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Advance Information



the book

Finely written... often hilarious Professor Michael Mullett

We are delighted to present this new book by John Sharpe who spent his police life looking after Cumbria.

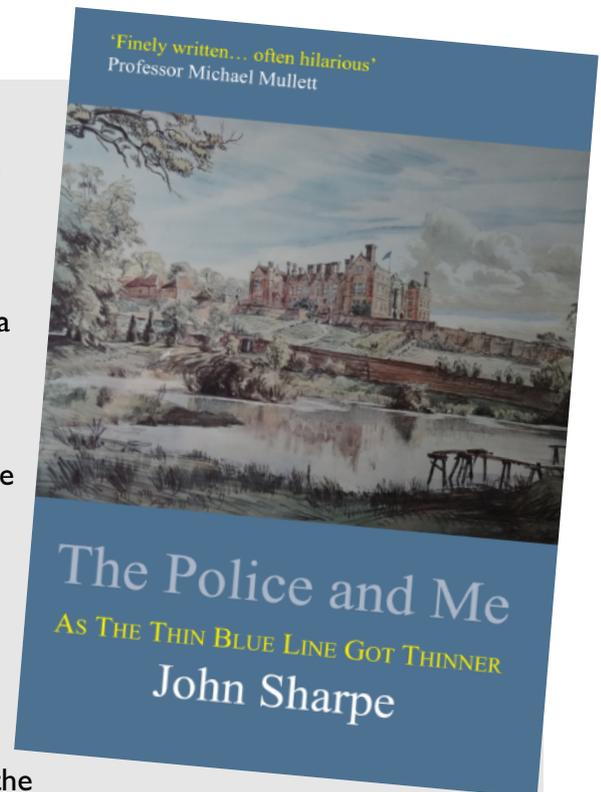
“What’s gone wrong with the police force?” The chief constable looked pensive as he put that question to a man of thirty years’ service on his last day in the job. The ensuing discussion was the spark that ignited these frank and revealing memoirs.

John Sharpe had been a student and a soldier when he donned a dark blue uniform to take on a Lake District beat in 1963. CCTV and computers were unheard of in policing and the uniformed figure on the street had no personal radio, pepper spray, taser or protective clothing – and little chance of ‘back-up’ except from the public.

Murder of a police colleague and two arrests for attempted murder would soon test his mettle, along with pre-breathalyser carnage on antiquated roads. Then a spell as staff officer brought its own set of pitfalls among the high and mighty of the job and a behind-the-scenes view of remarkable eccentricity at top management level.

‘Ordinary outside duty’ pitched the writer into the vagaries of the local magistrates’ courts and some surprising challenges of managing trainee staff. Mixed feelings were his reaction to assignment in 1980 to computer technology that would hasten the controversial process of police withdrawal from the streets and closure of stations. Complaints against police were a particularly sensitive area that became the writer’s eventual speciality. He raises the familiar veil of secrecy far enough to reveal an extraordinary range of options that were available to the experienced investigator.

These wide-ranging reminiscences have much to say about police procedures and management with all its human frailties. But the author misses no opportunity for humour as he draws on his 30-year experience of the service to offer a nostalgic inside view of an often misunderstood organisation that has seen dramatic change.



the author

John Sharpe studied Classics at Durham University and followed National Service in the Army with a working life in the police. A native of Cumbria, he has lived in the county’s Eden Valley since the 1960s. His writing speciality is the unsung hero – or villain! The Eden Valley is a rich mine of worthy material.

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