen, chest and groin. In a lucid period before he died he told colleagues that he neither saw nor heard anything before the shots. A search later revealed that a protective bar had been removed from a ground floor window, beneath which lay a lantern and a chisel. The burglar, who was never caught, had cold-bloodedly shot a police officer three times.

The effect was electric. More than 1,500 officers attended the funeral and newspapers were in

full cry about the dangers posed by armed burglars and the unfairness of asking unarmed police officers to deal with them. A month after the murder of Constable Atkins, in October 1881, even an uncharacteristically sympathetic *Punch* described it as ‘An Unequal Match’ and published a cartoon highlighting the problem with a constable cynically asking why, if the police could not be armed, burglars could not be disarmed?

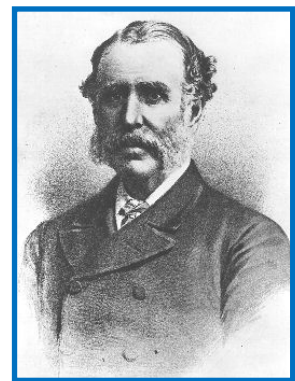
A Certain Sense Of Insecurity Among The Men

The Home Secretary, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, asked the Commissioner of the



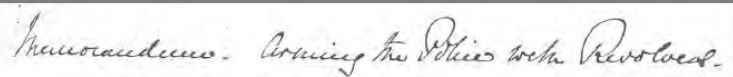
Harcourt

Met, Sir Edmund Henderson, whether it was time to arm the force. Henderson consulted his superintendents who were unanimous that arming the police would damage their public image and that the officers themselves did not wish it. This view was duly passed to Harcourt who was clearly getting information from other sources because he directed that the officers themselves be consulted as to their true feelings.



Henderson

These were duly sought and Henderson’s reply took the form of a memorandum which was presented to the Home Secretary at the end of November 1882. The Commissioner said that the rank and file generally agreed with their superintendents that a revolver would not afford much protection. He added that an officer would be at risk in law if he used the weapon with fatal results and would therefore be afraid to use it. He admitted that there was ‘a certain sense of

A handwritten note in cursive script, enclosed in a rectangular border. The text reads: "Memorandum. Arming the Police with Revolvers."

[For Full Document see Appendix I or Click Here](#)

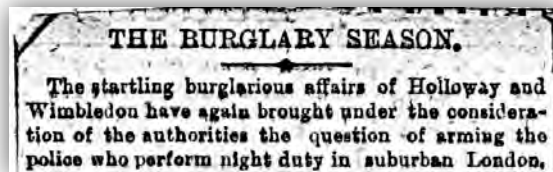
insecurity among the men who patrol at night in suburban districts, visiting all kinds of lonely places where no help is to be got in an emergency’ and he suggested that some patrols could be doubled-manned but ‘how far this may be possible in the more dangerous suburbs in the present condition of the Police funds I am not able without careful examination to say – but I do think that in a measure it may be possible to carry out such a scheme’. Harcourt replied to Henderson by saying that: ‘I am very glad that this matter of a doubling of the

patrols is taken in hand. I am sure that it is of great importance and will greatly tend by a knowledge of its existence to deter ruffians from their schemes. Let me know as early as possible what is done upon it'. In the early hours of 1 December 1882 another officer was shot and killed. Constable George Cole caught Thomas Henry Orrock breaking into a chapel in Dalston. As he was taking his prisoner back to the police station Orrock shot the officer four times using a revolver he had hidden inside his coat and which he had bought from *Exchange and Mart* for 10s 6d (52½p).

Henderson increased the number of officers in the suburbs so that he could double-man three hundred of the beats but this still left a great many that were single-manned and if he thought he had solved the problem he was mistaken. The discontent in the force that was simmering below the surface re-emerged in August 1883 when an officer in Holloway and Constable Boans of 'V' Division in Wimbledon were each shot and wounded in separate incidents. In Boans's case he was lucky to survive. He was on patrol in the early hours of the morning when he saw two men loitering in a lonely lane 'skirted by residences of a superior description'. The officer asked what they were doing and, not being satisfied with their answers, he took hold of one of them who promptly pulled a knife. Boans was so intent on keeping hold of the hand with the knife in it that he didn't see the man use his other hand to pull a gun from beneath his coat. The officer was shot in the left thigh and hand. A third bullet went through his helmet. Both men escaped but Boans managed to crawl to a nearby cottage where the occupier, George Allan, with his wife and their thirteen-year-old daughter, staunch the flow of blood, fetched a doctor and undoubtedly saved his life.

The Telegraph reported on 30 August, under the heading 'The Outrage at Wimbledon', that: 'Burglars now commonly carry revolvers and policemen not being provided with these weapons are entirely at the mercy of the most desperate class of criminals with whom they have to deal. Under these circumstances a constable who attaches any value to his life may well hesitate before he attempts to interfere with the proceedings of the night robber'. The editorial of the *Evening Standard* expressed the view that: 'The apathy which the authorities show in regard to these offences is astonishing. Parliament occupies itself in fighting over theoretical crotchets, and entirely overlooks the really urgent problems of the day. ... It is not only foolish, but absolutely cruel, to send policemen out to combat men possessed of revolvers, without any other arm than a short club. If the law will not protect the police by heavy penalties from armed resistance, they should at least have weapons to enable them to defend their lives'.

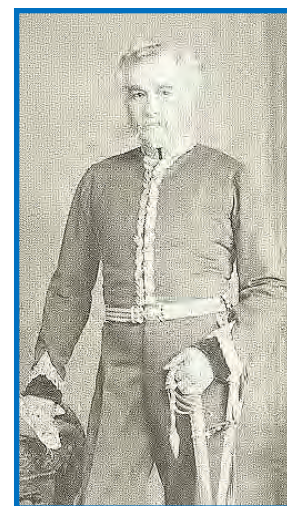
It seems that *The Chronicle* had a source within the Home Office. Under the heading ‘The Burglary Season’, it reported that ‘in the course of the ensuing week it is stated that the question [of arming the police] will be discussed by Sir W. Vernon-Harcourt, who will probably come to town for the purpose, and the heads of various police divisions, with the assistance of the Chief Commissioner’.



Vincent

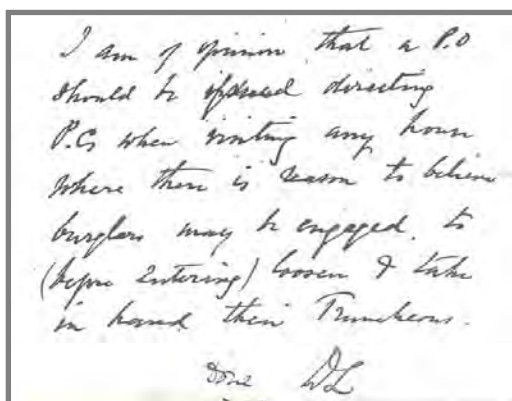
memorandum dated 6 September 1883 by (later Sir) Howard Vincent, the Director of Criminal Investigations in the Met. This provided information on ten cases where revolvers were used against the police since October 1878 (when Peace was arrested and omitting cases outside London including the deaths of Sergeant Sewell and Constable Moss), two of which resulted in the deaths of Constables Atkins and Cole. A further

six officers had been wounded and in two cases the bullet ‘passed through his clothes without inflicting injury’. Colonel Douglas



Labalmondiere

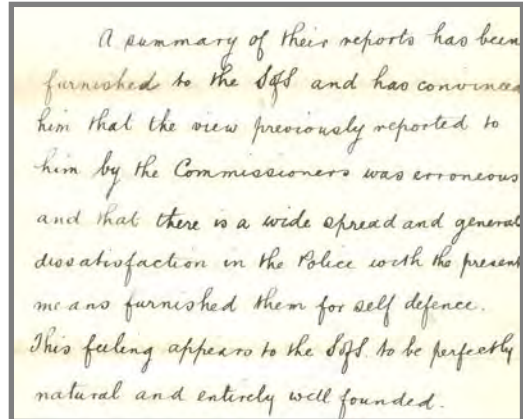
Labalmondiere, one of the two assistant commissioners, was the most senior officer left in the Met at the time. The Commissioner and the other assistant commissioner, Colonel Pearson, were on holiday in Scotland. In a covering letter to Harcourt dated 7 September Labalmondiere pointed out that ‘the occasions on which police were attacked were very rare, and I cannot think that it can be requisite to arm them any further. ... I am of the opinion that a [police order] should be issued



[For Full Document see Appendix II or Click Here](#)

directing P.C.s when visiting any house where there is reason to believe burglars may be engaged to (before entering) loosen and take in hand their truncheons’.

Labalmondiere must therefore have been more than a little concerned when he got an 'Urgent and Immediate' package back four days later from the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office, Sir Adolphus Frederick Octavius Liddell. This enclosed a long minute from Harcourt, marked 'Confidential', saying that: 'The recent murderous attacks on a policeman by a man armed with a revolver has again fixed the attention of the [Secretary of State] on the question of the sufficiency of the means of protection at present afforded to the Police, and on the expediency of arming them with revolvers or some other more efficient weapon than they at present possess. ...



A summary of their reports has been furnished to the Sd^o and has convinced him that the view previously reported to him by the Commissioners was erroneous and that there is a wide spread and general dissatisfaction in the Police with the present means furnished them for self defence. This feeling appears to the Sd^o to be perfectly natural and entirely well founded.

[For Full Document see Appendix III or Click Here](#)

When this question has been previously raised by the [Secretary of State] he has been assured by the Commissioners that there is no discontent on the part of the force with the present armament or any desire for further protection. This impression seems to have been derived from the reports of the Superintendents though the [Secretary of State] was always inclined to doubt whether this view really represented the feelings of the Constables. In consequence of the recent attack on a Constable by a man armed with a revolver the [Secretary of State] has called for fuller reports which embrace the opinions of the Inspectors who are more likely to be acquainted with the real sentiments of the men. A summary of their reports has been furnished to the [Secretary of State] and has convinced him that the view previously reported to him by the Commissioners was erroneous and that there is a wide spread and general dissatisfaction in the Police with the present means furnished them for self defence. This feeling appears ... to be perfectly natural and entirely well founded'.

The minute continued: 'The [Secretary of State], with these reports before him disclosing a most serious danger in the Police finds himself unfortunately without the means of personally consulting the Chief Commissioner or Col. Pearson. It is impossible of course that the [Secretary of State] can come to so grave a decision affecting the force as that of arming the Police without the advantage of their counsel. The [Secretary of State] cannot at all accept the suggestions of Col. Labalmondiere in his letter of Sept. 6 [sic] as affording in any respects an adequate solution of the matter'.

Harcourt 'felt called upon to express his opinion' that out of the commissioner and his two assistant commissioners he expected there always to be not less than two available at any

one time which ‘he is confident therefore will hereafter be observed’. After that put-down he went on to say that ‘unwilling as the [Secretary of State] is to trench upon the much needed holiday of the Commissioners he feels that in a matter so vital to the interests of the Police they will at once take the matter in hand ...’.

Copies were delivered to Henderson on a private yacht off the coast of Oban in Argyle and to Pearson at Gordon Castle in Moray. Both returned to London forthwith and after a series of meetings Henderson directed that every sergeant and constable serving on outer divisions was to submit a report indicating whether he wished to be armed when performing night duty. The result must have been horrifying. 4,430 out of 6,325 men wanted a revolver, although 1,240 only wanted one when they were on ‘exterior beats’. Presumably the other 3,190 wanted one wherever they were.

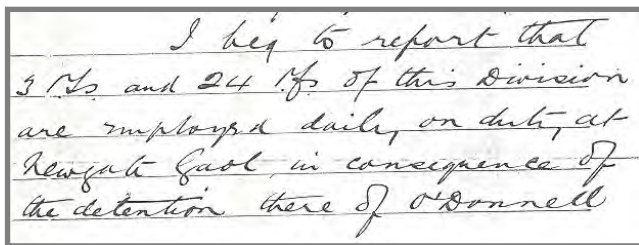
Terrorism Returns

It wasn’t as though Henderson just had to deal with the problem of the morale of his officers in the suburbs. On 15 March 1883 a bomb had exploded beside the Local Government building in Charles Street in London. Later that evening another device was found outside the offices of *The Times* newspaper. Over the next two years there were twenty-two bomb attacks against buildings and monuments including the Tower of London, Nelson’s Column and even Scotland Yard itself. According to *Scotland Yard and The Metropolitan Police* by John Moylan (1929): ‘When the dynamite outrages began in London, members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were thought to be more competent for the protection of public buildings and the persons of Cabinet ministers than London’s own police, and in their green uniforms and rifles they were seen for a time on sentry-go in the Whitehall neighbourhood’. In due course they were replaced by armed ‘A’ Division officers.



Bomb attack on Scotland Yard 1884

There are records showing that at Newgate prison on 27 September 1883 there were

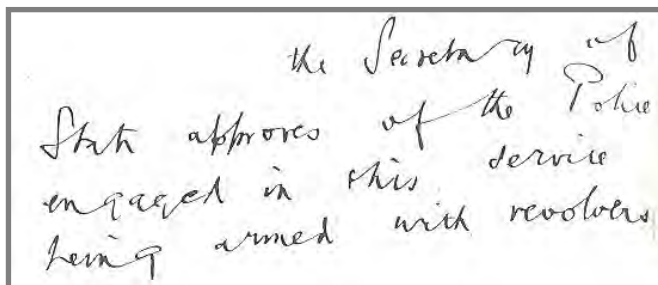


*I beg to report that
31 Ms and 24 Ms of this Division
are employed daily, on duty, at
Newgate Gaol in consequence of
the detention there of O'Donnell*

already three sergeants and twenty-four constables from 'A' Division employed 'in consequence of the detention there of [Patrick] O'Donnell charged with the murder of James Carey; the men are armed with the [Adams] Service revolver' and the purpose of the report

was to point out that only a few had been trained in how to use it.

Carey was a leading Fenian who had been arrested with others in 1883 and charged with conspiracy to murder public officials after the 'Phoenix Park Murders' in Dublin of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Burke in May 1882. He had turned Queen's evidence and five of his erstwhile associates were hanged. He was shot and killed by O'Donnell on board a ship travelling from Cape Town to Natal where Carey was hoping to start a new life well out of reach of his former comrades. O'Donnell was brought back to England for trial and he was executed at Newgate in December 1883.



*the Secretary of
State approves of the Police
service engaged in this
being armed with revolvers*

On 22 September Harcourt gave authority for the officers on duty at Millbank Prison, where more Fenian prisoners were being held, to be armed with Adams revolvers 'except those employed in the public thoroughfare', a rather curious caveat given the discussions that were now taking place.

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The Compromise

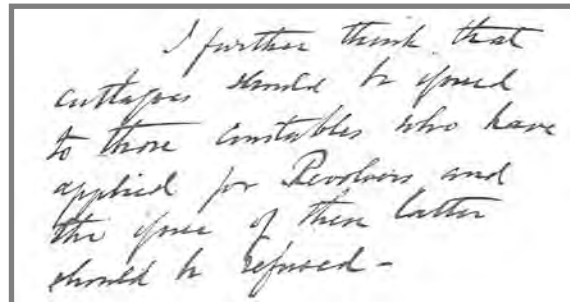
Arming officers so that they could take on armed terrorists was one thing. There was an established precedent for it. Arming the force as a whole, or even just arming a large part of it, as a matter of routine was something else entirely. On 21 September 1883 Henderson wrote to Harcourt and, after the usual preamble about the views of the Home Secretary being carefully considered, he said that: 'The Commissioners are not prepared to take the responsibility of recommending [to] the Secretary of State [that he] issue an order that the

police are in future to carry revolvers when employed on night duty in the exterior districts. The risks which a police officer would run in shooting a man are so great that it would be a grave responsibility to make a revolver part of his equipment. If death were to ensue it is more than probable the coroner's jury would return a verdict of [~~'wilful'~~ crossed out in the draft] manslaughter and the officer would have to take his trial and take the uncertainty of the result which would depend very much on the manner in which the facts of the case were placed before the jury. ... At the same time, looking to the feeling which appears to have been evoked among the Police the Commissioner would submit for the consideration of the Secretary of State whether it might be desirable to issue revolvers to such men as desire to have them when employed on night duty in the exterior districts and who can, in the opinion of the divisional officers, be trusted to use them with discretion'.

In other words, rather than arm all 6,325, only allow those who actually wanted to carry a firearm to do so if (and only if) they could be 'trusted'. It was Liddell's soon-to-be successor, and the current Assistant Under-Secretary (Legal), (later Sir) Godfrey Lushington, who replied on 24 September that: 'Under the circumstances stated, Sir William Harcourt is prepared to sanction the experiment to the extent proposed, i.e. he sanctions the issue of revolvers to such men as desire to have them when employed on night duty in the exterior divisions ...'.

There were two Met divisional superintendents who were particularly opposed to their men having revolvers under any

circumstances and on 8 October Labalmondiere tried a last ditch attempt to prevent the proposals going through. He agreed with the two and this time he argued that: 'I further think that cutlasses should be issued to constables who have applied for Revolvers and the issue of these latter should be refused -

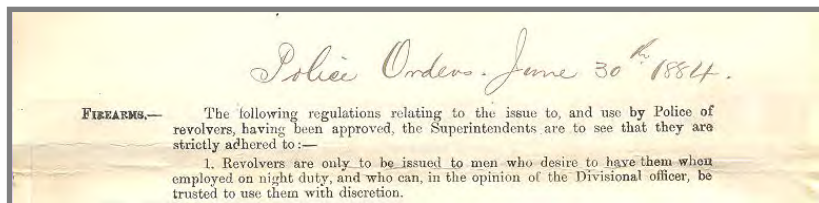


Webley .450 gate-load
revolver

the latter should be refused. ... I do not think that responsibility can be entirely removed from these superior officers'. It was a futile though undoubtedly a heart-felt appeal. On 16 October Harcourt gave Henderson authority to purchase 931 Webley .450 calibre gate-load revolvers (all with the initials M.P. together with a number between 1 and 931 inclusive stamped on the frame) with the Adams revolvers

first supplied in 1868 (see *Early Police Firearms*) being disposed of in exchange.

The changes to Met regulations were eventually agreed by the Home Secretary on 24 June 1884 (see *Rules and Regulations*) and published in force orders six days later at which time it was officially announced that:



[For Full Document see Appendix VI or Click Here](#)

‘The following regulations relating to the issue to, and the use by Police of revolvers, having been approved, the Superintendents are to see that they are strictly adhered to. ... Revolvers are only to be issued to men who desire to have them when employed on night duty, and who can, in the opinion of the Divisional Officer, be trusted to use them with discretion ...’. Although the measure was originally intended for uniform officers on patrol in the suburbs, it is worth noting that it now applied to any officer on night duty anywhere in the Met and on 9 December it was made clear that the regulations covered CID officers at night as well. The ‘experiment’ allowing the carrying of firearms at night in the Met remained in force for the next 52 years (until July 1936).

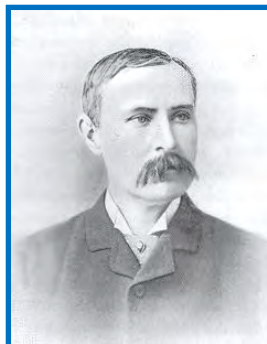
After the sale of the Webley revolvers to the Met the company produced a number of them as the ‘British Constabulary’ (or sometimes just ‘The Constabulary’) revolver and although this may only have been a marketing ploy it is very likely that the weapon was sold to other police forces as well. It is certainly true that it was not just the Met that had to deal with armed burglars.



Top-strap of a ‘British Constabulary’ .450 gate-load revolver

On 20 January 1885 Inspector Thomas Simmons of Essex Constabulary was on routine patrol in a pony and trap in Romford. He was accompanied by Constable Alfred Marden and shortly after four o’clock in the afternoon they spotted three men acting suspiciously. One of them, a known criminal named David Dredge, left the trio and headed across the fields while the other two took off down the road. Simmons told Marden to go after Dredge while he went after the others. When Marden caught up with Dredge he was threatened with a revolver and when Simmons caught up with his men he was shot in the stomach. Marden raced back to help his inspector but there was very little he could do. Simmons died four days later.

The effect was the same as that following the murder of Constable Atkins just over three years earlier. On the day of the officer's funeral all shops and businesses in Romford closed as a mark of respect and hundreds of people lined the streets to see the funeral

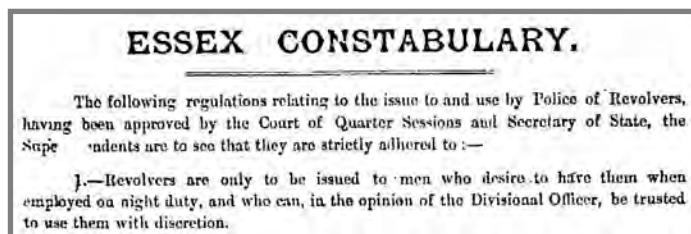


Poyntz

procession with over 2,000 attending the funeral service. Essex officers also expressed concerns over their safety, particularly those whose beats were adjacent to the Met suburbs, and argued that if Met officers could carry firearms, why couldn't they? Harcourt gave authority for the force to purchase twenty-two Webley revolvers and in June 1885

Major William Henry Poyntz, the Chief Constable of

Essex, used wording almost identical to that used in the Met in an instruction permitting officers in his force to carry revolvers on night duty if they 'desire to have them'.



[For Full Document see Appendix VII or Click Here](#)

Other forces undoubtedly did the same. For example Constable Joseph Byrnes, of the Cumberland and Westmorland Constabulary, was shot and killed on 30 October 1885 by a gang of armed burglars. As a result, the Chief Constable of Coventry City Police, John Norris, wrote a letter to *The Chronicle*, which was published on 11 November, calling attention to 'the necessity for arming the constabulary when sent on night duty in lonely places'.

This may have been why John Jones, the Chief Constable of Dumfries-shire Constabulary, wrote to Henderson three days later. At a police committee meeting, which had taken place



[For Full Document see Appendix VIII or Click Here](#)

on the day that the letter was published, it was decided that more information on the arming of officers with revolvers was needed to 'enable them to come to a decision on the matter at their next meeting'.

However, just how many forces actually did incorporate a ‘night duty’ provision into their regulations will never be known. Most of the records have been lost but Henderson’s compromise solution worked. Morale was restored and by the turn of the century only a handful of officers in the Met still carried a firearm at night and none at all by 1905. It was probably the closest we have ever come to having an armed ‘Home Office’ police force on mainland UK.

Note:

A well researched (and highly recommended) account of the murder of Inspector Simmons and its link to the fatal shooting of Constable Byrnes in Cumberland nine months later can be found in ‘*The Romford Outrage*’ by Linda Rhodes and Kathryn Abnett published by Wharncliffe Local History (2009).

According to ‘*The British Police*’ by Martin Stallion and David Wall published by The Police History Society (1999), although there were single police forces in Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man, there were 203 forces in England, 21 in Wales and 69 in Scotland in 1885. Were there any developments to do with police firearms in your force/area or its predecessors during this period of history? If so please contact mike.policehistory@yahoo.com.

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Memorandum. Arming the Police with Revolvers.

I have endeavoured in accordance with the wishes of the Secretary of State to ascertain the general feeling of the Constables themselves on this question and in the main it agrees with that of the Superintendent, that a revolver would not be of much real protection to a Constable, that he would run a most serious risk if he used it with fatal effect and that as a rule he would be afraid to use it at all.

No doubt this arises from the extreme severity with which the use of the truncheon is visited, when serious wounds are inflicted and the men are constantly warned of the risks they incur by the too free use of the weapon with which they are armed in self defence.

The feeling on this matter is unquestionably stronger both on the bench and in the press in London than elsewhere.

And the men seem to apprehend and I think reasonably that if death ensued by any action of theirs either in the use of a revolver or a truncheon they would be liable to very serious consequences.

Under any circumstances they feel their safety would consist in letting the Burglar

have the first shot and they do not seem to
see that much advantage would accrue
to them.

Opinions differ as to the effect likely to
be produced by the knowledge that the Police
were armed with revolvers. The timid Burglar
might be discouraged but the more desperate
might arm in self defence.

At the same time it is quite clear that
there is a certain sense of insecurity among
the men who patrol at night in the suburban
districts, visiting all kinds of lonely places
where no help is to be got in an emergency;
and the general wish seems to be that the
beats should be so advanced or amalgamated
that the Police could patrol in couples.

How far this may be possible in the more
dangerous suburbs in the present condition
of the Police funds I am not able without
careful examination to say. but I do think
that in a measure it may be possible to
carry out some such scheme, and although
the time of working the beats might be lengthened



I have little doubt that the support thus given would materially add to the efficiency of the men employed in the secluded localities which are naturally the places selected by burglars for their operations.

I have instructed a committee consisting of the two District Superintendents and the Supt of the outer Division to go carefully into this question & report on the improvement of the Security of State.

A return just furnished to the Home Office shows that Burglaries decreased from 500 in the year 1881 (ending 24 Sept) to 467 in 1882. & that in the former year 2 were accompanied by the use of fire arms and in the latter year 1.

J. W. Henderson.

6119

I am very glad
that the matter
of the doubling of
the patriots is
taken in hand
I am sure that
it is of great
importance to
all greatly bent
by the knowledge

of its existence
I deter myself
from then schemes
delays but as
early as possible
what is done
upon it

WVH

2 12 82



Sept. 7 - 1883

In submitting the accompanying reports I have to point out that the occasions on which Police have been attacked are very rare, and I cannot think that it can be requisite to arm them any further. I agree with the final paragraph in Mr. Vincent's Report as the number of revolvers imported from Germany at a cost of $4/5$ each is very large. I am of opinion that a P.O. should be instructed directing P.C.s when visiting any house where there is reason to believe burglars may be engaged, to (before entering) loosen & take in hand their Truncheons.

Done DL

7.9.83



6th September 1883.

Memorandum.

Since October 1878. there have been ten cases in which revolvers have been used against members of the Metropolitan Police by Burglars or persons supposed to be about to commit burglary - all save one in suburban districts.

In one case the Constable was shot dead. In one he died from wounds; in one he was wounded; in two the bullet passed through his clothes without inflicting injury.

In one case the burglar was apprehended and executed, in two cases he was sentenced to penal servitude



servitude, 20 and 15 years respectively.
in two cases the Constable being
shot dead (for the only words spoken
by the one who died from wounds
were 'I saw nobody, I heard nobody')
and nothing being stolen, there was
absolutely no evidence; in two, &
there was no reliable evidence of
identity; in one the efforts made
proved abortive, and the last case
is under enquiry with good hope
of success.

I have gone this morning most
carefully through the details of each
case and I am of opinion that
in two only out of the ten cases
would it have been possible to use
the revolver on the part of the Police

Sn.



In these two, the possession of a revolver would possibly have prevented the attack by the assailant or secured his arrest; in the remaining eight cases the circumstances of the struggle or attack preventing even the use of the truncheon, would have probably hindered the use of the revolver.

The issue of revolvers is not so far as can be ascertained, ^{generally} cleared ^{away} by the Police, and the Officers are ~~almost unanimously~~ of opinion that it would be dangerous to the public. But, as I find that sticks are frequently carried by Police in country districts, who conceal them from their Inspectors
as



as being contrary to the regulations. I share the opinion of many Officers that the issue of an approved pattern to exterior Divisions would be a advantageous to the service.

Memo. by Director as
to forming the Police.
6/11/9
6-11-Sept. 1883

I think also that legislative means should be taken, if not to hinder the present enormous sale of foreign revolvers for a few shillings, at least to punish more severely the burglars and housebreakers found with them in their possession.

(signed) C. E. H. Vincent.



Urgent and Immediate.

Whitehall

11. September 1883

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State to transmit to you the enclosed copy of a minute by him on the subject of the more effectual protection of the Police.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

R W Daddell

Lt. Col. Pearson.

Gordon Castle

Fochabers.

N.B.

Confidential

The recent murderous attack on a policeman by a man armed with a revolver has again fixed the attention of the Govt. on the question of the sufficiency of the means of protection at present afforded to the Police, and on the expediency of arming them with revolvers or some other more efficient weapon than they at present possess.

The matter is one of great gravity and one which demands a thorough investigation and an immediate decision.

Its importance is shown by the facts stated in Mr. Vincent's mem. of Sep. 6. 1883 where it appears that in the last five years there have been ten cases of Policemen being shot at by armed burglars. In two of these cases the Constables were killed, in six they were wounded but in only three out of the



the ten cases were the Criminals brought to justice - a very serious and disheartening feature in this class of crime.

When this question has been previously raised by the Soff. he has been assured by the Commissioners that there was no discontent on the part of the force with the present armament or any desire for farther protection.

This impression seems to have been derived from the reports of the Superintendents though the Soff. was always inclined to doubt whether this view really represented the feeling of the Constables.

In consequence of the recent attack on a Constable by a man armed with a revolver the Soff. has called for fuller reports which embrace the opinion of the Inspectors who are more likely to be acquainted

acquainted with the real sentiments of the men -

A summary of their reports has been furnished to the Sd. and has convinced him that the view previously reported to him by the Commissioners was erroneous and that there is a wide spread and general dissatisfaction in the Police with the present means furnished them for self defence. This feeling appears to the Sd. to be perfectly natural and entirely well founded.


Though a majority of the Superintendents are adverse to the use of revolvers by the Police it is remarkable that on this subject the opinion of the Inspectors is as nearly as possible equally divided. This reveals a state of feeling in the force entirely different from that which has been formerly.

formerly reported to the Sops. He is quite convinced that the Police as a body are not satisfied that their protection should be left on its present footing.

There are differences of opinion as to the proper remedy to be adopted but all are of the same mind that the truncheon and the rattle as at present employed are not adequate to their safety.

Mr. Vincent has informed the Sops. that he is surprised at the amount of discontent in the force on this subject and that he was before unaware of the extent to which it existed.

It is impossible that this condition of things and this state of sentiment in the Police force should ~~should~~ be allowed to continue for a moment longer than is necessary in order properly to consider
and



and deal with a matter which if allowed to remain as it is may demoralise the whole spirit & courage of the Police -

The Soff. with these reports before him disclosing a most serious danger in the Police finds himself unfortunately without the means of personally consulting the Chief Commissioner or Col. Pearson. It is impossible of course that the Soff. can come to so grave a decision affecting the force as that of arming the Police without the advantage of their counsel. The Soff. cannot at all accept the suggestions of Col. Labalmondiere in his letter of Sep. 6. as affording in any respect an adequate solution of the matter -

Adverting to this part of the subject the Soff. feels called upon to express his

opinion



opinion that having regard to the present magnitude of the Metropolitan Police Force the vast population of London & the constant dangers to which it is exposed (which the Sd. has particular reason for knowing were never greater than at this present time) there ought never to be less than two of the Commissioners (i.e. the Chief Commissioner and one Assistant Commissioner or two Assistant Commissioners) in charge at the same time of the Metropolis. There can be no difficulty in making the arrangements with respect ^{to} turns of leave such as to secure this end, which the Sd. feels to be necessary & which he is confident therefore will be hereafter observed -

The present difficulty is one of urgent importance upon which the Sd. desires to have

have the immediate advice of all the Commissioners in consultation with one another. Upon a full consideration of their reports it may probably be advisable as is suggested in some of the memos. submitted to the Sd. that a small committee of the Police should be at once appointed — thoroughly to investigate the subject and to take evidence as to the opinion of the men and as to the practice in other places and to report the conclusions of such a Committee to the Sd.

As the days are already beginning to shorten this is a matter which admits of no delay — and unwilling as the Sd. is to trench upon the much needed holiday of the Commissioners he feels that in a matter so vital to the interests of the Police they

They will at once take this matter in hand and examine into it on the spot so as to place the Sfs. in a position within a week or two to take the necessary action upon it. If however the Commissioners are of opinion that the matter can be dealt with in any other way better than by such a Committee the Sfs. will leave to the Commissioners to adopt such method at their discretion -

(Dd)

H. V. H.

10. 9. 83.

No. 6.

J. & M. 50,000 1-81
P326

Metropolitan Police.

D Division }
Special Report.

Reference to Papers.

27 September 1883

I beg to report that 31st and 24th of this Division are employed daily, on duty, at Newgate Gaol, in consequence of the detention there of O'Donnell, charged with the murder of James Carey; the men are armed with the Service revolver but only a few of them have undergone a course of instruction in its use, and as it is obviously essential that those intrusted with firearms should be properly instructed how to handle them I beg to suggest that some arrangement may be entered into to effect that object; also in view of future contingencies I would recommend that the whole of the Reserve force of this Division should undergo a course of instruction.

Submitted

Wacker
W.P.

W. H. Hunt Secy. Sup.

6119 A Division.

Police employed on duty at Newgate Jail, armed with revolvers, a few of the men only having undergone a course of instruction. Recommended that the whole of the A.B. be instructed -

27 September 1883

Meemo: In compliance with the verbal instructions of the Commr. the name of a Sgt from each of the exterior Divs and from the A.B. who can be recommended to receive instruction in the use of the Revolver with a view to

acting as instructors to other men in his Division has been submitted as follows.

A	P.S. Kendrick
K	Seimoe
N	Beirne
P	Tricker
R	Askew
S	Concannon
T	Broughton
V	Jenkins
W	Major
X	Douglas
Y	Ellis

I have ascertained from Chief Supt Williamson that Meemo Lang's charge for instructing the squad of men who have already been through their hands is one guinea per day and the cost of the ammunition.

Arrange with Meemo Lang and let the Meemo put his experience. The instruction should be given as soon as possible. 4.10.83

Done: Supt 6119
19



Confidential

Whitehall.

22nd September 1888

Sir

In reference to your
letter of the 20th instant
inclosing reports with regard
to the Guard at Millbank
Prison, I am to acquaint
you that the Secretary of
State approves of the Police
engaged in this service
being armed with revolvers
except those employed in the
public thoroughfare.

I am Sir

Your obedient servant.

The Commissioner of Police

Godfrey Lushington

A 1542^B
31



Whitehall

June 1881.



Sir,

I am directed by
Secretary Sir William
Vernon Harcourt to
acquaint you that he
approves of the amended
Police Order on the subject
of the use of revolvers
by the Police as submitted
with your Memorandum
of the 19th Instant.

The Commissioner of Police.
Yours obedient Servant,
Godfrey Lushington



Police Orders. June 30th 1884.

FIREARMS.—

The following regulations relating to the issue to, and use by Police of revolvers, having been approved, the Superintendents are to see that they are strictly adhered to:—

1. Revolvers are only to be issued to men who desire to have them when employed on night duty, and who can, in the opinion of the Divisional officer, be trusted to use them with discretion.

2. The revolvers are to be kept at the stations to which men who are to use them are attached, the Officers on duty thereat being held responsible for their safe custody and efficient condition.

3. A revolver is to be issued to a Constable on parading for duty, on his own application only, at the time of parading. It is to be loaded by the Officer parading the relief, and placed in the holster. An entry is then to be made in the Occurrence Book, showing the number and name of the constable to whom a revolver has been issued, and also the number of the revolver.

4. The revolver is to be carried in the holster on the belt on the right side in front of the truncheon, and is not to be taken out of the holster for any purpose whatsoever, except for self defence.

5. Officers carrying revolvers are to be strictly enjoined that they are only to be used in self defence where there is necessity for resorting to their use, as when the Constable is attacked by a person with firearms or other deadly weapon and cannot otherwise reasonably protect himself, a Constable (as a private person also) may resort to a revolver as a means of defence.

6. On going off duty the Officer in charge of the Station is to receive the revolvers from the Police, and in their presence extract the cartridges, carefully examine both weapon and cartridges and make an entry in the Occurrence Book of the condition in which they are delivered to him.

7. The Officer having the use of a revolver is to report, on going off duty, every instance in which he has had occasion to remove it from the holster during his tour of duty, whether it has been used or not. Such reports are to be dealt with as "Urgent," and submitted at once to Commissioner through District Superintendent.

8. Before a revolver is issued to an Officer, he is to be properly instructed in its use, and a report of his competency submitted, through the District Superintendent, to Commissioner for his approval.

E. Y. W. HENDERSON.

ESSEX CONSTABULARY.

The following regulations relating to the issue to and use by Police of Revolvers, having been approved by the Court of Quarter Sessions and Secretary of State, the Superintendents are to see that they are strictly adhered to:—

1.—Revolvers are only to be issued to men who desire to have them when employed on night duty, and who can, in the opinion of the Divisional Officer, be trusted to use them with discretion.

2.—The Revolvers are to be kept at the stations to which men who are to use them are attached, the Officers in charge thereof being held responsible for their safe custody and efficient condition.

3.—A Revolver is to be issued to a Constable on parading for duty at a station on his own application only, at the time of parading. It is to be loaded by the Officer parading the relief, and placed in the holster. An entry is then to be made in the Occurrence Book, showing the number and name of the Constable to whom a Revolver has been issued and also the number of the Revolver.

4.—The Revolver is to be carried in the holster on the belt on the right side and is not to be taken out of the holster for any purpose whatsoever, except for self defence.

5.—Officers carrying Revolvers are to be strictly enjoined that they are only to be used in self defence where there is necessity for resorting to their use, as when the Constable is attacked by a person with firearms or other deadly weapon and cannot otherwise reasonably protect himself, a Constable (as a private person also) may resort to a Revolver as a means of defence.

6.—On going off duty, an officer to whom a Revolver has been issued at a station is to at once extract the cartridges, and hand it over next morning as early as possible to the Superintendent or Inspector in charge, who will, in the Officer's presence, carefully examine both weapon and cartridges, making an entry in the Occurrence Book of the condition in which they are delivered to him.

7.—The Officer having the use of a Revolver is to report on going off duty, every instance in which he has had occasion to remove it from the holster during his tour of duty, whether it has been used or not; such reports are to be dealt with as "urgent" and submitted at once to the Chief Constable through Superintendents.

8.—Before a Revolver is issued to an Officer, he is to be properly instructed in its use, and a report of his competency submitted, through the Superintendent, to the Chief Constable, for his approval.

9.—A box will be supplied to each Station, and to each Officer, to whom a Revolver has been issued, in which it and the cartridges are to be kept locked up and the key retained always on the Officer's person.

10.—An Officer to whom a revolver is issued at an out detachment, and who is unable to parade at a station owing to distance therefrom, is to keep the box in a safe place locked up, and is invariably to extract the cartridges on returning from duty.

11.—Superintendents and Inspectors, when visiting their men's residences, are invariably to inspect and examine the box, revolver, and cartridges, to see that the weapon is in good order, and the proper number of cartridges accounted for.

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S OFFICE,
CHELMSFORD,

1st June, 1885.

W. H. POYNTZ,
CHIEF CONSTABLE.

16 NOV. 85

Dumfries 14th Nov. 1885

The Police Committee of this County at their Meeting held here on 11th instth had under their consideration the advisability of Arming Certain Members of this Force with Revolvers. They have requested me to communicate with you, and to state that they will be much obliged if you would give them any information that would enable them to come to a decision on the matter at their next Meeting, which will be held in a few days.

The information they require is:-

- 1st The expediency of Arming Police men with Revolvers.
- 2nd If Armed is it necessary to get sanction of the Secretary of State?
- 3rd The description of Revolver that should be used and where obtainable.
- 4th The restrictions and regulations that should be observed by the men if armed.

The Police Committee here understand that a Committee was appointed by you to report upon the Arming of Police in the Suburbs and Country Districts. If such is the case, it would be obliging if a copy of such report were forwarded for their guidance.

I have the honor to be

With great respect

Your obedient servant

John Jones
C.C.

Col. Sir E. J. W. Henderson. K.C.B.

Commissioner of Police

41 Whitehall Place

London. W.