This paper profiles the Queensland Police Force at the turn of the twentieth century, and highlights recruitment and training, conditions, remuneration, duties, administrative structures and the influence of Commissioner Parry-Okeden. The life of a Queensland policeman was highly controlled, such that the occupation rarely attracted the upper strata of society, the wealthy, highly educated or faint-hearted. Yet an analysis of police duties shows them to be also social workers, psychologists, carpenters, painters, undertakers and health workers. The Force was neither autonomous nor a pace-setter, but drew its strengths and weaknesses from the people it served. Given the closeness between the police and the community at the turn of the century, it was difficult for the public not to get to know their local policeman, even if they were law abiding citizens. He encroached on their lives in many ways: patrolling on beat duty, collecting statistics from their farms, or checking electoral rolls. His obvious presence and standing in the community was open to scrutiny from all levels of society. This approach worked satisfactorily when Queensland was predominantly a collection of small rural communities and the concept of the ‘village cop’ was alive and well.

Recruitment was centralised in Brisbane, with all potential recruits being interviewed by the...
Commissioner at his office in George Street (the office was moved after 1901 to the Church Institute, on the corner of Elizabeth and George Streets). Training took place at the Police Depot in Petrie Terrace (Fig. 1). This was despite complaints from country hopefuls of their inability to travel to Brisbane.8 The men were accommodated in barracks, dormitory style.

The Commissioners paid particular attention to the training of recruits, with no man being sworn in until he had completed the three months of drill and instruction. The drop out rate was fairly high. In 1901, of the seventy-eight recruits taken on during the year, fourteen resigned and five were discharged.9 No more than thirty could be properly accommodated at any one time, which caused a problem for in-coming Commissioner Cahill in 1905 when he increased the number of recruits to 86.10

A well-equipped gymnasium was provided at the Depot and the Police Rifle Club provided useful recreation. Men were encouraged to join Athletics Clubs. But it was drill, held in the open parade ground up to three times a day, which provided the most exercise.11 Indeed, the stress of shouting commands at the recruits contributed to health problems of at least two of the instructors.12 In the absence of written examinations, the recruits were asked verbal questions while on parade.13 For those selected for mounted duty, training also included instruction in horse riding and care of horses.

Uniforms were part of the tools of trade, even more so since they had to be worn both on and off duty. Commissioner Parry-Okeden changed the uniform in 1896 with the introduction of a tunic to be worn in towns and a khaki uniform for country use. White helmets were worn during the day and caps at night. Mounted men wore Bedford breeches, black Napoleon boots and leggings. Chevrons were worn on sleeves to denote rank.14 A light cavalry sword was part of the dress uniform although it was not worn in the field. Police were able to display their military and police medals on their uniforms. The khaki uniform proved very popular and when the men wanted to wear khaki in Brisbane in the summer, Parry-Okeden disallowed this saying that the 'serge uniform looked better'.15 He also had the excuse that in khaki, police could not be distinguished from the Defence Force.16

William Edward Parry-Okeden was Police Commissioner between 1895 and 1905. After education at Grammar Schools in Melbourne, he was articled to a solicitor. In 1870, he was appointed to Queensland as an Inspector of Border Patrol where he engaged in customs duties and at times police work. He was Police Magistrate and Land Commissioner at Charleville and Gayndah, and Gold Warden at the

FIG. 1. Drill instruction, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane, 1902. The old gaol is in the background. (Queensland Police Museum, neg. no. PM874)
latter. Appointed Colonial Under Secretary in 1889, six years later he became Police Commissioner.17

In late 1896 Parry-Okeden visited north Queensland to inquire into the efficiency of the Native Police and their relations with Aboriginal people. He secured the appointment of Dr Walter Roth as a Protector of Aborigines and his suggestions contributed to the Aborigines Protection Act of 1897. Yet despite his accomplishments and past experience as a police magistrate, Parry-Okeden was condemned for trusting ‘too much to the representations of his officers’.18 His broad intelligence and varied experience in the colony was an advantage however, and he largely escaped the wrath of the Commissioners of the 1899 Royal Commission into the Police Force.19

Parry-Okeden was a sociable man and it was during his time that the Police Band was encouraged and social trips were taken by police members and their families on either the government steamer, the Lucinda, to Moreton Bay, or by railway to places such as Cleveland.20 He was particularly gifted when it came to organising official visits. In 1896, he arranged a most imposing procession through the streets of Brisbane for the arrival of Lord Lamington as Governor of Queensland. This was followed by a series of historic events which included the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee (1897), the despatch of the first troops to the South African War (1899); the inauguration of the Commonwealth and the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, both in 1901.

As to the structure of the Force, there were other branches besides the mounted and foot police. The Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB), the Water Police and the Native Police were sections of the Force that were often treated quite separately. Known as the Detective Force until 1895, the CIB was established to detect rather then prevent crime. The men received no special training. It was rather a case of those showing potential in this area being taken on.

The transfer of the Water Police to the general police did not occur until 1893. They were actually river police, having the facilities to patrol only the Brisbane River but often called upon to patrol Moreton Bay. Inspector Urquhart criticised their facilities during the 1899 Royal Commission: ‘They paddle about in a little boat with two oars; but I really do not think they are of much use. They should have a steam launch’.21 Not until 1907 was the timber launch, Patrol, purchased for use by the Police Department.22 After repeated requests, a motor launch was finally provided at Townsville in 1910 for rescue.
work, the policing of the federal Immigration Restriction Acts and the detection of the illegal trade of opium.23

The phasing in of Trackers occurred very slowly, with the Native Police being finally disbanded by the early 1900s. The Native Police had been an expedience devised by Europeans to exert power and control over Aboriginal people in the absence of a formal declaration of war. To this end the native force was successful, but by the late nineteenth century its practices and philosophy were being questioned. By then, the need to control Aborigines had been supplanted by a concern for protecting them from starvation, exploitation by whites and opium-related problems. The full implementation of the protection policy was instituted with legislation in 1897.

Native Police and Tracker numbers peaked in 1899 with 135, but decreased greatly after 1902 when the Native Police were gradually disbanded.24 Some Native Police became Trackers, their most valuable duty being in tracking lost people, cattle thieves and criminals. They also assisted with the horses at police stations, often a very time-consuming task because of the absence of fences. They were often in charge of a station during an officer’s absence and the Trackers’ wives provided valuable unpaid domestic help. The expertise of Queensland Trackers was known both interstate and internationally. At least one Tracker was sent to South Africa during the Boer War and Trackers were sent to Victoria in the search for the Kelly gang. Six were detailed for service in New South Wales to search for brothers Jim and Joe Governor in 1900.25

The Tracker was guide, philosopher and friend to any policeman who made an attempt to understand him and treat him fairly and, on more than one occasion, Trackers were responsible for saving a policeman’s life. Queensland’s most celebrated and longest-serving Tracker was Sam Johnson, who served in excess of twenty years (Fig. 2). His evidence in the trial of the notorious criminals, the Kenniff brothers, was instrumental in convicting them for the murder in 1902 of Constable George Doyle and Albert Dahlke, as Anthony Morris records in this issue. Threatened for years with retaliation by Kenniff supporters, Johnson was the only Tracker allowed to go on patrol armed with a revolver.26

After swearing in, policemen were sent to country areas. They were then promoted through the ranks, at the same time being moved around
the state. Each man knew that he was almost certainly going to be promoted to senior rank at some future date if he stayed. There was a major problem within such a promotional structure, however, because of the outside influence on promotions from politicians, influential business men, senior public servants and, to a lesser degree, the public. The Police Force, however, was not alone in this. It persisted in all areas of the Public Service. Promotion by merit and seniority with a system of competitive examinations was suggested by Commissioner Seymour as early as 1874, but such a scenario did not eventuate.\textsuperscript{27}

An internal infrastructure of rules and regulations within the Police Force kept the working and private lives of the men well in check. Punishments for police varied from cautions, reprimands and fines, to reduction in rank, transfers, suspensions and finally dismissal. While drunkenness was by far the most common offence, other offences included: drinking on duty; absence from beat; loafing and gossiping; asleep under arms; sitting down in uniform on beat; overstay leave; marrying without permission; refusing to go on transfer; allowing a prisoner to escape; assaulting a South Sea Islander; fathering an illegitimate child; fighting; ‘abusive language’; an unclean rifle and losing handcuffs.\textsuperscript{28} Some other offences were actually a cover for drunkenness, and so widespread was this problem that in 1906 Cahill issued a General Order that ‘there is no such offence as “being under the influence of drink”. A policeman must be regarded as either drunk or sober’.\textsuperscript{29}

The lowly Constable was at the mercy of his superior officers, especially the Inspector in charge of his District. If he wanted to complain to the Commissioner, he had to do so in writing through his Inspector. With no way of appealing any decisions made against him and the Police Union not being established until 1915, he was defenceless. Police were also hamstrung in expressing their political opinions because they were not allowed to vote until 1905.\textsuperscript{30}

When the men were transferred to remote areas of the state they were confronted by harsh living conditions and environmental influences. Infectious diseases that caused death, such as diphtheria, tuberculosis, bubonic plague and dengue and scarlet fever, had no boundaries. Patrols had to proceed no matter the weather, the season or the terrain. Infantile paralysis appeared in 1904 and the eye disorders of sandy blight and ophthalmia were prevalent in the west and were often the cause of men applying for transfers. The Force’s vulnerability to the environment was shown clearly in the Great Drought of 1898-1903. Police horses died,\textsuperscript{31} and forage had to be sent to far-out stations at great cost. Patrols in country areas went out only on urgent matters.

The unpaid contribution by police wives has often been overlooked or underestimated. They gave assistance in many ways, from preparing meals for prisoners and caring for the sick, to looking after the stations when their husbands were away. This was at a time when mounted patrols were frequent, distances between stations vast and the police worked seven days a week. Indeed, Sundays were often the busiest day of the week, with Sunday trading to be policed. Such was the plan of buildings in one-man stations that the whole family often had to put up with drunk yells abuse in the adjoining lock up at all hours of the night.

Marriage of policemen was regulated. Men faced dismissal if they married without permission or before the suitability and background of the prospective bride had been checked by a superior officer.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, police could marry only before the suitability and background of the prospective bride had been checked by a superior officer.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, police could marry only after a certain time had elapsed after joining the Force, presumably to economise on transfer expenses. Seymour instituted the first limit of three years,\textsuperscript{33} while Parry-Okeden changed this in 1896 to four years.\textsuperscript{34}

Although by 1895 Aborigines were still a ‘problem’ in some northern and western districts, residents in the west sought protection mainly against cattle thieves, while city-dwellers found larrikins and ruffians more a problem. A signed petition from residents generally led to a police presence, albeit in the form of a ‘station under canvas’(Fig. 3). Portable stations prefabricated in Brisbane were used as temporary buildings, being particularly useful in mining and railway construction camps in which populations fluctuated. If such locations took on some permanency, buildings were established.

The Department was always on the look out for unoccupied government buildings that could be used for police purposes. Rather than build police premises, private houses were rented both for accommodation and stations. Despite complaints from politicians of false economy and unfairness to local tradesmen, police often carried out repairs themselves.\textsuperscript{35} Indeed, painting of police buildings was regularly carried out as a duty.

Notwithstanding the fact that the men generally worked twelve hours a day and at least six days a week, police pay in 1895 was not a cause for complaint.\textsuperscript{36} By 1905, however, it was a cause of...
grievance, as Queensland police were poorly paid in comparison to their colleagues in other states. With the relatively low pay in the 1900s, monetary rewards from the government and private individuals for the apprehension of criminals and recovery of lost property was very welcome.

Annual leave did not exist and, when granted, never exceeded fourteen days a year. Men took leave only when absolutely necessary. By 1912, leave had been formalised to some extent with periods up to three weeks allowed in one year. Queensland police retired at sixty years of age and received pensions according to their length of service. After retiring they were required to live in Queensland, presumably to be ‘on call’ if needed in an emergency. In 1899 there were only four men to the Commissioner’s knowledge who had been given permission to live overseas; to live interstate was also generally refused. In any case, retired police had to appear personally to collect their pensions. There were regulations even after they retired.

Police widows and their children were destined to lower living standards, with eviction from the married accommodation that had been provided. The loss of the husband’s wage was devastating. In many cases, women were forced to work, at a time when the average wage for women working in factories was £46 per year while the salary for a Constable was about £140 per year. Not until 1921 was there any pension for police widows and their dependents.

General police duty covered a multitude of tasks. The most time consuming were investigating complaints and mediating in disputes. Other duties included: inspecting mobs of livestock for their correct way bill; investigating sudden deaths; looking for lost people; locating husbands for wife desertion; shoeing horses and repairing saddles; gold escorts (Fig. 4); looking for unlicensed timber getters; attending District and Supreme courts; rescuing people; escorting prisoners and mentally disturbed people; attending the annual races; blanket distribution to Aborigines; truant officer for school children; checking for unlicensed hawkers; overseeing Sunday trading in hotels; arranging for neglected children to be sent to orphanages; and escorting pay trains for the Commissioner of Railways. Protection of Queensland’s fauna also fell to the police and the Firearms Act of 1905 made it unlawful to sell or supply firearms to any person under fourteen years. From 1896, the burial of paupers was arranged and paid for by the Police Department.
and after 1905, police had authority to hold post mortem examinations. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the control of vehicular traffic emerged as a new function for police.

The *Immigration Restriction Acts* of 1901 ensured that a close watch was kept on the Chinese population. Larrikins in the towns were also a group to be controlled. In Brisbane, they congregated on streets such as the corner of Albert and Queen Streets and in inner suburbs such as Woolloongabba. The *Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act* of 1905 was an attempt to control such behaviour, although it was described as ‘grandmotherly legislation’ and its provisions were generally ignored.

An important avenue where police could increase their wage was in allowances paid for extraneous duties such as Acting Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mining Registrar, Inspector of Slaughter Houses and Border Customs Officer. Complaints by the Commissioner about the increased workload of these extraneous duties had no effect: the government, in particular the Home Secretary, had absolute control of this aspect. Police were required to collect statistical returns for other Departments – agricultural, census and electoral, and act as Inspectors for these Departments – of slaughter houses, protected animals, hotels, crown lands and nursing homes. The number of extraneous duties continued to grow, from twenty in 1901 to fifty-one in 1910.

The workload increased greatly after Federation because the Police Department was the only government agency with officers distributed throughout the State. By 1915, there were eighteen tasks that were undertaken for the Commonwealth, ranging from supervising exams for the Postal Department to reporting on applications for naturalisations. It was difficult to put police work first when statistics had to be collected by certain dates.

The work and efficiency of the police was crucially affected by the equipment supplied by the government, especially horses. Police saddles were made at the St Helena Prison, although they were repaired by the police unless there was a qualified saddler in the town. Until 1896, police received an allowance for the shoeing of horses but this was often abused; horses were often being reshoed once a month even in grassy country.

Bicycles introduced in 1895 proved very useful for both day and night patrols and were even used by Commissioned Officers. Urgent calls could be attended more promptly without the hassle of finding and saddling a horse. Increasingly they were used for the supervision of beats although, as with typewriters, the men often used their own. Bicycles were also used in the west, although there were problems with tyres in the heat and thorns causing punctures.

Arms used but not always carried by the police included Snider carbines, Martini-Henry rifles and carbines, Winchester rifles, Lee-Enfield rifles, Adams revolvers and Webley revolvers. The Snider was considered obsolete by the 1890s and was being phased out in preference to the Martini-Henry. The police rarely used their arms, although they were necessary for self-defence and in defence of others. Arms were essential, of course, for the escort of gold, both a revolver and a rifle being at the ready. There were parades under arms each time a station was inspected, and seldom-used weapons were often found in a neglected state.

The turn of the century was a time when the Police Force was advancing technologically. Photography was introduced into policing in 1893 and by 1898 Inspector Urquhart had established a scheme for the classification and registration of criminals through personal descriptions of race and height. Fingerprinting was introduced in 1903 and by 1910 most stations in Queensland had fingerprint equipment.

The Queensland Police Force in 1901, however, was a conservative institution that changed only when forced to do so. On a personal level, policemen were large, confident figures, but as a group they were a slow, ambling bureaucracy held in check by regulations which governed almost every aspect of their lives. The men were always under authority, whether to the law, a superior officer or to the government of the day, hence their conservatism. While the Force rarely attracted the upper strata of society, they were generally well respected in the wider community. In some ways, little has changed in one hundred years. In 1901, Queensland police dealt with juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, child neglect, racial tensions and drug (opium) abuse. Today’s police face similar challenges.

**ENDNOTES**

2. ‘Queensland Police Force’, the title used in 1901, was changed in the 1990s to Queensland Police Service.
Queensland

4. Census of Queensland, 1901,
258 MEMOIRS OF THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM
6. R. Haldane, The People's Force
5. Recruitment circular, A/44759, Queensland State Archives (QSA).
8. Inspector Lamond to Commissioner, 14 September 1896, Recruits, A/44759, QSA.
11. Parades were an important part of instilling discipline into the Force. The men when going on beat and traffic duty would parade at large stations, march to the city or town area and then separate as they took up their respective posts. Inspection parades were also considered important at country stations, although the formality varied with the officer in charge and the size of the station.
12. Personnel file, W. Maguire, A/40532, QSA.
14. The ranks of the Force during this period included Commissioner, the commissioned officers of Chief Inspector, Inspector, and Sub-Inspector, and the lower ranks of Senior Sergeant, Sergeant, Acting Sergeant, Constable, Supernumerary, and Native Tracker.
17. Personnel file, W.E. Parry-Okeden, A/47922, QSA. Born 13 May 1840, awarded the Imperial Service Order 1903, retired from the Commissionership 31 March 1905, died 30 August 1926.
19. Observations by the Commissioner of Police on the report, dated 29th November, 1899, of the Royal Commission... QVP, 5 (1900), pp. 570-73.
22. Based in Brisbane until 1917, Patrol was then sent to Rockhampton and used there until 1921. It was sold in Brisbane in 1921. File 105M, Queensland Police Department.
29. General Order 754, 18 January 1906, A/36277, QSA.
32. General Order 728, 3 June 1905, A/36294, QSA.
33. General Order 212, 3 October 1866, Queensland Police Gazette, p. 83.
34. A five-year limit was imposed between 1906 and 1909, with decreasing increments until 1915 when the limit was one year. General Order 681, 25 August 1896, A/36294; General Order 765, 4 October 1906, A/36294; General Order 806, 15 November 1915, A/36294, QSA.
35. C. McDonald, QDP, 73 (1895), p. 817.
37. Police Pay, A/44808, QSA.
38. Return showing Pay and Emoluments of Queensland Police Force, 1 July 1912, A/44808, QSA.
39. General Order 771, 26 March 1908, A/36277, QSA.
42. The Game and Fishes Acclimatisation Act of 1898 (62 Vic. No. 17); The Native Animals Protection Act of 1906 (6 Edw. VII No. 5); The Native Animals Protection Act Amendment Act of 1910 (1 Geo. V No. 17).
43. Parry-Okeden to Inspectors, 31 August 1904, A/36277, QSA.
44. General Order 740, 7 September 1905, A/36277, QSA.
45. Chairman of Woolloongabba Divisional Board to Colonial Secretary, 14 November 1887, A/41535, QSA.
46. QPD, 96 (1905), p. 1491; circular memo 987, 15 March 1917, A/36279, p. 370, QSA.
49. Duties, Commonwealth, State, A/44741, QSA.
51. Circular memo 215, 29 May 1896, A/36276, QSA.
52. Toowong Police Station, A/41507, QSA.