

# **Police Role in Society at the Beginning of 21st Century**

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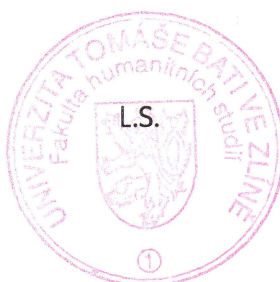
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Ve své bakalářské práci se soustředuji na roli policie v britské společnosti. Zabývám se tím, jaké instituce a jakými prostředky zajišťovaly dodržování práva a pořádku v osmnáctém a na začátku devatenáctého století, a jaké důvody vedly ke vzniku první centrálně kontrolované policie. Dále zkoumám, jak tato Metropolitní policie ovlivnila tehdejší společnost a jaké změny se udály na začátku 21. století.

Klíčová slova: policie, Metropolitní policie, thief-takers, watchmen, konstáblové, Bow Street Runners, Robert Peel, Bobbies, detektivové, ženy u policie, ozbrojování policie, výstroj, moderní technologie, speciální jednotky, organizovaný zločin, internetový zločin, fotbalové násilí, terorismus, role policie

## **ABSTRACT**

In my bachelor thesis I focus on the police role in British society. I deal with the issue what institutions enforced the law and order in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and by which means they did so, and what were the reasons that led to the creation of the first centrally controlled police. Further, I examine how this Metropolitan Police influenced the contemporary society and what changes took place at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: police, Metropolitan Police, thief-takers, watchmen, constables, Bow Street Runners, Robert Peel, Bobbies, detectives, women in police, arming of police, equipment, modern technologies, special units, organized crime, internet crime, hooliganism, terrorism, police role

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## INTRODUCTION

British police is regarded as “the best police in the world” or as “a stabilizing feature of British life”. Since its start in 1829, it has become an important part of British culture, an icon of Britishness. Although nowadays policemen are far from the idealized Bobby from the nineteenth century, some characteristics stay the same – he still patrols unarmed, on foot, wears his typical blue uniform and helmet, and controls crime and disorder. Due to these features, British police is widely admired not only at home, but also abroad.

But modern police faces more risks and challenges than it did a few decades ago. Policemen had to adapt to changing conditions and their role in society transformed as well. The traditional story portrays the Bobby as a little more than a citizen in uniform. But the policing institution has shifted gradually from having its primary relationship directly with the local community, to becoming an instrument of the state. Also, demands on police have increased and have affected both public expectations and public opinion about the police.

This thesis focuses on police role in society, its importance and how it has changed throughout its history. If we understand how police responds to the aspects of modern world, we could better understand the necessity of such changes that might not be to the likeness of the public but have a justification.

It seems that the public has never been truly satisfied with the police. At the very beginning, the public saw them as a threat to their civil liberties, and although the police have gone a long way from there, they have never been really able to meet the public expectation in terms of immediate response when needed or visibility – the reassurance that they are being protected.

## 1 BRITISH POLICE ORIGINS

“To serve and protect” – four words summarizing the very basic principle of today’s policing and giving ordinary citizens the assurance that they are being watched upon while they live their ordinary lives. But was it always like that? When did people start to rely on that police would come when something wrong happened? Has it changed throughout its history?

The origins of a police system in English-speaking countries can be traced back to the early tribal society where a group of appointed people was to maintain order. This system was later expanded by the Saxons, establishing a so-called tithingman – a man responsible for collecting taxes in his “tithing”. That was a group of ten people, to which every man older than twelve years had to belong, characterized by a collective responsibility among the members.

The tithings were grouped together by ten, creating a “hundred” that was managed by a “hundred man”. He was responsible for choosing a sheriff for each shire, who had the power to punish every resident who did not pay taxes or broke the law.

Over time, the tithingman transformed into a person, who was responsible for apprehending people breaking the law, which brings us to a fourteenth-century constable, de facto serving from that time on, and eventually to a modern policeman. At that time, they were not wearing any uniform and certainly did not have to face such extensive problems we have now, but there could already be seen some attempts of maintaining the public order by a group of appointed men.

### 1.1 The word “police”

British policing has been through a long development, as well as the very word describing the policing activity.

The word “police” originally comes from a Latin word “politia” denoting civil administration. The connection with an activity of maintaining order has its origin in French, which was taken over by the English in the late seventeenth century as the word for

the “control of all activity, all dimension of experience, deemed properly subject to public authority”.<sup>1</sup>

During the next decades, the meaning changed a little – it no longer referred to the control of the whole state, but narrowed down to a control of a city. The modern meaning of the word “police” was specified after the creation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, when the definition changed to “the care of preventing infractions of the law, detecting offenders, bringing them to justice, and executing the sentences of the courts”.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the term “police” is understood as a “body of officers ... typically responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elaine A. Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Elaine A. Reynolds. *Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>3</sup> “English and American policing in the late 19th century,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/467289/police/36621/English-and-American-policing-in-the-late-19th-century> (accessed March 16, 2010).

## **2 BEFORE THE BOBBIES: LAW AND ORDER IN EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY LONDON**

Eighteenth-century London was a developing metropolis and the largest city in Europe. There had been significant social and economic changes, which caused a massive migration from the countryside into cities. Population growth in London and its dark narrow streets and omnipresent fog made it a perfect place for criminals. Robberies and assaults were nothing unusual as well as the most bizarre murders. The fact that there was no organized law enforcement system did not help either.

The English saw any kind of police institution very suspicious. It reminded them of the intrusive French model that was considered to be full of spies and militarised “gendarmes”, which did not correspond with their traditional liberties granted by their Protestant island. It was believed that such a system had no place in this country, that they could do without. I do not think that the crime victims, and there had to be many of them, would have agreed.

### **2.1 Paradise for criminals**

London was generally considered to be a dangerous city, especially at night, when the streets were regarded a lawless place. Disreputable individuals of all kinds ruled the city, making it for ordinary citizens difficult to survive their way through the dark city streets unharmed when going alone and unarmed.

There was a great variety of crimes ranging from petty offences like robbery and burglary to the most serious crime of murder. In such a religious society, murder was seen as an act “usurp[ing] God’s right to take life, symbolizing rebellion against providence, nature, authority and Christian society”.<sup>4</sup>

Murder was not easy to prove, though, as it was committed mostly secretly and without witnesses, regardless of the fact there was no police with investigating capacity, if we could speak about police at all. Also smaller offences usually remained unsolved, because it was up to the victim to apprehend the offender and bring him to justice, which most of them did not dare or did not bother. Honestly, I cannot imagine a young woman running after a tall and stout felon. Furthermore, the criminals were not stupid; they had wit and were well organized, so they were a hard nut for the law enforcement officials.

## 2.2 Crime punishment

It is not very accurate to describe the eighteenth-century apprehending and punishing of offenders and investigating of crimes as a “system”. It was rather several institutions working more or less together in an attempt to repress crime, even though not always successfully.

As mentioned before, up until 1829 and later it was mostly crime victims who pursuit felons in order to get them punished, and only then a constable was contacted to make an arrest. There was a rule that anyone who witnessed a felony was obliged to apprehend the culprit, and to inform a constable if they heard a crime had happened. They also organized a hunt on criminals called “hue and cry”, which every citizen had to participate in when declared. It was a collective pursuit of a criminal, while shouting and blowing horns, announced when there was a felony spotted. This was supposed to raise alarm, so every man close-by could join and help.

It was not difficult to escape a punishment – it was enough to run away to another part of the country and I am sure that many felons did so on regular basis. The powers of magistrates were geographically limited, so when a felon escaped to a foreign area, he won, as there was no cooperation between individual regions and counties. All the offender had to do, then, was to wait until the things calmed down and then eventually return without a fear of being punished.

Trials were initially very short, rather symbolic and the verdict was most likely a death sentence in order to avoid any future crime. Evidences were usually very poor, so it was a common practice to try to obtain a confession from the accused in order to be able to sentence him. Many felons were probably sorry for what they had done, because according to the following quotation, it was not rare that they actually confessed, even though they had to know what that meant for them – that was a very severe punishment. But the religious criminals believed that when they plead guilty, “God [then] forgive their sins and admit them into heaven”.<sup>5</sup> Why they committed the crimes in the first place, is a different question.

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<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 210.

<sup>5</sup> “Crime and Punishment in Victorian England: The Law System Switch from Death Penalty, to More Humane Punishment,” Suite101.com, [http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime\\_and\\_punishment\\_in\\_victorian\\_england](http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime_and_punishment_in_victorian_england) (accessed January 16, 2010).

There was also another excuse for the use of capital punishments, also called Bloody Code. The population of London and surrounding countryside grew rapidly, along with the crime rates, so the town officials were convinced that the best way of dealing with it was by executions. These would have two benefits – it would discourage people from committing crimes and also slightly reduce the population numbers. No matter how brutally that sounds, they believed they were doing the right thing.

Death penalty was used for a great range of crimes from murder to not so serious offences, like stealing a property worth more than one shilling, for example. Executions were carried out exclusively by hanging, because it was believed that taking somebody's life was a sufficient punishment and there was no need for additional torture. Death penalty was used since the beginning of the eighteenth century until the abolishment of capital punishment in 1964. Practically, though, only about a quarter of the accused criminals actually ended up being hanged.

Executions were a popular public event up until 1868 when it was moved indoors. The hangings were being executed in a place called Tyburn, which was a village close-by London, and it always attracted many curious people. Entire families came to watch. It was a form of entertainment that lasted eight days a year, so the audience could see executions of numerous criminals. The principle of these public executions was a belief, that, again, it would deter any potential offenders from committing a crime and “inspire terror in those whose duty it was to obey”.<sup>6</sup> Maybe that was the reason why the execution day was the most likely declared public holidays.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the popularity of capital punishments decreased. There was a prevalent opinion that they were “too powerful”, that “the lesson offered to the lower class was contradictory and dangerous”.<sup>7</sup> Reformers thus wanted to focus on the rehabilitation of criminals, because they believed they could amend their behaviour and return them successfully to the society. Death sentence did not disappear completely, though; it remained reserved for murderers and traitors.

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<sup>6</sup> “Crime and Punishment in Victorian England: The Law System Switch from Death Penalty, to More Humane Punishment,” Suite101.com, [http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime\\_and\\_punishment\\_in\\_victorian\\_england](http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime_and_punishment_in_victorian_england) (accessed January 16, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> “Crime and Punishment in Victorian England: The Law System Switch from Death Penalty, to More Humane Punishment,” Suite101.com, [http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime\\_and\\_punishment\\_in\\_victorian\\_england](http://georgian-victorian-britain.suite101.com/article.cfm/crime_and_punishment_in_victorian_england) (accessed January 16, 2010).

Another very popular punishment was whipping, which was a standard punishment for petty offences. It usually took place when there was a market in the town, so there were plenty of onlookers, and thus the public humiliation for the convict was greater. He or she had to be stripped to the waist, because the punishment was more effective on the naked body.

Imprisonment was in the eighteenth century used very rarely, and if, then not for serving a sentence, but only for holding felons before their trial or punishment. Imprisonment was perceived as a too mild punishment, so when eventually used, it was in a combination with another penalty. As a full-time punishment, it started to be used since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it became the most common sentence in non-capital property crimes.

### **2.3 Lack of organized police force**

Eighteenth century England did not possess any kind of a central police authority. It was a “mishmash” of various law enforcement bodies that were very different from each other. It was not until the very end of the century when something similar to organized police appeared.

Policing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was only at the beginning of its development. The role of law enforcing officials was only gradually forming and it was a long run before they developed into a trustful institution people could rely on.

Policing was at that time secured mostly by unpaid volunteers, who had only basic understanding about the law (probably as any other citizen) and for whom it was just a free time activity, sometimes obligatory. These individuals were known as watchmen and constables, whose origins go back to the thirteenth century and further. Each of these “professions” had different demands and duties and thus played a distinct role in the society.

#### **2.3.1 Watchmen**

People have always cared about their property and this is what I see as one of the reasons of creating bodies of appointed men responsible for patrolling streets at night, guarding town gates and watching for eventual offenders. These tasks were carried out by watchmen, who had served since the seventeenth century, being then called “Charlies” according to their creator, King Charles II.



Each night, when their shift started, the watchmen set out to their sentry boxes, equipped with a light and a stick, from where they watched the part of the street they were responsible for, and patrolled it every hour, much like today's policemen. Their shift lasted from 9 or 10 p.m. to dawn, during when they had to control all suspicious individuals, especially those carrying a bundle. When encountering such a person, their responsibility was to stop and question him, which was a duty that has endured until nowadays. If they saw a crime being committed, they used their wooden rattle they were armed with to draw an attention and summon help.

Initially, they were paid only from taxes, which mirrored in the quality of the watchmen, who were mostly elderly men and those who could not get another job. But although there is a common opinion that they were mostly decrepit drunks not very different from the felons they were fighting against, it is not really true. Yes, they were inefficient, but they were few in number and although it was only a part-time job, many of them were dedicated to it and tried hard to be as good as possible. When needed, they did not hesitate to challenge an armed felon and pursue him at great personal risk.

Parishes were aware of the insufficiency of the amateur watchmen and also of the fact that paid employees would do a better job, as they would have bigger motivation. The answer to this was the passing of the Act of Parliament in 1735, which professionalized the watchmen by transforming them into public servants. That meant higher pay and thus more dedicated and better watchmen. Results were seen almost immediately. Watchmen left their sentry boxes and started to act almost like modern policemen, patrolling the streets and checking if doors and windows of shops were secured.

The Watch is seen as the basics in which the modern police system originates. There can already be seen features that are still alive or that are very similar to those we know today. For the first time, they patrolled streets (although not that much as they did later) and cared about the property of businessmen, so we can see that the nature of policing has not really changed. This proves for example the still-present duty of stopping and searching any suspicious character.

### **2.3.2 Constables**

The daily counterpart of the night watch was the office of constable. They operated together and yet independently, playing basically the same role in the society, but working in a different daytime.

The office of parish constable can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon and Norman times. Traditionally, it was a local government task performed by volunteers within their civil duty. It was an unpaid function that each property owner had to serve for a year, together with his civil employment. This system was rooted in a belief that government was safer when in hands of independent amateurs, although their law skills were no better than those of ordinary citizens. After all, they were ones of them.

According to a guide for constables printed in 1710, they should have been “chosen out of the honestest ablest and most understanding Men, not Feeble with old Age, not otherwise Weak, Sick, Poor, or Impotent, That so the Office may be perform’d truly and diligently, without Malice, Affection, or Partiality”.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the nineteenth century when they became professional officers paid by taxes of citizens.

The parish constables were responsible for keeping the peace and dealing with any criminal behaviour or public disorder. Although they were not working towards crime prevention yet, there were already some signs that it might play an important role in successful policing one day. That sign was the hope that the presence of constables on the streets would deter eventual offenders and make them think twice before committing a crime.

The constables were not a detective force either. Because it was mainly a voluntary office, the crime victims could not depend on their help with identifying and apprehending offenders, if they were not caught right after the crime was committed, as that was far beyond their duties. All they were willing to do was to come to the crime scene to provide the immediate help to the victim and eventually to escort the arrested felon to the magistrate to have him punished.

These constables might have been effective in fighting against petty thieves and small-scale crimes, but they struggled when facing organized gangs or violent public disorders. They had no skills and means how to deal with such individuals and it took a long time before they were able to handle such situations without the help of the Army.

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<sup>8</sup> Elaine A. Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies; The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14.

### 2.3.3 Thief-takers

Although there were men keeping an eye on people and safety of streets, nobody could guarantee that the offenders would be arrested and sentenced. Neither constables nor watchmen helped there and the victims rarely risked going after the suspect on their own, provided they knew who it was.

To enhance the justice, the government started to offer reward money for those who would detect and catch an offender or who would have information leading to his apprehension. It did not work the way they planned, though. Ordinary citizens were afraid to take the risk, which led to the rise of thief-takers. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century they played the role of detectives and the crime victims hired them to find the offender or/and their stolen property.

Although they were not very different from the felons they were detecting, they made a decent living out of the rewards. They were often connected to criminal underground, so I think that sometimes it was not difficult for them to find the culprit they were looking for. Some of the thief-takers were even blackmailing criminals with turning them in if they failed to pay the protection money.

Despite the corruption, I believe that thief-takers were an important step in creating police functions and identity, as they laid the foundations for the professional detective work.

## 2.4 The Bow Street Runners

At this point, people finally realized the need for more skilled officers able to deal with different aspects of policing and their importance in the society. It was clear that the detection of suspects could no longer remain in the hands of private thief-takers. A more organized and transparent body was needed. This was found in the Bow Street Runners.

The Bow Street Runners were established in 1749 by Henry Fielding, a novelist and a chief magistrate. He well contributed to the development of policing and changed the approach to crime. He was well aware that the current system of policing, which almost completely lacked the detection of suspects, was not working. Ordinary people rarely took the risk of apprehending the offenders on their own, especially when facing armed and dangerous members of gangs, and thief-takers were not very trustworthy. Despite severe punishments, violent crimes were on the rise, and so Mr. Fielding was convinced there had

to be another way – crime prevention. He encouraged people to get together and go into the streets to catch the felons before they commit a crime.

Despite this, the Bow Street Runners were not a preventive force. They did not patrol streets; that was still the job for watchmen and constables. The Bow Street Runners waited to be called to the crime scene - they were early detectives. They worked in a similar way as thief-takers, who Henry Fielding believed were essential in the fight against crime, catching any criminals that were avoiding their punishment.

Originally, they worked for fees charged for their services and for rewards from the state for successful conviction of felons. Later, they were paid by the magistrate, so their effort in thief-taking was “worth their while”.<sup>9</sup>

They knew the city and the people very well and usually knew where to look for wanted suspects. Their investigation methods were very modern – they asked questions, interviewed witnesses and sometimes even infiltrated among criminals to capture a wanted person. Being full-time policemen, they gained considerable experience in the investigation field, including knowledge of the topography of crime and basic forensic skills.

The Bow Street Runners also revolutionized policing in another aspect. They encouraged the victims and other people to come with descriptions of the suspects, so they could share them with other magistrates and advertise them in newspapers. This rapid spreading of information helped to catch the offender quicker and increased the chance that the stolen property would be returned. Also, all the information of criminals were for the first time recorded, making the Bow Street office the centre of a criminal intelligence network, which later became the Criminal Record Office of Scotland Yard.

Henry Fielding caused quite a stir in the outdated law system that basically remained unchanged since the fourteenth century and where the idea of the detection of suspects was hue and cry. He showed that it was not pointless to make the effort to catch offenders, because consequently it could drive the criminals out of the streets, as the certainty of being caught would be higher. The Bow Street Runners laid the foundations of detective policing, extending thus the role of the police by another aspect, necessary for effective functioning in the society.

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<sup>9</sup> J. M. Beattie, “Early Detection: The Bow Street Runners in Late Eighteenth-Century London,” in *Police detectives in history, 1750-1950*, ed. Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 18.

### 3 THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

The establishment of the Bow Street Runners was undoubtedly a revolutionary idea that changed the whole police concept. Operating at that time as a first professional detective force and being the precursor of the New Police, the Bow Street Runners, however, could not sustain the rapidly growing numbers of London population. By 1829 it had raised up to 1.5 million, with crime rates copying that trend and contemporary police force was having a hard time with keeping pace. There were only 450 constables and 4,000 watchmen, which was not enough for so many citizens. It was clear there was a need for a new centralized body, able to police such big numbers.<sup>10</sup>

Since 1812, several Parliamentary committees were trying to find a solution to this problem, but were not successful until 1829, when Robert Peel finally succeeded with his proposal.

Robert Peel was the Tory Home Secretary and believed that the most effective way of dealing with crime and the decline in moral values was prevention that depended on public support. He said that “the police are the public and the public are the police” and the only difference between them is that the police are the members of the public that are “paid to give full-time attention to duties incumbent on every citizen”.<sup>11</sup> Peel believed that concerning the discouragement of crime, the prevention could replace the old system of severe punishments.

In 1829 he set up the fourth committee, the House of Commons Select Committee on the State of the Police in the Metropolis, where he presented his ideas and plans. The previous attempts failed because the committee believed that in such a free society, as London was, any effective police system could not work, that it would surely “destroy traditional English liberties”.<sup>12</sup> However, Robert Peel had strong arguments and thus the Metropolitan Police Act could be passed on July 19, 1829, creating the new civilian Metropolitan Police.

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<sup>10</sup> “The Growth of the Police Force,” School History, <http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/gcselinks/crimepunishment/resources/policeforce.pdf> (accessed February 24, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> “Robert Peel,” Icons of England, <http://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/the-bobby/biography/sir-robert-peel> (accessed October 13, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* (1989; repr., London: Routledge, 2002), 33.

The greatest change compared to the old Bow Street Runners was the shift in the control – unlike the Runners, the Metropolitan Police was centrally controlled from the Home Secretary. That eliminated the differences in police standards among rich and poor parishes that were common in the times of Watchmen. As everything, policing depended on money and the more money the parish had, the more watchmen could be hired and thus streets were safer.

In my opinion, it was a vicious circle. I believe that the less money the parish had, the higher crime rate there was and so more officers were needed. But there were not enough finances to do so. And that is what the Metropolitan Police Act changed – it made all parishes equal, because all of them were included in one unit, no more dependable on their own resources.

Two commissioners were appointed to set up a new police force and become its permanent heads - Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Charles Rowan, a retired military officer and Richard Mayne, a lawyer. Each of them brought valuable knowledge and experience from their fields, and together with Robert Peel's political skills, they created the whole new police concept – the principles of an organisation based on military ranks, impartial and lawful behaviour and public relations. Their headquarter was situated at Whitehall Place with a back entrance leading onto a courtyard called the Great Scotland Yard, later giving the headquarter the famous name of Scotland Yard.

The new Metropolitan Police, as the name suggests, covered only the metropolis, except for the City of London, stretching seven miles from the centre. The covered area was divided into seventeen divisions, each with 165 men from estimated 2,800, who were controlled by four inspectors and sixteen sergeants.<sup>13</sup>

The recruitment process started in August 1829 and the first patrol began their beat on the evening of September 29, 1829. The policemen were being recruited mostly from the working class, usually from the unskilled or semi-skilled background, and had a little idea of what they should expect. Although the men had to be no more than thirty-five years old, had to be at least five feet and seven inches tall, physically fit and literate, a lot of men interested in joining the force were drunks or otherwise unable to find any other job, which mirrored in an enormous turnover. Not being able to get used to the militaristic discipline,

which was something completely new to the early nineteenth-century labour, or to the violence they had to occasionally face, caused that many of the recruits left the job. Some of them also could not stand the boredom and loneliness of the beats, or the abuses from the public. Many policemen were dismissed because of indiscipline, drunkenness or other offences in the first months, some of them even after two or three days in the service. For example, the very first hired policeman was fired after only four hours, because he seriously did not meet the required health standard – he was legless. The statistics say that by May 1830 only 562 constables from the initial 2,800 remained in the force and even later, between 1856 and 1867, the force of 6,800 men had an average turnover of 1,096.<sup>14</sup>

Educated men were not much attracted to join the police if they had a chance to find another job. As a Superintendent, who became a policeman in 1835, said in 1868, “in [his] whole experience [he] never knew a man of superior education join unless there was a screw loose somewhere”.<sup>15</sup> People usually joined the police force as a temporary employment, a bridge to a better job. Some of them took it even as a chance to move to a town.

The main aim of the new police was the prevention of crime rather than its detention after it was committed, which used to be a common practice. Charles Rowan and Richard Mayne believed that uniformed officers patrolling streets would discourage criminals and get them out off streets, while they would also be there for the citizens when needed, clearly recognizable by the personal number on their collars.

Bobbies, as they were called after their creator, were instructed to stop, question and search every suspicious person after dark, especially when carrying a bundle or moving property in a wagon. That was what the old Watch did and what modern policemen are still obliged to do. They could arrest anyone they thought he could be “about to commit a

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<sup>13</sup> J. David Hirschel, and William Wakefield, “The History and Organization of the Police,” in *Criminal Justice in England and the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 67-80.

<sup>14</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 125.

<sup>15</sup> R. M. Morris, “‘Crime Does Not Pay’: Thinking Again About Detectives in the First Century of the Metropolitan Police,” in *Police detectives in history, 1750-1950*, ed. by Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 84.

felony”, but they had “to be civil and obliging to all people, of every rank and class ... and cautious not to interfere unnecessarily, in order to make a display of authority”.<sup>16</sup>

On September 1829, *The Times* newspaper printed the “New Police Instructions”:

It should be understood at the outset, that the object to be attained is “the prevention of crime”. To this great end every effort of the police is to be directed. The security of person and property, the preservation of the public tranquility, and all other objects of a police establishment, will thus be better effected than by the detection and punishment of the offender after he has succeeded in committing the crime. This should constantly be kept in mind by every member of the police force, as the guide for his own conduct. Officers and constables should endeavour to distinguish themselves by such vigilance and activity as may render it impossible for any one to commit a crime within that portion of the town under their charge.<sup>17</sup>

The uniforms were carefully designed to emphasize the civilian nature of the new police and to prevent the public from comparing them to soldiers. For this purpose, the colour chosen for the coat was blue. It was a colour of the Royal Navy, which was, unlike the Army dressed in red, relatively popular among the public. The coat was of swallowtail type with brass buttons resembling the uniform of servants, telling the public that the police officers were here to serve them. The coat had a high collar, strengthened with a leather stock to protect the policeman against strangulation. There was also a pattern of white bars on the sleeves to distinguish them from the Navy, whose uniforms they actually copied. The uniforms were “buttoned up to the throttling point” to represent “an institution rather than a man”<sup>18</sup> and ultimately the law.

The policeman’s head was protected by a glazed black stovepipe hat, which was hardened with cane, so he could stand on it to look over walls if needed. The hat was a sign

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<sup>16</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 42.

<sup>17</sup> Eugene McLaughlin, and John Muncie, “The Origins and Development of the Police,” in *Controlling Crime*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 28.

<sup>18</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 139.



of authority and it also made a policeman look taller, so people could recognise him more easily.

During the 1860s, this uniform slightly changed. The swallowtail coat was replaced by an eight-buttoned coat and instead of the top hat, the Bobbies wore a cock's comb helmet, which was replaced by a six-panelled helmet in 1870, which was very similar to those that are worn today.

As Watchmen, Bobbies were armed only with a truncheon, hidden in a long pocket in the tail of their coat, and a wooden rattle to summon help when needed, which they kept in their breast pocket as a protection against a knife aiming at their heart. The rattle was later replaced by a whistle, because the tests proved it could be heard over a longer distance. They did not carry any lethal weapons, but if needed, for example when facing a crowd, they could be equipped with a cutlass. This unarmed concept became the distinguishing sign of the British police, although they have experienced many difficulties with armed felons and there were some talks about arming them. However, even today, the majority of Bobbies remains unarmed.

Contemporary Bobbies worked seven days a week, with only five days a year of unpaid holiday. Initially, half of the patrolling was done at night. It was not until later when a three-shift system was introduced with two-thirds of men working at night, when it was more likely that a crime would be committed. The night shifts were usually shorter, so more men had to be employed.

They had to patrol at a steady pace of two-and-a-half miles an hour, in all weathers, and they should have been able to cover their beats in up to fifteen minutes. They were also supposed to get to know everyone who lived on those beats. During each patrol, they walked an average of 20 miles and were not allowed to sit down or lean against anything. But that was just a glimpse of the strict police discipline. The officers were also forbidden to talk to each other or with members of public if it was not concerning their duties.

The lives of policemen were controlled, too. They had to ask for permission when having a meal with a civilian. In the early years, they had to wear their uniforms even when off duty, so everyone could recognise them as policemen and people did not feel as being spied upon. They could not vote and until the Second World War they had to ask for permission to get marry. This became more difficult in the inter-war years, when an officer had to be in the service for at least four years before obtaining the permission.

A policeman's wife was an important part of a policeman's life and she even had her own little role in policing. When her husband was gone on patrol, she was supposed to act as his personal assistant – taking messages and answering the phones. Her responsibility was also to keep their house in a “high state of cleanliness”.<sup>19</sup> That is probably why she could not have any paid employment and why her character and past was investigated, before being found suitable to marry a police officer. These restrictions, however, ended shortly after the end of the Second World War.

The policeman's job had also several perks. The most significant advantage, and probably one of the reasons why some men joined the police, was a pension, although it was not guaranteed until 1890. It was something rare among working-class occupations and although they could not always count on it, it provided certain assurance of finance security after leaving the force. Another great incentive was that some forces were offering health care, even for the man's family. There were also police houses for rent, where a policeman's family could live, usually in a greater police community.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the pay of a policeman was higher than those of unskilled working-class jobs, rising with the rank and the years in the service, which made it for the first time a rather desirable employment.

### 3.1 Popularity

John Prince-Smith, a British politician, said back in 1812 that a centralised police force is “a system of tyranny; an organized army of spies and informers, for the destruction of all public liberty, and the disturbance of all private happiness”.<sup>20</sup> Although the Metropolitan Police did not exist yet in his time, his attitude fully describes the situation that accompanied its creation.

The new police struggled for acceptance, as any other police institution before. The fear of a French-style police tyranny was still alive. People were afraid that the officers would act as for which their French colleagues were infamous – that is to spy on them through plain-clothes detectives and thus suppress their civil liberties. There were also rumours that the Bobbies were armed with lethal weapons, although it contradicted to their

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<sup>19</sup> Eugene McLaughlin, and John Muncie, “The Origins and Development of the Police,” in *Controlling Crime*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 37.

<sup>20</sup> “Robert Peel,” Icons of England, <http://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/the-bobby/biography/sir-robert-peel> (accessed October 13, 2009).

essential intention. But I think that people were ready to believe anything that contributed to the image of the hated Peelers.

Some regulations that the Metropolitan Act of 1829 included, though, were rather bizarre. The Act, for example, made illegal kite flying, knocking at doors without reasonable excuse, hoop-rolling or even shaking rugs and carpets in the streets before 8 a.m.<sup>21</sup> No wonder, then, that the Bobbies were given insulting nicknames like “Mr. Peel’s Bloody Gang” or “The Crushers”.<sup>22</sup> *Weekly Dispatch*, a British newspaper, also described them as “police soldiers”, who created “a military body employed in civil duties ... a powerful engine in the hands of Government [that] may be employed for the suppression of public freedom”.<sup>23</sup>

I dare to say, though, that this fear was not as strong as it was in the earlier times, since the public had already experienced that a British police could function without being intrusive into people’s lives.

There was also a great distrust among the ratepayers who did not like that the police was no more under their control, that they paid for something they could not influence. People in wealthy parishes objected that there were fewer policemen patrolling the streets than when they paid for their own watches, and so the streets were not as safe as before. Poor people from the working class complained about the ways the new policemen behaved towards them and the Commissioners had a hard time explaining that everything was according to the instructions. On November 1829, Robert Peel wrote: “I want to teach people that liberty does not consist in having your house robbed by organized gangs of thieves, and in leaving the principal streets of London in the nightly possession of drunken women and vagabonds.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, there were some areas where it was dangerous for a Bobby to go, as there was a high number of assaults on policemen.

The expenses of the new police were higher, which people naturally criticized. But the Bobbies had also advocates. They saw the bright side and were well aware that all social

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<sup>21</sup> David Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England: Crime, Conflict and Control* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>22</sup> Ian K. McKenzie, “Policing in England and Wales,” in *Law, Power and Justice in England and Wales* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 46.

<sup>24</sup> “Perils of Multiculturalism?,” *The Suburbanist*, <http://suburbanist.vox.com/library/post/the-dread-perils-of-multiculturalism-1-fixed-and-fluid-cultures.html> (accessed March 10, 2010).

classes benefited from the police protection, which was now more effective with their primary aim being crime prevention.

It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, when the Londoners realized that the police were here to protect them and began to accept them as a “stabilizing feature of British life”<sup>25</sup>, thinking they are “the best [police] in the world”.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2 Old vs. New Police

One scholar said that the only real difference between the old and the new police, that is between the Bow Street Runners and the Metropolitan Police, was the centralized control of the latter. He might have been right. After all, the English are a traditionalist nation and they like to preserve things that have proved to be good. Unlike the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century constables and watchmen, stepping in only when a crime was committed, the Runners began to realize that crime prevention is equally important in the reduction of crime as crime detection. There were not regular patrols on the streets yet, but the foundations were laid. And when then Robert Peel appeared, he took these basics, developed them and made them the main aim of the Metropolitan Police.

Another thing that had the old and new police in common was that the officers were still being sworn as constables. Not only it had a traditional value, but it also gave people the feeling that nothing really changed and that the policemen were still the same old friendly constables coming from local communities to serve them and be there for them.

### 3.3 Public disorders

Police had always struggled when facing a crowd, especially an angry one. They did not have the capacity nor skills to deal with public disorders, so often the Army had to be called. The soldiers did not possess the right skills either, but they had weapons and weapons worked, often with tragic consequences; it was not rare that a citizen was killed.

And that was what Mr. Peel wanted to avoid in the future. His aim was to find an effective mean of maintaining public disorder by training his policemen in crowd maintaining skills, so there was no bloodshed when breaking demonstrations.

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<sup>25</sup> Roger Graef, *Talking Blues* (Glasgow: HarperCollins Manufacturing, 1990), 46.

<sup>26</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 156.

It was a great idea, but the reality was not that simple. It took the police some time to develop the right crowd control and management techniques, and only gradually they started to replace the Army in dealing with disorders. From the beginning, when they did not possess the right tactics yet, their advantages were at least the great number of policemen, as well as the fact that their only weapon was a relatively harmless truncheon.

### 3.4 Detectives

The Metropolitan Police was originally designed as being only a preventive force, so initially the prosecuting of offenders and other detective work was left to the capable Bow Street Runners. When they were disbanded in 1839, detective policing was largely ignored, until the crimes rose over the policemen's heads and they realized that not all crimes can be prevented.

For this purpose, a new branch of the Metropolitan Police was created in 1842. The Detective Department unit started with eight plain-clothes detectives and once again struck fear into the citizenry. People did not trust them, because they were wearing civilian clothes and thus could not be recognized as policemen. When leading an investigation, they were using informants, lies and deception, which caused a great suspicion. That was probably the reason why after six years after their creation, there was still the same number of detectives.

The 1870s were characterized by a corruption affair of three chief inspectors, which led to the abolition and consequential reorganization of the Detective Department, creating a new Criminal Investigation Department in 1878.

The CID was a modern detective branch, which by far beat the Bow Street Runners. It counted 200 detectives, rising to 800 by 1883,<sup>27</sup> many of them being former thief-takers or constables with years of investigation experience. As one detective said, the most important thing for their job was a common sense of “put[ting] two and two together to make four”,<sup>28</sup> along with the knowledge of where to look and the techniques of right questioning.

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<sup>27</sup> “The Growth of the Police Force,” School History, <http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/gcse/links/crimepunishment/resources/policeforce.pdf> (accessed February 24, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 167.

By that time, the Criminal Investigation Department took the responsibility for the whole prosecution process, finally leaving out the duty of the crime victims to find the offenders on their own. Of course, they still had to report what happened, but that was all they were now expected to do. The Metropolitan Police thus gave the people another demonstration of how they could be useful for the society.

### 3.5 Arming Bobbies

The members of any British police institution have never worn lethal weapons, unless it was necessary. The Metropolitan Police even uses it as a sign of their uniqueness among the police forces of other nations. The only weapon they have ever had on them was a truncheon, still carried by police officers today, plus a whistle to summon help when needed.

This was about to change in the 1880s. There was a great problem with armed burglars, while the Bobbies who pursued them were unarmed and unprotected when being confronted. In 1883, the *Evening Standard* newspapers commented on the issue that way: “It is not only foolish but absolutely cruel to send policemen out to combat men possessed with revolvers, without any other arm than a short club”.<sup>29</sup>

This concern resulted in a questionnaire about arming the policemen, which was issued among them. The outcome showed that more than two-thirds of officers would have preferred carry guns. There was a great debate over the results and the Commissioners were rather baffled – accepting the wishes of constables would have meant overthrowing the unarmed nature of Bobbies that they were famous for.

Eventually, they came with a decision to have a limited number of revolvers for the men patrolling the most dangerous beats. The revolvers were not very used, though. Officers did not have much practice, as they were allowed to have only six training shots at a target a year, which was not much. Although the men voted for the firearms, they were quite anxious about using them. They were not very skilled in firing and it often happened that while being confronted with an armed gang, the officers missed all the shots. The more typical usage was when one officer fired into the air to wake up a family in a burning house.

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<sup>29</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 157.

This topic is still alive today. Arming Bobbies has its opponents as well as its advocates, but I dare to say that most citizens are against – because of the tradition, which is for the British very typical.

### **3.6 Women in police**

For a long time, women were not interested in men's job. In fact, they were supposed to not be interested in any kind of job, as they were taught that their role was to bring up children and take care of their family and household.

But during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the things were to change. Women called for equality with men in separate job spheres that limited their participation in public life and the feminist movement was on the rise. It was just a matter of time before the feminism reached also the Metropolitan Police.

The development of the role of women in police was a slow and only gradual process full of troubles. First women in the force appeared during 1880s. They were wives of station sergeants living there with their husbands and originally taking care of the domestic needs of young constables. But because there were frequent problems with arrested women that sometimes charged the supervising officers from sexual harassment just to escape the punishment, some police stations appointed so-called police matrons, which function was usually served by the police officers' wives.

Their tasks were to deal with female suspects, such as searching them when arrested and supervising them in custody. Later, they were also responsible for visiting female convicts released on license.

During the First World War, many men left for the front and women filled the incurred gaps. This shift of sex did not spare the police force either. Women from a higher class than were the average policemen became attracted to the police profession, although they were not really accepted by their male colleagues, as they were seen better suited for an unpaid social service work. They were to deal with the matters involving women and children, doing only a limited number of patrolling.

Simultaneously, there were operating two voluntary groups that actually laid foundations to the official female police work. These groups were created because they wanted to control young women and girls that were having relationships with present soldiers. Both groups were policing behaviour of working-class women, patrolling parks

and other public spaces in order to separate dating couples, when a woman was thought to be married.

But while the middle-class National Union of Women Workers (NUWW) considered themselves to be an aid to the Metropolitan Police, the Women Police Service (WPS) did rather charity or “rescue work” like warning misbehaving girls and soldiers’ wives of the danger of immoral behaviour.

Their effort eventually led to the creation of the Women Police in 1918, a body of 100 women with Sophia Stanley from the NUWW appointed as its Superintendent. There were also first requirements on the enrolment issued, such as the minimum height of five feet and four inches, no power of arrest as they were not sworn as constables, and no right to pension. Also, any woman with dependant young children was forbidden from the service. By February 1919 there were only 25 women officers appointed.

These women met strong opposition from male officers, because they saw them as intruders in their job. They were said to be denying their femininity when accepting the job and their uniform that was considered to be too “mannish” did not help either. It consisted of a tunic and a wide skirt, together with a wide brimmed helmet, and was not changed until the 1930s and 1940s when there were some attempts of its feminisation.

One policewoman recalled meeting a Canadian soldier on a street who “proceeded to give [her] a piece of his mind ... and advised [her] to stay at home and bring up [her] family instead of walking the streets in a way no decent woman should”.<sup>30</sup> There were also fears that the police service could attract lesbians looking for a partner.

Although women proved during the war, their success as police officers did not last long. Shortly after the end of the First World War, the Women Police was disbanded. Only a few women officers left in the service, but police matrons were still being employed to search and supervise female suspects and were present while they were being interviewed.

The life of the purely women police force was very short, they worked only during the war emergency. But the fact that police matrons were still being hired indicates that there was a constant need for women to be present at police stations, and so I do not see a tangible reason why the women police officers had to be disbanded. Maybe it was because

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<sup>30</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 185.



their male colleagues did not see their activities as a proper police work, and so employing of police matrons was a better and mainly cheaper choice for them.

Anyway, women did not give up and have been attacking men's job sphere since then, although the resistance to them still carried on; they were thought to be an unnecessary luxury that the economic could not support.

A slight change came no sooner than in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the percentage of women in police raised from 9,4% in 1985 to 11,8% in 1997. The numbers from 2003 talk about 21% of women officers in the police force.<sup>31</sup>

By 1939 they got standardized pay and working conditions and the requirement that they resign after getting marry was dropped. But their duties have stayed very traditional – working with women and children, locating missing persons and dealing with female prisoners, while having only a limited number of patrols. However, they did not become a proper part of the force with the same conditions and rights as men until the early 1970s, and still then a woman joining the police was seen as “either a nymphomaniac or a dyke”, in any case she “couldn't be normal”.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, women play in the police an important role. Although they now have the same conditions as men, they still prefer to deal with sexual assaults and matters involving children. Also only a minimum of them is trained to use firearms.

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<sup>31</sup> J. David Hirschel, and William Wakefield, “Modern English Police,” in *Criminal Justice in England and the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 127.

<sup>32</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 271.

## 4 POLICING TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY

Policing has gone through a long development that is still not over. Each era brings new difficulties and police have to be able to deal with them, to adjust to them.

From the very beginning, when there was no organized police system, people depended on amateur watchmen and constables and self-appointed thief-takers that were to a certain degree substituting modern policemen. At that time, there were no direct attempts to prevent crimes, contemporary “police” focused rather on detection of already committed felonies. Maybe they did not know how to do it, maybe they did not have enough resources. And maybe they did not care, convinced that the punishments were severe enough to deter any potential offenders.

In the half of the eighteenth century, thief-takers were replaced by the detectives of the Bow Street, although not completely wiped off the streets. The Bow Street Runners worked in similar ways as the thief-takers, but were under one “roof” and paid by the magistrate.

The great revolution in policing came in 1829 when Sir Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police, the first centrally controlled police force, that became a model of policing also for other nations and due to the unarmed nature of patrolling Bobbies, stays unique among the police forces world-wide.

The 1960s was a period of major changes. The wars were over and Britain started to get on its feet again. Cultural and social changes accompanied by a great technological boom, created a new kind of society. People were moving into towns, driving their cars and enjoying the benefits of the National Health Service that was launched in 1948.

Ben Pimlott, a biographer of a British Prime Minister of that time, Harold Wilson, described the 1960s as being “arguably the episode of greatest transition and change in the post-war period. It was a period of coming to terms with a new prosperity and it was a period of rapid cultural and social change. It was a period of very important humanitarian reforms.”<sup>33</sup>

Naturally, these changes influenced the British police as well. The extension of suburbs made some beats much longer and thus led to the reorganization of the patrolling system, creating the Unit Beat Policing. This system was applied in wider beats and replaced the traditional foot patrol by uniformed policemen in cars, issued with a radio for

an easier contact with the central office. The idea was that the officers should every now and then park the car and patrol on foot and at the same time be able to respond to any emergence calls. It was claimed that by the beginning of the 1970s, this new style of policing covered about 60% of England and Wales.<sup>34</sup>

However, this reorganization was not very popular among citizens. They criticized the decreasing number of patrolling officers, feeling they are not as safe as they were before. For over hundred years, Robert Peel saw preventive patrol as the key to successful policing. In the past, the Bobby had to cover his beat up to fifteen minutes, so when you needed something, you could just stay in front of your house and he would eventually pass you by. Now, you could wait perhaps the whole day and then had to make a call, because there would probably be no policeman around. So basically, the police gave up what they had been doing for more than a century and quietly started a completely new system.

And this is one of the features that people complain about. They miss the old friendly Bobby patrolling still the same streets and knowing the local people. I believe, however, that in a modern world this is not possible anymore. There are still more and more people and even if there were not a shortage of men and women in the police service, this tradition would be only hardly sustainable.

There were some attempts, though. In response to people's calls for higher police visibility, the Police Community Service Officers (PCSOs) were introduced in 2002. Because the police generally have more important work elsewhere and have not enough resources to patrol usually uneventful areas, those non-sworn uniformed officers were employed to replace them in being there for the citizens.

Community policing has always been rated very high. People like the assurance that they are watched upon, that someone not really far away protects them from day-to-day minor offences like anti-social behaviour, vandalism, drunkenness, neighbourly disputes or parking matters. The biggest contribution, however, is their visibility. They are patrolling streets in a way that Bobbies several decades ago were in an attempt to reduce crime and although they have no power of arrest and are not police officers, the PCSOs are able to directly tackle some petty offences like those that were described earlier.

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Parsons, "Licence d'anglais - The Sixties in Great Britain," *Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour*, <http://web.univ-pau.fr/~parsons/sixties.html> (accessed April 9, 2010).

The PCSOs are employed by local police forces to support police officers in reducing the fear of crime among the citizens. They wear similar uniforms as police officers with certain distinguishing features depending on the area, such as a blue shield on the cap stating “Community Support Officer”. They are also not as equipped as police officers, they have only a protective vest and a radio.

However, the officers on beat did not disappear completely, they can still be seen in the centers of large cities or in especially dangerous areas. But the characteristics of these officers have changed as well. Apart from those who are particularly keen on patrolling, the patrols are mostly done by young recruits straight out of the academy, who are serving their obligatory two years of street patrolling, or by officers who were not accepted to any specialist group.

The rising tendency of crimes, particularly those that newly appeared in the recent years and require special attention (such as an international crime or terrorism), led to the creation of many specialist squads. This specialization drew all skilled and experienced officers out of the streets to the units dealing with specific crimes, leaving cities to the novices who have only little clue about the demands of their work. Generally, the average policeman answering people’s calls is likely to be less than 25 years old with less than four year’s experience.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.1 News in the system

When you say British police, most people visualize a decentralized police system, unique in its unarmed civilian nature that is widely admired at home and abroad.

There are 43 forces in England and Wales now, two of which are for the London area – the Metropolitan Police and the City of London police, compared to 183 during the Second World War<sup>36</sup>. Each force is maintained by a police authority, an elected committee that appoints the chief constable, who is responsible for management tasks like appointment, promotion and deployment of his force. That means that the force is responsible for

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<sup>34</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 1829 to the Present* (London: Quercus Publishing Plc, 2009), 250.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Edwards, *Changing Policing Theories For 21st Century Societies*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Federation Press, 2005), 72.

<sup>36</sup> J. David Hirschel, and William Wakefield, “Modern English Police,” in *Criminal Justice in England and the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 126.

policing their local territory. The forces, however, cooperate in a number of policing activities, such as asset recovery or motorway patrol.

All the police forces contain more than 140,500 police officers and 13,400 police community support officers,<sup>37</sup> which is a great increase since 1977 when there was about 108,000 policemen.<sup>38</sup> Out of this number, women represent 24% of police officers.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Aims of policing

In the 1820s Robert Peel published his “Nine Points of Policing”, the principles that are still cited today and that are said to be as relevant in modern policing as they were in the nineteenth century. These principles are basically reflected in the following quotation:

The purpose of the police service is to uphold the law fairly and firmly; to prevent crime; to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law; and to keep the Queen’s Peace; to protect, help and reassure the community; and to be seen to do all this with integrity, common sense and sound judgement.<sup>40</sup>

These tasks are, however, being recently challenged by a growing number of crimes that are of non-local character and that often go even over the British borders. This makes higher demands on effective policing and broadens police role to the extent it has never been before. So while in the nineteenth and most of the twenty century the police were inclined to community policing, knowing everyone who lived on their beats, today they have to make sure that they are able to deal with such threats as terrorism and an international crime, and do whatever it takes to prevent it or at least minimize the impacts on ordinary citizens.

#### 4.1.2 New Powers

Until 1967 a policeman had no more powers than an ordinary citizen, as anyone could arrest an offender while committing a crime or when they had a reasonable suspicion that he or she is guilty of the offence. A change came in 1984 by issuing Police and Criminal

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<sup>37</sup> “About the Police,” Home Office, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/about/index.html> (accessed April 11, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Home Affairs Committee, *Policing in the 21st Century* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2008), 85.

<sup>39</sup> Home Affairs Committee, *Policing in the 21st Century* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2008), 95.

<sup>40</sup> Tim Newburn, *Handbook of Policing* (Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2003), 87.

Evidence Act, so-called PACE, which deals primarily with the search and stop powers, powers of entry and of arrest, and the balance between these powers and the rights of the public.

The most controversial is especially the search and stop power. Officers used to misuse it, mainly when dealing with ethnic minorities, particularly young black men. They are still seen as potential suspects, partly probably because the officers just do not understand them. As one policeman explains: “Black youths do have an aggressive manner, they are very excitable, and they shout and wave their arms about and they sort of sway and stagger around.”<sup>41</sup> An officer can perceive this as a provocation and so he reacts – by searching them for any weapon or other things they should not have on them.

But the PACE specified the circumstances under which the stop and search can be done. Officer now has to have a reasonable suspicion that the person is in possession of an offensive weapon, drugs or stolen goods, or for example spray paint attempted to use in damaging property. The fact that the person has different skin colour does not count. They are also obliged to make a report and when making an arrest, to inform the suspect of his or her rights.

#### **4.1.3 Training**

It is not very difficult to become a policeman; as a matter of fact the basic requirements for the admission to the police are very similar to those from the beginning of the Metropolitan Police. The applicants must be older than eighteen years and be fit enough, which is tested by a fitness test that consists of running and a test of strength. There are also certain health standards that they must meet such as stress resistance or good eyesight, but generally the test are designed that every healthy man or woman should pass. What is new is that the financial situation of the applicants is checked in order to assess the vulnerability to corruption. Because the corruption is seen as a big problem, anyone with high debts is rejected.

Unlike in the nineteenth century, the recruits of many forces have no minimum height required now, because it is seen as a kind of discrimination against ethnic minorities with smaller stature. Although the smallest police officer ever was probably the legless man from the first recruiting in 1829, who was in the service for only four hours, today's police

have also its rarity. That is PC Sue Day, whose height is only four feet and ten inches and who is said to be the smallest police officer in Britain.<sup>42</sup>

Bigger change, however, is in the recruitment and training process. The nineteenth century applicants were accepted only by fulfilling basic, mostly physical requirements and today it is not much different, except for having to go through an assessment center, where the applicants' aptitudes for police work are assessed. When they pass, their twenty-week training starts with a course of instruction, followed by the final exams and a two-years probationary period. You can see then that this is something different from the 1829 practice, when all the training the recruits got was by working with an experienced officer. Fortunately, today's recruits are more prepared and better trained for doing a good job as police officers.

#### 4.1.4 Police officers equipment

It seems to be so long ago when first officers started to patrol streets, armed only with a wooden truncheon and a rattle, later a whistle, to summon help when needed. And yet, today's officers are not equipped much more. They still carry a modern version of a truncheon and instead of a whistle they have a personal radio. Apart from this, they are also issued with handcuffs and an incapacitant spray, may wear a stab-proof vest and be armed with a taser.

There is also a special unit, whose men are trained and issued with firearms called Authorized Firearms Officers. These qualified officers form, however, only a small portion of the Metropolitan Police officers, so you can see that Britain try hard to sustain the image of an unarmed force. The majority of citizens are against routine arming of police officers, although some people argue that there is no other way in such a violent society and that is it naïve to think that the officers could be able to deal with gun crimes without being armed themselves.

Although firearms is not anything new in British police as they were at officers' disposal already in the 1880s, the prevailing opinion is that when policemen get armed, it will be "the end of the civilization as we know it". The routine arming of Bobbies is thus

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<sup>41</sup> Roger Graef, *Talking Blues* (Glasgow: HarperCollins Manufacturing, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Ben Perrin, "People look up to Britain's shortest cop," *Swindon Advertiser*, [http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/4855738.People\\_look\\_up\\_to\\_Britain\\_s\\_shortest\\_cop/](http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/4855738.People_look_up_to_Britain_s_shortest_cop/) (accessed April 12, 2010).

seen as “the last straw”,<sup>43</sup> when there is no other way out, which with the rising threat of terrorism and organized crime can happen very soon.

## 4.2 Dealing with new patterns of crimes

The British are said to have a high respect for the law, but it would be foolish assuming that this could be applied to anyone. In fact, the crime rates are still increasing and the law-breakers are coming up with new and new ideas.

Every era brings distinct responsibilities and challenges to the police. Societies are still developing and crimes with them, using the newest technologies and advantages that the modern world can give them. Although the street crime has not almost changed throughout the years, as people have always stolen things, and liked drinking and fighting, there are now new problems that have to be taken care about. These problems are characterized by advances in technology, especially the information technology, along with increased mobility. These factors influence the way crimes are being committed, as well as their detection. It also means that some crimes are gradually ceasing to be of a local character, and are more and more demanding a national or even an international cooperation.

Criminals are very inventive. Since 1997, 3,605 new criminal offences were created, introducing 29 new Home Office crime classifications.<sup>44</sup> Many of those can be trivial or even ridiculous, but it still shows that the number of law-breakers is rising, and thus adding more work to police officers.

Nevertheless, not all crimes that we consider to be a creation of a modern world are really new. They may be more sophisticated and more difficult to detect, but basically they were here even several centuries ago. Charles Edwards gives in his book an example of the crime of fraud. Today’s stealing another’s credit card or using another’s password for financial gain is very similar to the medieval falsifying of documents. The only difference he sees is in the level of anonymity. While the medieval victim would probably know which persons had the access to his belongings, like the seal used in the falsification, today’s use of the Internet makes almost impossible to find out who is the suspect. It is likely that the victim and the offender never met, because they can be from different parts of the country, or even the world. Such offenders are not easy to detect, not only because of

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<sup>43</sup> Roy Ingleton, *Arming the British Police: The Great Debate* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1997), vii.

<sup>44</sup> Home Affairs Committee, *Policing in the 21st Century* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2008), 10.



many of these crimes go unnoticed.<sup>45</sup> Another example of an old crime in a new disguise can be people smuggling or prostitution, which is just another version of slavery that was abolished in Britain in 1833.

The rise of non-local crimes sparked off the creation of specialized units, dealing with specific types of crimes. This means that the role of the police in the twenty-first century is broader than it has ever been before, ranging from tackling terrorism to taking lost dogs. Because of this wide variety of tasks, the police often struggle with what they are here for and what their role in the society really is, being confused about their priorities.

#### 4.2.1 Traffic division

Creating a traffic division was one of the first signs of police specialization. The increasing use of cars had a great impact on policing from two reasons. First, it brought new conflicts to the officers, as cars were initially driven mostly by the higher class of the society, by the people the police had rarely troubles with. This changed when they started to encounter each other on the roads. People were reluctant to the regulations that they were supposed to obey, such as that they could not park where they wanted, that they had to have a driver license and that their car had to have a valid tax disc. All these issues were causing disputes with the respectable class of the society, as they did not like that someone in a uniform was telling them what to do.

The extensive use of automobiles led to the creation of the traffic department. Motor Traffic Patrols were set up by the 1930 Road Traffic Act that among other things established pedestrian crossings and abolished the speed limit of 20mph. The forerunner of today's traffic units watched out for people driving regardless of others, prevented collisions and made sure the traffic was smoothly running. Although those early traffic officers were nicknamed "Courtesy Cops", today's policemen of the Traffic Operational Command Unit are seen by the public rather as their enemy, probably because they are the most in the contact with them.<sup>46</sup>

Secondly, the use of cars by the public made the police start to utilize them as well. It was not their first means of transport, though. During the Victorian period, the officers

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Edwards, *Changing Policing Theories For 21st Century Societies*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Federation Press, 2005), 275.

<sup>46</sup> "1930 ~ 2005: 75 Years of Traffic Patrol," Metropolitan Police, <http://www.met.police.uk/traffic/history.htm> (accessed April 13, 2010).

were allowed to use bicycles on longer beats, so they did not have to walk such a distance and were also able to respond quickly when there were no telephones. Gradually, they moved on to the use of first purpose-built motorcycles Velocette in the 1960s, followed by cars famously nicknamed “Pandas” – small cars originally painted with black and blue. The police were initially hesitant in using new cars, as they did not want to be completely isolated from the public, but the increasing traffic gave them no choice. There had to be someone to deal with road pirates and that was impossible without putting the officers themselves into the cars. Today’s traffic department is formed by several specialized units, each one dealing with specific traffic issues.

#### **4.2.2 Organized crime**

People’s nature is to make a lot of money without much effort. An ordinary job is not the right way to do so, as they have to work for long weary hours and all they get is a few pennies. Most of people do not much complain, but for some it is an unacceptable solution. But because theft and fraud are not very effective either, they have decided to get together with other similarly thinking individuals, so the illegal money gaining is easier and harder to detect.

This is the principle of organized crime, another aspect of the modern world that the police have to face. The main drive is money as well as a demand from the illegal market. Origins of organized crime could be seen already in the seventeenth century, when pirates terrorized merchant ships on the open sea. And already then they were hard to trace and hard to arrest.

Today’s organized crime is more sophisticated, which causes many troubles to the police. There are usually whole groups involved, with a hierarchical structure, and if the police are successful in detecting them, they are able to prosecute only the lowest members; they very rarely get the ones who organize the whole business, because these are people who usually cannot be easily linked to the crimes.

The most successful “business” is predominantly selling stolen or illegal goods, which includes cars, drugs, firearms, or even babies or exotic animals. The gangs also provide illicit services like prostitution or money laundering.

#### **4.2.3 Hooligans**

It is said that Britain has the greatest problem with football violence in the world, which is also called hooliganism. This can be described as “having an anti social and violent

minority of fans that spoil the enjoyment of the vast majority”.<sup>47</sup> It is a big problem all over the world, but Britain is infamous for it – that is why hooliganism is nicknamed “the English disease”. I will not talk now about the spontaneous violence caused by overexcitement, but about the intentional fights with members of rivaling clubs.

Football hooliganism is probably as old as football itself. The most serious problems with football violence were in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, especially after the Football Spectator Act was issued in 1989, the number of incidents on the matches decreased, but that is because the majority of the fights moved out of the stadium to the places where normal fans cannot be affected and where the hooligans are harder to find. That means that the matches themselves are rather safer than they used to be, but it does not solve the problem. On contrary, it is maybe even worse.

These out-of-stadium fights make more troubles to the police. They take place mostly in an unknown area, at an unknown time and the police are lucky to even know there is a battle coming. These meetings are being arranged via Internet forums or mobile phones, that is once again with the help of modern technologies, and so it is more difficult for the police to take any precautions.

These conflicts are also more violent than those on the stadiums. The hooligans do not have to have regards for others (if they ever do) and thus during these fights many people very often end up injured. And the police are more radical, too.

Tackling football violence is one of the roles from the broad spectrum that the police have to play. It is important that the stadiums are safe for entire families and that people do not have to worry they could be injured by aggressive fans.

The police fight with the hooligans mostly by the law. They have powers to ban their access to the matches for from two to ten years, both at home and abroad. In 2007-2008 were for such banning orders subjected 3,172 hooligans and 3,842 people were arrested for disorderly behaviour on the matches.<sup>48</sup>

Modern technology helps the police in preventing hooliganism as well. Almost on all stadiums there are closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras that help to catch the

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<sup>47</sup> “Preventing Football Hooliganism,” Football Network, [http://www.footballnetwork.org/dev/communityfootball/violence\\_reduce\\_violence.asp](http://www.footballnetwork.org/dev/communityfootball/violence_reduce_violence.asp) (accessed April 15, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> “Football disorder,” Home Office, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/football-disorder/> (accessed April 15, 2010).

offenders, either red-handed or subsequently, thanks to the picture of their faces. In larger stadiums there are even control rooms from where the police officers can search the area. The important element, though, still remains the presence of the police in the stadiums, both in uniform and plain-clothes.

#### 4.2.4 Internet crime

The Internet is probably the most perceived technological invention that influenced almost everyone on the planet. It can be a very helpful tool, but when in hands of a wrong person, it can turn into a dangerous device. The Internet is basically anonymous and thus a perfect place for every kind of crime.

Internet or cyber crime is a broad term covering all kinds of crimes that are committed via the Internet, such as computer hacking, financial scams, credit card fraud, identity and data theft, child pornography, cyber stalking or even viruses, junk mail and the creation of websites that promote racial hatred or terrorism. The topic itself is very extensive, so let me focus only on some basic facts and on the police role there.

Internet crime is on the rise, for example the number of viruses in 2008 increased of 250%.<sup>49</sup> The reason may be that it is easier to become a criminal online, where nobody knows you and nobody will ever see you in person. This anonymity causes that even people that would never commit a crime in the psychical world do it via the Internet, as they are convinced that nothing can happen to them, that the police will never find them.

Cyber crime is a worldwide problem. As Roger Gaspar from the National Criminal Intelligence Service says, “we can now be attacked by criminals who do not need to come to [our] territory. Lots of policing arrangements have their roots in the fact that victim and offender are geographically co-located. It is a different world now, and if you can do your business legitimately from home via the electronic medium, why can't that business not be criminal business? We have to move ourselves into this new world. It is a great challenge for us.”<sup>50</sup> That means that Internet crime not always stays in the borders of the country.

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<sup>49</sup> Home Office, *Science and Innovation Strategy 2010-2013* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2010), 6.

<sup>50</sup> “The World Wide Crime Web,” Life of Crime, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/uk/2001/life\\_of\\_crime/cybercrime.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2001/life_of_crime/cybercrime.stm) (accessed April 16, 2010).

The investigation can lead also to another nations and thus the crime cannot be solved without an international cooperation.

In Britain, each police force has its computer crime unit, whose work is to detect the online offenders. Until 2006 they belonged to the Hi Tech Crime Unit, then their competences were transferred to the e-crime unit of The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

#### 4.2.5 Terrorism

The destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001 influenced the whole world and the governments of all countries tried to find a solution to the question what if something similar happens to them, too.

Terrorism is not a new crime, terrorist organizations were active since at least the 1970s, but at that time it was mostly attacks on important persons and the number of killed people was much lower than in 2001. Now, the targets of the terrorist are mostly innocent ordinary people that die because of a twisted ideology that have all the attackers in common, as well as shared tactics and methodology.

The fight against terrorism requires an international cooperation, as the attacks come from the Islamic countries. The individual attackers might be local born, but they are all connected to a certain extremist group.

In July 2005 London suffered the terrorist bomb attack, when 52 people were killed and nearly 800 injured.<sup>51</sup> There were already operating anti-terrorist branches, but they did not prove very successful and so the Counter Terrorism Command was created. This new unit is designed to stop terrorist attacks by detecting terrorist networks and breaking up their activities; to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporters of the extremism; to strengthen the protection against attacks by guarding potential targets like buildings or public transport and controlling people coming into the country; and to minimize the impact when the attack cannot be avoided by making plans how to deal with an attack for every region in the United Kingdom.

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<sup>51</sup> "Call for public inquiry into 7/7," BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/6948174.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6948174.stm) (accessed April 16, 2010).

#### 4.2.6 New technologies

It is not only that criminals cause problems to police because of using modern technologies, fortunately it is also vice versa. Technological boom and advances in science influenced the way that police work already in the middle of the ninetieth century, when the first photographs were introduced and have been challenging the changing patterns of crime ever since. In the 1890s the police started to catalogue fingerprints, which led to the creation of the fingerprint bureau at the beginning of the twentieth century. There are stored fingerprints of all sentenced and charged criminals from the United Kingdom; fingerprints of those who eventually proved innocent are destroyed. It helps through a computer system to quickly find if a person was already convicted in the past. Fingerprints are also being taken from crime scenes, as well as DNA traces, which testing methods are used since the 1980s. In 2008-2009, for example, 17, 463 crimes were detected by a DNA match.<sup>52</sup>

Another use of technology in the fight against crime is closed circuit television cameras on streets. They help to protect the public as well as to more quickly detect the offenders if a crime was committed; because of their crime reduction approach they are very popular among citizens. The cameras are especially beneficial in discouraging offenders and identifying crimes in progress, as well as in monitoring activities of the suspects and providing evidences for the trial. Nowadays, there are about 4.2 million cameras all over the United Kingdom.<sup>53</sup>

New technologies also changed the protective equipment and weaponry of the police. The new focus is mostly on less lethal weapons such as tasers or water canons for breaking demonstrations, or on police equipment like body armour or portable ballistic and slash protection made of aramid fibres, such as Kevlar.

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<sup>52</sup> Home Office, *Science and Innovation Strategy 2010-2013* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2010), 11.

<sup>53</sup> "News & Facts: Number of Cameras," The National CCTV Strategy, [http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cctv/news\\_and\\_facts.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cctv/news_and_facts.htm) (accessed April 16, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

The British Bobby is one of the most globally recognized symbols of Great Britain, along with the Tower Bridge or double-deckers. But just as the typical red London buses, also the Bobbies gradually become a thing of past. The world is changing and the police have to be able to reflect these changes.

The police have gone through a long development, which is by no means over. And yet, their role basically has not changed; it just expanded into enormous proportions in an attempt to face any threat the modern world can bring.

The purpose of this work was to analyze the whole process of the development of the police in Great Britain and their role in the society.

The very basics of modern policing lay in several institutions that operated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. These watchmen, constables and thief-takers together in fact represented the whole police body, as each of them specialized in a different aspect of law enforcement and thus played a different role in the society. The proactive part were the watchmen and the constables that guarded streets, arresting any offender in the process of committing a crime, while the reactive “force“ were the thief-takers, catching criminals after the crime was committed and the offender ran away.

Thief-takers were subsequently replaced by the Bow Street Runners, who developed modern detective techniques, detecting the offenders in similar ways as the thief-takers did. They were also the first who came with the idea that crime prevention is an important part of the fight against crime.

The revolution in policing came with the establishment of the Metropolitan Police, the first centrally organized police force that Britain has never seen before. Their aim became crime prevention and first regular patrols were sent to the streets to protect the citizens and discourage offenders. Despite the initial antipathy, the Metropolitan Police was a great success. Crime began to decrease and because of the Bobbies on beats, people felt safer. Subsequently, the police forces based on the Metropolitan Police were created all over Britain.

Today’s police is not very different from that created in 1829 by Robert Peel. His “Nine Principle’s of Policing” are still cited today, providing the essential aims of policing. The modern world and especially technological advance caused that the police have to gradually leave the tradition of the unarmed local Bobby and respond to the new crimes and threats. Organized crime or terrorism is impossible to tackle in a peaceful way and

although the police have modern technologies and science to detect the offenders, it is not enough. More and more police officers are issued with guns, so they could protect themselves while facing an armed gang as well as more and more money is put into the development of new protective and reactive equipment.

The world changes, it becomes more violent and more dangerous, crimes cease to be of a local nature and due to the easier transport require an international cooperation. And the police have to harden, too. New precautions are being taken and although the police cannot always protect the public against the danger, they try at least to minimize the impact on them.



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## APPENDICES

P I Robert's Peel Nine Principles of Policing.

## **APPENDIX P I: ROBERT'S PEEL NINE PRINCIPLES OF POLICING**

1. To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and by severity of legal punishment.
2. To recognize always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.
3. To recognize always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of willing cooperation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws.
4. To recognize always that the extent to which the cooperation of the public can be secured diminishes, proportionately, the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving police objectives.
5. To seek and to preserve public favour, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustices of the substance of individual laws; by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing; by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour; and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.
6. To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public cooperation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order; and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.
7. To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen, in the interests of community welfare and existence.
8. To recognize always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the state, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty.
9. To recognize always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.