

Police Staff Records

Background

The Gloucestershire Constabulary was formed in 1839. It was the second county police force formed in England. Before this, each parish employed constables to help keep the peace and arrest criminals. Cheltenham had started its own police force in 1831, but this joined the county force in 1839. Gloucester had its own police force from 1836 to 1859. Tewkesbury also had a separate force from 1840 to 1854.

What records are there and what information will they contain?

The **Alphabetical Register of rural constabulary** (reference: **Q/Y/1/1***) lists all men who joined the Gloucestershire Police between 1839-1919. It includes:

- Warrant number
- Date of joining
- Name, age and height of man
- Previous occupation
- The parish and county the man came from – not necessarily their place of birth
- The name of the person who recommended them
- The ranks they achieved and the dates they were promoted
- Their character e.g. good, indifferent, bad
- Cause and date of removal
- Marital status – whether single or married

*A transcript of the entries in this document is available on the online catalogue.

Police Personnel Files 1860s-1969 (Reference: Q/Y/1/6)

These include applications to join, testimonials and records of service. The files are sorted by surname. The files are not complete. There are no files for surnames beginning with letters O to Q. Files are closed for 100 years from the last entry. We hold a name index of these files and they can be searched or by name on our online catalogue.

Candidate Joining Books 1839-1963 (Reference: Q/Y/1/3)

These give the candidate's name, address, trade, age, measurements, level of education, marital status, medical notes, date of application and date of commencement of duties. Registers Q/Y/1/3/1, 2 and 6 only contain names and date of joining. They are not indexed by name.

Registers of variation of constabulary force 1888-1955 (Reference: Q/Y/1/2)

These registers give monthly lists of officers joining and leaving the force, including resignations, promotions, pensions and dismissals. The division at which a leaver was stationed is given along with the reason for leaving. They are not indexed by name.

Register of additional constables 1890-1916 (Q/Y/1/4)

This is a list of temporary constables. The register gives their name, rank, name of their employer, height, hair and eye colour and the date of starting and finishing.

Registers of pensioners and gratuities received 1850-1962 (Q/Y/1/14)

Gives the name, rank and date of joining of the police officer. The amount of money paid into the pension fund is also noted.

Other Records

There are lots more police records which may be useful in your search. These include:

- Constabulary default, commendation and disciplinary books 1839-1978 (**Q/Y/1/10**). See catalogue for full list of references.
- Superintendents' diaries 1840-1900 (**Q/Y/2/3**). See catalogue for full list of references.
- Police station diaries 1840-1974 (**Q/Y/2/4**). See catalogue for full list of references.
- Station offence books 1874-1968 (**Q/Y/4/2**).
- Some photographs of individuals and groups of police officers are also held (**Q/Y/6**).

How to Find the Records

The official records of the Gloucestershire Constabulary are held under the reference **Q/Y**. To view a list of records in this collection please use our online catalogue, which can be found on our website at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives. Type the references given above into the search box as your search term. You can also try typing in the surname as the personnel files are indexed.

To view these records, you will need to visit us in person. Some records relating to personnel are closed for 100 years. If you are looking for information about a person who is deceased or yourself, please email us at archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

For more guidance on how to use our online catalogue please see the Help page and FAQs. Or you can watch our YouTube tutorial.

Further Reading

Gloucestershire Archives holds several books and pamphlets on the history of the Gloucestershire Constabulary. "*History of the Gloucestershire Constabulary, 1839-1985*" by Harry Thomas (Ref: GAL/E1) is a good overview of the force's history.

For more information about the Gloucestershire Constabulary please contact the Police Archive Volunteers at GloucestershireConstabulary.ArchiveGroup@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk

They should be able to offer advice and information. They also look after a collection of non-official records (e.g. photos, memoirs). You can see key items from their collection on their website at: <http://gloucestershirepolicearchives.org.uk/>

[Gloucestershire Family History Society](#) also have information which can help you search for police ancestors.