

Limerick City Council

Night Watch

L/NW

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Introduction

Limerick Corporation's Night Watch service was established in 1843 with the employment of 10 watchmen, a superintendent and a watch house keeper. The service was modelled on the Night Watch service then operating in New Town Pery under the Commissioners of St. Michael's parish. See L/MP/4 for surviving records of this service. The Night Watch's main function was to ensure public order, the security of property and the lighting of lamps. The service operated from Watchhouse Lane, off Rutland Street. Where records were inspected and a report made to the monthly meeting of the Night Watch committee, a standing corporation committee (see L/SMIN/6).

As a result of the financial crisis created by the War of Independence Limerick Borough Council established a Retrenchment Committee in April 1921 whose report recommended that the Night Watch should be totally abolished. The 23 members of staff were pensioned off thus marking the end of the Night Watch service in Limerick.

Night Watch Reports' Books (1861-1920)

Reports of the night watch service, detailing the number of men on duty, their responsibilities and nightly incidents, 'At half past nine, Mr Hayes brought in Mary Gronin, Eliza Burtell and Mary Ann McNamara for protection', L/NW/3 (5 March 1862), Includes details of lamps being lit in 'Lamps blown out by gale during the night', L/NW/23 (1898-1902) and general surveillance, 'NC O'Brien found door rear of number 54, William Street open at 11.45 a.m. called owner who secured same', 2 October 1906, L/NW/26.

From 1861-1905 reports for the entire city were kept in the same volumes (with the exception of the period 1888-1893, L/NW/16-19), but from 1905 onwards (L/NW/25), separate books were held for the Old Town (Irish Town) and the New Town (English Town and Newtown Pery).

The terminology used to name the men on duty also changed throughout the period; they were called Night Watch Men (NW) from June 1861 to December 1899 (L/NW/1-23), then Night Patrol (NP) until July 1900 (L/NW/23) when finally adopted the name of Night Constables (NC).

Note: L/NW/3, L/NW/6, L/NW/8 are not available for public inspection pending conservation

27 volumes

[1-2]

3 29 June 1861 – 8 November 1862

c. 250 pp

4	17 December 1862 – 16 September 1863	c. 150 pp
[5]		
6	29 November 1864 – 1 January 1866 Pages missed.	c. 250 pp
[7]		
8	8 April 1867 – 23 April 1869	c. 250 pp
[9]		
10	7 December 1870 – 21 January 1873	c. 375 pp
[11]		
12	12 November 1875 – 21 March 1879 Volume organized in three columns: hour/date, reports and general information/comments. Reports signed by the inspector.	c. 300 pp
13	22 April 1879-1 September 1884 Volume organised in there columns hour, reports and outcomes (fines/imprisonment etc).	c. 450 pp
[13-15]		
16	22 March 1888 – 2 May 1890	c. 120 pp
17	16 November 1888 – 9 July 1892	c. 150 pp
18	9 August 1892 – 16 January 1899 The main information included is from August 1892 to April 1893, but it also refers to the period 30 March 1897 to 16 January 1899. There are missed pages from 22 April to 29 November 1897, from 2 December 1897 to 24 July 1898 and from 15 August 1898 to 1 January 1899.	c. 55 pp
19	31 July 1888 – 18 November 1893 Volume signed by the inspector that gathers together the information of the three previous volumes. Missed pages from 18 April 1891 to 1 May 1891, 22 June 1891 to 26 July 1891, 19 October 1891 to 27 October 1891 and 18 September 1892 to 25 October 1892.	c. 450 pp
[20]		
21	8 January 1895 – 2 February 1897	c. 250 pp
[22]		
23	16 August 1898 – 20 May 1902 From the back of the volume it includes reports of lamps not lighting (by day, month and year, giving the	c. 275 pp

name of the street in which placed and the cause of the extinction) from 1 October 1881 to 1 February 1895 and from 13 May 1899 to 18 April 1902.

[24]

25 13 January 1904 – 29 November 1905 c. 200 pp

Old Town

26 17 May 1905 – 5 February 1907 (OT) c. 180 pp
This volume refers to the Old Town, but, between September and October 1906, covers the whole city.

27 6 February 1907 – 30 November 1908 (OT) c. 180 pp

[28]

29 10 March 1910 – 9 January 1912 (OT) c. 130 pp

30 10 January 1912 – 30 April 1914 (OT) c. 150 pp

31 1 May 1914 – 2 January 1917 (OT) c. 150 pp

New Town

32 31 October 1906 – 19 November 1907 c. 150 pp
From the back of the volume it includes a list of men's beats from 7 July 1907 to 31 November 1907.

33 20 November 1907 – 4 August 1908 c. 100 pp
From the back of the volume, it includes a weekly list of men's beats from 7 December 1907 to 28 March 1908 for both Old and New Town.

34 5 August 1908 – 27 April 1909 c. 90 pp

35 28 April 1909 – 4 April 1910 c. 150 pp

36 6 April 1910 – 28 November 1910 c. 100 pp

[37-38]

39 22 January 1913 – 2 July 1914 c. 200 pp

40 24 July 1914 – 13 February 1916 c. 200 pp

41 16 February 1916 – 1 January 1918 c. 220 pp
No reports from 6 to 24 July 1916.

[42]

43 16 July 1919 – 25 November 1920 c. 180 pp
From 27 August 1920, men were distributed by areas, e.g. Fire Station, Technical School, Athenaeum, etc.

Night Watch Inspector's Complaint Book (1866-1892)

44. 11 November 1866 – 26 December 1892 Book of complaints against the watchmen on duty collected by the inspector in charge. The complaints were sent to the Watch Committee by the Inspector. The volume details the cause of complaint- generally being found asleep or drunk on the beat, and the sanction imposed.
c. 100 pp

Night Watch Account Book (1857-1914)

Account book detailing the watchmen's weekly wages. Includes the name of the watchmen and supernumeraries, the nights on duty per week, total value of the week's work and observations. From 13 January 1910, volume is titled 'city night constables pay book' and included additional column titled 'occupation'

3 volumes

- 45 12 June 1857 – 3 October 1860 c.70 pp
[46-48]
- 49 31 July 1879-8 August 1889 c. 500 pp
[50]
- 51 22 October 1891-2 April 1903 c.600 pp
[52]
- 53 13 January 1910-9 April 1914 c. 200 pp