

The Forces of Law and Order

Lluoedd Cyfraith a Threfn

On 19th October 1840, John Denman, the chief constable of the newly established Denbighshire Constabulary reported to the Justices of the Peace:

"I proceeded on the 12th instant [October] to take charge of the town of Wrexham, which is now under my control."

No one had been able to make that claim for some time! Food shortages and an economic downturn had sparked riots across the North Wales coalfield. In 1830 the miners had clashed with the militia at the Battle of Cinder Hill in Rhosllanerchrugog. A parade through Wrexham of the miners' leaders after their arrest backfired when the townsfolk cheered rather than booed the captured men. In 1839 the colliers of Brymbo and Cefn Mawr marched on the new workhouse in Wrexham to demand its closure.

The elites in the industrial areas felt threatened – the army was far away and the militia took too long to mobilize. They needed a full-time force. In 1840, the Justices of the Peace voted 17 to 4 to establish the Denbighshire Constabulary – a police force of twenty-seven men. From his base in Ruthin, the new Chief Constable allocated one superintendent and four constables to Wrexham, two policemen each to Rhos and Cefn Mawr, and stationed a village bobbie in Ruabon, Coedpoeth, Holt and Marford.

The new police force had some unexpected opponents – the ratepayers in rural parishes who strongly objected to paying the new police rates. They called public meetings and lobbied the local MP, Townshend Mainwaring, who had voted to set up the force. Petitions were drafted, arguments rehearsed and signatures gathered. The petitioners viewed the new police as costly, ineffective and unnecessary. Mainwaring soon switched sides and called for the disbandment of the Denbighshire police. The Justices of the Peace held a vote in 1844 and again in 1849 on whether to scrap their new force, but each time the constabulary narrowly avoided abolition – the police were here to stay.

Ar 19eg Hydref 1840, meddai John Denman, prif gwnstabl Heddlu Sir Ddinbych oedd newydd gael ei sefydlu wrth yr Ynadon Heddwch:

"I proceeded on the 12th instant [October] to take charge of the town of Wrexham, which is now under my control."

Nid oedd neb wedi gallu gwneud yr honiad hwnnw ers cryn amser! Roedd prinder bwyd a dirywiad economaidd wedi tanio terfysg ar draws maes glo Gogledd Cymru. Yn 1830 roedd y glowyr wedi gwrthdaro â'r milisia ym Mrwydr Cinder Hill yn Rhosllanerchrugog. Pan geisiodd gwneud sioe o arweinwyr y glowyr ar ôl eu harestio mewn gorymdaith drwy Wrecsam, aeth pethau o chwith pan floeddiodd y trefolion o blaidd yn hytrach nag yn erbyn y dynion a ddaliwyd. Yn 1839 ymdeithiodd glowyr Brymbo a Cefn Mawr at y tloty newydd yn Wrecsam i fynnu ei gau.

Teimlai'r bobl freintiedig yn y cylchoedd diwydiannol dan fygythiad – roedd y fyddin yn bell i ffwrdd a'r milisia'n cymryd gormod o amser i gynnwll. Roedd arnynt angen llw llawn-amser. Yn 1840, pleidleisiodd yr Ynadon Heddwch 17 i 4 dros sefydlu Heddlu Sir Ddinbych – heddlu o 27 o ddynion. Clustnododd Denman, y Prif Gwnstabl newydd, un uwcharolygydd a phedwar cwnstabl i Wrecsam, dau heddwys yr un i'r Rhos a Cefn Mawr, a lleolwyd plismon pentref yn Rhiwabon, Coed-poeth, Holt a Merffordd.

Roedd rhai gwrthwynebwyr annisgwyl i'r heddlu newydd – y trethdalwyr mewn plwyfi gwledig – oedd yn gryf yn erbyn talu'r trethi heddlu newydd. Aethant ati i bwysu os yr AS lleol, Townshend Mainwaring, oedd wedi pleidleisio dros sefydlu'r heddlu. Drafftiwyd deisebau, ymarferwyd dadleuon a chasglwyd llofnodion. Ystyriai'r deisebwyr bod yr heddlu newydd yn ddrud, aneffeithiol a diangen. Ni fu Mainwaring yn hir cyn newid ochr a galwodd am chwalu heddlu Sir Ddinbych. Cynhaliodd yr Ynadon Heddwch bleidlais yn 1844 ac eto yn 1849 ar roi'r gorau i'w heddlu newydd neu beidio ond, bob tro, daliodd yr heddlu i osgoi diddymiad o drwch blewyn – roedd yr heddlu yma i aros.



Wrexham Police, outside County Buildings, c. 1900
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Heddlu Wrecsam, o flaen Adeiladau'r Sir, tua 1900
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Wrexham Division, Officers and Constables, outside County Buildings, 1921.
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Adran Wrecsam, Swyddogion a Chwnstablaid, o flaen Adeiladau'r Sir, 1921.
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