



# Charles Mandeville: Guildford's First Policeman



By

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The exploration of the Mandeville branch of my wife's family tree has been - over several years - a fascinating journey which led back to Henry Mandefeild who died in 1600. Henry was a wheelwright in the village of Dunsfold in Surrey. His descendants remained in the area until the 19th century before migrating to other villages in Surrey, and to Guildford, Godalming and London. Along this journey we met Charles Mandeville, the first policeman in Guildford. He was the 2xgreat- grandfather of my wife, Margaret.

The spelling of the surname has varied widely over the years, Maundeifeild, Manderfield, Mandeville, Manvell, Manville and so on. The spelling became more or less standardised as Mandeville in the mid-19th century.

Charles Mandeville was the youngest child of John and Rose Manvell. There were six sons and three daughters; the first child was baptised in Kingston-on-Thames in 1782 and the others in the Church of St Nicholas

in Guildford. John and Rose lived in Guildford, in Park Street. The 1801 population census records the

household as "John Manvell, 3 males, 2 females. John

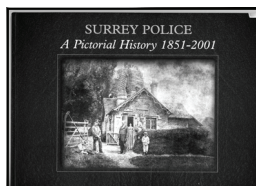
Manvell was a labourer - probably a seasonal agricultural worker. The family was poor and John was in receipt of parish relief. The St

Nicholas Parish Rate Book shows that he was ill during 1793 and 1794, and received a number of small sums from the parish. One entry, for example, records 3s 6d paid out for "a new hat" for one of the children. John died in 1825 and his wife, Rose, in 1842 at the age of 83, a pauper in the Union Workhouse in Guildford. Charles Mandeville, who was born in 1805, married Catherine Holt at St Nicholas in 1825. There were nine children and twenty-three grandchildren (see page 14). Charles and Catherine lived at Park Street in Guildford; there are records of conveyances that mention Charles and Catherine and members of the Holt family, and of a small plot of land possibly in Godalming where the family went to live in the 1850s. Catherine died in 1854. Some few years later, Charles married Mary from Shere in Surrey; there was one child of this second marriage.

## The Tradesman

At the age of 14, Charles Mandeville was apprenticed by officers of the Parish of St Nicholas (church warden and overseer of the poor) as a plasterer to William Smith of Guildford. Charles was a so-called pauper apprentice. The Poor Law Act of 1601 allowed the parish to place children of destitute parents with a master who would teach them a trade, and ensure that they could

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earn a living and not become a drain on parish resources.

The indenture of apprenticeship would have stipulated that Charles "should not commit fornication, nor play at cards or dice, tables or any other unlawful games, and should not haunt taverns or play houses". The master would provide working tools and allow the apprentice "sufficient meat and drink".

William Smith died in 1821 and the indenture was transferred to Charles Eade. The apprenticeship would have been completed in 1826 with Charles a journeyman plasterer although as Charles married in 1825 it is possible that he was released by his master before that date. As a journeyman he would have been able to seek employment as a skilled workman and eventually set up business himself as a master plasterer.

**Guildford High Street**



in Victorian times

Plastering is an ancient craft and Charles would have been expected to become proficient not merely in the layering of interior walls but the creation of decorative plasterwork for large houses, churches and public buildings. Up to the middle of the 19th century, plasterers used lime and sand for basic work of covering walls and ceilings. The plaster took two weeks to set under favourable conditions. Gypsum plaster set faster but was

costly and used mainly for ornamental purposes. For plain work the apprentice would have required few tools, but a workman efficient in all branches of the craft would have needed a large variety of implements. Materials would have included wood laths and lath nails; lime, sand, and hair; plaster of Paris, and a variety of cements and colourings.

### The Night Watchman

Charles was employed in the early 1830s as a night watchman before becoming a borough constable. Night watchmen, known in earlier times as bellmen, were paid for by property owners to supplement the system of Parochial Constables in towns such as Guildford. The Surrey Police website refers to a watchman, James Barrat in Godalming, who in 1820 received a salary of £15 2s 6d per year. The sum of £2 15s was paid out for a watchman's hat and 4s 3d for a 'lanthorn', a candle-lit lantern with a horn window. In 1833, the employment of night watchmen in towns was regulated by the passing of the Lighting and Watching Act. Inspectors were appointed and a rate was levied on property owners to pay for the service.

### The Borough Constable

Modern policing dates from Sir Robert Peel's Police Act of 1829 when the Metropolitan Police Force in London was formed although long before that date there were rudimentary police forces; in fact, "the ubiquitous Parish Constable was to be found everywhere".

The creation of a Borough Police Force in Guildford resulted from the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835.

In the Minutes of the Council Watch Committee of 18th January 1836, it was ordered that "James Wilkins and Charles Mandeville be continued watchmen and night constables of this borough at the salary of 18s in summer and 21s in winter".



The policemen of the 1830s were known as 'Peelers'

On the following day they were sworn in as constables before the Mayor, Mr John Smallpiece, Gentleman. On 1st February, six pairs of handcuffs were ordered for the night constables. Some Watch Committee proceedings are reported in the *Surrey Police - A Pictorial History 1851-2001*. At a meeting on 15 January 1836, it was resolved to appoint nine constables for the borough. Three days later the appointments were made and the officers became operational shortly afterwards. Richard Jarlett was appointed superintendent at £15 per year; he was only part-time and was in fact a baker in the High Street. The Minutes also record the appointment on 14th July of a day policeman, Philip Clarke, at a salary of 17s 6d. The Watch Committee later decreed "that a newly appointed constable in addition to his salary .... be provided with clothes of



the same description as the London police provided the expense thereof does not exceed five guineas".

The clothes provided were the so-called Peeler uniform consisting of a top hat representing authority, and an eight-button, blue swallow tailed jacket representing servitude because, according to David Cross writing in the BBC British History website "although the police were considered public servants, they were also the public's masters".

A leather stock, 10 cm deep, was worn around the neck as protection against attempts at strangulation with a piece of rope - a favourite trick of footpads. The uniform was completed by a broad belt with a large buckle bearing the Borough insignia, and a pair of heavy Wellington boots.



**Belt buckle of the Guildford Borough Police**

The hat was 15 cm tall with a 5 cm wide brim and reinforced. The upper part was of leather overlapping a beaver skin body; it was reinforced inside with cane. Supposedly a symbol of authority, it has been suggested that the top hat was used for peering over stone walls in 'covert surveillance' operations. Whilst the uniform would have been very suitable for cold nights in winter, one can only imagine the level of discomfort in summer. Although constables in some forces were allowed to purchase light-weight trousers for summer wear.

### *Surrey Police—A Pictorial History*

The constable carried what were known as his appointments: a truncheon, handcuffs, rattle to raise 'a hue and cry', and at night an oil lamp suspended from his belt. The truncheon was hidden in a long pocket in the coat tails. In some areas of town the constable would have carried a cutlass. Borough policeman were on duty seven days a week without a break throughout the year. After one year's service they received ten days annual leave. According to David Cross "the Victorian policeman was very lucky to receive sick pay. However, if he had a hangover or injury caused by drinking, he might well receive nothing at the discretion of his Superintendent". Many Boroughs produced a Rule Book for constables and in one of these written in 1840 for the Birmingham Force it is stated that "on discovering a fire, the constable - who doubled as a fireman - will spring his rattle and cry fire there for raising an immediate alarm". The instructions covered not only operational matters and, for example, "night duty officers will grow a beard that will cover his throat to keep his tubes warm". Constables usually lived just a few doors away from the police station. On parading for duty at 6 am the day constables were marched to their beats. Only at this stage was the night constable allowed to join the officers going on duty so he could march back to the station and sign off. Had any incidents occurred he would have had to write up a report before going off duty. Simon Dell, in *The Victorian Policeman*, points out that "discipline was intolerably

strict, Policemen were dismissed if a member of the public complained about them or if they committed any offence, or kept bad company, or if they broke regulations such as being late on duty or being improperly dressed."

The usual cause for dismissal was "being drunk". In 1841, following a change in the structure of the Guildford Police Force, the Watch Committee "ordered that Charles Mandeville, William Seabrook and James Wilkins be [re] appointed Watchmen and Policemen of the Borough to perform the duties of those situations by day and night and to act under the Superintendent of the Police and Head Constable of the Borough and to be subject to the Laws and Regulations to be made to their Government and to be subject to the same salaries paid to them as Night Watchmen".

Constables Seabrook and Wilkins did not last long in office. Both were discharged from their duties only a few weeks later for being absent without leave. There was quite a high turnover of officers, some resignations and some dismissals. There are many references in the Minutes to the recruitment of replacements from the Metropolitan Force in London in preference to appointing local men. The proceedings of the

Watch Committee provide an insight into the misdemeanours of one officer. "Dismissed Thomas High for drinking with servants of Mr Elkins in his brewery at 4 am". Not a smart move on the part of PC High as it appears that Mr Elkins was a member of the Watch Committee!

In another instance PCs Wakefield and Barnes, "who



had joined a lottery" at *The Malthouse Tap*, won two bottles of brandy and sold them to the landlord of *The Jolly Butcher*, "were called upon to resign". The Committee later relented and instead of dismissal the two constables were reduced in rank. The Watch Committee Minutes make interesting reading exemplified by references to an investigations involving "lewd women" and "houses of ill repute" in the town

A police station was established In Guildford in Tun's Gate behind the Corn Market but has long since been demolished. A full-time Superintendent, Charles

Hollingsworth, was appointed in 1851 at a wage of 25s a week; he was succeed in the following year by William Goff and then by George Vickers. In 1843 the cost of the Borough Police and Watch Force was recorded as being £252 and by 1856 the number of constables had reached 15.

The photograph (page 9) shows Charles Mandeville in his uniform and is of a portrait which for many years hung in the cottage of one of his grandsons, also named Charles, at Sandhills in Witley.



**Charles Mandeville in the Borough Constable uniform with his truncheon**  
Courtesy of Wendy Ward

Although not evident in the portrait Constable Charles is— according to family lore - said

to have had red hair.  
**Shot-firing pistol confiscated from**



**a highwayman**  
Courtesy Wendy Ward

There is also a truncheon and small shot-firing pistol with the portrait. The truncheon is of polished wood and quite small, about 25 cm in length. The pistol was reputedly confiscated by Charles from a highwayman he arrested on the Peasmarsh, common land just south of Guildford. It is still a rural area and would have been very desolate at night for coaches travelling to Portsmouth. These items are now in the possession of a granddaughter of Charles' grandson. There is also a larger truncheon, 45 cm in length, that was formerly in the possession of another descendant of PC Charles. It was described in a letter in *The Surrey Advertiser* is believed to have been donated to the Surrey Police. This truncheon is of a size that would have been rather more useful in keeping the peace and appears to have seen a good deal of use all those years ago. It has a coat of arms embossed in red, gold and black, but the emblem has partly worn off. Truncheons of this type were usually decorated with a crown over a VR cipher and a shield containing the arms of the town possibly with a date. An example - from the Godalming Borough Police - is illustrated..

In the portrait, Charles Mandeville is shown with a 'No. 1' on his collar which might indicate that he was the first of the Guildford officers to be appointed. But in the very early days of Police Forces it is possible that uniforms were shared to reduce the costs in kitting out constables.

The portrait itself raises some intriguing questions. Why was it painted? By whom and when? The painting is in oils, 21 x 18 cm, and is unsigned by the artist.

A recent examination by the present owner has revealed that the



**Godalming truncheon dated 1846**  
**Truncheons and Tip staves**

painting is on card on a backing of stiff paper with a copy of the London *Evening Standard* dated 9th February 1921 used as packing during framing. This may be a red herring but it could suggest that the portrait was painted in relatively recent times. It is interesting to speculate why Charles decided to become a policeman. After a long apprenticeship he might have been expected to receive a better wage as a journeyman than as a policeman. Was there a surfeit of plasterers in Guildford? However, the office of constable would have offered security of employment and with the promise of a pension valuable benefits in Victorian times. Charles' service record with the Borough Police has not survived. But the Minutes of the Watch Committee for 15th January 1849 state that "it





is resolved that policeman Mandeville be reduced to 8/- a week from Friday next". In December of that year and in the following January "it is ordered that the wages of 8/- a week be continued until a further consideration of the subject". No reason is given for this reduction but family memories suggest that Charles suffered an injury during the course of his duties and was obliged to retire from the Force at the age of 44. The reduced payment was probably a form of sick pay - or it might have been a disability pension.

#### The 'No 1 Peeler' Campaign

In the 1870s, Thomas Mandeville, one of the sons of Charles and Catherine, went to Nottingham to work for Allen Solly & Co., makers of hosiery products. He was employed as an "engine tender in factory" and spent 56 years in the job. Thomas and his wife, Emily, moved to Arnold, near Nottingham sometime between 1881 and 1891. Three of their children took up jobs at the factory as hosiery workers and remained with Allen Solly for many years. In the 1920s the company instituted a publicity campaign to promote a new range of half-hose (socks and stockings) called 'The Peelers'. The advertising strongly featured the portrait of Charles Mandeville as "No. 1 Peeler", and focussed on the long service of Thomas and his family. A representation of one the publicity leaflets is shown on page 11.

*(Allen Solly is now owned by an Indian firm,)*

As mentioned earlier, it is unclear how the portrait of Charles came to be painted but it is possible that it was produced from the original drawing (on the title page) in the 1920s by or for Allen Solly for their advertising campaign.

#### The Toll-Gate Keeper

Following his police service, Charles returned in 1849 to his trade as plasterer for some years and was then appointed collector of tolls on the Portsmouth road in Godalming on what used to be known as Anchor Hill; it is now Ockford Road on the A3100.

The toll house and toll-gate cottages on Ockford Road in Godalming (1994).  
Courtesy of Rita Stevens

Built in 1856, the two-storey property was one of three toll houses in the town. The cottage next door



was occupied for many years by members of the Mandeville family including Charles' grand-daughter, Mrs Kate Emma Overington who died in 1947. The toll house is now a residence enlarged by the addition of a bedroom. Toll gates came into being when turnpike legislation was enacted in the late 18th century as a supposed remedy for the deplorable state of English roads. The tolls were to be used to maintain the roads, but, although there was a general improvement in the condition of roads by the end of the 18th century, many of the Turnpike Trusts were more intent upon profit than upkeep. The toll-gate keeper was provided with a small house by the gate. The pay at the principal gates was usually no more than 5 shillings for a 24-hour day. The keeper's job came with the constant inconvenience of being awakened in the middle of the night and the danger of robbery and assault. Writing in *The Esher Review*, C R S Saunders observes "that traffic along the Portsmouth Turnpike-road would have been considerable. Royalty, ambassadors, nobles, admirals, captains, soldiers and sailors, men of every degree were at times obliged to undertake the journey, the gentry in their own coaches, the middle class in public conveyances and the commoners by stage-wagons or on foot, taking probably several days to reach their destination". "By the middle of the 18th century stage coaches had approached a standard of perfection but even at that period the outside of the coach in mid-winter with darkness and icy roads, cold mists and biting winds, driving rains and floods afforded little comfort. Fellow travellers were not always congenial and highway

robbers and beggars helped to make the journey far from pleasant. The night coaches were loaded with sailors going to Portsmouth to join their vessels and a rare drunken crew they were ..... and many a free fight occurred at toll-gates or when changing horses."

Apart from the long-distance coaches, there were horses and riders, chaises, stage wagons, ordinary wagons and carts, and livestock being driven to market. Although by 1859 the opening of the London and South Western Railway to Portsmouth would have provided an alternative method of travel leading to a big reduction in the number of stage coaches on the road. Typically toll charges were 1d for a horse, 10d for a score of cattle, 5d for a score of sheep or swine, 3s for a coach drawn by six horses, 2s or 3s for a wagon and 1s or 1s 6d for a cart depending on the width of the wheels and the number of horses.

Whilst Charles was collector of tolls, it was revealed in *The Surrey Advertiser* of 14th October 1865 that he appeared to have been struck off the Electoral Register. It was reported under the heading *The Borough Revision* that "under the Parish of St Nicholas ....

Charles Mandeville [and others] objected to by the Liberals, were struck off the list." No reason was given. Charles Mandeville died at the toll house in Godalming of 'apoplexy' on 6th August 1868 aged 63, and is buried in the Nightingale Cemetery. After his death Mary, his second wife, continued to collect tolls until sometime after 1871. She then worked as a laundress with her daughter-in-law, Anne whilst staying on in the toll gate cottages with her son George and other members of the family.

Mary died in 1896 aged 73. According to *The Surrey Advertiser* of 11th October 1947, Frederick Holt Mandeville was the last toll-gate keeper on Anchor Hill but census records show him as a grocery porter and then baker. It seems likely that tolls were collected by members of the family living in the cottages. Rapid growth of traffic on turnpike roads meant that the tolls were insuffi-



cient to repair the roads and so local authorities were obliged to take over the responsibility. By 1888 the county council had taken over roadway maintenance in Godalming with the consequent closure of the three toll gates in the town.

#### The Family

- ☐ **Charles** and his first wife, Catherine had seven sons and two daughters.
- ☐ **Henry** (b.1832), a cabinet maker, moved to Clerkewell in London, and married Jane Cox. There were two sons and four daughters.
- ☐ **Elizabeth Jane** (b.1834) married a Mr Gwynn. She moved to Portsea in Portsmouth and was enumerated in 1891 as "living on own means".
- ☐ **Robert** (b.1836) was a bricklayer and later a glazier and painter. He married Elizabeth Charlotte Farr and lived at Milford and Witley; there were four daughters and five sons.
- ☐ **James** (b.1837), also a bricklayer, of Hurtmore, Godalming. He married Louisa Stedman; there was a son and a daughter.
- ☐ **Charles Francis** (b.1840), a signalman of the London and South-Western Railway, moved to Lambeth and is believed to have been unmarried.
- ☐ **Frederick Holt** (1844-1893), a stone dresser, then grocer's porter and baker of Godalming, was for many years a member of the local fire brigade. He married Amy who died after 1871; there was a son and a daughter. Frederick then married Anne.
- ☐ **Thomas** (b.1846), a stationary engine driver or stoker of Godalming, moved to Nottingham. He married Emily Christmas in St Pancras; there were two daughters and one son.
- ☐ **John** (b.1848) who died in infancy.
- ☐ **Rose Kate** (1851-1899), a spinster who lived in Chelsea. There was one son of the marriage between Charles and his second wife, Mary.
- ☐ **George** (b.1863) worked as a shoemaker before joining the Royal Navy.

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#### The Peelers - A New Range of Half-Hose from Allen Solly

In the year 1829, Sir Robert Peel piloted his Police Act through the House of Commons and

in the town of Guildford, Surrey, Mr Charles Mandeville had the distinction of becoming "No. 1 Peeler" as can be observed from his collar.



From that time forward the family of Mandeville has been closely associated with Allen Solly, for the son of No. 1 Peeler spent fifty-six years of his life in the service of the firm. Of three grand-children of Charles Mandeville, one is still with us after forty-six years of service—one spent thirty-nine years with us and a grand-daughter thirty years with us.

Few families can boast such a remarkable record of service to one firm, and it is this that the reputation of Allen Solly has been founded. In these times such a reputation is more than ever valued, we think it appropriate to call our special range of colours and designs in Half-Hose, "The Peelers".

#### PEELER grey

PEELER blue      PEELER brown  
PEELER smoke      PEELER slate  
PEELER red

Could you write an article, the PHS Journal is always looking for contributions.