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URBAN POLICE PATROL IN ENGLAND AND WALES*

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Beat patrol in the United States, England, and Wales, is generally performed with a similar end in view to prevent crime, to apprehend criminals, and to protect life and property. However, there are differences between the means used to obtain these ends. Most differences are only a matter of local custom and procedure, and a few are of greater consequence.

The present system of police organization in England and Wales is based upon two local areas, namely, the County and the Borough. These two local units of organization are the result of a long history of law and order and its formation in Britain. In order that the English police organizational system as it is today might be more easily understood and appreciated, one should know and appreciate its historical foundation.

Police service in England and Wales is definitely on a local control basis supplemented by Home Office inspection and aids. Operational and equipment techniques have been developed more to meet local requirements than to satisfy any general standard. Of course, it is only natural that in such a system these requirements differ substantially from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in the sense that each area has characteristics peculiar to its own situation. But the development of modern communications and methods of science and detection have forced greater uniformity and cooperation between forces. So, today, with the aid of the centrally located Home Office, there is greater uniformity in method and administration of local forces than ever before.

In England and Wales, development of today's police system can be generally stated as slow with only the Police Acts of 1829, 1839, and 1919, bringing any radical hasty developments. This is in marked contrast to the United States where the "child grew too fast" and developed into a hodge podge of various types, concepts, levels of control, overlapping jurisdictions, and degrees of efficiency in the police field.

Found in the British Isles is a very peculiar, but sacred, relationship between the people and their police. The dominating factor in this is that the police themselves are members of the public, appointed by their fellow citizens to protect life and property, guide and assist them when necessary, and generally to perform the functions basic to modern policing. Great Britain is unique in that police forces are not under the sole control of either the central government or the local authorities. The

* The author makes grateful acknowledgement to Sir Arthur L. Dixon, formerly of the British Home Office, for his assistance in attaining the original material contained in this article from the constabulary forces of England and Wales.

constable is not regarded as an official employed by "authority" to supervise, control, and protect the public, but he is, in fact, a fellow citizen appointed in the name of The Crown. This tenuous truism, accepted by all concerned, is the rock upon which the British police system is centered.

TYPES OF FORCES

Four types of police forces are found among the 126 separate forces in England and Wales. These are 52 County forces under the command of a Chief Constable who is responsible to the local police authority which is known as the Standing Joint Committee, then the city or borough forces, 72 in number, also commanded by a Chief Constable. He is responsible to a committee of the town council known as the Watch Committee. Next the Metropolitan Police, headed by its Commissioner and, strangely enough, the only force under the direct administration of the Central Government. The Metropolitan Police District is responsible, directly, to the Home Secretary. Lastly, there is the City of London Police, also headed by a commissioner but with the Common Council of the City of London as its governing authority.

Of course, these 126 forces run the gamut of conditions from the Metropolitan Police District, a force of over 20,000 men responsible for over eight million persons, to the sprawling rural County force covering many square miles with virtually no population. But the police coverage of the British Isles is complete, every square mile belonging to some jurisdiction with no overlapping responsibility prevailing.

TRAINING

Prior to being placed "on the street" as a constable, the new man undergoes a three months residential training course at one of the Home Office administered training schools. All new men are subjected to this training program. At the school they are grounded in the law, their powers and responsibilities, court procedure, personal defense, evidence, case preparation, and so on. Upon completion, each man rejoins his constabulary and receives additional instruction pertinent to his own department's procedures. Then he meets the public as an officer, the first week generally being on the street working a section in the company of an older, more experienced constable. In addition to beat duties, procedure in most constabularies is to have the new man spend a short time on other phases of the job. This idea is to round the man to appreciate the supplementary and concurrent services available to him while on the street and to allow him a very broad picture of the service as a whole. About a year later, the man returns to the Home Office Training School for a four weeks refresher course. Following the course he returns to his own constabulary for the remainder of his two year probationary period.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PATROL

In the urban areas the working day is broken into three shifts of eight hours each. The three basic shifts throughout England and Wales are: 6 am/2 pm, 2 pm/10 pm and 10 pm/6 am. Policy differs from department to department regarding how many weeks are spent on each watch, but in nearly all departments there is a rotation of watches.

Each relief congregates fifteen minutes prior to the hour. During this interval the section sergeant assigns each officer to a beat, patrol, or traffic point. In case of an absence or sickness, the section sergeant insures that the vacant post is adequately covered, usually by a man who would normally be posted to a surplus patrol. Attention of the man is directed to pertinent information regarding occurrences expected during the coming duty tour, any labor disputes or road work greatly effecting the area, vacant houses to be inspected, stolen vehicles, persons wanted and missing, and any other affair liable to affect the coming watch. The men can peruse the telephone message block to see where reports have come from.

Then an inspection of the platoon follows, administered by the duty officer who is directly in charge of the men. Each man is responsible for insuring that his clothing is in press, he is well-groomed, and is properly equipped. His appointments, which are a truncheon, handcuffs, whistle, keys, and flashlight, are presented for inspection and noted to be in working order. The watch is then released to duty as assigned. It is noted that the basic equipment differs from department to department, handcuffs not always being standard. Furthermore, the British police do not carry fire-arms and very rarely have occasion to use the truncheon as either an offensive or defensive weapon.

FOOT PATROL

In the urban areas in England and Wales it is the general practice for the beat constable to patrol his area on foot. This has been found to be of great advantage in several ways, perhaps the greatest one being that of maintaining that close, friendly police-public relationship which is so often lacking in the United States. The English people long have been accustomed to seeing the "Bobbie" on the street and asking his advice on matters and receiving a sound answer in a courteous manner. This is one of the key trademarks of English police service.

The foot beat is an area varying in size and range according to the hazards and police problems in its given location. Regardless of the type of area, the first requisite of the beat man is that he knows it and knows it well. Shops, alleys, lanes, parking areas, basements, medical and other offices, factories, amusement areas of all types, creeks, rivers, and all physical features must be second nature to the capable beat man. These are often the sources of questions, specific problems, and related matters, so the intimate knowledge of the officer is seen to be priceless in his daily work.

Once out on the beat, the route which the constable follows is a matter left to individual discretion. The manner in which he works it is likewise discretionary. The only exception to the discretionary method is that, at intervals of one hour, the constable must be at a pre-arranged "conference" point in order that his sergeant or inspector might visit him. Also at this "ring in" point, where communication directly with the station is made, the man can pick up any urgent information or disperse any he has that should be taken care of at that time. Conference points, of course, vary in location from day to day so the officer's actions cannot be so easily plotted. This, theoretically, maintains the element of surprise. Also, the time allotted for meals is generally staggered so his beat is never vacant at the same time for any period of days.

The foot constable assigned to a specific beat is responsible for all matters which occur on his beat or patrol during his duty tour. He is called upon by departmental order to report them all. Should any allegation of larceny or another major crime occur, he must conduct any immediate initial action and notify the station officer as soon as possible. If the crime is of a sufficiently serious nature, the resources of the Criminal Investigation Division are at his disposal. The general practice is for the beat man to turn the further investigation over to the specialized unit. Close interest should be, and generally is, kept by the beat man in the conduct of the case, and he must work harmoniously with the detectives in order to secure a closure and a successful prosecution. As soon as the C. I. D. unit arrives and commences its investigation, the constable returns to patrol duty, his basic function. He must be on the street, in evidence, as much of the time as possible.

The constable should plan his route so that he may arrive in the right vicinity at the right time. This means, by the bank during large monetary transfers, by the school at the noon hour and at final dismissal, at a public transportation transfer point at the rush hour, and so forth. In this manner he will be able, by his mere availability, to do the most good at the right time along the lines of accident and crime prevention. The constable, in this manner, will gain respect of the shop and store keepers and will be in a better position to relate advice regarding specific problems of store security and safety. He can also see that pedestrian traffic flows smoothly and traffic jams are eased. The officer maintains a look-out for miscellaneous hazards and notes them when found. These include gas and water leaks, wires down or in sagging condition, holes and ruts in sidewalks and street pavements, electric street light outage, peculiar store conditions, dead animals, supervision and investigation of business premises with regards to activities and if they are licensed, and a host of other conditions. Constables should even note construction equipment left after working hours to see that local children are not apt to injure themselves on these, and other attractive hazards. As is obviously the case, all patrolling officers and all police officers, regardless of their posts, must at all times maintain a keen ability to perceive irregularities and exercise a keen amount of discretion in making a fair, impartial appraisal of what any situation might amount to and what immediate action is necessary under the circumstances. This is a key note of good police work anywhere.

Besides noting peculiar circumstances, such as listed above, the constable is constantly on the lookout for any breaches of the law, none of which should pass unchecked. If the offense proves to be of a minor nature, a verbal warning or caution issued in a constructive manner should easily suffice, and perhaps, noting the incident in his field book to insure if it happens again that stronger action is taken. In the case of more serious matters, the offense is reported, and the constable must submit details of the offense together with replies made to his questions by the suspect. This file of information is forwarded to the Superintendent or Chief Superintendent in charge of the constable's police division for the rendering of a decision as to whether the matter should be brought before the Magistrates, or disposed of by written caution.

All police in England and Wales have the power to stop, search, and detain any

person who the constable has reasonable grounds to suspect may be in possession of stolen property. Most police administrators in England and Wales believe this is the finest instrument afforded to the police. It is peculiar to note that the Metropolitan Police District, by dint of the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839 is afforded somewhat greater latitude in this type of search. Sometimes, particularly when there is a specific breaking and entering problem at hand where the responsible person is not yet apprehended, the night and early morning watches revert to some "aids to detection" to more accurately obtain a time element on the man as well as to more easily determine if the suspect has effected an entry. Often a thin thread of dark cotton is spread across alleys, doorways, grilles, windows, and other passages. Its displacement is at once investigated. A slip of whale bone bent double in the lock side of a door, grille, or window flies out of position if that means of entrance is used by anyone. A used match stick serves the same purpose. As mentioned before these aids are used normally only on the dark hours and should be removed by the officer prior to his relief at 6:00 am.

The officers in the greater majority of departments carry several pocket books, there being four main types: An official pocket book in which he records all occurrences other than traffic offenses, personal injury accidents book, property damage accident book, and a book for reporting traffic offenses. All entries are recorded in the appropriate book while the man is out on the street or at a police call box. Reports are passed on to the section sergeant or the duty sergeant when the sergeant meets the officer. When going off duty, the officer hands the reports to the officer in charge of the men at the station. The reporting officer does not complete or maintain station records, this being done by another group, but he may be directed to follow up some line of the investigation in order to complete the report.

The approach to beat patrol during the dark hours, with its decrease in vehicular and pedestrian traffic, calls for a different method of policing. During these hours, when not on actual case work, the officer directs a greater portion of his time and energy to protection of property. His patrol is governed by the need to check on store security of all types of business establishments. All open doors, windows, suspicious lights, or the absence of a light normally on should at once be investigated. Checking an alley and noting a ladder out of position might indicate its use sometime prior to aid a burglar onto a roof. The well-informed beat man notes these peculiarities and as a result makes a good many commendable arrests and case originations. Anything differing from its norm should be investigated. If the officer, discovering the suspicious circumstances, desires, he can summon assistance of near-by officers and area cars so as to cover off the locality.

Suspicious persons on the street at late and unusual hours should be stopped, questioned, and checked out to the constable's satisfaction. Contents of any parcels they might be carrying should be inspected. Suspicious vehicles should be checked against the stolen list and occupants questioned. A mental note on the contents might be made, and if there appears that something inside might be contraband, further investigation is warranted. So it is seen that even at night when, by store security checks and the like, the emphasis is on crime prevention, the beat constable also can play an important role in crime detection.

Another good technique in patrolling is for the night men to know the vehicles normally parked on the street, and, if a vehicle is seen which does not seem to belong, note its number, location, registered owner, and the like. It is often possible that the auto is parked there pending its owners return after some illegal activity. A check on autos parked overnight about transient hotels and overnight roadhouses often brings gratifying results as these places frequently are housing known criminals on the move about the country. To check guest registers against known wanted criminals names and their aliases may pay dividends. Often a casual traffic violation stop will yield a group of thieves with their loot still in the car and the men "just off the job." These are procedures generally best exercised by the night watch personnel, and this type of work is the sign of an alert, interested beat officer as well as excellent public relations and sound police work.

MOUNTED PATROL

The larger sized beats are not patrolled by foot but are generally patrolled on a pedal cycle or some other means of transportation. However, even though the mounted officer covers about thirty or thirty-five miles in his tour as compared, roughly, with the ten miles or so covered by his counterpart on foot, he still accomplishes the same efficiency. His only use of the cycle is for transportation, and he still keeps that familiar contact with the residents on his beat. In some very large extensive beats, almost rural in composition, the auto is sometimes employed. Often this is radio equipped. But again, the beat officer is doubly certain to get into the foot patrol work in the hamlets and villages to maintain contact. Again the auto is used merely as a means of transportation.

SPECIAL PATROL

Throughout England and Wales we find another type of coverage for a specific area, this being patrols superimposed upon the individual foot beats so as to provide an overlapping of two or more beats. These special patrols are known as beat, crime, ordinary, or extra. Whether these are worked by foot or by a group of men in a car varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction according to the type of area to be covered and the local problems involved. There is no set pattern throughout the country.

A beat patrol may overlap two or more beats in such a manner as to include the most vulnerable areas of those beats. Crime patrols encompass certain streets or areas where statistics have shown that reported crime is most prevalent, and others may also extend over one or more beats. Ordinary and extra patrols are used to deploy excess manpower to the best advantage to better meet any anticipated emergency which might arise during that tour of duty.

It is seen that, should a supplemental patrol area be relatively small in area, it probably would be best covered on foot. This is particularly so in the Metropolitan Police District where during the day large gatherings are found in small areas. The same is true in other large centers of population. On the other hand, in the less heavily populated areas and more rural spread areas, administrators often believe in placing the men in autos, leaving the individual beat man on foot to cover their areas. When there are autos used frequently, whether it be day or night, the driver

often lets a man out of the car in an area for a period of time, drops another man out at another location and so on, and, after they patrol on foot for a while, returns, and they continue auto patrol. This is considered a good practice and is widely used in conjunction with the auto patrol idea.

AUTOMOBILE PATROLS

The automobiles of the local police jurisdiction are owned, maintained, and equipped by the local police authority. They are not always conspicuously marked as police cars en total, this varying from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Most of the cars, however, are marked, carry sirens or gongs, and are equipped with two way F/M radios. They are generally garaged at the Sectional Stations throughout a police jurisdiction and for administrative purposes generally are attached to a police division commanded by a superintendent or a chief superintendent. Overall direction, of course, is exercised by force headquarters. Contact with the radio equipped cars is maintained by the information room at headquarters, and all requests for a car's services are passed from a sectional station to the information room by private telephone line and then to the cars by radio. This is the general procedure, of course, varying in a few constabularies where geographical and population problems force alteration onto a smaller or different arrangement.

The autos are manned by two or three men, the different number depending on the local policy. The principal function of a crime, extra, or ordinary patrol car is to act as a quick striking force, available by radio for service at any time. Upon arrival at the scene where assigned, the crew thus maintains a status quo at a crime or accident scene awaiting arrival of the beat officer or the C.I.D. or other special unit which carries on additional inquiries. Upon their arrival, the car and crew report back in service and maintain their principal function of being available to provide immediate "crime first aid". It is seen then that they hand over any investigation to the conventional investigating officer as soon as practicable and resume their watch and patrol. Any aspect of police duty would be handled by this special unit as they came upon it or might be directed to it.

The Crime Patrol System by auto is not intended to supplant foot beat patrol. It is meant as an additional tool to aid the foot patrolman. The crews of the Crime Patrol do in fact spend much of their time on foot. This is one of the reasons for the two or more man crew. Continued radio contact is maintained by the car at all times while in service regardless of the fact that all but one man might be out on foot. This maintains the essential element of communications for immediate responses and also allows for an element of surprise by dint of an immediate response to a call. If the crew is on foot patrol, the driver is not too far away and to drop back to pick up the crew utilizes only a small portion of time.

The beat man often uses the Crime Patrol car as a means of transportation back to another point on the beat rather distant. Thus he can hitch a ride and arrive at this point when a criminal is sure he could not be back for a longer time. In this way, the beat man can use the car to provide himself with an additional element of surprise.

The keynote of the supplementary patrols is vigilance and availability. Administrators believe that the success of this type of auto patrol is dependent upon two or

more men to the motorized unit. These cars patrol all types of areas from main arterials to residential areas, and administrators will maintain that driving becomes a full time job and nearly all the observation and vigilance must be borne by the additional crew.

CONTROL

The Information Room maintains the position of each car on a large map and records whether the given car is available for service or out on an emergency or on an inquiry. This enables the officer in charge to know at a glance the status and location of each unit should any occurrence arise for which a unit should be dispatched. Method and route of patrol by the units is discretionary as long as each unit stays within its own assigned geographical area. Units can be, and often are, dispatched to adjacent areas for service when the need arises.

The dissemination of information is an all important factor in the efficient policing of any community and the means used are generally standard throughout England and Wales. True, there are modifications in each police authority depending on its size, type, and the like, but largely speaking things are generally similar in the urban areas.

In addition to the many public telephone lines reaching each police station, there is a network of private lines between adjoining stations and headquarters and also private lines running to the many police boxes or pillars throughout the city or town. Besides a patrolling foot beat officer can be contacted from the station by means of a visible call signal on the top of each call box or pillar. A powerful electric light, easily distinguishable by day or night, can be activated at the station and remains operative until the officer desired responds. The response is generally made by telephone.

Inter-departmental and, in the Metropolitan Police District, inter-divisional telephone and radio communications are supplemented by teleprinters thus avoiding overloading of radio and telephone apparatus for transmission of routine non-rush material and information.

An emergency telephone system affording the public prompt and expeditious service from police, fire, and ambulance services is available in most communities of any appreciable size all twenty-four hours a day. The public has only to dial the numbers 999 and inform the operator which service is needed and at what location, and immediate contact is obtained. With such a system it is maintained by most administrators that any emergency call in a fair sized community can be responded to within five minutes. All officers should be competent first aid men and in nearly all of England and Wales a competent ambulance service is available.

What is just as important as reaching the beat officer, from the patrol officer's point of view, is that this communication system can work in a reverse direction. So, by going to a police pillar he can be immediately connected to the Information Room by private line, and through it the entire resources of the force are at his disposal. Thus the officer knows no task or assignment is too big to handle. He knows that teams of experts on hand at the station are in easy reach. So be the incident an aircraft disaster, a mine cave-in, or a simple breaking or the like, he can summon the aid necessary by dint of a call to headquarters. This squad or available squads are

affectionately known by constables as "The Circus", but actually their technical name is the "Headquarters Action Squad" or "Flying Squad".

TRAFFIC

The last type of patrolling officer, who works by car, is the man known as a "Traffic Patrol". His main function is traffic control on the highway, the prevention and reporting of road traffic offenses, arrangement of road diversions when necessary, reporting and investigation of traffic accidents, and a very important activity in the education and guidance of all highway users regarding matters of road safety.

Also working traffic on congested urban intersections are men assigned to "Traffic Points". These are constables who are appointed to specific locations to direct and move traffic, to ease congested areas, and to protect pedestrian flow. Generally these men work day time only as that is the crux of the heavy congestion. Of course, since these men work one small area, they are on foot and when speaking of a "Traffic Patrol" reference is not made to these traffic point officers but only to the motorized units.

The traffic patrol car is nearly always very definitely marked as a police vehicle, going even so far as carrying illuminated signs denoting the fact for night use.

The traffic patrols are often sub-divided to cover different types of road. These are often enumerated as "Headquarters Traffic Patrol" and "Divisional Traffic Patrol." The Headquarters patrol generally covers the primary roads intersecting the entire police area. The Divisional Traffic Patrols are, on the other hand, responsible for the secondary roads within their own divisional area. Traffic Patrol officers are usually alone in the auto and are in constant F/M radio communication with the Headquarters Information Room. Radio communication is deemed necessary in the traffic patrols so the cars can readily be diverted to accident scenes, road bottlenecks, or other related matters requiring attention. Each car is equipped with accident warning lights, reflectors, and such equipment warranted to cope with nearly any accident or incident met with on the road. The extreme mobility of the Headquarters officers, covering as they do the entire police area, allows them to concentrate patrol on particular stretches of road on which the accident rate is a rising problem, thus creating by their presence a certain preventive element as well as a higher standard of driving and care.

Special responsibility is generally placed on the Traffic Patrol units when there are large special events to cope with involving the movement of large numbers of pedestrians and many public and private conveyances. This type of problem is found at race meetings, rugby and football matches, and the like. The Divisional Traffic Patrol, who carries ultimate responsibility usually, is often supplemented by numbers of men from Headquarters and other divisions to assure adequate manpower coverage.

While on traffic patrol, traffic offenses and breaches of road courtesy are dealt with by the traffic patrol officer. He takes whatever steps are necessary, often merely politely reprimanding the driver and constructively pointing out to him the correct procedure to be adopted. This educational approach is generally felt to be appreciated and results are thought to be noted from it. Accident investigation is also a specialty

of this branch. Yet, although traffic is the primary function of this branch, the traffic patrol officer remains a police officer and as a result involves himself at any occurrence where he deems his attention necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

So in England and Wales it is seen that in each department, be it urban, rural, city, or country, there is the "team" or elements thereof. The remarkable point is that in each department the team is a completely interdependent unit under different administrative commanders but the manner in which the components work together with such close liaison to accomplish the ends in view is the ingenious thing. All these components cooperate in the common task of preserving life, protecting property, and the maintenance of the Queen's Peace.

This article has attempted to supply some insight into the duties and methods of performing those duties that the constable in England and Wales is engaged in. Undoubtedly, and unfortunately, there is a lot which has been left unsaid, for there are a thousand and one responsibilities that the officer on the street has to be prepared to deal with. To delve into each one would involve countless pages of explanation. This, then, is a sketch of the British Police Constable and the way he carries out some of his responsibilities. It must be always remembered that regardless of any overall picture, each police force throughout England and Wales adopts its own special procedures, and methods vary thusly to some extent from one authority to another. All, however, have the common aim and object in view—the preservation of life, the protection of property, and the maintenance of the peace.