



SOUTH WALES POLICE
MUSEUM

Appointment of the
First Chief Constable:
Captain Napier



The History of Policing in Wales

Appointment of the First Chief Constable: Captain Napier

A new constabulary needs a new Chief Constable, so when the Glamorgan Constabulary was established in 1841, one of the first priorities was to recruit a leader.

Advertising for the first Chief Constable

Advertisements in the press were short and precise, and requested that:

“ any person desirous of the appointment, to send sealed testimonials of his qualifications to the Clerk of the Peace at Cardiff on or before Friday 23 July 1841. ”

The adverts did not mention any qualifications, even though the rules of recruitment and qualification requirements set by the Secretary of State were passed to the Clerk of the Peace from the Home Office.

The Home Secretary would have undoubtedly expected these rules to be adhered to, so the oversight may have been a deliberate move by magistrates.

Rather than limit the pool of applicants, the magistrates may have preferred to examine the qualifications from a wider range of people before committing themselves to a condition of appointment they might not have agreed with, such as a maximum age.



Captain Napier

The Guardian newspaper did however supply the missing information in a paragraph commenting on the advertisement:

“For the guidance of those gentlemen who may think proper to answer the advertisement for a Chief Constable...we subjoin the rules laid down by the Secretary of State as to his qualifications. His age must not exceed 45 years, he must be certified by a medical practitioner to be in good health and of sound constitution, and to perform the duties of his office. He must not have been a bankrupt, nor have taken the benefit of the Insolvents Act, and

he must be recommended as a person of general character and conduct.”

The preliminary committee meeting was held privately at the Pyle Inn, Pyle towards the end of July.

The Pyle Inn was built during the latter half of the 18th century and was used for occasional Quarter Session meetings. The building was demolished in 1960.

Although the July meeting was private, the Guardian got the scoop.

The paper announced: **“there were about 20 applicants, the great majority of whom produced testimonials of the highest description”, and that “the Committee decided unanimously on recommending Captain Charles Napier, of the Rifle Brigade, for the choice of the magistrates at the ensuing Quarter Sessions.”**

A Chief is Chosen

Captain Charles Frederick George Napier’s appointment was confirmed at Quarter Sessions in the Pyle Inn, Pyle on 11th August 1841.

Evidence shows that Captain Napier started service on Friday 13th August. His salary for the quarter ended 30th September and is recorded as £60 8s 8d. At the rate of £450 per annum (£300 salary plus £150 for his horse and other expenses) this covered a period of 49 days.

Captain Napier’s first report to the magistrates was dated 30th August 1841.

By this time, he had already toured the county on horseback to suggest:

“ the required arrangements prior to the adoption of the new system of Police Force ”

Chief Constable Napier Takes Control

Following his appointment, Captain Napier worked closely with the Marquis of Bute to plan the force area and resources of the new constabulary.

They divided the county into four districts:

- **Merthyr**, which included Merthyr; Dowlais; Rhymney; Troedyrhiw and the upper part of the Aberdare Valley from Mountain Ash to Hirwaun
- **Newbridge**, which included the Rhymney Valley; the Taff Vale below Mountain Ash and Troedyrhiw; the Rhondda Valleys and Llantrisant
- **Cowbridge and Ogmore**, which included the Vale of Glamorgan from Penarth to Taibach and the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi Valleys



Pyle Inn, Pyle

■ **Swansea**, which included the west of the county from the Avon to Carmarthenshire and Breconshire borders

Four Superintendents with police experience were recruited, together with 34 suitable men to serve as Constables.

Napier looked to his military past for a rank structure. He decided to divide his constables into three classes. The first class would be known as Sergeants whilst the rest would be known as First Class Constables and Second Class Constables.

For the first month of their new careers, the Sergeants and Constables lived in the Bridgend workhouse. In 1841, the new workhouse was only three years old and occupied by just two paupers.



Bridgend Workhouse 1841

It offered Napier an ideal location to teach the officers their new duties.

The Chief Constable issued his first General Order on 23rd October 1841:

“All orders and regulations of the Union Workhouse to be strictly adhered to, particularly with regard to tobacco smoking which cannot be permitted within the walls of the Union grounds.

“The rooms to be kept thoroughly clean, beds rolled neatly and personal clothing folded.

“The Sergeant on duty will be responsible for the cleanliness of the rooms, regularity at meal times, the respectable conduct of the constables, as well as due observance by them of all rules and regulations.

“He will cause all lights to be put out, and the men in bed, by 10.00pm, reporting such or any irregularities.”

Captain Napier and Superintendent Lewis

Whilst the Sergeants and Constables occupied a wing of the Bridgend Workhouse, the four Superintendents and their horses were accommodated by Captain Napier at his house in Brynteg, on the Ewenny side of town.

Napier and one of the Superintendents disliked each other.

Superintendent Lewis had been in charge of a small trial force in Glamorgan for about 20 months before Captain Napier arrived on the scene.

The animosity between the men may have stemmed from Lewis's reluctance to play a subordinate role.

Records suggest that Lewis was a flamboyant and conceited person. His uniform was of the finest quality, liberally decorated with silver braid. This was topped with a blue, red and gold forage cap.

The other Superintendents were issued with a basic uniform and didn't have forage caps. Their clothes had no frills or embroidery except for the silver crown on the collar.

Lewis requested that Superintendents be allowed to purchase forage caps for their own use, but Napier insisted instead that this would only be allowed if the cap was as plain as possible.

Napier also insisted that Lewis move from Llantrisant to Pontypridd, because the Pontypridd area was better suited for District Headquarters.

The Men Begin their Duties

Chief Constable Captain Napier originally estimated that officer training would take three weeks, but this proved to be optimistic.

He had to apply to extend the stay at the workhouse wing twice, and the men weren't fully equipped and sent to their stations until Tuesday 23rd November 1841.

Whilst Superintendent Lewis served in Pontypridd in Newbridge, Superintendent Edward J Davies of the Lancashire Police was posted in Merthyr.

Superintendent Edward Leveson-Gower, a retired lieutenant of the Rifle Brigade, was posted in Bridgend, and Captain Henry J Peake was posted as the Superintendent to serve in Neath.

Leveson-Gower left after 2 months' service and was replaced by Edmund Corr, from the Metropolitan Police.

Merthyr Station was the only police station in the force to house more than one officer.

The station was a large house that Superintendent Davies rented, and it was known as 'Station House'.

In the other areas of the county, officers had to find their own accommodation in their patrol area, seeking more suitable premises as they became available.

The other officers were deployed as follows:

Merthyr

Merthyr - One Sergeant and seven Constables

Dowlais - One Sergeant and two Constables

Aberdare – One Sergeant

Hirwaun and Rhymney – One Constable

Swansea

Neath Abbey – One Sergeant

Loughor – One Sergeant

Aberpergwm - One Constable

Pontardawe - One Constable

Aberavon - One Constable

Ystalyfera - One Constable

Newbridge

Newbridge - One Sergeant

Caerphilly – One Sergeant

Treforest - One Constable

Llantrisant - One Constable

Llandaff - One Constable

Nantgarw - One Constable

Nelson - One Constable

Ogmore

Bridgend – One Sergeant

Llantwit Major – One Sergeant

Cowbridge – One Sergeant

Cornelly - One Constable

St Nicholas - One Constable

Maesteg - One Constable

Captain Napier – The Private Man

Charles Frederick Napier was born in Ceylon in 1805, the first child of Major Charles Frederick Napier and Catherine Carrington.

His mother Catherine was the sister of Sir Edward Carrington, the Chief Justice of Ceylon.

Charles joined the Woolwich Royal Military Academy as a cadet. He couldn't afford a commission to the Royal Artillery, so joined the Rifle Brigade in 1825 at Dover Castle.

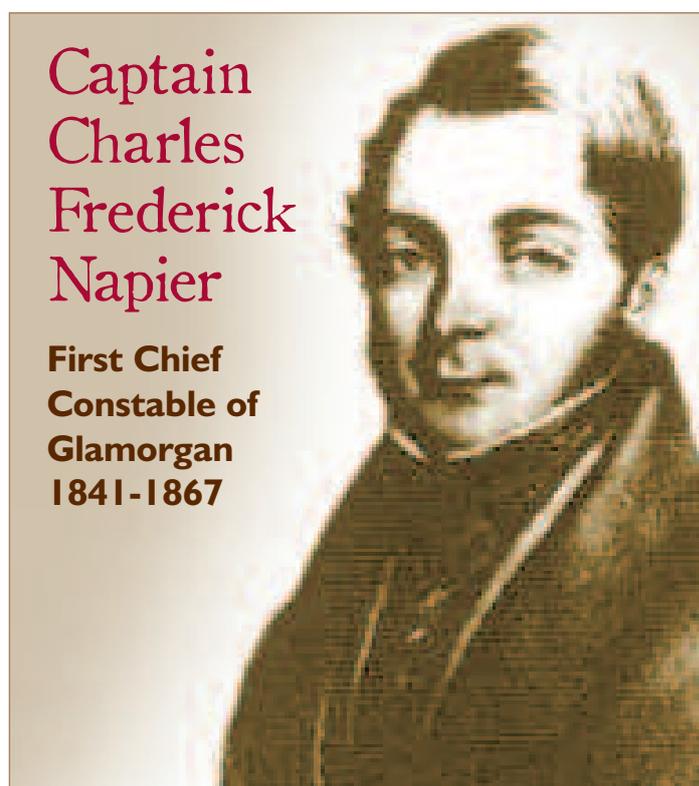
He married Emily Boughey Pinto Tomkinson on 7th December 1831.

In August 1834, Charles was promoted to Captain.

By the time he was appointed Chief Constable in August 1841, he was in charge of the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade at Usk and Monmouth.

Napier appears to have been very friendly with the Morgan family of Ruperra, who were connected with the family of Lord Tredegar. He also appeared friendly with the Bosanquet family, one of whom later became the Chief Constable of Monmouth.

These connections may have swayed the success of his application to become Chief Constable.



A rival to the position pointed out that he was, essentially, a total stranger to the county.

However, there is no doubt that Napier was an excellent appointment.

The new Chief Constable took up residence in Brynteg; now the Comprehensive School on Ewenny Road, Bridgend. Records show that he moved to the Vicarage on Newcastle Hill before going to 'Sarn Fawr', a spacious house in the north of Bridgend.

Sarn Fawr House was Chief Constable Napier's main residence during his leadership.

The house was later demolished to make way for a housing estate at Sarn near Aberkenfig.



Sarn Fawr

Social Ambitions

Napier was interested in public affairs and became a member of the Board of Health for Bridgend. As such, he would have played a key role in the official enquiry about the public health and sanitary arrangements of the town.

He was also a courageous man, most notably during the Rebecca Riots of 1843.

On 25th November 1843, the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian reported how Captain Napier risked a serious injury by stopping a runaway horse that was saddled to a small wagon.

Although Napier was held in high regard by the county magistrates, he was never accepted by the gentry as one of their 'set'.

He sought social recognition to benefit his wife, son and daughter; particular his son because his wife wanted to place him in the church.

Napier wrote a letter to his aunt in 1845, describing Wales as a country where one is valued and rated according to one's connections. He asked her to tell him what branch of Napier his father belonged to, and wondered if he was related to Lord Elgin.

In the letter, an extract dated 6th October 1845 shows his frustration:

"I am sure, my dear Aunt will forgive my untiring anxiety on these points, and for the sake of my son's prospects, as it can prove otherwise than an annoyance and a stumbling block to a man, bearing our name especially, where constant enquiries are made as to our connection, to be perfectly silent and unable to reply. I know myself the vexation this has been to me, often times, and I could really wish to be enabled to hold out a better prospect to my son, who although I have no money to give will, I trust, ever maintain his name."

Napier's aunt traced connections to a few prominent Scottish families, including the Duke of Hamilton. However, there is nothing to suggest that these connections helped the son, who went on to join the army and serve in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, He was seriously injured in the Crimea though, and sadly, Lieutenant James Napier died in 1863, just 30-years-old.

In 1856, Charles's daughter Emily Paulina married William Howe, a labourer and ex-soldier from Coity. Their marriage was frowned upon due to Howe's reputation as a waster.

When Napier's wife died in 1855, his social ambitions declined. Personally, he wasn't interested in social advancement because his life was dominated by work.

He was bored with army life and relished his position as Chief Constable.

The Death of Chief Constable Captain Napier

In January 1867, Captain Napier suddenly died of tuberculosis. He was 62-years-old.

His condition was apparently the result of Napier catching a cold whilst waiting for a train at Cardiff Station. He had attended a police finance committee meeting earlier that day.

His funeral was held on Wednesday 16th January 1867 and was largely attended by family and people connected to the Glamorgan Constabulary.

The cortege leaving Sarn Fawr House consisted of:

- 1st** Carriage - Mr Morgan, Cabinet Maker and Mr Evans, Draper
- 2nd** a large body of the force under Inspector Adams
- 3rd** the hearse
- 4th** a carriage containing the Venerable Archdeacon Lynch Blossie, Reverend D Evans and Dr Pritchard
- 5th** a carriage containing Dr Allen, T T Lewis, Esq, and M George Bird
- 6th** a carriage containing Superintendents Sadler, Wrenn, Thomas, and Thomas
- 7th** a carriage containing Mr and Mrs Howe, daughter and son-in-law

A few other carriages containing members of the household followed behind, reaching Newcastle Church in Bridgend just after 1pm.



Napier's grave can still be seen at the church today. It is made of flat stone and features a foliated sword.

His wife and son are buried with him.

Napier's daughter, Emily Paulina Howe, died in 1890 at the age of 59 after a short illness.

Captain Napier's death saw the end of an era.

In the 25 years of his command, the Glamorgan Constabulary grew into a force of almost 200 officers with a modern uniform.

A number of police stations were also built in Bridgend, Merthyr, Pontypridd, Neath, Aberdare, Maesteg, Caerphilly, Llantwit Major, Cwmgwrach, St. Nicholas, Mountain Ash, Dowlais, Briton Ferry, Llandaff, Pontardawe and Penarth.

The Grave of Chief Constable
Captain Charles Napier at
Newcastle Church, Bridgend

Notes

SOUTH WALES POLICE



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