



In the 1980s, the brash, bold years of Thatcherism, the Metropolitan Police in London launched an advertising campaign in which it proudly declared: "We're not just the oldest police service in the world – we're the most modern." When news of the Met's triumphant boast reached the nicotine-stained offices of Strathclyde Police there was considerable consternation. A complaint was made to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) pointing out that Glasgow Police was formed 29 years earlier in 1800. The complaint was upheld and the ASA ordered the Met never to repeat the advert. As John Carnahan, a retired detective says with considerable pride in The Force, a new documentary series which begins tomorrow night: "This is where policing started; it wasn't the Met, it was here."

Scotland has led the world with the first official police force, but also the first police box and police radio, right down to the chequered police cap, now recognised around the globe. Yet the antecedents of today's modern police force goes much further back. This year marks the 400th anniversary of a fascinating act from the Scottish parliament. In 1617 King James I ordered an act entitled: "Regarding the justices for keeping of the King's majesty's peace and their constables", which insisted upon the creation of two "constables" in every parish. The act listed the "constables" powers as: "a constable may apprehend any suspect man who for the most part sleeps all day and walks in the night." It added: "Constables shall stay and arrest all vagabonds" and stated: "Any constable having apprehended a person guilty and culpable of murder... shall send him to prison."

In the 17th century the early constables had little choice but to take on the role or face a fine or imprisonment; they later morphed into "watchmen" when they were issued with two weapons and each night told to keep guard until dawn. These press-ganged "volunteers" were eventually replaced by a professional, if poorly paid police force by the Glasgow

# LIFE AT THE SHARP END OF THE THIN BLUE LINE

Scotland led the way as the oldest police force in the world. Its female officers have come a long way too, writes *Stephen McGinty*

Police Act of 1800 which consisted of a force of three sergeants, nine day officers and 68 watchmen all under the command of a "master of police". It was during the 19th century that the nation's police evolved into what we would recognise today. The first detective officer was appointed in 1819 principally to maintain criminal records, but it was not until 1862 that Glasgow's detective branch truly came of age when it cracked the case of the murder of Jessie McPherson, a servant who worked at 17 Sandyford Place. By diligently following the trail of evidence, detectives concluded the murderer was her best friend, Jessie McLachlan.

Fans of Peaky Blinders, the BBC drama, would be familiar with the levels of violence accruing in Glasgow by the 1920s and 1930s. On May 4, 1921, the city's police lost a detective superintendent Robert Johnstone who was shot dead by an IRA gang during an unsuccessful attempt to free their leader from a police van. Gang violence in the city was also on the rise and prompted both new tactics and personnel. In 1931 Percy Sillitoe, a veteran "gangbuster" from Sheffield and a future head of MI5 took over Glasgow police force and instigated a brutal new regime. He came to be known as "the Hammer of the Glasgow gangs" and insisted that his police force was "the biggest gang in the world". Yet Sillitoe also transformed the city's police by introducing a modern fingerprint lab and the chequered band around police hats, now used around the world, but then called the "Sillitoe Tartan".

Today Police Scotland takes pride in its LGBTI officers, but one only has to flick through The Short Arm of the Law, the autobiography of Edinburgh's chief constable William Merrilees, to be reminded of the dark days when homosexuality was a criminal offence. Published in 1966, Merrilees took his title from the fact that he was 4in shorter than police requirements but secured a place through sheer force of personality. As an officer Merrilees targeted the homosexual community and describes how he



PC Diane Sorrell, top, on patrol in Peebles; the legendary 'Big Rachel' Hamilton, above

would hide in men's bedrooms to observe deviant sexual behaviour. It was his mission to "cleanse Edinburgh from the stain of having one of the most vice-ridden underworlds of any city" by driving out "rampant homosexuality". Yet Merrilees was beloved by the public who largely supported the policies of the time and in retirement he was rewarded with an appearance on This is Your Life.

The female police officer has had to endure their own right of passage. The earliest WPC was "Big Rachel" Hamilton, a formidable forewoman navy, who was sworn in as a special constable during the Partick riots of 1875. An attack on Irish nationalists by political opponents led to three days of violence on the streets and her reputation and cool head helped to eventually quell the troubles. The new documentary series also has powerful testimony from the post-war generation of WPCs who had to endure a tide of sexism from their male colleagues. Incredibly, one male police officer even talks of a practice whereby female officers were stamped on their bare bottom as an initiation to their new police station.

When Nanette Pollock rose to the rank of detective chief inspector she was asked who she was sleeping with as clearly in the 1980s the average male detective considered it inconceivable that a woman could achieve promotion through sheer tenacity and ability. Yet Pollock introduced institutional changes for the protection of prostitutes, assaults on whom were at the time routinely ignored. To Pollock it was simple: everyone counted or no one counted.

Police Scotland has endured its share of controversy but by hearing from the men and women, both serving and retired, at the front of the thin blue line viewers are reminded of their principle purpose. As one officer said: "You do put yourself on the line. You run into things when other people are running out."

*Stephen McGinty is the development producer of The Force: The Story of Scotland's Police, broadcast on BBC One on Monday at 9pm*

“This is where policing started; it wasn't the Met, it was here”

## L'ESCARGOT CHEF HELPS THE KIDS GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE SNAILS

A scheme to encourage healthy eating in youngsters is playing out in a Scottish stately home, writes *Julia Horton*

In a former laundry room at a historic stately home, amid the colourful clutter of decades of family life, Fred Berkmillier is serving an unusual lunch party. The award-winning French chef has just ladled out steaming bowls of cullen skink to a dozen guests, including the lady of the house, Mary Fawdry – who is a big fan of his Edinburgh restaurants, L'escargot Bleu and L'escargot Blanc. Newton House, just outside Dalkeith, is exactly the kind of country mansion where renowned chefs such as Berkmillier might provide exclusive fine dining

experiences for wealthy owners and their friends or business contacts. The most important people gathered around the large wooden table today, however, are six teenagers from Dalkeith High whose slightly incongruous appearance is accentuated by their school uniforms. They are here thanks to a new social enterprise project established by Berkmillier, Fawdry and environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful in a bid to ensure the next generation truly embodies the Scottish government's aim of becoming a Good Food

Nation. Its aim is to give today's teens from deprived communities the knowledge, skills and appreciation of healthy food to help themselves, from planting and picking fruit and vegetables to cooking and eating them.

It was inspired by the thriving walled garden just outside the door, which until recently had become an acre of "jungle" that retired art framer Fawdry, now in her seventies, could no longer manage.

Earlier, standing among the carrots and leeks which he is helping pupils to pick for lunch, Berkmillier freely admits that despite years honing his culinary expertise he too knew nothing about gardening before Fawdry offered him the use of her garden earlier this year.

Initially the idea was for him to grow produce for his restaurants, until they realised that they could do much more.

For while the world of fine dining and walled gardens seems far removed from the challenges of teenage life, Berkmillier relates to today's pupils as he vividly recalls his own formative years in France's Loire Valley.

He says: "I was a bad boy at school and my parents did not know what to do with me, so at 14 they sent me to a restaurant about 40 miles away on a kind of apprentice scheme.

"I was away from my comfort zone and the chef was a bully.

"I remember walking behind him gathering up carrots and green beans [as they fell from a wheelbarrow en route to the restaurant after being picked], and if you'd asked me then if I wanted my own garden I'd probably have told you off.

"But the chef was also a slow food man, and he always said to me, 'Whatever I'm teaching you, you will pass on'."

Now aged 47, with children of his own, Berkmillier is doing just that, but with humour, teasing one 14-year-old who refuses to eat the soup but asks what pudding is by replying instantly: "It's fish!"

Explaining the importance of dining together, Berkmillier adds: "Everyone is out of their comfort zone here too, but in a homely country kitchen. We have sat here for an hour and a half without

anyone wanting to leave the table.

"Food is not just about filling the engine, it's about socialising and communicating, and dealing with family issues. If you take away the table, what's left?"

As the pupils chat, a few plates remain untouched, but most at least try the soup despite their reservations.

Adam Ramage, 14, was among the doubters, but he then requests seconds, declaring that he's changed his mind and asking Berkmillier: "How did you get the carrots like this? When I cook them they are soft."

Berkmillier reminds him that the vegetables are fresh from the ground, "as you just picked them", and they are best when not cooked too long.

Ramage, who likes baking cakes, is only a partial convert, and cheerfully maintains that fish suppers from his local Italian chippy are still "better".

Leeann McLachlan, also 14, loves cooking, and regularly makes dinner for her family, including spaghetti bolognese with vegetables from the local Saturday market.

But the reactions she says



Berkmillier is helping schoolchildren get back to basics

she gets from her friends help explain the obstinately consistent high levels of obesity among children.

"My friends like eating but they don't like cooking. They like McDonald's. They like eating what I cook, but only if I don't tell them it's healthy."

Mud soon flies as principal teacher in sustainability, Bill Gray, demonstrates how to dig up a lettuce, shaking it "like a terrier with a rat" to remove the earth. One boy admits the vegetables look "different" when they are in the ground, highlighting the lack of familiarity that is another key issue in combating obesity.

Poverty is another. Gray says: "Food banks are a big problem across Scotland. Our aim is to empower the community. We want pupils to be able to teach the public to grow and cook healthy food."

Dalkeith is among three schools participating in the project which Keep Scotland Beautiful believes is "perfect".

Fawdry says: "I did not envisage schools coming at all at first, but this is even better than I'd hoped because now we have the social aspect too."