

## Evening All!

## The Police Force Luton/Bedfordshire

**In 1839, as a result of a Royal Commission Report**, the Quarter Sessions in the counties were authorised by legislation to establish rural constabularies within their County areas and these were to be financed through the county rates.

Bedfordshire was one of the counties which decided to do so, but not without considerable opposition.

The rural police began their duties on the 25 March 1840 and were to cover the whole county with the exception of the Borough of Bedford which had its own force already established,

under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

The Parish of Luton then consisted of the township and several surrounding hamlets, covering an area of about 1,700 acres and with a population of 7,000.

The new constabulary appointed 2 constables to cover the whole parish, but the Inspectors of Lighting and Watching apparently considered this a retrograde step pointing out

*"there was a less number than those previously covering the township alone,"* in their petition.

The petition also asked the Justices to supply the Superintendent of Police with a horse to enable him to have speedy communications with his subordinates; he covered the area surrounding Luton from Barton to Eaton Bray, and via the Hertfordshire border at Markyate Street to Chiltern Green, and back towards the north of Luton to the Barton area again. There is some indication that horses were supplied to all Superintendents in 1842.

The Parish Beadle died about this time, one of the new constables moved into his cottage and the prem-

ises were then continuously occupied by the Police.

In 1842 the occupant was PC 27 Henry Smalley and the other Luton constable was PC 29 John Chapman.

**Superintendent:**  
William Ashton

**Barton:**  
PC28 John James

**Dunstable:**  
PC30 John Tutte

**Eaton Bray:**  
PC31 Benjamin Cook

**Markyate Street:**  
(now Hertfordshire)  
PC 32 Martin Priestley

## Buckinghamshire Constabulary

On 6 February, 1857, this police force was established, and at the Epiphany Sessions on this date, Captain Willoughby Harcourt Carter was appointed the first Chief Constable at an annual rate of £300 plus £100 as a reasonable allowance for extraordinary expenses, purchase and keep of horses. He travelled around the county in a pony and trap accompanied by his groom.

The Force was made up of an additional 100 men at annual salaries of: 5 Superintendents £115 - 5 1st Class £85 - 5 2nd Class £75. 5 Sergeants 23/- per week. 30 1st Class Constables 20/- 30 2nd Class 19/- a week 20 3rd Class 17/-.

## Samuel Lovett PC10



Samuel Lovett was just 22, in 1857, when he was appointed a Constable in the newly formed Buckinghamshire Police Force at a starting salary of 17/- .

Collar No: PC10

### Promotions:

He was promoted to 2nd Class Constable on 23 August, 1858.

Promoted to 1st Class Constable on 21 July, 1862, at 20/-.

Pay increased from 24 October, 1864, to 21/-.

### Postings:

### Date of Discharge:

15 October, 1888, aged 53.

[Where did he live and where was he posted?](#)

### Remarks:

**15.10.88.**Police Constable 10 Samuel Lovett having been found medically unfit for further service, and having this day been granted a pension of £43 by the Court of Quarter Sessions, is struck off the strength of the Force from this date inclusive.

Signed.  
John C. Tyrwhitt-Drake,  
Chief Constable.

Old lock-ups were converted into police stations until they could be purpose-built.

When the Constables were first posted to their beats it was his responsibility to find his own lodgings, which would then become the police house. Outside the Constable would have to place a metal plate marked *County Police* with which he was issued at the time of his posting. These plates could be seen outside houses up until the late 1980s.

Police Constables attended church at the insistence of the Chief Constable.

A Constable's shifts consisted of 6 hours during the night and 3 hours in daytime. During this period he would have to meet his superior officers at conference points (at a local landmark) at pre-arranged times. The Constable would be given information and updated on matters of crime, observations, etc.