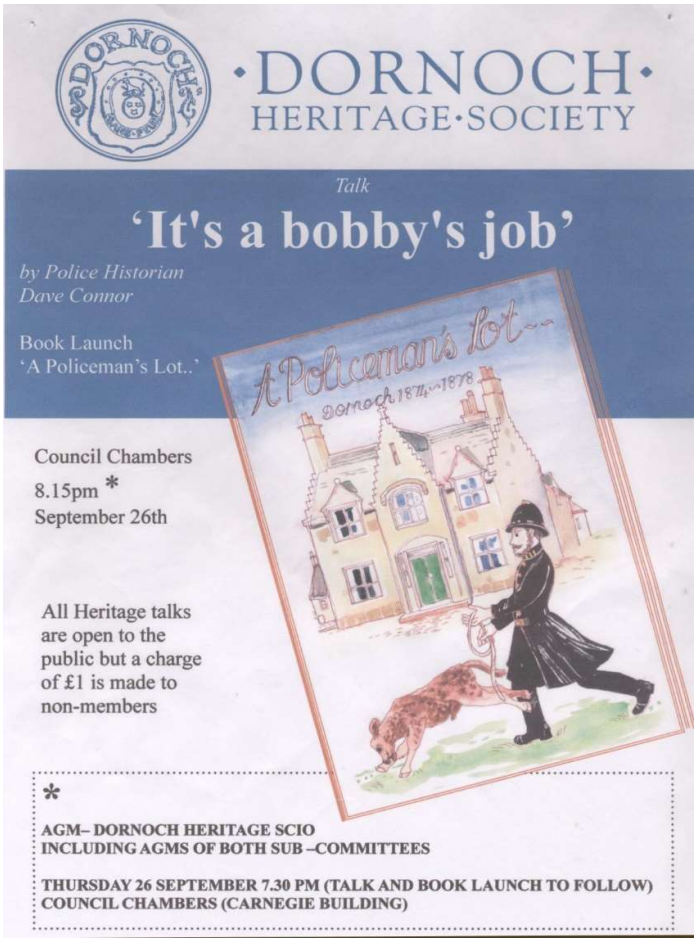

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Transcription of a talk 'It's a bobby's job' by Dave Connor at the Dornoch Heritage SCIO AGM held on 26 Sept 2013.

The talk launched the Historylinks Museum 2013 publication 'A Policeman's Lot' produced from a handwritten Dornoch Police Occurrence Book 1874-78.

I should explain at the outset that I have a 44-page A4 document which I intended just to read out to you. But I told Sue *(museum curator at the time)* this morning and I said it would actually last eight hours. I lied. It's only seven hours, 55 minutes.

You weren't really wanting to go home tonight. You have nothing pressing, have you? I've cut it down a bit, which means I will be ad-libbing quite a lot. And nobody goes off at tangents quite like I do. But by the law of geometry, if you keep going off at enough tangents, you end up back where you started. So, we'll hopefully get there.

First of all, introduction. Dave Connor is my name. I am not a Highlander.

I was born in Dundee. My parents moved up with me to Inverness back in 1961 when I was quite young, about eight, I think. Queen Victoria had just died.

I had a big problem. I thought I spoke fluent English. But when I said in my best Queen's English to the boys in the house next door, who were Invernessians, and I asked them if they wanted to partake in a game of association football, to which they replied, well, it's football.

So, I've had a problem with language ever since. So, if you don't understand what I'm saying, don't worry about it. I probably don't either.

I joined the police in Inverness in 1973 at the age of 19. That was about the time, at the start of the time when the younger lads were being taken on because they were short. They obviously had reduced the recruiting requirements. Otherwise, I certainly wouldn't get in if I'd applied today. With the result that after 30 years, I was able to retire on a full police pension at age 49. It would have been 50, but the chief inspector and I fell out about how many days off I was due before I finished.

I actually finished about three weeks before my 50th birthday. During the course of my interesting and illustrious, boring career, I was fortunate enough to, for a number of times, to be a troubleshooter. I started off being a troublemaker and then became a trouble sorter and then a troubleshooter.

It's funny, actually, when you think about it, that the guy who spent most of his police career looking backwards at history ended up being involved in computerising the Northern Constabulary, taking it from the more up-to-date version of the occurrence books, which John's just been talking about, to actually being able to access information wherever you were in the Highlands, irrespective of where that information was held. One boss did say, what's the point of all this? And I said, well, you're the boss in Inverness or Dingwall or Dornoch. Something happened in Lochinver and you want to know what it was. The bobby in Lochinver is not there. He's gone days off or his phone's broken and you've no way of finding out. Whereas if you put it on a computer, on a network system, everybody who needs to know the information can access it.

And remarkably, for a dinosaur, because that's what he was, he finally bought into the concept. Now, that computer programme went live in the whole of the Northern Constabulary area at the beginning of 1995. Some of it had been running before. It was a gradual rollout, but by the beginning of 1995, it was throughout the Highlands. And it was supposed to last at the most five years, until such time as the police services in Scotland pulled the finger out, for lack of a better word, and produced national systems. Well, that system was called ‘Impact’. And if that system was a human being, he could have taken me out and bought me a pint at the beginning of this year. 18 years on, that system is still in use. And it's fascinating the number of serving officers now who, because of this wonderful new system called Police Scotland, now realise that there will be a new computer system coming in, and they are totally dreading it, and saying how much they will miss my baby, ‘Impact’.

It's not, that baby is not what we called it at the outset, I can assure you. But I'm jumping ahead of myself, but I suppose it's funny, I suppose you could say something like Janus, the guy with two heads, in as much as looking back in the history, and being able to preserve part

of that history, and looking forward to computerisation, whether we'll be able to access such information a hundred years hence, as we can still access some information a hundred years ago, remains to be seen. Paper, the only thing that can happen to paper is fire or shredder.

And if it avoids either of these, you will eventually get it and be able to benefit from it. When it comes to electronic data, that's a whole different ballgame. I know that some of the people in the archives in the council, 'HighLife Highland' are now saying that they were having to try and preserve a computer for every database they had, because there were so many different systems they couldn't read each other's stuff.

So, to have a disk with all the data on it is absolutely no use unless you've got a machine still working that can read it. Isn't modern technology wonderful? When I joined the police in 1973, I was given a piece of wood that long. It had a leather handle and a grip. We knew it affectionately as Mr Wood. And we were issued with trousers, police trousers, with an extra pocket in there in which you put 'Mr Wood', if you remember to take him out of the office. Great, I'm left-handed. Pockets on the right-hand side. There's only once I've had more difficulty with a baton than trying to get it out of that pocket. Whoops, that's alright, sorry, just bits fall off.

One night, well stationed at Helmsdale, the phone went about half past three in the morning, there had been a fire at one of the lodges. And this was the gamekeeper's wife phoning to tell me, major panic, the fire brigade were on their way from Golspie and all that. But I was nearest. I was day off; I was supposed to finish at one in the morning. I had met one of the guys that had the lobster pots in Helmsdale. He was on his way to check them, and I stopped with a platter of ham. It was two o'clock before I got home. I was days off, so the uniform, thrown into the laundry basket, but with jeans and a jumper for the next couple of days. So, dives out of bed, runs to get the car, heads up the road. I remember to take Mr Wood with me. And I'm driving up the road and the road is like a bottle. I am quite worried. I'm trying my damnedest to get the baton into my trouser pocket. And I remember I was wearing jeans. I never needed the baton that night. In fact, in the whole 30 years, I used the baton four times. Once to defend myself. Once to knock some nails in. Once to tap broken glass out of a window so I could get in to find out if there was anybody in the house. And what was the fourth one? It hasn't come to court yet. Only kidding.

Anyway, in my service, I served initially at Inverness, which was an experience. There's nowhere like Inverness in the Highlands for doing policing, because it's so busy, so big, non-stop. I then went to Aviemore, which was a, well, that was a revelation as well. Opened my eyes. There to Portree. And after I had been there a whole five days, I met the lady who I subsequently married. Ah, isn't that sweet? Yeah. That's what happens when Bobbies go to islands. They invariably come back with a wife. Not necessarily their own. It took five days for me to get hooked. The reason being that she'd been away on holiday for the first four.

Back to Inverness, did umpteen different things in Inverness, from traffic to bits of CID, a whole variety of the job. And then I was told I was due a shift. Everybody's due a shift. Some are usually more due than others. If you haven't upset anybody and you keep your head down. Anyway, it transpired that I had joined Inverness-shire for six weeks too late to be given protection from transfer outwith Inverness-shire. It was open season. I could go anywhere in the Highlands and Islands, which nothing against the Western Isles, but I'm glad

it worked out that way because what it did mean is I got to serve in Orkney. And I also got to serve in the beautiful county of Sutherland. I did three years in Helmsdale and that was an education. I had a wonderful house, a lovely station, which is now the Helmsdale Free Church. They've done a beautiful job of converting it.

It's sad that there's no police stations in the villages anymore, but I believe that's progress. So anyway, from Helmsdale, I then went to Inverness where I worked as a local beat officer, staying in a council house with a portacabin in the garden and ministering unto all the people that lived in this place in Inverness that had grown from nothing to 10,000 people in a matter of 10 years. After that, I went into a communication centre for five years.

It was nice to tell people where to go rather than them telling me. I've been giving them directions that officers should go to certain places. And then after that, I went into the computer department.

I was fortunate there that I had established my bona fides with my fellow officers as a rebel. So, they knew that if I was involved in it, it's probably something that the computer system would work. It might not suit the bosses, but it would certainly suit the officers on the ground. So that was it because once I finished that job, I ended up, as I knew it, back on the street using it. And let me tell you, there are precious few bobbies who have been involved in computers who actually ended up using the system that they've designed, which maybe tells you something or not. After that, I had a few other interesting jobs.

And I finally retired in the years that followed. The last job I had was I was the duty sergeant in charge of Burnet Road Police Station in Inverness, which is where the big cell block is. And the penny dropped that here was me helping to restrain a young lad whose grandfather I had arrested not long after I joined.

I am no spring chicken anymore, and I do not want the next arrest to be a cardiac one. So anyway, that was me. Not quite finished with the police because I was back a couple of times as a civilian member of staff, not surprisingly to do with computers. The same computer system what I had worked on years ago, which is, as I say, still going. It's been a phenomenal change going from the pen and paper to information technology as it is today. It can't be a bad thing, because anything must be better than the transition that happened back in the turn of the century, 1900 and so on, when Bobbies stopped using proper nice fountain pens to write their occurrences to these awful ball pens that stuck and smeared and blotted and made a right mess. You can see the difference looking at occurrence books over the period when that happened. And it's the ball pen, unfortunately. It wasn't very good to begin with, but it was a great idea.

And that's when things changed for the worse. I'm not going to make any comment about education or stuff like that either, but in those days, it didn't matter if you spelt it right. The writing was so beautiful, you just appreciated it. But part of my job latterly was checking handwritten reports. And hieroglyphics didn't come into it, sadly, in a lot of cases. Not everybody. Some people, beautiful writers, but an awful lot of them, nowadays aren't. So at least now they're typing stuff into computers, which some of the bosses don't like. They would rather that the Bobbie wrote it out by hand than give it to a typist who probably can't read the flipping writing in the first place, and then keyed it in. And then it went back to the

cop who would then have to try and correct all the errors. It's wonderful. It's a wonderful thing.

The great thing is all this information technology means that there is no paper on the go in the police service whatsoever. One of the first things we did was introduce this new system and say to people, you don't need to print out a copy of the daily occurrences, you can look at it on screen. But one senior officer did inform me that unless and until they provided a computer terminal facility in the toilets, he would still need a printout, because he says it's the only dash place in this building that nobody can reach me by phone. That's the only place that I can get a piece to read. Anyway, 44 pages, 7 hours 57 minutes, is how long we're not going to take. I will supply the organisation with a copy. You have some of it online anyway, on the first page. I'll give you the whole document. What I've done is I went through it and took out half a dozen salient points. The problem with glasses and hearing aids is that the two don't go down very well together. I think I can read this.

No, kidding. Anyway, way back in 1977, I was working at Police Headquarters in Inverness, and they were clearing out a cupboard. Well, it wasn't a cupboard, it was a storeroom. It was intended to be the clothing store. As ever in police stations, it was short of space, it never became that. They reused it to store stuff, then cleared it to make it a print room, and ultimately, they got rid of everything that was in that store, because nobody's been in it since the building opened X number of years ago, so nobody obviously wants it.

Being a full-time volunteer, I give them a hand. One of the things that we came across was an envelope, a packet, which I suppose in reflection was a time capsule, that an inspector had left before he retired way back in the 1930s. Photographs, a few documents, a receipt, things like that. Unfortunately, he hadn't written them up, he didn't say what they were. I've spent ages trying to figure out who's in the photographs and what they're about. But I was at least able to save that from the bin. There were one or two little items of insignia, and I thought wouldn't it be nice if we could get a wee display of insignia to show what all the various forces that existed in the Highlands used to wear. I'm still working on that, but that was only 37 years ago. Very difficult to find, because each of the forces was small, with a small number of people, sometimes badges were sent back or destroyed, other times the few collectors that were on the go at the time got in there and managed to get spare stuff.

I have managed gradually to acquire a selection of insignia worn by the various forces, including the Sutherland Shire Police, the Sutherland Constabulary, the Sutherland Shire Constabulary, names changed according to whoever was designing the thing at the time. Now, as you'll all be aware, the first police force in the world was the Metropolitan Police in London. That's what the Metropolitan Police would have you believe that Sir Robert Peel invented policing. Sir Robert Peel did nothing of the sort. What Sir Robert Peel did do was take a good idea and put it into London. But by the time that the Metropolitan Police was established in 1829, all the major cities and towns in Scotland already had a police force, as did most of the other countries in the world.

Sir Robert Peel pinched the idea from the Royal Irish Constabulary, because he had been Secretary of State for Ireland. He was also quite pally with a chap called Patrick Cahoon from Glasgow, who was one of the magistrates in London. And he had seen or heard from Mr

Cahoon about the City of Glasgow Police, which was the first police force in the United Kingdom, established in 1800.

It was quite some time later before the concept of policing, as we would probably know it today, reached the heartlands. But there were law enforcement officers on the go from a long time back. Originally, it was a case of people who lived in a community, in a village. They didn't usually move very far. If they had crime, such as it was, it was either somebody internally doing it, or it was somebody passing through. If it was somebody passing through a vagrant, what would happen would be there would be a hue and cry, and everybody would go and get that person, and take them back and get the Sheriff, who was the count or the Earl of the county, and he would deal with them in his court.

But as time went on, it wasn't possible, nor feasible, for everybody to down tools every time a crime was reported. And from the time of James 6th and 1ST , 1603 time, the Office of Constable had been set up. Every parish in Scotland could appoint, should appoint, must appoint, one or more constables, who would be people who had to give up their day-to-day job, or employment, business, and execute the law as much as possible.

When you consider the only people that were allowed to do that were the rate payers, and they tended to be the well-off, and by virtue of that, somewhat less than young, and certainly less than enthusiastic in going and getting people. That was duly delegated to people who were without employment, and if they were without employment, then it tended to be because you were up to no good. So, talk about poacher town, poacher.

So, the old parish constable system, was a good idea, but like many good ideas, it didn't come to fruition. A lot of the towns in Scotland had their own, and they weren't initially law enforcement officers, they were actually officers of the council, town officers, and as time went on, when it was realised that constables were getting nowhere, these town officers were asked by the provost to go and deal with this, and deal with that, and gradually they acquired law enforcement powers by default, if you like. Now I did say that 1829 Sir Robert Peel amended the police.

Well, funnily enough, in 1828 was the first mention of the words police officer in the county of Sutherland, and he was a James Stewart, based in Dornoch. He was presumably appointed by the burgh of Dornoch, but Dornoch being not the biggest town in the world, obviously decided to work together with the county of Sutherland in terms of this sort of thing. So, Mr Stewart was effectively Sutherland's first policeman, but obviously he would be primarily based here in Dornoch.

And that was fine, he continued doing that, having his contract renewed every year, until 1841, when, for reasons that are not quoted in the archives, he chucked it or whether he was chucked, who knows. But anyway, in his place was one Philip Mackay, a named police officer, and Philip was based again in Dornoch, but he would travel probably quite a distance. Yes, he would have to lodge people in the jail here, but he would possibly have to take them to Inverness as well, depending on the circumstances.

But Dornoch was Dornoch, and that was essentially his remit. Normally what would happen in counties would be that there would be a decision taken by the magistrates and by the sheriff that a police force was necessary, and there would be one set up to cover the whole

area, the whole county. Sutherland, being Sutherland, didn't do that. Basically, what did happen was, in 1844, three years after Mr Mackay came along, the residents of Helmsdale petitioned to have a police constable in Helmsdale too. So, the commissioners of supply, the forerunner of the police committee for the county, said, all right. So, and he was going to get £15 per annum. Latterly it went up quite considerably to £25. But when you consider Mr Mackay, Philip Mackay down near Dornoch was getting £50. Favouritism. So, yeah, we've got a sort of police force, but we've got two guys, one in Helmsdale, one in Dornoch, and they're called police. And they'll have a suit of clothes with a top hat and a swallowtail coat, something like that, so it would set them apart. Now, John Sutherland up in Helmsdale was also a sheriff officer. That means he enforced a lot of civil law things, like if there was going to be a warrant sale, or if there were documents to be served to do with non-payment of debt and that sort of thing. So it might be that he didn't get as much because he was perhaps only doing it part time because he had his other job as well. But we'll see about that.

Anyway, next thing, Sheriff Lumsden, the sheriff of the county, said, enough of this messing about, let's set up a force, a proper force for the whole county. And he put it quite well. I'm not going to try and quote too much, largely because my glasses are not working. It's James Stewart, yes. Right. Basically, they said, Mr Gunn of Meikle, who was a factor for the Duke of Sutherland, he appeared before the commissioners and he produced what must have been a most convincing argument because the commissioners accepted, quote, the necessity of appointing a local police officer to reside in Helmsdale. That was it. And John Sutherland got the job.

Then the sheriff came up with it. He wanted a properly organised police force. And the meeting thereafter took into their consideration a communication from Sheriff Lumsden on the subject of establishing a constabulary force in the county. And the chairman, having submitted to the meeting the draft of an answer which he conceived would embody the sentiments of the meeting, the same was approved of and he was requested to address Mr Lumsden about it. Which basically means, no. It doesn't say that, but that was it. Anyway, here we go, 1846, Golspie said, well, Helmsdale's got one. We want one. So, he got one. They got a guy from Lairg to come down and do it. Whether there was nobody in Golspie wanting the job or what, I'm not sure. But anyway, this guy from Lairg goes.

Now, Bonar Bridge! They wanted one. They got one. They only stayed a few weeks, but they got somebody else. So anyway, they're getting on. And 1847, Philip Mackay was reappointed and this time they called him superintendent. Probably because he was getting 50 quid a year and the rest were getting 25 or less. So, they make him in charge. So effectively, that means that he is responsible for the whole county. I'm sure he probably didn't venture very far afield though.

Now, John Sutherland that same year was dispensed with as too old and infirm. And he was given the statutory notice one day, which I think nowadays would be titled, here's your hat, where's your hurry? Off they went. And somebody else was appointed in Golspie. It appears, although the minutes of the meetings aren't always very clear, MacDonald, who had been in Golspie, had moved up to Helmsdale to replace John Sutherland. And funnily enough, John Sutherland, although he was too old and infirm, was still submitting accounts and invoices to the court for doing a lot of civil work. So he obviously wasn't that old and infirm, he must

have been getting through some amount of work. Various people, either they didn't like the job, or they didn't live long then. It was one reason or the other, they either left or they died.

And then 1852, George Batters was appointed in Helmsdale. And it would appear that MacDonald, who had started off in Golspie and ended up in Helmsdale, was back in Golspie. Maybe. I think so. So that basically meant that there was a man in Bonar, a man in Golspie, a man in Helmsdale, and the superintendent.

So that seemed to be going all right. Then coming over the horizon was the first Police Act of 1857, which would require every county and every town in Scotland to set up its own police force.

Or, in the case of towns or small counties, they could unite with a neighbouring jurisdiction and have a joint force to save money. And the government would pay 25% of the staff wages and uniform costs.

But there's a catch. The Act was also going to set up a new appointment called Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. And he was tasked and succeeded in going round every county and every town in Scotland every year. Bear in mind that there weren't very many railways, and the roads were pretty awful. If he found a force effective and efficient did the government shell out the cash. The government wasn't keen to shell out the cash, but they did, provided it was deemed to be his decision.

But in the meantime, Philip, you're in, you're out, you're out. We're not wanting you anymore. What? Yes, at the beginning of 1857 they decided he's to be dispensed with. And the PC in Golspie and PC MacDonald at Bonar. Now I wonder if that's the guy who used to be at Golspie and later at Helmsdale. Suddenly, they were to be dispensed with.
Unsatisfactory. Sadly, the minutes don't elaborate, which is a great pity, because it must have been really something that they did, or they didn't do, or they did badly, that caused them to be ousted. But anyway, that was it.

Mr Mackay would be finished at the end of 1857, that's when his contract expired. So he wasn't down the road immediately, because of being the superintendent, he obviously had to get notice, not the one day one, John Sutherland. So, am I finished yet? No, we're getting there. Only another 150 years to go. Sorry.

They give the police committee their due, sometimes they're not quite off the mark, but this time they immediately advertised for a replacement for Mr Mackay, a superintendent. And then at the end of April, they had their meeting and said, well, we have advertised, yes. We'll have a meeting next week and we'll pick somebody. The force could manage without a superintendent, two cops short. Anyway, they did appoint somebody. His name was Peter Ewan and he got the job in 1857 to be the superintendent.

This came out of the blue to me because the only documented history that existed until I started doing this research was a document that came out in 1969 from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. Supposedly it recorded everybody who'd been a chief of police in any force in Scotland. They missed out Ewan. And they had Philip Mackay as having been on the go in the 1840s or 50s, but they didn't know when he finished. Then another chap started in the 1860s, so they presumed that there was an overlap. There wasn't. The

only way that I came upon Mr Ewan was because somebody gave me, as people do, what my wife terms as junk on a good day. I won't tell you what she says on a bad day.

Somebody gave me this book, Rules and Regulations for the Guidance of the Sutherlandshire Constabulary. There's a number of these books on the go that were required by the 1857 Act. Every force had to produce one. In most cases, all the force did was buy a standard one and put their name on the front cover and get their chief to sign it, and that was it. But no, this one from Sutherlandshire, it was mostly all the same, but there was one or two interesting little bits added in before it was sent off for typing and printing. It was authorised and approved and created by Peter Ewan, who was the chief constable. Now, nobody's ever heard of Peter Ewan before, and I hadn't a clue who he was. Thankfully, through doing some research on Ambali, or the Gaelic village, however it's pronounced properly, online, I found a couple of newspaper reports indicating that Mr Ewan had been picked for the job and giving a very brief precis of his history. He had been in the Aberdeen city and county police. But that's as much as I knew.

What I recently did was I took a scan of some of the pages of this book, and I uploaded them to a photographic website called Flickr, which is where I am building an online police museum, and I mentioned about this Peter Ewan in the book, and it showed me the beats that were on the go in 1857, 1858. Out of the blue, I got an email from Canada, from a lady who was Peter Ewan's great-great granddaughter. There might be an extra, you never know. And she had done the famous Google search on grandad's name while researching his genealogy and linked to my website. So that was fascinating. He had obviously, when he'd left the Sutherland police, he'd gone to Canada. And she subsequently did some more digging herself over there, and I now have a fair bit of information about this Peter Ewan that nobody knew about before. It's quite amazing how the internet brings things together.

But anyway, I'm ahead of myself.

The police committee, when they saw the requirements of the Act, thought, okay, basically what we've got is fine, except we could maybe do with a supervisor. So, we'll have a chief constable with an upgraded wage, and we'll have a superintendent as the deputy chief constable and the only supervisor manager in the organisation. And then the bodies where they are currently scattered around, the ones on the west coast, probably because they're probably a bigger area, we'll give them a bit more money, and the ones on the east coast are at the top, they'll be on less, but anyway they're going to get more than they are just now. With that written down and transmitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland, they would at least I see that we are on the ball. Basically, it was a pre-emptive strike. They'll think, great, we've got it on hand, no problem.

Back came a letter saying, no, no. The bottom line is that chief constables must have a pay of, I think it was £200 per annum, and they have proposed £150 for whoever would get the job. Eventually, after a bit of humming and hawing, and levelling out the pay scales for the officers so that all constables got the same, they were given approval to go ahead.

But then, of course, along comes Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. They've got approval, they haven't got the money yet, but they've got to be an inspector. To be honest, he didn't have a great deal of problem with Sutherland.

There should have been police stations built that hadn't been yet, but it takes time. At least in Sutherland, there did exist a police force. On his way up here, he had popped into Cromarty Shire.

Cromarty Shire is a bit of the Black Isle, down the Cromarty End, and other bits and pieces of land scattered around the Highlands, which used to be part of the Earldom of Cromarty. And they supposedly had a police force, but he couldn't find it. The Cromarty Borough, the Borough of Cromarty, it was quite an important place then. They had a police force, and he met them. So, as it transpired, there were two police areas, and in it, there was one bubble. Now, not so good. That had the guy screaming and tearing his head out. Then he got up here. It must have been a bit of a revolution, but at least they could do with a bit of assistance, and they'll take a bit of sorting out. But they got on the right lines.

And he went to Wick. Wick, thankfully by then, had originally decided to have a force of their own, but they decided they would come in with the county. Thurso eventually did too. But, and there's always a but, Pulteney Town is an independent borough of Thurso. It was established as a new settlement by the British Fisheries Society and by Act of Parliament, and although Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary could recommend until he was blue in the face, neither him nor the Secretary of State for Scotland had the power to force Pulteney Town to merge their police force with Caithness. Their Act of Parliament gave them the right to carry on regardless, as they did, until 1900. One of the last wee forces that ever existed. And you're talking wee, you're talking three men.

I could go on. There is a whole story there. Anyone who has read Ian Sutherland or the Wick Society's 'Battle of the Orange', will be familiar with cops, drunken cops, Pulteney Town cops, drunken Pulteney Town cops, specials, drunken specials, all fighting with the fisher folk and all because a Laddie dropped an orange and somebody else picked it up.

And as in all the best police dramas, it went on from there. In Ross-shire, on the ground, on the mainland had three bobbies. They didn't have a police station, so what happens when they locked somebody up? Can't just take him to jail. The law of Scotland says that you arrest somebody, you must take them before the court the next lawful day. You can't take them to jail until a sheriff has ruled. They had to take them to their lodgings. *'Hello, Mrs MacTavish. That'll be two for breakfast in the morning. Me and that drunken git over there. What's that? New lodgings? Oh, are you moving? Oh, I am. Oh joy'.*

So, you can see, although Sutherland was interesting, it was by no means, shall we say, the quirkiest. I'm sure Colonel Kinloch, who was our magistrate's inspector, didn't have as many nightmares about this particular county as he did about several others. And when you think that's just one part of the county, yet you go round every town, every borough, every county, where some little villages, towns, boroughs, might decide to appoint their lamplighter, their scaffy, or their town crier or piper as a constable. Give them a blue jacket and hope that they would be marked as efficient so that they would get 25% of his wages back from the reports. I don't know how he managed without going nuts.

Anyway, Peter Ewan duly got the job in the new force when the act finally kicked in. So, you would have thought that would be him for a duration, but it wasn't. The superintendent, the

deputy chief, decided they would make it a sergeant's job instead and they would pay him 19 trillion a week to save money. It's quite funny because there was a pet annum figure that the superintendent and deputy was going to get and obviously nobody could figure out how many weeks there were in a year because it worked out that the sergeant was going to get more. And the superintendent was. But because one said per annum and one said per week, you get what you can afford, don't you? Anyway, so the new force, the new Sutherland Constabulary started on the 16th of March 1858, the same as every other police force in Scotland and the Bellringer and Portobello and the Piper and Peterhead, the main man in MacDuff or whatever. Shall we just say there was a lot of little forces didn't last very long.

Some did though. The chief constable's eight districts were Betty Hill, Rhiconich, Lochinver, Helmsdale, Brora, Golspie, Dornoch and Bonar. Really not much difference to what there was when I went there well over a hundred years later. The only thing was, although they had eight districts, that meant the chief constable was also expected to do all the policing in Dornoch. They had eight districts full stop. There was supposed to be a deputy, obviously to save money by not appointing him at 19 bob a week or whatever it was going to be. Eventually, the following year, a guy did come to Dornoch as it transpired.

I am well sure he was the appointed deputy chief constable, Sergeant Alexander McHardy. He had been in the police in Aberdeen for about two years and he was inclined to be second-in-command in Sutherland. Not only that, but I've seen his brief CV, and he lied about his age to get into the bobbies. That's terrible. But they were just starting it and there was no such thing as birth certificates in those days. So, there wasn't a problem.

Anyway, Mr McHardy transferred in from Aberdeenshire. This was a young lad, 21-year-old, and he was appointed number two for the whole of the county of Sutherland. So that would probably account for why the HMI reported that the force had increased by one. That would be the eight districts in police. In other words, McHardy would be responsible for doing Dornoch and the chief would have responsibility for the whole county.

And then Mr Ewan produced a rule book. Now the chief by this time, of course, was getting £200 a year, including £50 pounds for a horse. Things were looking all right and then Mr McHardy went off to Fife constabulary. No record of it up here, but it so happens that a friend of mine was doing some historical research in their home area around the Beauly part of Inverness-shire and what they did was every time they looked through a census and they found any mention of police, they would email me. And they emailed me that they found an alien, and this was a chap McHardy, described as a sergeant of police who was visiting the priest in Beauly and the only other occupant of the house was the priest's sister, his wife, the priest's sister.

Now as it transpired, this was Mr McHardy probably on his way down from Dornoch to Fife to see about getting the job and on the way back, having got the job, he obviously popped the question to the priest's sister and that became his missus. So it just shows you how pieces of historical information turn up in all the weirdest places.

We've got 20 minutes. I'll bring it very quickly to a halt. Now that I've started on McHardy, he's my life's work, I've got to tell you a wee bit more about him.

So off goes Mr McHardy. He was a sergeant in Fife for a matter of months. He was then promoted to inspector for a matter of months and the next thing he was in the headquarters where he was appointed superintendent and deputy chief constable. This is a guy who by this time is not even 27. Not only that, but the chief also died down there. So McHardy is acting chief constable until a new one's appointment. But you wouldn't think you'd see him that active again. But Mr Ewan, who got £50 for the keep of a horse, had also been hiring a gig to get around. Now whether it was to transport prisoners or what, I don't know because it's not like the Minnies or the Wild West where you sling a prisoner over the back of the horse and go back into town. But whatever it was, it wasn't that he was at it, but I think some of his expenses didn't go down well with the commissioners, who felt he's already being recompensed for this so why should he be claiming it again.

So, to cut a long story short, it was suggested to Mr Ewan that perhaps he might be better to jump before he was pushed, which he truly did. You probably see the writing on the wall. And who replaced him? Alexander McHardy came back up from Fife to be chief constable.

Now I'm going to cut it short at that point except to say that Alexander McHardy was an amazing man. Joined the police at 18. He was still in the police when he died aged 71 in 1911. He was chief of Sutherland Shire from 1866 to 1882 and from 1882 to 1911 he was the chief constable of the county of Inverness. He was taken on, I think, primarily to deal with all the land reform agitation that there was in the West Highlands. The force when he joined Inverness-shire had 44 men all ranks. He was given permission to hire another 50 in a year and he did it. They didn't all stay. He obviously had great fun clearing out those that were no use or were fond of the 'sauce'. Yes, some policemen do take a tipple. Not me. But McHardy left to go to Inverness in 1882.

He was replaced by a Roderick Maclean who was superintendent in Dingwall. Unfortunately, he died after only a few years. He in turn was replaced by Malcolm Macdonald from Inverness-shire, an inspector, got his job. He was well known and loved and particularly adored, known as 'Chiefie'. He died suddenly in 1906 and was replaced by Hugh Chisholm who was the superintendent at Inverness.

Mr Chisholm served for quite some considerable time. He retired in 1903, aged 70. He was replaced by Superintendent Douglas George Ross of the Edinburgh City Police. Good Scottish name that. He was born in Ramsgate in Kent where his dad had been a police sergeant. His dad was Sir Roderick Ross who was probably the most famous chief constable that Edinburgh City Police ever had. Sir Roderick Ross was born in a croft house in West Helmsdale. He holds the distinction of being the only man who ever had two sons serving as chief constables at the same time as he did. You've probably seen his face. He brought an amazing likeness, particularly with a goatee beard and everything, to Edward VII and in fact he had a legal hee-haw with people. It was proved beyond doubt that he was not an illegitimate son of royalty. Anyway, Douglas George Ross duly retired in 1962 and he was replaced.

There was a merger coming up. Ross-shire and Sutherland were going to be merging in 1963. Normally if a vacancy occurred for a chief in the interim, a short time like that, the Scottish office would say the deputy chief will act up until the merger and we will pick somebody for the new force. It didn't work that way because the chief and the deputy in Ross-shire were both about to have to pick somebody who would be in charge of the combined force. So, the

one that got it was a detective chief inspector in Renfrew and Bute called Kenneth Ross. Kenny was a lovely man. So, Kenny was the last chief of Sutherland before it merged with Ross-shire in 1963. I think we'll close that for just now.

I'm sorry for going on so long but as you probably gathered, I love my subject. Have you any questions other than when you're going to sit there and chat? You're just all so gobsmacked. Are you awake? Yeah.

Any questions?

I think Alexander McCarty was the first captain of the Dornoch Golf Club.

Correct. He was the man that wrote asking permission to use what's now the links. He, although it was the Countess of Sutherland who got the credit for it, may have had something to do with the royal appendage to the Dornoch Golf Club because McCarty was awarded in 1906 member of the Victorian Order third class by Edward VII. He and the two of them were very pallid about it. They didn't look at it. Well, they did look at it, they're weird. The great thing, McCarty was always a sportsman, but he was from Braemar, and he was into, you know, Highland Games type of sports. But of course, during his time down in Fife, it so happened the Cooper Golf Club had just been set up just before he went there. So that's where he got it from. And not only that, but McCarty did also get to Inverness, and he was instrumental in setting up Inverness Golf Club as well. And in fact his gravestone is in Inverness, Tom Healy Cemetery, I thought it was crossed cannons, I thought it was shaky sticks to begin with until I did some research and it's actually crossed golf sticks on his very fancy gravestone along with a Celtic design, which gave me a shock because he died in 1911, which is very, very similar to the design that Northern Constabulary used to have on their car. I presume that's just coincidence. I don't think anybody went down there and had a look at his gravestone before they invented it.

But when I was at school here in 1942, Roderick Ross stayed up on top of Bishopfield Hill, he was very high up on the piece. It's amazing the information that flies about. I mean the internet is a much-maligned thing, but there is a lot of information. It's amazing the number of former officers who have contacted me. Most of the chief constables are high up on ranks because that's who I've got most information on, of the information that's survived.

But it's amazing to find out that Peter Ewing, who I'd never heard of until fairly recently, to get an obituary from him, which was published in Canada. He went to start a business, but as soon as he got there, the police there obviously heard about him and offered him a job as a detective in CID. And then he ended up being deputy governor of the big jail in Toronto until he died.

It's amazing the information. Any other questions?

Dave, thank you very much indeed.

It's most apt to give you a copy of our latest publication, 'A Policeman's Lot', which amongst other things does have a photograph in it of our great Alexander McCarty, who we've just been talking about. So, thank you very much indeed for coming up here and talking to us and helping us to launch this book.