

Richard Cowley: A Remembrance

By MARK HOLLAND and MARTIN STALLION

Mr Richard 'Dick' Cowley sadly passed away on 5th of January 2017 at Kettering General Hospital at the age of 71 years.

Richard joined Northamptonshire Police in July 1970, serving two periods in the force until his retirement in June 1995. Prior to joining the regular force he was a member of the Special Constabulary for two years from 1968, and prior to that he had a career in the printing industry.

His initial posting was at Corby and he became a Traffic Officer in the Eastern Area Traffic Department. Upon re-joining the force he was always based in the north of the county, serving in the small and large towns of the area as well as at Barnwell Manor, along the way acquiring his interest in police, criminal and legal history. He graduated from the Open University with a BA in Modern History before going on to gain a Master's Degree (MA) in Victorian studies at Leicester University, where his thesis was on the subject of the Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Following his retirement from the police service in 1995, Dick continued



to develop his interest in the history of Northamptonshire Police. As the Northamptonshire Police Archivist and Historian, he diligently gathered artefacts and records from the force's long history, storing and cataloguing items of interest and preserving important documents.

Dick's legacy within his home force is a comprehensive collection

illustrating the force history and the many changes Northamptonshire Police, and indeed policing in general, has experienced over the years. The artefacts Richard has collected will enable the public, current officers and staff and future generations to better understand the journey we have been on.

Dick Cowley was one of the earliest members of the Police History Society, joining in the mid 1980s. He took part in the only (so far) contested election for the Committee in 1992, when he was narrowly defeated in his bid to become Editor of the *Journal*. As consolation, he was elected as an ordinary Committee member and a year later he took over as

Membership Secretary, a post which he held until 1997.

On his second attempt to become Editor in 2014 he was unopposed, and he immediately set about improving the *Journal*, with full colour covers and a layout which reflected his skill as a printer and typographer.

He had already contributed several articles to the publication, including

one on chief constables in 1994 and the Inspectorate in 1996. His research on the Inspectorate also led to his becoming the joint author of its official history, published in 2006.

In 2010 Dick published yet another book, *Outrage and Murder*, about which he was interviewed by the BBC:

A former Northamptonshire policeman has written a book based on 800 years of criminal homicide and judicial execution in the county.

Richard Cowley, from Finedon, wrote the book 'Outrage and Murder' which looks at Northampton's violent past.

"My interest of murders in the county came from working on manslaughter

cases in the police force," said Richard. After 10 years of collecting the information, Richard completed the book.

"The earliest records go back to the 13th century where there was an average of eight murders in the county a year. Most victims of murder knew their attackers and there was a lot of alcohol related crimes," said Richard.

Information in the book dates back to 1202 running up to the 1850s.

Richard found a lot of inconsistency in the records held about sentencing.

"A man could steal a horse and get a simple fine, but another man could steal a horse and be hanged. I know we don't know all the evidence, but it

struck me as being very unusual," he said.

This is the first edition of this book and Richard hopes it will get more people interested in local history.

"Reading is great as it allows your imagination to run away with you, I hope people find the book a fascinating read whilst learning more about their local ancestors."



EDITOR'S NOTE: While browsing the articles collated by Dick for the 2017 *Journal* I discovered the following item written by him, which we're pleased to publish in this edition.

The First HMI

The Life and Times of William Cartwright: HM Inspector of Constabulary 1856-1869

By RICHARD COWLEY

Finding petty crime rampant in those counties and boroughs not having police forces, Palmerston's Royal Commission on the Police of 1853 urged the compulsory establishment of constabularies for all counties and boroughs.

Thus the County and Borough Police Act of 1856 was born, which forced the counties and boroughs that had not already done so, to form professional full time police forces immediately. And to ensure full compliance, three Inspectors of Constabulary were appointed under the Act, one for each of the three districts into which England and Wales had been divided.

The Inspector's task was to examine every force in his district annually and judge whether that force was 'efficient'

in terms of numbers, equipment and buildings.

Being mindful of the huge expense to the local rate-payers of full-time efficient constabularies, the government provided an incentive whereby each constabulary found efficient by the Inspectors, was to have a quarter of its annual wages and clothing expenses paid by central government (eventually this would be raised to fifty-one percent of all expenses).

Appointed on Friday 1 August 1856, William Cartwright, was the very first Inspector of Constabulary. He was followed in September that year by John Woodford, for sixteen years Chief Constable of Lancashire, and then in January 1857, by Edward Willis who had been Chief Constable

of Manchester for fifteen years.

Ironically, it was the only non-policeman of the trio who was to have the greatest and longest lasting influence on policing policy, and who, upon his death was to be fondly remembered as 'the policemen's friend'.

Coming from the privileged upper classes of his time, William was born on Wednesday 22 February 1797 into the wealthy land-owning Cartwright family of Aynho in Northamptonshire.

Educated privately, and then at Eton, his future appeared mapped out when he was sent to the Royal Military College at Marlow in Buckinghamshire (later moved to Sandhurst) in 1809. Having been 'Gazetted' into the 61st Regiment of Foot (2nd Battalion