

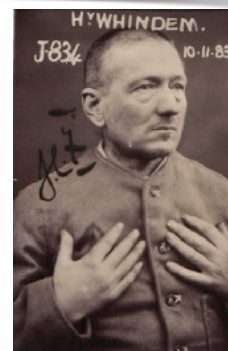
PC Thomas Whincup, first detective in the West Riding Police Force

For centuries policing was a community issue. Parish constables and night watchmen were appointed to patrol and deter crime. The local JPs could impose punishments and curfews as they felt necessary. Most crime in Settle was vagrancy related, together with breaches of drinking regulations, burglary and occasional assault usually committed by the illiterate working classes. If you found yourself in a spot of bother the easiest way to escape justice was to move to another parish or, if the worst came to the worst, emigrate for a fresh start.

The development of a national police force came about because of the concern over dangerous situations such as the increased crime in ports and the Chartist and Luddite riots. Glasgow had the first organised local police force, and Ireland had the first national police force.

In 1856 the government passed an Act enforcing county borough police forces. The West Riding division commenced officially on 1 January 1857 [1], ably led by the Superintending Constable Cockshott, whose story is given alongside petty criminal *John Cockshott* in the *Old Graveyard*. In 1877 a National CID was formed to provide a central record of crime and criminals. The introduction of classic 'convict' photographic records such as this (Henry Whindem [ph2], otherwise known as Henry Whinnerah or Henry Edwards) meant that having an alias or moving to a different part of the country was no longer a way to escape justice.

THE NEW WEST RIDING POLICE.—The New Police commenced on the 1st of January. In Staincliffe West they are 11 in number and are stationed as follows, one at each place: viz:—Settle, Giggleswick, Wigglesworth, Hellifield, Gisburn, Bolton by Bowland, Slaidburn, Bashall Eaves, Newton, Grindleton, Malham, and one for Littondale who has not yet arrived.



Thomas Whincup was the son of John Whincup, a master wool-stapler in Leeds who afterwards became deputy governor of Kirkdale Gaol in Liverpool. Thomas joined the West Riding Police Force at its commencement and had a long career of 46 years, moving through the ranks to Police Superintendent. One of his obituaries explains Thomas was the 34th recruit to the Force. When he signed up Thomas said he was 25 although was only 23. He was described as 5ft 8 and a quarter inches, light brown hair, blue eyes and worked as a wheelwright at Brighouse. After training Thomas set to work as a divisional clerk in Staincliffe, the Settle area, where he stayed for seven years. His records show regular promotions and several good conduct awards.

In Settle in 1859 Thomas married **Jane Dickinson**, the daughter of **John Dickinson** and **Sarah Smith** who farmed at Cow Bridge near Wigglesworth for decades. A few years later, Jane's sister **Betsey Dickinson** married Thomas' brother **Richard Whincup**, a quarryman, but died soon after their marriage, perhaps in childbirth. At the time of the 1861 census Thomas and Jane lived in Chapel Street in Settle. Jane gave Thomas three sons: infant **John** is buried at Holy Ascension in the Ancient graveyard, **Richard** became an accountant after resigning as a policeman, and **John Thomas** became an inspector on the tramways in Leeds.

During his time in Settle Thomas dealt with all sorts of petty crime, including burglary and robbery, enforcing regulations at inns and lodging houses, traffic offences, attending dead bodies and being the 'inspector of weights and measures' to ensure fair trading. He had to enforce additional regulations during the Cattle Plagues of the 1860s.

In a wonderful example of 1865 policing methods, Thomas even had to hide in a cupboard to apprehend a suspected burglar,

Saturday morning found to be missing. It was suspected that the person committing the theft had gained access to the post-office through the shop of Mrs. Wildman, which adjoins it, and calculating upon the possibility of something of the kind being attempted again, it was arranged that P. C. [Whincup] should conceal himself in the shop early on Monday morning, ready to pounce upon his customer if such an opportunity presented itself. P. C. Whincup accordingly secreted himself in a cupboard in the shop, and had not been long in ambush before the prisoner, who is Mrs. Wildman's charwoman, made her appearance. She

47 year old widow Betty Shepherd [1]. Betty had been working as a charwoman for Mrs Margaret Wildman, the widow of printer John Wildman, who ran the Post Office. A year later Mrs Wildman resigned and the family emigrated to Australia. Betty was, unsurprisingly, found guilty and sentenced to Wakefield House of Correction for three months with hard labour. Afterwards she moved to Carnforth with her daughters.

Thomas was transferred to Bolton By Bowland and then to Halifax, York and Saddleworth. In 1878 Thomas was promoted to the position of Superintendent of the Upper Osgoldcross Division in Pontefract and took over the County Force when local divisions merged. The family were able to employ a servant after this. In 1897 Thomas was awarded a bronze medal for bravery by the Prince of Wales (Bertie). Despite sustaining long lasting internal injuries, Thomas saved the life of a woman who had slipped down under the foot-board of an excursion train at Baghill Station in Pontefract.

Thomas [ph1] was the first detective appointed to the West Riding Force dealing with 'the arrest of some Fenians in Manchester'. Linked to this he was on the team of detectives for the Phoenix Park Murders on 6 May 1882. These were the fatal stabbings of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke in Phoenix Park in Dublin. Cavendish was the newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland and this was his first day in Ireland. Burke was the Permanent Undersecretary. The assassination was carried out by five members of the rebel group Irish National Invincibles, radical activists for Home Rule who were subsequently found guilty and hanged. Thomas also investigated several high profile murders.



POLICE VETERAN'S DEATH.
STORIES OF EX-SUPERINTENDENT OF WEST RIDING.

The death occurred at Leeds on Saturday of Mr. Thomas Whincup, ex-Superintendent of the West Riding Constabulary, in his 78th year. Mr. Whincup, who was of kindly disposition and a most popular officer, was at the time of his retirement, eight years ago, the oldest police-officer in the kingdom. Mr. and Mrs. Whincup last July celebrated their golden wedding.

A native of Great Horton, Bradford, Mr. Whincup joined the West Riding Police Force on its formation in 1856. Twenty-two years later he was promoted to superintendent of the Upper Osgoldcross Division, and with that town he was mostly connected during his public career.

During the Featherstone riots he was met by a body of rioters one dark night in a lonely lane at Purston. The Superintendent was accompanied by several Metropolitan policemen, and it would have gone hard with them but for the fact that Mr. Whincup was recognised with the remark, "Oh, it's all right. It's the old superintendent; let him go."

Mr. Whincup was decorated by King Edward (then Prince of Wales) in 1897 for an act of bravery at Baghill station, Pontefract. He rescued a young woman, who had been caught by an incoming excursion train and dragged between the carriages and the platform. By jumping on to the line he held her clear of the metals until the train had passed through the station.

Thomas retired in 1903 and was 'presented with handsome bunting by his superintendent brothers' having served for 46 years. Upon retirement Thomas was the oldest serving officer in the country. Thomas and Jane celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1909.

46 YEARS IN THE FORCE.
DEATH OF PROMINENT WEST RIDING POLICE OFFICER.

A year last July Mr. and Mrs. Whincup celebrated their golden wedding.

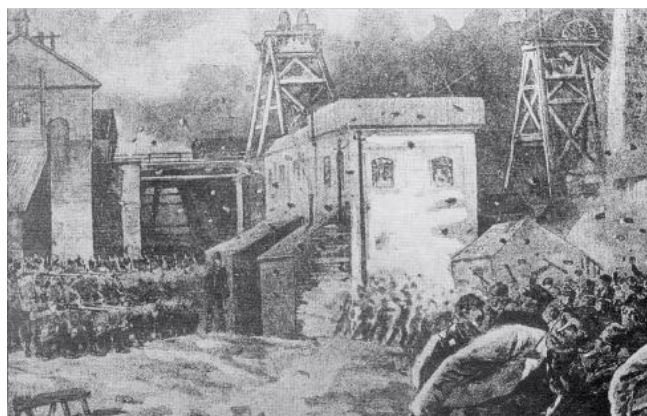
Thomas died in 1911, aged 78 and Jane in 1916, aged 80. Thomas' obituaries indicate the esteem in which he was held [2,3] and his involvement in the Featherstone riots [ph3].

The Featherstone Riots took place in 1893 near Wakefield - the miners at were locked out of the mine due to overproduction of coal. Soldiers fired on a crowd who were demonstrating at the colliery gates, killing two instantly. However, due to his reputation as a fair man, a gang of rioting miners chose not attack Thomas and a few of his

colleagues when they found them in a lonely lane. They even offered to make a presentation to him when he retired.



Incredibly, a descendant of Thomas's brother, Richard, now lives in Settle and is the proud owner of Thomas' truncheon.



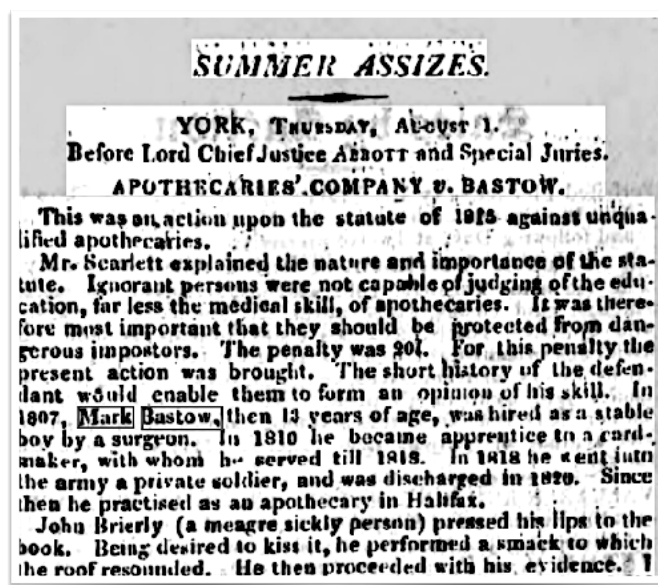
Jane's sister **Ann Dickinson** died soon after the birth of her second illegitimate child who was brought up by grandparents. Sister **Ellen** married **George Kayley** who was one of the fleet of Yorkshire Dales cowmen who travelled from Settle to Liverpool to provide milk for the expanding population of the city.

The rather interesting history of **PC Whincup's** mother

Thomas' mother was **Harriet Avison**. Before she married **John Whincup**, the wool stapler, Harriet had married **Mark Bastow** from Halifax. As a boy Mark was hired as a stable boy to a surgeon and, being a curious lad, helped out with the surgery, learning the trade.

Mark joined the army in 1818 but was discharged for some reason in 1820. Being entrepreneurial, Mark reinvented himself as 'Dr Mark Bastow'. Unfortunately, in 1822, thanks to the new 'Statute of 1815 against unqualified apothecaries', Mark was found guilty of trading as an apothecary without appropriate qualifications [4]. He was fined £20 for an act of unqualified practice which seemed to wipe him out. A year later he found himself in York Castle debtor's prison.

Six years later, in 1828, Mark married Harriet and they had a daughter Nancy, but Mark died two years later.



VERDICT FOR THE PLAINTIFF.—Damages—
TWENTY POUNDS, being one penalty.
It may be of use, that the observation which fell from the Judge on this trial, should be publicly known viz. "that according to that act, a penalty of £20. attaches for every act of unqualified practice, and that the company might, if they had been disposed, have required a verdict for several penalties in this case."

...JR...

The like certificate for Mark Bastow late of Southowram in the parish of Halifax in the said Riding Cardmaker a Prisoner confined for Debt in the castle of York for the County of York —//—

This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. Life stories can be found on dalescommunityarchives.org.uk, 'settle graveyard project'. The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project

Settle Graveyard Project

is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

With thanks to relatives Clive and Pauline Whincup for their help with the compilation of this story.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 3 – Leeds Mercury, 4 – Leeds Intelligencer

ph1 – with thanks to Clive and Pauline Whincup, ph2 – thanks to Sarah Lister, ph3 – photo credited to Yorkshire Historic facebook page, posted by Edward Downes