

TORQUAY DISTRICT POLICE 1835-1870

DEVON CONSTABULARY 1857-1966

The 2016 Police History Society Conference is being held in Torquay in Devonshire. Because Torquay did not receive borough status until 1872, it was not therefore affected by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. This Act gave the powers to every borough in England and Wales to hold elections, and thus create a democratically elected Town Council to replace the previous system of commissioners. The Act also stated that from this new Town Council, a sub-committee was to be formed, called the Watch Committee, and into the hands of the Watch Committee was placed fairly and squarely the onus of establishing a full-time, professional police force, along the lines of the Metropolitan Police, to replace the previous system of watch keepers.

So not being a borough, Torquay was not obliged to conform with the 1835 Act, But, it *did* form a police force in 1835, obviously because it was growing in size and popularity as a genteel society resort, and felt that it needed a better policing system than the previous one. And because it was not a borough, the fledgling force had to be called the Torquay District Police, rather than the Torquay Borough Police.

The Torquay District Police was established on Monday 3 August 1835, and consisted of five Constables, under its first Chief Officer, Charles Kilby, who was called the Superintendent in the 1851 Census. Charles Kilby left office sometime in the 1850s, because in the 1861 Census, he was described as a water bailiff.

His replacement as Chief Officer appears to be Patrick Hogan, an Irishman from County Cork, who in the 1861 Census is described as Sergeant of Police. Also from the 1861 Census, the strength of the Torquay District Police appears to be seven more Constables - Joseph Buckingham, William Clampitt, Richard Edwards, William Ford, William Jeffrey, Stephan Henryson and Michael Wildermott. Also living in the town at that time, were three Railway Constables (Richard Babbage, Francis Bibbings and William Pike) who were possibly members of the South Devon Railway Police.

Patrick Hogan continued as Chief Officer until 1870, when the Torquay District Police was absorbed into the Devon Constabulary. This seemed to be inevitable, as in October of that year, the Torrington Borough Police, which had been established in 1836 under the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, was brought under the control of the county constabulary, because of chronic inefficiency. And to have a separate police force in a town which had not even obtained borough status, was looked upon as unacceptable - hence the demise also of the Torquay District Police.

The first act of the Devon Constabulary was to build a new police station in Torquay, and after a false start, it was eventually opened in 1876. The second step was to appoint Patrick Hogan as a Sergeant in the Devon Constabulary. He was sent to Stoke Fleming, where he stopped for the rest of his career, being reported in the 1891 Census as a retired Police Sergeant.

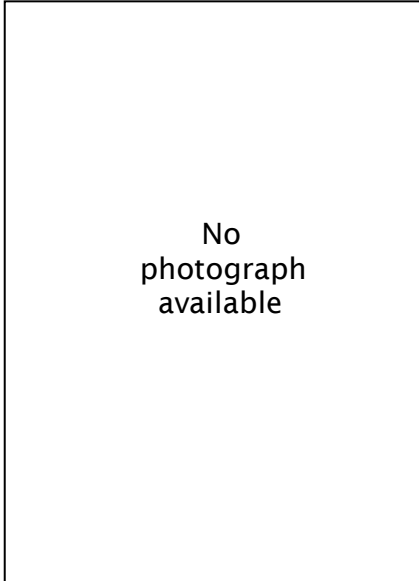
References :

- HUTCHINGS, Walter J. *Out of the Blue. History of the Devon Constabulary.* (Devonshire Press, Torquay 1956)
STALLION, Martin and WALL, David S. *The British Police. Forces and Chief Officers 1829-2012.* (Police History Society Monograph 7, 2011)

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THE CHIEF OFFICERS

1. KILBY, Charles



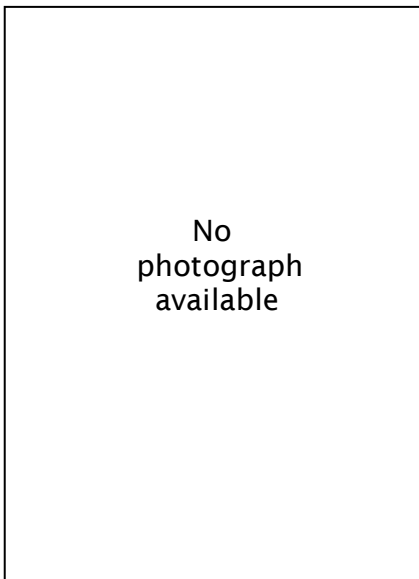
[1] Chief Officer Torquay District Police 1835 - 1850s

Education
unknown

Career
Previous career unknown - [1] - Water Bailiff
1850s/1863 - died whilst holding office?

*baptized Sunday 18 July 1802, Leamington Spa
m. Mary Ann (Barker?)
d. Wednesday 25 February 1863, Torquay*

2. HOGAN, Patrick



[1] Chief Officer Torquay District Police 1850s-1870

Education
unknown

Career
Previous career unknown - [1] - Devon Constabulary
1870/1880s (PS 1870) - Retirement

*b. 1827, Larmouth (?), County Cork
m. Ellen (McDonnell, 1856?)
d. 1895, Stoke Fleming, Devon*