

cline of the Roman Empire Britain was left to its own resources until the last invasion of these shores by the Normans in 1066. The office of Constable is ancient but over the centuries has had different connotations.

Throughout the country there is evidence of Police History covering many centuries. An example of the Policing history over a long period can be seen at Lincoln Castle. It was one of the first Norman Castles built in 1068 on the site of an old Roman Fort. The Normans were a minority in this country but built their castle to subdue the population that they had conquered. The Castle at Lincoln stands in a prominent position near the Cathedral. The Castle contained soldiers commanded by a Constable and was used by the Sheriff to dispense justice at the Shire Court. Within the Castle the Georgian and Victorian prisons can be visited together with the condemned cell. Currently the Crown court for the area is situated with the Castle's walls. The link with law and order stretches from 1199 and during the period 1608 to 1878 was used as a prison with a courthouse.

Those interested in Police history will find that throughout the Country there are often links to law and order stretching back many centuries.

Overall DNA and researching Police and family History has resulted in the Roper family involved in Policing from Suffolk, Devon, Hertfordshire, and Virginia in America. This covers a period from the 1840 to the present day.

Service in total is in excess of 240 years.

DEREK ROPER

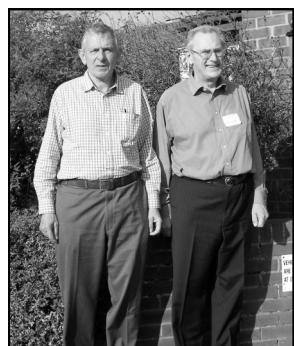
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**Howard Vincent and the birth of the Criminal Investigation Department
By Adrian James**



The uncovering of police corruption has often been a driver of great organisational change. In 1877, concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Metropolitan Police detective force were greatly amplified by the very public proceedings that have come to be known as the 'Turf Fraud' trials or the 'Trial of the Detectives'. The trial followed the discovery of a network of fraudsters into which senior detective officers: Chief Inspectors Nathaniel Druscovich; George Clarke; William Palmer, and Inspector John Meiklejohn had been drawn (see Wade, 2007 for more details of this case). The trial precipitated a swift reaction from the state. In 1878, within days of Druscovich, Palmer and Meiklejohn's conviction (and Clarke's acquittal), the Home Office convened a 'Departmental Commission' on the 'State, Discipline and Organisation of the Detective Force of the Metropolitan Police' (otherwise known as the Ibbetson Commission). The Commission concluded that the arrangements for the oversight of the detective police were inadequate and that a new detective department should be established. The Commission was firmly of the view that only an 'outsider' (who was untarnished by any link to police corruption) could be trusted to deliver that change and it strongly recommended that an Assistant Commissioner, preferably a lawyer having magisterial experience, should be appointed at the head of the detective branch (cited in Jeyes, 1912).

The decision to appoint a legal professional to the post was of course entirely consistent with the approach that had been taken in setting up the Metropolitan Police. On appointment, the first Joint Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, Richard Mayne and Charles Rowan had been sworn in as Justices of the Peace rather than as police officers. Moreover, Mayne, a qualified barrister (who had died in post only ten years before these events), had become the more significant figure not least because of the length of time he had held the post and the number of changes in the force that he singly and successfully had overseen.



The individual selected for the new post of Director of the 'Criminal Investigation Department' was Lt. Colonel Charles Howard Vincent (later Colonel Sir, Charles Howard Vincent KCMG, CB, and DL - usually known as Howard Vincent). His appointment to the Metropolitan Police was followed by the wholesale reform of the detective department and, amongst other things, the introduction of a police code which became the guiding text for police forces, and the first incarnation of the specialist detective squad. However, considered in the round his relatively short stay at Scotland Yard was just one interlude in a notable and exceptional life as a barrister, soldier, newspaper correspondent, administrator, and politician (see Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004 for greater detail).

Howard Vincent took up his post at Scotland Yard on 8th April 1878. It is not now known who coined the term that defines the detective force to this day but Vincent's biographer Jeyes (1912: 60) argued that he was afforded the title 'Director' to remove any "uncanny associations" with the word detective that had so recently been discredited. Prior to his appointment, Vincent had established a reputation as an innovative and determined administrator (Wade, 2007). However, opinion on his appointment was divided. To some his "indefatigable" writing and publishing skills and his ability as a linguist made him a strong candidate for such an important post (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). However, some thought him to be too inexperienced and a novice (see Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, 2006: 23) whilst others, rather uncharitably, saw him as a "briefless barrister with... little or no knowledge or experience in police matters" (*Reynolds' newspaper*, 1880, 15th August).

Vincent's nomination for the post of Director was the product of careful calculation and assiduous planning on his part. Jeyes, (1912: 57) recorded that "it was not purely with the object of assisting the (Ibbetson) committee in their labour that Vincent put himself to all this trouble. He had anticipated that an important new post would be created and he was determined to get it". That determination extended to enrolling in the Paris Faculty of Law to carry out his own investigation of the French detective police, the Sûreté. He presented to the Commission, a thorough critique of the French system (redrafted 18 times

with the help of his brother) (Jeyes, 1912). The report and a reference from the Attorney-General recommended him to Home Secretary R.A. Cross (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). Sir John Holker the Attorney-General's reference read:

You have an intimate acquaintance with the European systems of police, and you have the great advantage which is afforded by the command of several languages, viz. French, German, Russian, and Italian. To these qualities I have enumerated I may add others of great importance. They are these: you are a man of great energy and determination of character and, I need hardly add, of the highest honour... (cited in Jeyes, 1912: 58).

Vincent also benefited from the abandonment of the principle that police recruits should be drawn only from the working class communities they served. That principle originally was established by Peel. His stated aim was to avoid a caste system in the police so that even though the armed forces were rich sources of recruits, ex-warrant officers and non-commissioned officers were favoured over 'gentlemen' officers (Wall, 1998). Wall (1998: 21) has argued that rather than representing 'policing of the people by the people' as Peel publicly claimed, this was an attempt to "ensure that the relationship between the police and the public remained close and that control over... the 'dangerous classes' was maximised while the potential for disorder was minimised" in a cost-effective way. However, as the force developed and grew larger, it was clear both to the police elite and the Home Office that better-educated recruits were needed. Therefore recruitment was opened up to commissioned officers (Wall, 1998). Vincent was one of the first to benefit from that change.

Unusually, though perhaps confirming the Home Secretary's control over the London police, Commissioner Henderson announced Vincent's engagement but he played no meaningful part either in his selection or in his appointment. Those responsibilities instead falling to Home Secretary Cross who of course had initially commissioned the Ibbetson inquiry (Roach, 2004: 164). Like Rowan and Mayne before him, Vincent was not a police officer and just like Rowan and Mayne, he reported di-

rectly to the Home Secretary. That meant that Commissioner Henderson was by-passed and on occasions sidelined (Fido and Skinner, 1999). Though those arrangements must have led to some interesting debates within Scotland Yard, there can be no doubt that it was the Home Secretary rather than the Commissioner who controlled the CID in that period.

Vincent's new department attracted comment and amusement. Mr. Bridge, the Hammersmith Police Magistrate "chafed unmercifully" a detective who appeared before him as a "crime investigator" rather than as a detective (*The Era*, 1878, April 14th). Another, who styled himself a 'criminal investigator' was told by a second Magistrate to "Call yourself a constable, I suppose you are one" (*The Graphic*, 1880, September 4th). There certainly was enough work for the new department. For example in 1879, its detectives made 4,862 arrests, 65 percent of which resulted in convictions. In that year, officers conducted 2,066 inquiries that did not require any arrest and travelled throughout the United Kingdom and to Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and Spain in pursuing their investigations (Vincent cited in *The Graphic*, 1880, 4th September).

Despite having no disciplinary power over his staff and being "short-handed" due to the "disappearance in disgrace" of many senior members of the detective force (Jeyes, 1912: 62), Vincent reformed and reorganized his department (a task made especially challenging by the 'Fenian' outrages in London in the early 1880s). He introduced a shift system and supervision through the ranks; appointing 60 divisional detectives and 20 special patrols and formalising the distinction between Scotland Yard detectives and their divisional colleagues. Vincent established the tradition that CID officers remained in that department throughout their police careers. During his directorship, Vincent maintained the links with the Parisian police that he had established prior to his appointment. For example, in March 1881 en route to London from a visit to the south of France, he visited several branches of the Paris Prefecture of Police (*The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 1881, 19th March).

Vincent published widely on legal and police matters. Notably in the context of his role as 'chief of detectives', he published in 1882 *A Police Code and Manual of*

Criminal Law which became the "basic textbook" for police forces both in Britain and throughout the British Empire for many years after his death in 1908 (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). In the modern era, the investigative environment has come to be dominated by 'doctrine'; the codification of instructions and guidance. Vincent's *Code* was exactly that, which of course provides even more evidence of his foresight and creativity. Mr Justice Hawkins wrote the foreword to its fifth edition. His words provide a fascinating insight into the culture of police work in that era. He exhorted constables to:

Obey every order given to you by your superior officer without for a moment considering the propriety of it. You are not responsible for the order, but for obedience. In yielding obedience let the humblest member of the force feel that by good conduct and cheerful submission he may himself rise to be placed in authority to give the orders that he is now called upon to obey (cited in Vincent, 1886: 5).

Vincent's advice to detectives was rather more practical. He argued that "the detection of criminals... can only be attained by cordial cooperation, the absence of craving for individual credit, free interchange of information, great activity, and the constant adoption of fresh and unexpected measures" (1886: 53). The ability of detectives to unravel crime depended upon "the energy, the ability, the judgement, the zeal, and the integrity of the detective force" (1886: 109). Vincent felt that detective work was "more varied and interesting than the ordinary street duty". However, prospective detectives needed to demonstrate "voluntary inclination" for the work and to have "given proof of skill" while on beat duty (Vincent, 1886: 109).

From 1883 to 1884, Vincent edited the *Police Gazette*; the first police intelligence circular to transmit descriptions of wanted offenders, details of stolen property and other useful information (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). The *Gazette* has gone through many reviews and revisions but is still in use today. Vincent was an innovator and unlike his predecessors was influenced by continental methods. He favoured using police informers and undercover operatives as *agents provocateurs* (Wade, 2007),

though he was rightly wary of encouraging improper relationships between detectives and those from whom they sought information. Vincent was “always unconventional in his methods” (Wade, 2007: 32). On one occasion he used the advertisement section of a daily newspaper to offer a £200 reward for the arrest of a ‘dynamiter’ (Jeyes, 1912: 75). He was a true innovator. Against the convention of the time, he would proactively launch an investigation without waiting for a criminal complaint (Morris, 2007: 22).

In 1883, he established the Special Irish Branch, which later (as Special Branch) became the first of the specialised squads and units ‘spun off’ from the CID. Wade (2007: 87) argued that the establishment of this unit was a “development of the tendency to assemble men of special expertise to tackle specific threats or new crimes”. This established a template for detective work that has continued into the modern era. In this particular case, the event was the failure of the police to prevent an attack on Clerkenwell Prison by a group of Irish nationalists, despite having received accurate intelligence from the Irish Police warning of the attack (Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, 2006: 83).

The new unit brought “added kudos and consolidated [the] CID’s monopoly over investigative techniques” (Matassa and Newburn, 2007: 44). It also signalled a significant split between the ‘ordinary’ detective and those tasked with responding to events on the world stage (Wade, 2007). The work of the unit meant that some detectives “found themselves acting in quasi-espionage situations and as time went on, in real espionage” (Wade, 2007: 88). Clutterbuck (2002: 351) argued that the establishment of the squad represented a “quantum leap” in the operational methodology of the detective force as for the first time it signalled a new, longer-term approach to intelligence work of the kind that has come to be associated with specialist detective units in the modern era.

Clutterbuck’s fascinating account of the emergence of the Special Branch at the end of the nineteenth century suggests that the tools and techniques now associated with ‘high policing’ (Brodeur, 1983), have their roots in the nineteenth century (2002). However, in that period they were used exclusively to counter ‘political’ crime. Clutterbuck (2002: 244) has argued that there was

“scarcely no aspect” of the covert investigative work he described, that has not continued to play a part in police counter-terrorism operations.

Vincent acknowledged that the establishment of the CID had erected a barrier between police in uniform and police in plain clothes that operated “with much detriment to the public service” (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26th October 1880). Vincent made a real attempt to ameliorate cultural differences between detectives and uniformed officers which existed since the first plain clothes officers had been employed in 1842. For example, he cautioned detective officers to be “watchful” about taking cases away from uniform constables and to be:

Especially guarded against the arrogation of individual credit, and if they have any information which may secure the arrest of a criminal, they should communicate it to the officer who is placed in a position to work it out, instead of reserving it for themselves.

Vincent’s identification of the potentially corrosive effect of that cultural divide demonstrated his insight and management skills. History does not record the immediate effect of his words but this research suggests that their impact was limited. Arguably, that divide exists in policing even today.

In a memorandum addressed to Commissioner Henderson, which gives a fascinating insight into Vincent’s opinion of detectives’ abilities in the earliest days of the CID, he continued that detectives’ dealings with other constabularies often indicated incompetence in even the simplest of tasks (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26th October 1880). The fact that in this case he was writing to the Commissioner rather than his ‘line manager’ the Home Secretary may have been significant but it is difficult, at this distance from the event, to interpret the full meaning of Vincent’s words.

Given the detectives’ opinion of themselves, it is perhaps surprising that Vincent believed that their personal inadequacies were at the heart of the problems in the detective department. However he also blamed the force’s superintendents for selecting CID men who were “far removed from the best quality” and leaving those men to their own devices to investigate cases so that “there was neither control nor cooperation, neither intelligence

nor thoroughness as a general rule" in their investigations. This perhaps explains Vincent's enthusiasm for the professionalisation of the CID through the recruitment of detectives by 'direct entry'. However, his initial recruitment by 'direct entry' of six detectives from the 'professional' classes was not a success and he quickly abandoned the scheme.

Unfortunately, there is no record of a response to Vincent's proposal that CID superintendents should all be trained "in the same school of the Criminal Law" to improve a department that "never had any stability" and which was "defective in the time of Sir Richard Mayne" and "defective during the period of the divisional detectives" or alternatively that they be replaced by existing chief inspectors or by local inspectors eligible for promotion who were of "suitable calibre" (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26th October, 1880). However, it would be another half a century before that "school of criminal law", the detective training school, was established in Hendon, North London.

Jeyes recorded that at first, as an amateur, Vincent made many enemies at Scotland Yard. However he claimed that Vincent's willingness to give credit where it was due, to deal frankly and honestly with his staff, his good humour and "social popularity" earned him a measure of respect from his subordinates in the CID (Jeyes, 1912: 104). Vincent remained in post until 1884, when he left to stand for Parliament and soon was elected to the constituency of Sheffield Central. It has been argued that in the six years as Director, Vincent's influence on detective work in London was immense (Lucas, revised by Emsley, 2004). Reflecting on his short but immensely significant career as director of detectives, Stead, (1888: 1) felt that Vincent had "succeeded in establishing cosmos out of chaos". Certainly, he left the CID far better equipped to meet the challenges it would face at the turn of the nineteenth century than it had been when he had assumed command only six years earlier.

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The author is a senior lecturer and researcher in criminal investigation in the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth. He took up that post after completing 30years service with the Metropolitan Police. His interest in Howard Vincent and the early history of the CID was first stimulated by his reflection on his own CID career and was further developed during his doctoral research into intelligence-led policing models. Adrian welcomes feedback on this article and can be contacted at adrian.james@port.ac.uk

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