

Superintendents 3 — Supts Copeland and Croft

When he died, Settle's first **Superintendent Cockshott** was replaced by **Superintendent Christopher Copeland** who served for seven years before his retirement aged 51, and he was followed by **Superintendent James Robert Croft** who died after just three years' service, aged 60. Both of these men give us a colourful insight into 19th century policing and justice systems.

Christopher Copeland was a Lancaster lad, the son of **John Copeland** and his wife **Elizabeth Fawcett**. He was one of at least five siblings who have proved rather elusive, with the exception of a brother, **James Copeland**. James initially worked as a porter, one of 63 employees of **Henry Woolwight** who ran one of the enormous drapery factories in the burgeoning city of Liverpool. These had a reputation of harsh working conditions and so, perhaps, we can understand why James decided to aim for a better life on the other side of the world in Australia, joining the thousands of men hoping for some luck in the Gold Rush. He settled in Amherst, in the heart of a gold-digging belt married and had a family there. Despite thousands flooding to the area during the gold rush the town is almost deserted these days.

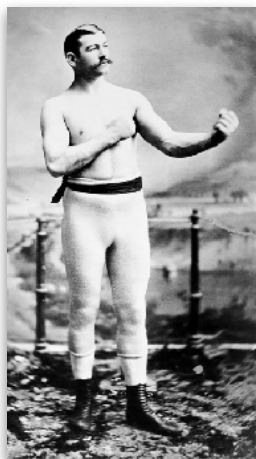
Meanwhile, Christopher began his working life as a grocer. When he was 20/21 he obtained his first post as a police officer in Lancaster. When he was 26, in 1853, he married 20 year old **Eve Woodhouse**, a farmer's daughter from Morecambe who had been working as a servant to a fish salesman, and they had two children. Christopher will have signed up to work for the West Riding Constabulary from its commencement in 1857 but, as he had been working as a police officer before that, appeared to have joined the ranks as an inspector. In 1857 he was posted to Tadcaster, then Bradford, Halifax in 1864, Otley in 1868 and then to Settle in 1871. His salary, in Settle, was £100, which was £25 less than Supt Cockshott received at the commencement of the WR constabulary in 1857.

There are numerous reports of Christopher dealing with theft, assault, drunken behaviour etc. However, a more unusual case arose soon after his promotion to Superintendent of the Bradford Division in 1858. He replaced **Supt JM King** who had been diagnosed with cancer of the tongue. The report of the alarming incident in November 1858 described *'great excitement was occasioned in Bradford by the rumour that a great number of people had been poisoned by eating lozenges which had been sold in the Green market on Saturday night. On Sunday morning two boys, aged nine and eleven, died very suddenly. It was first supposed that they had died of cholera, but during a day a great many other persons were attacked with illness'* and they had all eaten the lozenges too [1]. The market stall holder and the original source of the lozenges were identified. By the time the article was written 13 people had been reported dead with about 80 being ill, although actual numbers are likely to have been higher. Even the lozenge vendor became ill after eating them — *'Hardaker, the person who sold the lozenges in the market is so ill that the medical men despair of his life.'* *'Superintendent Copeland of the West Riding Constabulary is now investigating the scene in the out-townships'* [2]. Health and safety procedures had not been heard of in those days, of course!



**NEARLY 100 PERSONS POISONED
AT BRADFORD.**
On Sunday night and Monday morning great excitement was occasioned in Bradford and the neighbourhood by the rumour that a great many people had been accidentally poisoned by eating lozenges, which had been sold in the Green market on Saturday night. It appeared that on Sunday morning two boys, one aged nine and the other

One of the more unusual jobs of the police force was to prevent bareknuckle *'Prize fights'* [ph4], especially following the new rules introduced in 1853 to decrease cases of injury and death. In



1863, a prize fight for £25 had been set up 'between two Huddersfield bruisers named Smith and Mills' at Baildon Moor, just outside Shipley. As usual, hundreds of spectators, 'all apparently of the class known of 'roughs' came along. 'Superintendent Copeland, however, was ready with about fourteen members of the constabulary' and moved the supporters on towards Shipley, which is quite an achievement for 14 policemen against hundreds of 'roughs'. 'Their sport was thus spoiled after all their early wanderings, and loud were their maledictions against the "official interference of the

PREVENTION OF ANOTHER PRIZE-FIGHT. — Arrangements had some time ago been made for a prize-fight for £25 a side, between two Huddersfield bruisers named Mills and Smith; and Baildon Moor, or the region further into the hills, was selected as the scene of operations, which should have come off on Tuesday last. Numerous cabs had been driven in that direction, filled with sportsmen, by early dawn, and some hundreds departed by the train for Shipley immediately after six o'clock, all apparently of the class known as "roughs," and most of them strangers, no doubt from Huddersfield and the district. Superintendent Copeland, however, was ready with about fourteen members of the West Riding constabulary, and they followed the combatants and crowd as far

police". Subsequently the pugilist Mills was taken before the magistrates and bound over to keep the peace for six months.'[3]

One of Christopher's career highlights could well have been in 1864 when he was assigned the responsibility of coordinating the police presence surrounding the visit of the Liberal Prime Minister, **Lord Palmerston**. Lord Palmerston dominated British foreign policy when Britain was at the height of its imperial power, promoting free trade and sponsoring the 'Opium Wars' against China and a war against Egypt. 'Last evening the usually quiet and secluded village of Lightcliffe, near Bradford, was all excitement and commotion, in consequence of the arrival of Lord Palmerston on a visit to lay a foundation stone of the new Exchange at Bradford'. A great crowd assembled. 'Numerous flags floated in the breeze and the villagers had evidently put on their best attire.' Well, you would, wouldn't you? 'The crowd vociferously cheered him as he passed them — one man with a stentorian voice shouting, "Europe's hope and England's glory"'[4].

LORD PALMERSTON'S VISIT TO BRADFORD.
HIS LORDSHIP'S ARRIVAL.
Last evening the usually quiet and secluded village of Lightcliffe, near Bradford, was all excitement and commotion, in consequence of the arrival of Lord Palmerston on a visit to lay the foundation stone of the new Exchange at Bradford. A telegraphic mes-

We know the officers of the constabulary knew each other and worked together through their promotion ladder. It transpires that, while Supt Copeland was in Halifax, one of his officers was **Sergeant Inman** who became the Settle Superintendent during the 1880s. In 1864, in a very complicated case reported as 'Extensive Pilferings by the Cook in a Gentleman's Family' [5] Superintendent Copeland sent Sergeant Inman to Wigan as part of the investigation. And, in 1867 Sergeant Inman was asked by Supt Copeland to take 65 year old **John Greenwood** to a bank to deposit over £140 cash. The cash had been found on Mr Greenwood's person as he was taken to the lock up after being arrested for being drunk and disorderly. [6]

EXTENSIVE PILFERINGS BY THE COOK IN A GENTLEMAN'S FAMILY.

HALIFAX—"A FOOL AND HIS MONEY."—On Tuesday, at the West Riding Court, a man aged sixty-five, named John Greenwood, weaver, of Oldham, was charged by Police-constable Midgley, with being found drunk and incapable at Ripponden on the previous day. It appeared he had been wandering about the neighbourhood since Sunday, and on Monday he fell down Norland Scarr, severely bruising his face. When searched at the lock-up it was found that he had upon him in cash £141 9s. 5d. He was fined 12s. 6d. and costs. At the instance of Mr Superintendent Copeland, Sergeant Inman went with the old man to the Union Bank, and deposited his money in that establishment.

Christopher's most high profile case was in Halifax in 1866 when a man 'passing under the name of Samuel Mortimer, low in stature, dark complexioned and apparently about 35 years of age' was arrested for the "Wilful murder by hanging and suffocation" of his own son in Seven Dials in London a few weeks previously'[7]. Superintendent Copeland produced the Police Gazette which stated that one **Richard Jeffery**, otherwise known as 'Mad Dick', was wanted for murdering his son

in Seven Dials and a description was issued. Using the latest technology, a photo of Samuel Mortimer/Richard Jeffery was taken and sent to London. Supt Copeland sent a telegram to **Inspector West** of London who brought Mr Jeffrey's fellow lodger, **William Ingram**, to Halifax and he recognised Richard Jeffery straight away. The prisoner was taken back to London for his trial, the result of which was a guilty verdict and a death sentence. The prisoner said, *'in a voice of deep emotion, I have led a most unhappy life for the past seven years. I am guilty. He then thanked the learned judge and the jury and was led from the dock.'* Mental health support? Not a chance in those days. It transpired that his wife had been unfaithful and Richard suspected their son was not his. *'The culprit was a short, spare man, rather good-looking with not the slightest appearance of ferocity or bad temper in his countenance'*[8]. It was two years since the last execution had taken place at Newgate.

THE MURDER OF A BOY IN SEVEN DIALS.
On Monday, at Halifax, a man, low in stature, dark-complexioned, and apparently about thirty-five years of age, who has for a short time past been working as a journeyman tailor for Mr. Helliwell, at the village of Triangle, and passing under the name of Samuel Mortimer, was brought up on a self-accusation of murdering his own child in London some weeks ago.

don he went by the name of "Mad Dick."
Mr. Superintendent Copeland produced the *Police Gazette*, which stated that one RICHARD Jeffery was wanted on the charge of murdering his son, in Seven Dials, London, and gave a description of his person.
The prisoner now stated that he was a native of Virginia, United States. He had been drinking all the week, and did not know what he was doing. He was at a beerhouse at Triangle when he saw the reward offered in a newspaper. He did not deny making the statement to the policeman.
The magistrate remanded the prisoner until the London authorities could be communicated with.
The prisoner then complained of "feeling very lonely, ill, and oppressed in spirits, wretched, and miserable," and asked for company.
Mr. Rawson said he would leave him in the hands of the superintendent, and if he required medical aid it would be obtained.
A photograph of the prisoner was taken, and sent to the London police authorities.

In an incredible case in 1867, *'Superintendent Copeland moved energetically in the matter'* of finding a missing five year old boy, **Cain Hanson** of Halifax, who had disappeared and his father, a shoemaker, suspected he had been stolen. A nationwide search was initiated, placards distributed and a reward offered. Four months later, *'the poor little fellow turned up in Dewsbury Workhouse'* where he had been since the day after he disappeared [9]. Four months! He had been placed in the workhouse after being found in Dewsbury by a policeman. Young Cain seemed to have survived this ordeal unscathed. He served in the army before marrying and worked as a quarryman in Halifax and then as a coffee and dining room waiter in London.

A CHILD FOUND AFTER BEING LOST FOUR MONTHS.
—On the 17th September last a boy, five years of age, named Cain Hanson, son of a working man at Northowram, near Halifax, was missed from his home, and the general opinion prevailed that the child had been stolen. It was even asserted that the child had been seen in the company of beggars weeks after. Mr. Copeland, superintendent of the police, Halifax, moved energetically in the matter. He communicated with all the police stations in the country; a subscrip-

In 1868 Supt Copeland's division received a visit from the government inspector of police. The report explained that Supt Copeland oversaw one inspector, seven sergeants and 48 constables. *'The inspector viewed the court-house, cells etc and inspected carefully the accoutrements of the men and the police books and expressed to Superintendent Copeland his entire satisfaction with the present situation of this portion of the West Riding force'*[10]. Christopher was obviously a safe pair of hands. In a similar vein, upon his transfer from Halifax to Otley in 1869 it was reported that Supt Copeland had spent 22 years in the Forces of Lancashire and Yorkshire. *'The superintendent is generally esteemed by the bench and the general public of Halifax, for the promotion and satisfactory manner in which the duties of the appointment discharged and for his general courtesy to all with whom he transacts business'* [11]. Sounds good!

INSPECTION OF THE HALIFAX DIVISION OF THE WEST RIDING POLICE.—On Thursday the constables forming the West Morley division, were inspected by Captain Elgee, government inspector of police, who was accompanied by Colonel Cobbe, chief constable of Wakefield. The force numbers 56 men of all ranks, namely, 1 superintendent, 1 inspector, 7 sergeants, and 48 constables. The inspector view the court-house, cells, &c., and inspected carefully the accoutrements of the men, and the police books, and expressed to Mr. Superintendent Copeland his entire satisfaction with the present position of this portion of the West Riding force. The men were not put through their

Settle Graveyard Project

The lack of newspaper reports suggest that, once in Settle, Supt Copeland's time was more low key, or it could be that there were less journalists in Settle! However, in 1876, he crossed paths with **William Harrison**, 'a lad of diminutive stature said to be about 15 years of age'. William was charged with 'stealing a meerschaum pipe, valued at 18 shillings' from **Mr Frederick Taylor** who had been lodging on Castle Hill in Settle with shoemaker **Robert Brown**. Meerschaum pipes were premium, handmade smoking pipes carved from a rare, porous white mineral (sepiolite, also known as meerschaum) found primarily in Turkey and the Black Sea [ph1]. They are known for providing a cool, dry and relatively pure smoke as the pipes act as natural filters.



Frederick left his pipe on the window-seat in the kitchen. William Harrison and his family lived a few doors away from Robert Brown's shop. William had gone into Robert's shop to buy some hair oil and stole the pipe from the widow-seat. 'Mr Copeland stated that the prisoner was a very bad lad and had committed

window bottom."— In reply to the bench Mr. Copeland stated that the prisoner was a very bad lad, and had committed many depredations. Only a short time ago he had been before their lordships for stealing a quantity of iron, on which occasion he was ordered to be whipped.—The bench ordered him to be committed to prison for 3 weeks, and afterwards to be sent to a Reformatory for 3 years.

many depredations. Only a short time ago he had been before their lordships for stealing a quantity of iron, on which occasion he was ordered to be whipped.' So, on this occasion he was committed to prison for three weeks and afterwards to be sent to a Reformatory for three years [CH]. Did this bring about William's reformation? Sadly not! Soon after his release from the Reformatory William was 'charged with stealing a quantity of manure, valued at 5 shillings from **George Huthersall**', the innkeeper at The Talbot. William was seen throwing the manure into the yard of the house next door to his parents! So, he was given another three months in prison with hard labour [12]. A year after the manure incident William's father died, perhaps because of the stress caused? After this, most of William's siblings were found in Burnley — perhaps for a fresh start, but there was no further sign of the very bad lad, William.

In 1878 Christopher retired to Morecambe, which was wife Eve's hometown, and they ran a hotel together. Sadly, Christopher died just five years later, aged 56. Eve stayed in Morecambe and lived to the age of 86!

What happened to Christopher and Eve's two children? If son **James Copeland** looked anything like his dad, we have an idea of the appearance of Supt Copeland [ph2]. James began his career apprenticed to a druggist/chemist in Otley and then, perhaps inspired by uncle James Copeland, emigrated to live and have a family in South Africa. He may have continued to work as a chemist/druggist. Sadly, James died when he was just 45 in 1899. His widow, **Charlotte Emma (Stigant) Copeland**, who was born in Australia, brought their three children back to Morecambe, near their grandmother Eve. James and Charlotte's daughters **Mabel**, a nurse, and **Winnie**, who became a coal merchant's wife, stayed in Morecambe but son **John Copeland** returned to South Africa after serving with the RAF during the war.



Christopher and Eve's daughter, **Elizabeth Louisa Copeland** also stayed in Morecambe and married a draughtsman, **John James Newton Walker**. It's hard to find out much about their lives but the death notice of their daughter, **May Gwendoline Walker**, who died in 1918 aged just 24, gives us some clues. She died at the family home in Blawith, at the southern end of Consiton Water, at the end of a long bout of influenza. In Blawith 'she had been an active worker in all matters connected

with the church, as well as in all social matters' [13]. 'Belonging to a musical family, she and her sister took great delight in arranging concerts for the school funds and to provide comforts for the soldiers. They also have been helpers in the Ulverston Military Hospital.' May and her sister **Hilda Walker** had been to a girls' boarding school in Ingleton together before doing their good works at the hospital and in the Ulveston community. At the age of 48 Hilda became the second wife of **Charles Gordon Lowden**, an Ulveston auctioneer and lived to the ripe old age of 98! outliving her husband by 30 years.

GREAT SORROW was felt in the village when it was known that Miss **May Gwendoline Walker**, of High Field, had died from influenza following on a long illness. The deceased, who was only 24 years old, will be greatly missed in her home, and also in the parish, where she has been an active worker in all matters connected with the church, as well as in all social matters. Belonging to a musical family, she and her sister took great delight in arranging concerts for the school funds and to provide comforts for the soldiers. They also have been helpers in the Ulverston Military Hospital. The funeral took place on Monday

Superintendent James Robert Croft

Our third superintendent was **James Robert Croft** whose police records tell us that he joined the new West Riding Constabulary as a sergeant in January 1857 when he was 35. He was 5 foot 9 inches tall, with a sallow complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair. He was from Manningham, Bradford and, if the records are correct, had served in the local police force for six years in Bradford and then three in Pateley Bridge before the constabulary was formed. James was promoted to the role of inspector in 1861, serving in Bingley and Hebden Bridge before becoming the Superintendent in Otley in 1877. He took over in Settle after the death of Supt Copeland in 1881.

Newspaper reports indicate the usual cases of theft, assault, drunk and disorderly and poaching with nothing out of the ordinary or of particular note. In Otley in 1878 James reported that '*drunkenness has been steadily on the increase until the year 1878, when there has been a decrease of 38 upon the previous year. This is accounted for by a decrease of navvies upon public works*' [14]. No surprises there then!

OTLEY BREWSTER SESSIONS.

The annual licensing day of the Otley division was held yesterday, before a full bench. Superintendent **Croft** read the annual report. Drunkenness has been steadily on the increase until the year 1878, when there has been a decrease of 38 upon the previous year. This is accounted for by a decrease of navvies upon public works. The innkeepers and beerhouse-keepers manifest a desire to keep their houses orderly. The de-

In Settle, In March 1881 Superintendent Croft was called to investigate the '*Discovery of Dynamite*' at a junction on the Midland Railway by railway labourer, **John Maunders** who was seeking shelter from a storm [15]. There are no further reports about what he found out!

DISCOVERY OF DYNAMITE NEAR SETTLE.

The inhabitants of Settle and the immediate vicinity were considerably alarmed on Friday evening on information being conveyed to the Police Office of the finding of 20 dynamite cartridges in an old cowshed situate in the fork of the two lines of the Midland Railway Company to the south of Settle, and not far from the residence of a local magistrate. A railway labourer named **John Maunders**, who was seeking shelter from a storm, discovered a waterproof parcel containing the cartridges in a hole in the building, and took it to the Police Station.

James, initially a butcher, had married **Sarah Adamson** in 1840 and they had five children. James and Sarah moved to the States during the 1840s but were back in Bradford by 1850.

Sadly, while the family were in Otley, Sarah died on 26 April 1876 when their youngest child was 16. The only hint of scandal in Superintendent Croft's life occurred when he remarried — just three months later, on 31 July 1876. 55 year old James married 45 year old **Martha Annie Whittaker** of Esholt, outside Bradford. Of course, it always looked better for a superintendent to be married!

Just a few years later, by 1881 James' health was failing and on 29 April he passed away, aged 59. '*The immediate cause of death was carbuncle*' on his neck — a severe abscess or multiple boil in the skin, typically infected with staphylococcus bacteria. The deceased officer was one of the oldest

Settle Graveyard Project

members of the police force having been in the service for over thirty years. In carrying out what he believed to be his duty laid him open in some quarters to the charge of too great sternness'[16], which doesn't sound like the ringing endorsement of most obituaries. He was buried in Otley with his first wife, Sarah, and his funeral was attended by most of the superintendents of the West Riding Constabulary. The authorities granted £190 from the Superannuation Fund to support the widow of Supt Croft. The fallen memorial stone reads [ph3]:

DEATH OF SUPERINTENDENT CROFT.—For some time past Mr. Croft, the Superintendent of the West Starncliffe constabulary who has resided for almost three years at Settle, had been in failing health, and on Friday morning week he passed away. The immediate cause of death was carbuncle. The deceased officer was one of the oldest members of the police force having been in the service for over thirty years. In the dis-

In memory of Sarah, wife of James Robert Croft, superintendent of police, who died April 26th 1876, aged 58 years. Also of the above James Robert Croft who died at Settle on April 29th 1881, aged 59 years.



Widow Martha Annie lived off her inheritance wisely, living with/close to her Whittaker cousins in Headingley but spending her final days in Harrogate. She was 86 when she died.

What happened to James and Sarah's children? Eldest **Arthur Thomas Croft** appears to have died while the family was in America. Second child **William Thomas Croft**, born in the States, perhaps taking his deceased brother's middle name, became a Town Clerk in Shipley and the assistant Town Clerk for the whole of Bradford. After his first wife died, William remarried a woman 30 years his junior but died less than two years later. James and Sarah's third child, **Emily Croft**, married and had a family with **William Henry Corbridge** who spent his life working as the Postmaster at Rawmarsh, Rotherham for which he was awarded the Imperial Service Medal. Emily probably deserved it as much as William! James and Sarah's fourth child, **Sarah Elizabeth Croft** died when she was 27. At the time of the 1881 census, James and Sarah's fifth child, **Martha Ann Croft** was living with sister Emily and the Corbridge family in Rawmarsh. A couple of months later she married **John Dunhill**, then working as a colliery timekeeper in Rawmarsh. In another case of itchy feet, John and Martha emigrated to New York where John worked as a bookkeeper and they had three daughters.



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. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Preston Guardian, 2 – Daily Telegraph, 3 – Leeds Times, 4 – Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 5 – Wigan examiner, 6, 12 – Yorkshire Post, 7 – Tavistock Gazette, 8 – Dundee Advertiser, 9 – Bury Times, 10 – Halifax Courier, 11 – Leeds Intelligencer, 13 – Barrow News, 14, 15 – Daily Gazette for Middlesborough, 16 – Lancaster Gazette, CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

ph1 – credited to [smoking pipes.com](http://smokingpipes.com), ph2 credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username BrianCarter 333, ph3 – photo credited to Findagrave.com, submitted by Bob the Greenacre Cat, ph4 – photograph of John L Sullivan, 1882, credited to Wikipedia, public domain