



Journal of the Police History Society

Number 12 1997

- ◆ Crime in a Victorian country town
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- ◆ The rise and fall of Basil Thomson, 1861–1939
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The *Journal of the Police History Society* is published annually by the Police History Society. Contributions are welcome from both members and non-members. Send material double spaced and typed please on A4 paper with details of any discs you can supply to save retyping. The *Journal* is produced on Word for Windows 2.0 by the Editor, Dr Jenny Ward, 15 Corona Road, Cambridge, CB4 3EB.

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Editorial

At the end of the last century Sir Josiah Stamp, head of the Inland Revenue from 1896, said: 'The Government are very keen on amassing statistics. They collect them, add them, raise them to the *n*th power, take the cube root and prepare wonderful diagrams. But you must never forget that every one of these figures comes in the first instance from the village watchman, who just puts down what he damn pleases.' In our first offering this year, Mark Emsley, son of Clive, looks at the Borough of Dunstable Reports of Charges Book from 1865 to 1878 to see how the local statistics fitted into the national pattern. A by-product of his analysis is a perhaps unique glimpse at the 'village watchmen' compiling their figures for the judicial statistics.

The *Journal* this year has a biographical flavour. From New Zealand is Richard Hill's article on Walter Dinnie, Wellington's Police Commissioner from 1903 to 1909. The article is reproduced with permission from the New Zealand *DNB*, vol. 3, Wellington 1996. More details on Dinnie can

be found in Richard's recent book *The Iron Hand in the Velvet Glove*, reviewed in the *Journal*, volume 11 (1996), page 38.

American writer Jeffrey Bloomfield gives us a glimpse at the career and downfall of another police chief, Basil Thomson, who was caught in a 'lewd' act with a young lady in Hyde Park in 1923.

Elizabeth Sellers was looking for some information on sheep scab when she came across the adventurous life of Inspector Peter Lennon in an *Essex Weekly News* of 1923.

Fred Feather, curator of the Essex Police Museum, sends us the extraordinary career of Stephen English, Chief Constable of Norwich in the last century.

From the other side of the world, Peter Farmery tells the tale of Alex Riley, Aboriginal tracker – whose tracking skills seem almost supernatural.

John Welch has given us the story of the much decorated PC Oliver Wise, who saved a boy from drowning in 1889.

Thanks also to regular contributors Tim Wright, Richard Ford,

Reginald Hale and Bernard Brown. Tim Wright brings his history of the NRP up to the outbreak of war in 1939. Richard shows the police and fire service working together during the war when a bomb fell on Parnall's aircraft factory at Yate. And still in Gloucestershire, Reginald Hale gives us the murder of Parish Constable Henry Thompson, who was shot in 1817.

Bernard Brown traces the story of Met and City connections in Southwark for us this year. Bernie sent in the piece despite struggling with serious health problems triggered off by being one of the first Battersea officers to reach the Clapham rail crash in 1988.

The pièce de resistance this year is just that – journalist Peter Cole's story of former policeman, Flying Officer Edgar Jackson, who baled out over France in 1944 and was rescued by the Resistance, to be caught by the Gestapo and sent to Buchenwald and then Stalag Luft 3.

Jenny Ward

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Crime in a Victorian country town

Mark Emsley

This study looks at crime in a Victorian country town in the 1860s and 1870s. The general level of crime in Victorian England seems to have been decreasing from about 1850 to about 1900. My study investigates how mid-Victorian Dunstable fits into this pattern, and what the specific problems of crime, law and order were in the town during the 1860s and 1870s.

Research by historians like V.A.C. Gatrell has suggested that the general level of crime was decreasing, or at least levelling out, from the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of the First World War.¹ Gatrell concluded that among the reasons for this decrease might be the development of professional police forces, especially after the 1856 County and Borough Police Act which made professional police forces compulsory throughout England and Wales, people accepting Victorian values of morality and good behaviour, and a general improvement in the standard of living with increasing wages and a more stable food supply.

The major exception to the decline in crime in Victorian England was burglary. This offence probably increased because of the benefits of the Industrial Revolution and the general improvement in the standard of living which led to people having more movable goods, and more valuable goods in their homes. The two most common kinds of offence nationally were first, and most common, theft, then assault. Within the overall decline of crime the statistics show peaks and troughs of these two offences. When Gatrell put the peaks and troughs against the trade cycle he concluded that when trade was booming theft declined and assault increased, and vice versa. This is possibly because people stole when they were hungry, and when they had money in their pockets they were more likely to go out drinking and to get involved in fights.

Of course, crime statistics do not give the precise level of crime. Gatrell's statistics are mostly the national judicial statistics based on information sent by police forces to the Home Office every year since 1857. Such statistics can only be of crimes reported to the police, therefore ignoring the so-called 'dark figure' of unreported crimes. But even though we do not have the exact figure of every

crime committed it seems reasonable to assume that people report crime to the police in roughly the same proportion each year.

The statistics used here are not taken from the national judicial statistics but are taken directly from the Borough of Dunstable Report of Charges Book, 1865 to 1878, which is preserved in the headquarters of the Bedfordshire police. This book would have been kept at Dunstable Police Station. By using the statistics in this book this study will try to show the reality of crime in a small town rather than on the national scale.

Mid-Victorian Dunstable

Dunstable is a small town in the south of Bedfordshire. Last century the county was overwhelmingly rural, but Dunstable and its larger neighbour Luton were renowned for their straw-hat making industry. Luton made more hats, but those made in Dunstable were of a much higher standard and price. Unfortunately after the removal of tariffs in 1842 the high quality production of Dunstable was less in demand and therefore trade declined.

While the economy was in decline in Dunstable the population continued to grow, from 2,500 in 1841 to 3,500 in 1851 and 4,500 in 1861. Thereafter, until the end of the century, the population remained static. What appears to have enabled the population to grow in the 1840s and 1850s was the opening of the Great Northern Railway. A rail link between Luton and Dunstable was made in 1855.

Even though Dunstable was one of the smallest towns in the county, it became a municipal borough in 1864. The only other county borough of this sort was Bedford itself. Part of the civic pride of being a municipal borough in the Victorian period involved a town Watch Committee running its own police force. In 1865 Dunstable set up its own police force consisting of two men, both recruited from the Bedfordshire county force. It should be noted here that the County Police also considered that two policemen were sufficient for Dunstable. PC Addington was already serving in Dunstable and he resigned from the County Police to become constable in the new borough. The new superintendent had been a sergeant in the county force based in the village of

Table 1, Crimes in Dunstable

Year	Male	Female	Petty theft	Drunkenness	Assault	Begging	Burglary	Murder	Other	Total
1865 ¹	7	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	2	7
1866	38	13	17	12	6	6	1	-	9	51
1867	24	11	11	12	4	1	-	-	10	38
1868	33	7	8	8	7	5	-	-	17	45
1869	41	5	14	9	7	4	-	-	14	48
1870	39	5	22	9	2	5	-	-	8	46
1871	27	3	11	7	2	3	-	-	9	32
1872	40	4	15	12	11	4	-	-	7	49
1873 ²	19	2	4	3	7	1	-	-	8	23
1874	23	10	6	11	4	6	-	-	8	35
1875	25	4	7	9	5	5	-	-	5	31
1876	28	7	12	10	4	1	1	1	9	38
1877	36	7	15	10	4	7	-	-	10	46
1878 ³	23	6	11	11	2	2	-	-	11	37
Total	403	84	155	123	67	51	2	1	127	526

1. Only three months accounted for on the book. 2. No crimes recorded between March and June.

3. Only nine months accounted for in the book.

Toddington. Superintendent Benjamin George was 37, a married man with six children. These were the first two men to keep the Report of Charges Book in Dunstable Police Station.

Crime in Dunstable 1865–1878

The three tables give a breakdown of the statistical evidence contained in the Report of Charges Book. The total number of offences for the period 1865 to 1878 was 526. The book begins in September 1865 and ends in September 1878 which gives roughly thirteen full years. No crimes were recorded between March and June 1873 which accounts for the low number of crimes recorded for that year; perhaps there were none, or perhaps the book was not used. The average number of crimes reported each year over the whole period was 40.5 – less than one crime per week, and approximately one crime for every 111 inhabitants of Dunstable in a year.

There were 487 people listed in the books for committing these 526 crimes. Most people were only charged once, but there were fifty people who were charged with more than one offence, and some of these were charged on several separate occasions. Arthur Champkin, alias Mace, a young labourer, was convicted of a series of petty thefts between 1870 and 1876. The last occasion involved two offences of petty theft and attempted suicide for

which he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. The suicide attempt was made while he was in custody and suggests that he was a character in need of help rather than imprisonment. John Walker, an engineer, was a different sort of character. He was charged with assault and drunkenness in both March and August 1869. He received ten days for the first offence and twenty-one days for the second.

Elizabeth Thompson, described by the police as a 'tramp and prostitute', also had a drink problem. She was arrested in September 1873, April 1875 and March 1876 for drink-related offences, and in May 1887 for begging.

Table 1 clearly shows that the most common offence was petty theft, which makes the pattern of crime in Dunstable much like the national picture. The second most common offence was drunkenness, and many of the assault cases appear to have been drink-related.

When the ages of those responsible for petty theft and drunkenness are compared (Table 2) it is clear that while theft was a crime mainly committed by young people between 10 and 29, drunkenness was more common among the older age group of 30 to 60. It is surprising that as many as 51 offenders, that is 10.5 per cent of the total, were charged with begging. Of the 127 offenders listed in the 'other' category, the largest single group was 16 army

Table 2, Crimes and ages

Age group	Petty theft	Drunkenness	Assault	Begging	Total
10-19	56	2	3	4	65
20-29	46	20	20	9	95
30-39	31	30	16	17	94
40-49	17	32	15	10	74
50-59	1	29	5	6	41
60-69	3	9	1	3	16
70+	1	1	1	1	4
Unknown	-	-	6	1	7
Total	155	123	67	51	396

Table 3, Crimes committed by women

Year	Petty theft	Drunkenness	Assault	Begging	Burglary	Murder	Other	Total
1865	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1866	7	4	-	2	-	-	-	13
1867	4	7	-	-	-	-	2	13
1868	1	2	-	-	-	-	4	7
1869	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	5
1870	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	5
1871	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	3
1872	-	2	2	1	-	-	1	6
1873	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
1874	2	5	1	2	-	-	1	11
1875	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	4
1876	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	6
1877	1	1	1	4	-	-	-	7
1878	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	7
Total	23	37	7	11	-	-	11	89

deserters. The 'other' category also included tramps destroying their clothes in the Tramps' Ward in the Dunstable Workhouse, 'a wandering lunatic' put in an asylum, people using obscene or abusive language, and youngsters knocking on doors and ringing doorbells. A large number of the 'other' cases were also probably the result of the offender being drunk; for example the man who, in April 1878, was fined for driving his carriage along a footpath.

There were two really exceptional cases. In April 1866 Angus McPhearson, aged 46, was arrested on suspicion of having committed murder: 'He having stated that he had killed a man named Rennie a contractor at Bermondsey about 5 weeks previous, by throwing him out of a railway carriage and taking about 5s from him.' It turned out that

Rennie had died from natural causes in November 1864. McPhearson suffered from delirium tremens associated with drink and his statement appears to have been made when he was drunk.

An actual case of murder occurred in January 1876. This involved a man who had killed his wife, an offence for which he received twelve years. This was an exceptional case because murder resulted, but many of the assaults recorded in the charge book took place within the family. In most instances this involved the husband beating up his wife, but very occasionally it was the other way round. These assault cases seem to have been typical of those committed elsewhere in Victorian England.²

The charge book also suggests that there were other problems within families. There are several cases where the husband was arrested for running

away and deserting his wife and children. The most unpleasant assault case, apart from the murder, involved a man aged 37 who attacked two girls aged 2 and 8. He appears to have got off lightly, receiving only two years' imprisonment.

While the overall crime statistics show that burglary was not declining throughout Victorian England, burglary in Dunstable seems to have been almost non-existent. The only two cases recorded throughout the thirteen years were one offence of breaking into a chicken house in 1866 and another involving the theft of a diamond ten years later. The culprits were sentenced to one year and six months respectively.

Most theft was petty theft and often involved the stealing of vegetables, bread and other foodstuffs. For example, in 1870 a 22 year-old man received fourteen days imprisonment for stealing potatoes and cabbages. The majority of the thieves were young; just over a third were between 10 and 19 and almost another third were between 20 and 29. Some of them seem to have been working in gangs. For example, in 1866 five girls all aged 13 were arrested for stealing, were found guilty and fined, and in 1876 two boys aged 11 and 13 were arrested for theft; they were each given six strokes of the birch.

Most crime in Victorian England was committed by young males. Women committed far fewer offences.³ The statistics from Dunstable show the same difference. Overall, the crimes committed by women in Dunstable followed the same pattern as those committed by men in that petty theft and drunkenness were the most common (Table 3). But, whereas the men were more often charged with petty theft than drunkenness, the statistics show the opposite for women. Out of the total of eighty-nine offences committed by women, thirty-nine of them were drink related. What is interesting also is that the proportion of women committing petty theft increased with age. Of the 102 offenders in the age group 10 to 29 charged with petty theft, eleven were women, approximately one-tenth. But of the forty-eight offenders in the age group 30 to 49 charged with petty theft, ten were women, approximately one-fifth. Without detailed work on the census papers it is not possible to prove that these older women were mothers, but if they were, it is possible that they were stealing because of poverty and the need to feed their children.

The pattern of crime

In 1985 Michael Hopkinson published a pamphlet *Poverty, Crime and Punishment in Victorian Bed-*

fordshire.⁴ Hopkinson is a social geographer and his principal concern was poverty and the problems of the poor. His main conclusions, in line with Gatrell's, were that police and judicial efficiency increased in Bedfordshire from the mid-19th century. Hopkinson suggests that crime in Bedfordshire followed the national patterns. Most offenders were young. In the early part of the 19th century crime was 'poverty based', gradually shifting to 'prosperity based' in the later years. In the Borough of Bedford this shift was unspectacular partly because prosperity was delayed and because most of the poor accepted 'honest' employment when the opportunity was available; but it took a long time for the authorities to recognise this fact, and they were, according to Hopkinson, 'much more willing and prepared to condemn the charity cushioned indolence of the working classes than to improve opportunities.' In Bedford it was only when the expanding brewery, metalworks and transport industries began to create employment that the slack in the labour force was taken up and the shift in the base of crime occurred.

Dunstable was static in the second half of the 19th century, both in population and economy. Crime in Dunstable does not appear to have shifted from being poverty based in the 1860s and 1870s; it remained largely very petty theft and there were virtually no burglaries. In Victorian Dunstable, overall, the problems of crime and the maintenance of law and order seem to have been fairly negligible, and the two policemen seemed able to cope.

Notes

1. V.A.C. Gatrell, 'The decline of theft and violence in Victorian and Edwardian England,' in V.A.C. Gatrell, Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker, eds, *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe Since 1500*, London 1980.
2. Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900*, London 1987, pp. 35-42.
3. Emsley, *Crime and Society*, p. 27.
4. Michael F. Hopkinson, *Poverty, Crime and Punishment in Victorian Bedfordshire*, Settlement Studies Service, Paper No. 39, Bedford 1985.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Geoff South, Public Relations Officer of the Bedfordshire Police, for giving me the run of his museum, and my father, Clive Emsley, who introduced me to both the subject and the Bedfordshire Police.

Walter Dinnie, policeman, 1852–1923

Richard Hill

Walter Dinnie was born in Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, in 1852,¹ the son of Celia Dinnie and local historian and poet Robert Dinnie, a wealthy contractor.² Well educated at Aberdeen Grammar School, he excelled at athletics,³ although in such pursuits he was overshadowed by his brother Donald, internationally famous as the 'champion Scottish all-round athlete'.⁴

In 1871 he began work as a bank clerk in Aberdeen, but joined the clerical staff of the West Riding of Yorkshire Constabulary in 1873. After two years as assistant clerk in the Bradford Superintendent's office, he was promoted to Clerk to the Superintendent in Goole.⁵ On 27 March 1876 he joined the Metropolitan Police and was soon promoted to clerical work in the Commissioner's office.⁶

In 1880 he was promoted to sergeant and in January 1881 was made Clerk to the Chief Constable of the CID, where he improved the keeping of criminal records.⁷ In 1882 Dinnie was appointed to detective work at his own request, and was promoted within the CID to Inspector in 1889 and Chief Inspector in 1895.⁸ In a twenty-year detection career, he specialised in frauds and forgeries, bringing to justice a number of infamous criminals: among them the arsonists of 'The London Fire Ring' (1891), Charles Wells ('The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo') in 1893, and the thief who stole the Duchess of Sutherland's jewels (1898). Such cases made him internationally famous.⁹

In 1901 he was instrumental in setting up the new system of registering and identifying criminals, with fingerprint identification being at the forefront of his integrated information system.¹⁰

In 1903 New Zealand's reforming Police Commissioner, J.B. Tunbridge, a former senior Metropolitan detective officer, announced his retirement. The New Zealand government sought continuity by hiring Walter Dinnie, a policeman of similar background, to succeed him. Dinnie retired from New Scotland Yard amidst accolades, and on a large pension, on 5 April 1903.¹¹

He had married Frederica Matilda Kemp on 18 October 1883, and their five sons accompanied them on the *Ruapehu* when they left London on 23 April

1903.¹² Dinnie began work in Wellington on 8 June, and Tunbridge took him on an inspection tour before returning to England. When Dinnie publicly maintained neutrality in the fierce debate about liquor laws, Premier R.J. Seddon pronounced him 'the right man in the right place'.¹³

Policing success was in Dinnie's eyes ultimately based upon fear of detection. He implemented with zeal further reforms in the New Zealand Police Force, particularly the utilisation of scientific and technological advances to aid in the identification of offenders. Almost at once he took over the Prison Branch's new but primitive fingerprint initiative, and placed one of his sons, Edmund ('Ted') Walter Dinnie, in the fingerprint branch from 6 July 1903.¹⁴

Ted Dinnie, born on 14 August 1884, had been trained in the latest fingerprint identification techniques at New Scotland Yard. In 1904, the year he procured an important breakthrough for the validity of fingerprint techniques by gaining a conviction on fingerprint evidence alone, he became head of the fingerprint branch. In 1908 he established the police museum, mostly as a detection training aid. The Dinnies, father and son, were soon being acclaimed for their successes with scientific identification techniques, New Zealand being reportedly in the forefront of the international development of fingerprinting.¹⁵

The Commissioner, however, soon came under sustained public attack as a result of various revelations of inefficiencies and scandals in the Force. When Dunedin constables were discovered to be involved in the burgling of premises they were supposedly protecting, a resulting Royal Commission (1905) exposed weaknesses in police discipline despite recent tightening of supervision and standards.¹⁶

By 1907 there was a vociferous campaign for a commission of enquiry into policing. This was spearheaded by the *New Zealand Truth*, which had led the initial opposition to the importation of outsider Dinnie to the top New Zealand police job. By 1909 *Truth's* campaign against the 'curse of Dinnieism' had peaked, with almost every issue attacking the 'dunderhead' Commission as 'useless'. Discipline problems in the Gisborne police, and

bungled murder investigations in the South Island, led to a further decline in confidence in Dinnie. A variety of public commentators were now predicting that Dinnie would be sacked, his initial five-year contract having expired.¹⁷

In June 1909 MP J. Arnold launched a withering attack on the police force, which was said to be in a deplorable state. Although the Prime Minister leapt to his defence, Dinnie sought a public enquiry to vindicate his name. The government, desperate for resolution to the troubled policing question, obliged by appointing stipendiary magistrate H.W. Bishop as a Royal Commissioner.¹⁸

The two men clashed soon after the Commission commenced, as Dinnie did with other senior policemen during the hearings. The resulting Report was a curious one, pronouncing New Zealand policing to be sound at the core, 'thoroughly efficient', non-corrupt, favourably comparing with any in the world. However, while Dinnie's integrity was endorsed, he was depicted as an incompetent Commissioner, particularly in relation to the recruiting of unsuitable men. A newspaper summed up the Report's verdict on the force: 'admirable material, badly handled'. In effect, the Report concluded that Dinnie must go. Even commentators who agreed that Bishop had been unfair to Dinnie – and it seems clear that Dinnie's initial defensiveness had led Bishop to an overly extreme categorisation of the Commissioner as a weak head of police – stated that it was impossible for him to remain in office.¹⁹

Dinnie, with the help of his maligned headquarters staff, hit back publicly with a blunt and comprehensive rebuttal of much of the Report. The Royal Commissioner, he said, had entered upon his task with preconceived opinion, and had distorted and suppressed accordingly. But while he exposed many of the inadequacies of Bishop's conclusions, he could not puncture some of the allegations of inefficiency. It was in any case now only a matter of time before his Commissionership was terminated, given that he had cast doubt on the integrity of a senior judicial officer.²⁰

In a Prime Ministerial statement on 22 December 1909, Dinnie's 'resignation' – allegedly tendered before the Commission – was announced. It had been accepted in the light of Bishop's strictures, and because friction within the police and with other officials could not be contemplated. Under-Secretary for Justice Frank Waldegrave

would assume Dinnie's responsibilities.²¹ Earlier in the year Dinnie had been told to report to his minister through the Under-Secretary. He now claimed that his resignation had resulted from this, and had then been withdrawn when the Commission was established. He believed that Waldegrave had engineered his downfall, and vigorously protested that he had not resigned.²²

But from 1 January 1910 he was forced to take up six months' paid retirement leave, after which he was found another position: President of the Tokerau District Maori Land Board. He moved to Auckland to take this up from 1 July 1910, amidst much political and public criticism about his lack of background in Maori and land matters: the government had allegedly found him a 'cosy corner', at the very time that 'noted Maori scholar' Elsdon Best had been retrenched.²³

After new legislation made Native Land Court judges of the corresponding Land Boards, Dinnie's job ceased to exist from 31 March 1914, and after three months' paid leave he was jobless. On being turned down for a number of official positions, he set up as a private detective and settled back in Wellington. *Truth* sneered that he had found his 'true level'. Although much of his private detection work was tedious or sordid, he stood on his dignity – refusing, for example, a 1916 offer to be Assistant Commissioner of Police in Samoa on the grounds that 'the prestige of Scotland Yard' must be retained'. A former senior Metropolitan Police officer could not serve under a Commissioner 'entirely ignorant of police control or administration'.²⁴

In 1915 Dinnie sued the Crown for £501 damages for wrongful dismissal and denial of full superannuation rights. He was said to have 'a string of grievances as long as your arm'. The Chief Justice decided that he had no jurisdiction to enquire into whether Dinnie had been 'treated harshly', and on the superannuation question ruled him non-suited.²⁵

Walter Dinnie died on 7 May 1923 of congestion of the lungs, survived by Frederica and their sons. Of these, Ted Dinnie, 'finger print expert and photographer', had been transferred to the sworn police staff on 1 April 1915 as a Senior Sergeant. He remained in this rank, in charge of the Criminal Registration Branch, until his retirement on 24 January 1947. Ted Dinnie married Margaret Emily Yates while on leave in London on 12 June 1909, and after she died on 18 March 1951 he

married Kathleen Mabel Marriner on 22 August 1951. He died on 23 April 1962, and Kathleen Dinnie died in 1992. His successful career included many highly publicised feats of detection, including the famous identification of murderer Dennis Gunn in 1920 – the first execution in the Empire based on fingerprint evidence.²⁶

Walter Dinnie, the archetypal gentleman detective, had been embroiled in controversy for most of his official career in New Zealand. Circumstances and egotism led to a once internationally renowned detective ending his years in obscurity and bitterness. But he had consolidated Tunbridge's reforms and taken them a significant degree further. Most of all he had revolutionised scientific procedures in the New Zealand Police Force. This achievement, particularly his establishment of an efficient fingerprint identification system, lived on in the career of his son, Ted Dinnie, who dominated criminal registration and identification in New Zealand for decades.

Notes

1. 'Dinnie Family Book', in possession of Mr and Mrs D. Dinnie, Hastings; Dinnie Papers, Police Museum; *New Zealand Herald*, 8 May 1923. Some sources give Birsbeg as the place of birth; this is not as common as Aboyne.
2. Finger Print Branch records (Police Headquarters) box 2: Dinnie's scrapbook, p. 92; Dinnie's marriage and death certificates.
3. P1, 1/12/3 (National Archives); Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 92–3, including *Daily Telegraph* (6 April 1903) and *Police Review*, 23 October 1903.
4. Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 92–3; *Free Lance*, 6 August 1908.
5. P1, 1/12/3 (National Archives); Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 92–3, including *Daily Telegraph* (6 April 1903) and *Police Review*, 23 October 1903.
6. Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 93, 116; biographical material in Police Museum; information from Peter Backshall: Metropolitan Police Pensions Book, 11, 23, 23a; *Otago Daily Times*, 16 May 1903.
7. *Police Review*, 23 October 1903; Dinnie Papers, Police Museum; Metropolitan Police Orders, order of 9 March 1880 (ex Peter Backshall); Metropolitan Police Orders, Jan. 1881, p. 14 (ex Peter Backshall).
8. Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 46, 92–3.
9. Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 34–5, 46, 92–3; Police Museum transcripts of cases; *Otago Daily Times*, 16 May 1903; Dinnie's c. 1914 notebook (with Mr and Mrs D. Dinnie).
10. Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 92–3.
11. Tunbridge essay (by R.S. Hill) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* II; Dinnie's scrapbook, pp. 92–3; Metropolitan Police Orders (4 April 1903), p. 268 (ex Peter Backshall) and see also p. 273.
12. Exhibit A, *Dinnie v. King*, 16 November 1915: Dinnie's agreement with New Zealand government (via Agent General P. Reeves), 11 March 1903 (with Mr and Mrs D. Dinnie); family information, Mrs A. Jemmett; *New Zealand Herald*, 18 April 1903.
13. *New Zealand Times*, 20 August 1903; 1905 Commission, pp. 690f; *New Zealand Herald*, 9 June 1903.
14. Dinnie's notebook, c. 1914 (with Mr and Mrs D. Dinnie); *Police Description Book*, E.W. Dinnie entry.
15. E.W. Dinnie's birth certificate; material with Mrs. A. Jemmett, especially a 1934 lecture by E.W. Dinnie, and correspondence with Mrs Jemmett and Mr D. Dinnie; *Free Lance*, 7 September 1907; M. Hoare to P. Backshall, 10 December 1992.
16. 1905 Commission proceedings and report; John Dwyer, 'Fragments' manuscript, p. 39.
17. Information from Mrs A. Jemmett; for sample *Truth* attacks, see 19 Jan., 27 July ('useless'), 21 October 1907; 4 Jan., 15 Feb., 22 Feb. ('bounder'), 27 Feb., 14 March, 6, 13 June, 25 July ('curse'), 29 August, 26 Dec. 1908; 16 Jan., 6, 20, 27 Feb., 19 June 1909; for a sample of other commentary, see *Otago Daily Times*, 14 March 1908, *New Zealand Herald*, 3 Feb. 1909.
18. *Truth*, 19 June 1909; *Otago Daily Times*, 21 June 1909; NZPD, June 1909 debate.
19. For early reported clashes, see *Truth* 17, 24 July 1909; see also Commission proceedings; *New Zealand Daily Herald*, *Otago Daily Times*, *Lyttelton Times*, 4 November 1909; *Lyttelton Times*, 18 Oct. 1909, 5, 10 Nov., 1909; *Otago Daily Times*, 9, 20 Nov., 1909; *Truth*, 27 Nov. 1909.
20. *Observations of the Commissioner of Police on the Report of the Royal Commission*, Wellington, 18 Oct. 1909; *Otago Daily Times*, 20 Nov. 1909; *New Zealand Times*, 19 Nov. 1909.
21. *Evening Post*, 22 Dec. 1909; *Otago Daily Times*, 23 Dec. 1909.
22. For W. Dinnie's views, see note by E.W. Dinnie in Dinnie material held by Mrs. A. Jemmett; *Otago Daily Times*, 24 Dec. 1909.
23. *Otago Daily Times*, 24 Dec. 1909; E.W. Dinnie's scrapbook (Mrs. A. Jemmett); *Evening*

Post, 11 July 1910; *New Zealand Herald*, 11–12 July 1910; *Otago Daily Times*, 12 July 1910; *Truth*, 16 July 1910.

24. 'Dinnie Family Book' (Mr and Mrs D. Dinnie); *New Zealand Herald*, 8 May 1923; E.W. Dinnie's scrapbook (Mrs A. Jemmett); *Truth*, 11 July 1914; information from D. Dinnie, 1979; W. Dinnie's detection notebook, April–May 1916; R. Hill draft, *NZ Police History*, vol. iii, pp. 736–7 re Samoa.

25. Mrs A. Jemmett's clippings, *Truth*, 28 May 1915; *Otago Daily Times*, 22 Nov. 1915; *Evening Post*, 16, 22 Nov. 1915.

26. W. Dinnie's death certificate; oral information, D. Dinnie; *New Zealand Herald*, 8 May 1923; Police Description Book (E.W. Dinnie entry); *Police Gazette*, 1915, p. 254; George Wilton, *Fingerprints*, 1938, ch. 36; P1, 20/444 (National Archives); *Truth*, 15 May 1915; E.W. Dinnie's marriage certificates; Margaret Dinnie's death certificate.

A second Gloucestershire tragedy

Richard Ford

In the last *Journal* I related the story of 'a Gloucestershire Tragedy' – the Charfield rail crash of 1928. Horrific though this disaster was, worse was to follow thirteen years later in different form and in time of war. I was personally involved as was my father, Inspector Albert Ford of the Gloucestershire Constabulary, who was the officer in charge of the Chipping Sodbury sub-division.

Early on the afternoon of 27 February 1941, the air raid siren on the Chipping Sodbury police station wailed its warning signal, mournfully echoed by other sirens in the vicinity, including that of the Parnall Aircraft factory at Yate, which stood beside the main Bristol to Gloucester railway line, only two stops away from Charfield. No planes or action were immediately apparent and at first it seemed that it was one of the numerous scares of the times. The illusion was soon shattered. As the notes of the sirens died away several loud thudding crashes from the direction of Yate indicated bombs falling. Parnall's had been hit and hit badly. A lone enemy aircraft, swooping from the low clouds, had dropped six bombs into the building before workers had a chance to take cover. Not all the bombs exploded simultaneously and some people who escaped from the first blasts were killed a few moments later when delayed action bombs exploded.

My father departed for the scene while I, serving as a part-time fireman in the local fire brigade, hastened to the fire station where I joined the crew of a responding appliance. On our arrival at Parnall's the sight was appalling. The main buildings were in ruins and on fire, lorries and ambulances were already bringing out dead and

injured people and other dead, dying and injured were still lying among the wreckage. As we passed through the factory gateway I briefly saw my father, distinctive in police uniform and with senior officer's white steel helmet, but from then on we lost sight of each other in the maelstrom of activity.

Critically the fire raged unchecked. Parnall's works fire brigade had been immobilised through their station being bombed and their Chief Officer being injured. Water mains had been shattered by the force of explosions. Thanks to somebody's foresight a pipeline had been laid some months previously from a distant stream across the flying field and up to the factory where it ended in a small reservoir. I assisted other firemen in getting a pump into action at the stream, thus restoring the water supply, and then returned to the main operations at the works. There, rescue workers were struggling to free people trapped in the wreckage while first aiders treated the mounting number of casualties, the most serious of whom were dispatched by ambulances to various hospitals in Chipping Sodbury and Bristol. Walking wounded, pale with shock, made their way painfully from the scene as some of the uninjured fled in panic.

Police controlled crowds and traffic. A distressed constable looked for signs of his daughter, knowing that she had been in the works when the bombs fell. Thankfully she survived, although injured.

The situation gradually stabilised as reinforcing emergency services, including some from Bristol, arrived. By nightfall the fire had been extinguished and main fire brigade units were withdrawn. I was

one of a party who kept eerie vigil throughout the hours of darkness in case there should be further outbreaks.

With daylight a grisly and gruesome task commenced for the police. As further bodies were recovered they were removed to a temporary mortuary at the Westerleigh Brickyard. There they had to be identified, their property secured and their names gathered and published on casualty lists which were posted outside the Chipping Sodbury police station. Some of the police officers involved in the task, including my father, were veterans of the First World War and they now found themselves facing scenes of carnage which they thought they had left behind them on battlefields in France over twenty years before. The dead totalled fifty-two.

The plane which had wreaked such havoc made good its escape. Ironically, at one stage in its

operations it was reported as being seen over Charfield railway station with its German markings clearly visible. Efforts were made to re-start Parnall's but a week later another raid, possibly by the same plane, took place, and three more people were killed. The factory was then abandoned and the work and workforce dispersed to other sites. A memorial to all the dead now stands in Yate Churchyard.

Police officers of the Second World War were later, with other Services, granted the Defence Medal. For some reason or other my father never claimed his. In 1984, ten years after his death, I found the certified claim form among his papers. I forwarded it to the Home Office and a fortnight later received the medal. It now rests with his earlier war medals – a silent reminder of, among other things, the 'second Gloucester tragedy'.

The rise and fall of Basil Thomson, 1861–1939

Jeffrey Bloomfield

Basil Thomson was born on 21 April 1861 at Queen's College, Oxford. His father was Dr William Thomson, Provost of the college and Chaplain to the Queen. Dr Thomson was a very gifted speaker and attracted much attention for his eloquence. He was made Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in 1861. On 26 March 1862 Bishop Thomson was made Archbishop of York. He had married Zoe Skene, daughter of the British Consul in Aleppo, in 1855 and they had four sons and five daughters. Basil Home was their third son.

Basil attended Eton and New College, Oxford. While in his second term at the university he suffered a breakdown. His physician recommended that he would recover by a life in the open air. He worked on a ranch in Iowa, then in 1883 went to the South Seas. He went to Fiji, and became a cadet in their armed forces. He was told that he had to be fluent in their language and customs to hope for promotion. In three months he could speak Fijian fluently. He was sent to other islands, such as Tonga, Nandronga and British New Guinea. His negotiations with the King of Tonga made a great impression. The King, who was 96, appointed him Prime Minister for his successor (a young great-grandson).

Thomson married Grace Webber in 1889. Not much detail exists about the marriage. His wife was the daughter of a naval officer. They eventually had two sons and a daughter. Whether it was a happy or unhappy marriage is not mentioned, which (given later events) would have been a key to understanding what happened. However, if they did have three children it seems safe to assume they were in love at the start of their marriage.

Thomson had to return to England after contracting malaria in New Guinea. Returning in 1894, he proceeded to write the first of many books, *The Diversions of a Prime Minister*, as well as *South Sea Yarns* (1894). He was a good writer, though he never failed to blow his own horn. Both *Diversions* and his later book, *The Fijians* (1908) are cited in the bibliographies for the articles on Tonga and Fiji in the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

He had decided on a legal career, so in 1896 he was called to the bar at Inner Temple. Shortly afterwards he was made Deputy Governor of Liverpool Prison. Just why he merited this job does not appear. So far he had demonstrated that he was good in the colonial service, had some administrative ability running an island kingdom, and was a readable writer. None of these points are relevant to being the second officer in a gaol. Whether the

appointment had to do with his father's name and position again cannot be shown. However, Thomson did creditably well in his new job. He was promoted to Governor of Northampton Prison.

Then, in 1900, Thomson was sent back to the Pacific to assist in the signing of the declaration proclaiming a British Protectorate of Tonga. He returned to England and was made Governor of Cardiff Prison. He eventually became Governor of Dartmoor, and (in 1907) Wormwood Scrubs. In 1908 he was made Secretary of the Prisons Commission.

In 1913 Thomson was made Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard, and head of the CID. In his initial year he was basically called upon to deal with the activities of suffragettes. The coming of the Great War changed all of this. Thomson was to make his name in British police history as the great spy catcher. To give him his proper due, he did help smash whatever spy organisation Germany set up within the United Kingdom. The exact level of his success is worth considering. Thomson, in his post-Scotland Yard career, did lecture tours in which he commented on the enemy agents he had faced. He gave one at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York City on Sunday, 5 November 1922, which got front page coverage by the *New York Times* the next day. In it, Thomson discussed the German spies he had met, and spoke highly of those who did it for patriotic motives. In particular, he singled out Carl Lody, a spy who was captured early in the war, and shot 6 November 1914. Apparently Thomson was impressed by his 'quiet dignity'. Hireling agents, who were paid to spy, were frequently cowards.

Thomson was never one to forego any opportunity to discuss his finest hour as one of England's spy masters. As late as 1936, in *The Story of Scotland Yard*, he would wax eloquent on his experiences. He also tended to reveal a degree of chauvinism, possibly forgivable in his day, but less acceptable now:

'As for the spies they sent to England, they could scarcely have been worse chosen. This was due to the fact that two separate German spy organisations were competing with one another – the one military and the other naval. Both were amply supplied with money and both were singularly incompetent. They sent musicians, dancers, music-hall actors, and commercial travellers who at best could report only gossip picked up from fellow travellers on the railways, but nothing of value either to the naval or military authorities.

'I was destined to learn a good deal about the German intellectual limitations during those four crowded years.'

One cannot claim Thomson was totally wrong about the level of incompetence in German espionage in the First World War. But if German espionage was a washout, the accomplishments of British espionage were not something to sing about. Naval Intelligence, under Sir William 'Blinker' Hall, was able to crack the German Naval code, but this was in large measure due to an assist from the Russian Navy, who turned over a copy of a captured code book early in the war. No major military campaign was won by the British by a sudden display of great spy work. Far better work was done by agents on both sides in the Second World War.

Thomson did have some face-to-face meetings with some notable espionage figures. He was responsible for deporting Ignatius Trebitsch Lincoln, former Member of Parliament and then a German spy, in 1916. That same year he met Mata Hari, and helped deport her to Spain. He felt she was a double agent of Germany and France, which is a view held by a recent biographer.

But it was Thomson's involvement in a third case that is more controversial. He was one of the intelligence officers who decided to release the notorious 'black diaries' of Sir Roger Casement after he was found guilty of treason in 1916. Casement's record as a humanitarian in the Congo and South America led to many social and cultural figures rallying to his support and trying to convince the Asquith government to commute his sentence to life imprisonment. Thomson and his cronies decided to reveal the contents of the diaries, which showed the author was a pederast. The support for Casement diminished, and the Asquith government had even less reason to change the sentence. Sir Roger hanged. Thomson never appears to have regretted his actions.

Was it all patriotism? Considering the stuff-shirt image of his photographs, his lifetime devotion to serving the state, I would hazard to guess that a good portion of his activities was due to patriotic fervour. But patriotism has its more pragmatic results: those 'glittering prizes' that are dangled before good little civil servants. The year of his destruction of Casement, the Government made Thomson a Companion of the Bath. In 1919 he got a new job title: Director of Intelligence at Scotland

Yard. He also was now a Knight Commander of the Bath. Ruthlessness sometimes pays.

There is some evidence that Thomson would have liked to have been more of an organisational reformer at Scotland Yard. Frederick Wensley wrote of some discussions he had with Thomson in *Forty Years of Scotland Yard* (1930):

'It was in 1916 that Sir Basil Thomson, then the Assistant Commissioner in charge of the CID, asked me if I had anything in mind that would put the detective system in a more fluid state. I pointed out, in a skeleton outline, the desirability of appointing superior officers of experience, each of whom should supervise and coordinate the activities of several divisions and be in more or less constant touch with each other. There should also, I suggested, be created a roving body of detectives under officers of special capacity, who could move rapidly and operate in any division where there was an epidemic of crime. They should be able to deal with it independently or in conjunction with the divisions concerned – whichever appeared most efficacious.

'Sir Basil seemed to welcome the idea, but we were at the time too concerned with wartime matters to make any immediate change. Later Sir Basil went over to the Special Branch, and the scheme lapsed. It was revived towards the end of 1919.'

According to Wensley, the scheme was put under the control of himself, Arthur Neil, Francis Carlin and Albert Hawkins (the legendary 'Big Four') and led to the creation of the Flying Squad. Thomson's spy master activities prevented him from becoming a police innovator.

The government had further use of Thomson's anti-spy activities after Ludendorff surrendered. After handling the safety of Lloyd George at the Versailles Treaty, Thomson was assigned to stop the threat of Bolshevism in Britain. The years of war had been tolerated, though barely, by the masses due to promises of better conditions and wages after a victory. Instead, there were massive unemployment and unduly low wages. In fact, even the Metropolitan Police was affected by strikes from 1918 to 1919. The real blame lay with the politicians who made ridiculous promises about creating 'a land fit for heroes'. But the government preferred to blame the new threat from distant, unpopular Russia. It also fit with an older bogey: the mass of Eastern Europeans (mostly Jewish) in London itself.

It is one of the little-known aspects of British criminal history that the relations of the Jews with

the police was (to put it in its best light) strained. It should be the subject of a full-scale study. To be as fair as I can, the police officials, with few exceptions, rarely showed any real sympathy towards the Jews. The Jews, unless they were wealthy like the Rothschilds, the Montefiores, or the Sassoons, or prominent like Disraeli, Zangwell, or Rufus Isaac, were viewed with disfavour as dirty foreigners with questionable businesses or ethics. It is easy to see how this developed. The aliens spoke English badly or with peculiar accents, had odd customs, and practised a religion which was historically suspect to Christians. They also had some criminal members (such as Ikey Solomon, the original for Fagin in the 19th century) who could be used to smear the group. Due to their far worse treatment by Russia, the Jewish aliens were suspicious of the British police as police. Therefore, a cultural, racial clash was inevitable.

If you read the books by British police figures in the early years of the 20th century, you will find the occasional jab at Jewish people. For instance, in Arthur Fowler Neil's *Manhunter of Scotland Yard*, the first chapter deals with the career of George Chapman, the 'Borough Poisoner' (1897 to 1902). Chapman, a leading suspect for Jack the Ripper, was a Polish citizen named Severin Antoniovich Klosowski. Neil refers to him as a Polish Jew. There is no proof that Klosowski was a Jew or Catholic.

Later in the book he describes a homicide case from 1908, where the murderer was one Noah Woolfe, and here Neil seems to show actual sympathy for Jews. He felt Woolfe (who killed a fellow inmate at Holloway prison) had been a kindly person goaded into killing by ostracism and malevolent persecution of the victim. But Woolfe had converted to Christianity. Therefore, without saying a word, Neil lets the reader figure out that Noah Woolfe was being persecuted by the Jews.

At first sight Neil's friend and colleague, Frederick Wensley, appears to be more tolerant. Early in his memoirs *Forty Years of Scotland Yard*, he describes his early years on the force in Whitechapel:

'At the time I resented the move to what was then one of the worst quarters of London. Not only did the thickly populated slum area of Whitechapel and the surrounding districts breed many of the worst of our native criminals and desperadoes, but it harboured a cosmopolitan population, chiefly Jews, many of who were decent hard-working folk, though others were the very scum of Europe.'

The 'scum' grates a bit, yet he seems to be even-handed. But there is another witness to look at concerning Wensley's views on Jews: Mr Justice Travers Humphreys. In his book of memoirs, *Criminal Days*, Humphreys has the following interesting scene:

'Wensley was a hot-tempered man, and during the 1914-1918 war he with his subordinates arrested a gang of Hebraic receivers in a room where they were discussing the price of a valuable lot of furs lying on the table, recently stolen from a warehouse. I had a brief at the Old Bailey to defend one of them, whose excuse for attempting to escape through the window (where he was caught by a policeman thoughtfully placed in the yard for the purpose by Wensley) was that he was terrified by Wensley, whom he did not know to be a policeman, who was walking up and down the room shouting, "Bloody foreign Jews, bloody foreign Jews."

'The defence did not avail my client, but I can well believe the story to be founded on truth: Indeed when I asked Wensley the question at a later date he said he was not prepared to contradict it and added, "I had just heard that the second of my two sons had been killed in action, and the sight of those young strong men who could find nothing better to do for the country than make money out of stolen furs made me lose my temper."

Humphreys, a humane jurist, ended his account of this incident by saying that he could not blame Wensley. The loss of both sons is tragic, but Wensley was able to drop his controls pretty quickly. Did he need to say 'Bloody foreign Jews' if he could have said 'Bloody thieves'? Obviously the word 'Jews' was readily available for Wensley to shoot out, with the intention of hurting.

If two of the 'Big Four' showed anti-Semitic tendencies, it should not be a surprise that Thomson, one of their chief officers (whom both men speak fondly of) also shared these views. *The Story of Scotland Yard* never misses an opportunity to remind you that a criminal is Jewish. An interesting example is his description of the stabbing to death of PC Thompson by a man named Abrahams. This incident is described by Wensley in his memoirs, and he does not label the killer a Jew. But Thomson does. Thomson mentions the theft of a pearl necklace worth £110,000. The gang involved had some Jewish members involved - 'a little room ... which had been let to some Jews who had not been there after the theft of the pearls'. But Thomson is sure the necklace was not as valuable as the jeweller

said it was. He mentions this to that gentleman, a Mr Mayer, who protests Thomson's criticism. Jews are always guilty, even if they are in legal trades.

He makes questionable racial connections, calling Cora Crippen a Polish Jewess (she was a Catholic). The native Protestant stock swindler Alexis Mandeville is described thus: 'His Semitic hawklike beak seemed to muffle his speech'. There was no need to say that, except to spread hatred.

Thomson began going after the Bolsheviks with all the zeal that he brought against the Boche. The exact details of these activities are not covered very well in the newspaper or books of the day, possibly because they did involve a degree of interference with the Labour Party. Thomson did get quoted in the *New York Times* of 6 November 1922 as to his belief that Bolshevism was in decline in England.

'While at the head of Scotland Yard, Sir Basil Thomson did much to prevent the spread of Bolshevism in England by checking the activities of Russian emissaries who managed to enter the country. Although a certain element in the British Labour Party has become infected with Bolshevik principles, Sir Basil does not believe this is true of the larger proportion of British working men and their present leader.

"I am convinced," he said, "that Arthur Henderson, J.H. Thomas and other labor leaders of the more conservative type have no sympathy whatever with the Reds and are, in fact, very much afraid of them. They don't dare, however, to make open war on the Reds because they might be ousted from their leadership by the radicals in the Labor Party, who are fairly numerous and extremely active.

'Bolshevism in England has declined somewhat of late owing, I believe, to the object lesson furnished by Russia, and by the suffering there. At one time it seemed as if Bolshevism might sweep the British Labor Party. In the early part of 1919, for instance, thirteen Soviets were formed in England, the radicals waved the red flag at their meetings and sang the Internationale. That sentiment has greatly subsided.'

These pronouncements may have impressed newspaper readers in 1922. In fact, Americans might have considered these very similar to the views of the American police at the time. While Thomson was cracking his whip against the Reds in the Labour Party, the Attorney General of the United States, A. Mitchell Palmer, was deporting 'undesirable aliens' to Europe. If the United States

could have the 'Palmer raids', Thomson could deport Russian agents too.

In retrospect, Thomson's calm admission makes one's blood boil a little. The men in the leading ranks of British Labour, of whom he speaks with great approval, were the conservative, do-nothing types who (with their leader, Ramsay MacDonald) betrayed the party in 1931 by creating a coalition with the Conservatives under Baldwin. In reality this National Government was dominated by Baldwin (MacDonald willing to be figurehead Prime Minister). It took Labour nearly fourteen years to recover under Clement Attlee. These were the type of Labour leaders Thomson liked. Jimmy Thomas was a real revelation of Thomson's dream politician. Thomas resigned in 1936, in disgrace, having leaked a budget tax to a wealthy crony.

Before leaving this area, I have to mention Sir Basil's unofficial writings. In the post-Great War years, the public became aware of the figure of J. Maundy Gregory, who was the man to see if you wanted some public honour, such as a knighthood. Gregory would pocket a fee, but the rest ended up in a special political fund, controlled by Lloyd George. The revelation of this scandal helped destroy that leader's ministry. For reasons of self-protection, Gregory cultivated several pompous, self-important police officials. One was Thomson. In his study of Gregory, *A Playful Panther*, Tom Cullen pointed out that Thomson wrote a series of editorials under the pseudonym 'Gellius' for *The Whitehall Gazette*. This was a magazine published by Gregory, supposedly for social gossip, but also with a reactionary slant. The Gellius editorials linked all Bolshevism to the Jews and were totally racist in character.

In 1920, due to the Irish Civil War, General Nevil Macready was transferred from his post as Commissioner of Scotland Yard to head the British Army in Ireland. His successor, Brigadier General Sir William Horwood, was the former Provost Marshal in France during the war. Sir William did not get on well with Thomson, not liking his new title of Director of Intelligence, or Sir Basil's ability to deal directly with the Home Secretary and other government departments. Being a military man, Sir William believed in lines of command, and resented Thomson's semi-independence. That Thomson's work involved possible undermining a major political party, it is little wonder that the Commissioner would be overlooked in this covert operation. Thomson resigned, his title was changed

back again to Assistant Commissioner, and Sir Wyndham Childs replaced him.

Sir Basil left on an extended trip to the United States, where he gave lectures, and where his book, *My Experiences at Scotland Yard*, was published. He was always full of hints about proper police procedures. Some of his comments showed that he could be quite sensible. He pointed to the failure of American gun laws to be as stiff and restrictive as Britain's, with the result that the States had more deaths by violence. Thomson said this in 1922, and even in 1996 gun control is a major political issue in the US.

Thomson returned to Britain in March 1923. He continued writing books, like *Queer People* (1922) and *Mr Pepper, Investigator* (1925). *The Times* announced on 4 December 1925 that he had joined a firm of solicitors dealing with insurance in the city. His future seemed secure, if less exciting than it once was.

A small notice in *The Times* of 17 December 1925 marked the beginning of his disgrace. It mentioned that on the night of Saturday, 12 December 1925, Sir Basil was arrested with a young woman for committing an offence in Hyde Park. They both failed to appear in court on Monday, 14 December, so the magistrate issued summonses against them. Sir Basil was to appear at Marlborough Street police court on New Year's Day 1926.

The woman, Miss Thelma de Lava, appeared at the police court on Tuesday 22 December. She was 21 years old (Thomson was 64) and gave her occupation as 'actress'. It was not to be a good occasion for the still missing Sir Basil, as the young lady (on advice of counsel) pleaded guilty. The newspaper account mentioned that Thelma had been arrested for the same offence on 13 November 1925. This is likely why she decided to plead guilty. She was fined 40s., bound over on her own recognisance, and told to appear at Sir Basil's hearing on 1 January. This was postponed until 4 January.

The magistrate was Henry Cancellor. Vincent Evans represented the Director of Public Prosecutions. Thomson was defended by Sir Henry Curtis-Bennett and Walter Frampton. Curtis-Bennett was one of the leading barristers of the 1920s. Sir Basil actually was facing two charges. The more serious one (and the one that covered the lesser one) was whether or not he was innocent of lewd behaviour in Hyde Park. The other was to

explain his failure to appear on the original date he was summonsed – i.e., had he forfeited bail of £5.

It was now that the story officially came out. On the night of 12 December 1925, PC Frederick Hancox was jotting down notes, on a path in Hyde Park, about an automobile without lights. PC William Lawrie joined him. As Hancox put his notebook away, his attention focused on some activity in the distance. The two constables walked over to a tree some 50 feet away from a park bandshell, and north of the path leading to Stanhope Gate. There they found a man and a woman together, looking toward Hyde Park Corner. They were sitting on the grass, the man closest to the two policemen. Both were taken into custody, Hancox taking Miss de Lava to the police station in the park, while Lawrie had the pleasure of accompanying Sir Basil.

Fairly early (if we credit the police story), Thomson showed his view of personal responsibility. 'This is a serious thing for me,' he said to Lawrie. The latter agreed. Then came the inevitable, 'Do you know who I am?' 'No, Sir,' was the reply. 'Your face is certainly familiar, but I cannot remember where I have seen you before.' The prisoner replied, 'I am Sir Basil Thomson, the ex-Assistant Commissioner. How can I keep this from my friends?' If Thomson was hoping for some help from Lawrie he was soon disappointed. 'You must not let them know,' was the sensible response.

There was some controversy about what just did happen next. Thomson and Lawrie were talking all the way to the police station. Just before they entered (according to Lawrie) Sir Basil said, 'Lawrie, if you could overlook this, you could leave the police tomorrow.' Lawrie supposedly answered, 'You should not throw temptation into my path, you know how impossible it is for me to let you go. The police is the whole means of my existence.'

Inside the station, Thomson's world began to crumble. Sergeant Reid recognised him, and telephoned Sub-Divisional Inspector George Duncan. The two constables gave their statements to Reid, before the prisoners. Duncan arrived, and was recognised by his old superior. The inspector said he was sorry to see Thomson in this fix, but when Thomson again asked if this had to continue, Duncan said that it did. Thomson asked if he had to use his name. Duncan said that was up to him. Thomson gave his name as 'Hugh' Thomson. This was to become a matter of some controversy and

interest during the trial, as it was either an error or an attempt to mislead.

Both Sir Basil and Miss de Lava were released on bail, Sir Basil giving £5. They were told to report to the police at Marlborough Street on 14 December. Neither did. Sir Basil telephoned Inspector Duncan, and explained he had mistakenly gone to the Bow Street court. A letter from Thomson to the Inspector repeated this, and Duncan found out that the story was true. Duncan assisted Thomson in attending Marlborough Street court at a later date, for service of the summons.

PC Hancox was able to give some more details of what Thomson and Miss de Lava were exactly doing. They were facing each other, he on the left, with his right arm around her neck. The night was very clear, with no snow and no fog. Sir Henry Curtis-Bennett cross-examined Hancox and asked if he had arrested other couples on similar charges. Hancox had.¹ Curtis-Bennett asked if other couples were there that night. Only one was noticed, according to the constable, besides Sir Basil and Miss de Lava. Sir Henry attempted to make it appear that this other couple was the one that Hancox had originally seen from the distance. Furthermore, he insisted that Sir Basil and Miss de Lava were not misbehaving up to the time that Hancox and Lawrie arrived. Hancox had no reason to suspect Miss de Lava, as she and her sister had been in the park several times before (at night). Again he denied they were under another tree, and that he and Lawrie ran out of nowhere shouting at them.

Cancellor announced his intention of viewing the tree, at which Curtis-Bennett suggested he take police protection. The barrister had viewed the tree the night before with Mr Frampton.

It was now Constable Lawrie who was questioned. He said it appeared that Thomson and the woman were kissing, but he would not swear to it, nor had he heard kissing. Sir Henry, foregoing the interesting (and never totally settled) issue of precisely what the lewd behaviour was, began to zero in on Lawrie's walk with Sir Basil. Lawrie said that Sir Basil mentioned that Sir James Olive was about to retire from his post of Deputy Commissioner. The appointment of a successor seemed to

¹ Joan Lock tells us in *Marlborough Street: The Story of a London Court* (1980) that these affairs were frequent enough in the 1920s to be termed 'gentlemen in the park' cases. Sir Basil was only one of several notables to be found courting danger. (Ed.)

preoccupy him. Lawrie told Sir Basil that he had heard nothing odd about it. Unlike Hancox, Lawrie knew Miss de Lava, and had arrested her the previous November on a similar charge. When Sir Basil revealed who he was, he had been surprised. Thomson never said that Lawrie made a mistake. Lawrie did admit that he had told Thomson not to tell his friends about what happened. He had difficulty in conversing with Sir Basil, once he knew who he was, and especially as Sir Basil was very open about his identity. Curtis-Bennett pressed Lawrie that as they neared the police station Thomson had said, 'I think it is going to be all right. I hope they won't prefer a charge.' Lawrie denied that and that he had discussed the matter in the police canteen (at Cannon Row).

Cancellor ended the first day's proceedings. He told the court that he would see the tree that night, accompanied by representatives of the prosecution and defence. He was reminded by defence counsel that there was an issue about which of the two trees Sir Basil and Miss de Lava had been under. Chancellor was aware of the issue.

The following day, the proceedings resumed, with Police Sergeant Reid being questioned by Curtis-Bennett. Sir Basil was totally silent while Hancox made his statement at the station. To Curtis-Bennett's inquiry, Sir Basil was not drunk at the time. Reid admitted that the 'lovers lane' where the event occurred was not lit at night. He also admitted that neither of the two constables mentioned that Thomson had been kissing Miss de Lava.

Reid said that Inspector Duncan had never said that Thomson could put down any name and address he liked. Nor did the inspector say that Sir Basil's first name was well known. Reid did correct the error of the name being given as 'Hugh', adding that Thomson's pronunciation of 'Home' had confused him.

Sir Henry, for the defence, built his case on four points:

- a) Sir Basil was a great public servant and patriot.
- b) His personality was such that he could not lower himself to commit such a crime.
- c) Given the appearance of the scene of the crime (which the magistrate had now seen), it was highly doubtful that the two police officers had actually seen any type of behaviour from such a distance. In fact, their story was untrue.

d) As the charge was based on what the officers claimed they saw, if it was untrue, the charge was untrue.

Actually, a great deal can be said in support of Curtis-Bennett's main thrust. Exactly what the misbehaviour was had never been explained. 'Lewd behaviour' is a very open term. Kissing was mentioned by Curtis-Bennett, but he was simply asking if the officers saw it. The closest reply was that Lawrie said the pair looked as if they had been kissing. It was said that Thomson had been facing de Lava, and had his arm around her neck. Intimate, perhaps, but 'lewd' behaviour?

What sunk the defence was that Curtis-Bennett tried to give Thomson a legal reason to be in Hyde Park at night. It seemed that Sir Basil was pursuing his new career as a criminal authority and writer. He was doing research. Exactly which of the two, barrister or defendant, came up with this idiotic idea never appears. Curtis-Bennett was a pretty sharp lawyer, and I cannot believe he dreamed it up. Thomson is more likely, the hypocrisy of doing it for the public good is of a piece with destroying the Labour Party for state security, or destroying Casement's chances of leniency by showing he practised deviant sex.

The opening of the defence was a parade of character witnesses, led by former Home Secretary Reginald McKenna (who had appointed Basil Thomson to Scotland Yard). Then Sir Basil himself went into the witness box. He was in the course of writing another serious study of crime, in this case dealing with the radical rabble-rousers who appear at Hyde Park Corner (which, if you recall, he and Miss de Lava were facing when arrested). He went to the park to hear such a speaker, and only then met Miss de Lava, who was sitting on a park bench. It was she who addressed him first, asking, 'Can I speak to you?' He asked her what she was doing in the park, and she said she was waiting for a friend. They began walking side by side in the park. They sat on the grass, because it was a quiet place to talk. Thomson said he would pay her for information, and he asked her questions about the people she saw in the park. As she was talking to him, they were surprised by Hancox and Lawrie.

Thomson's version of what he said to the two officers and their superiors was at considerable variance to what those four witnesses reported. He claimed that he had never said, 'This is a serious thing for me.' Rather, he had said, 'This is a serious matter for everyone concerned.' He had not said to

Lawrie, 'How can I keep this from my friends? If my friends know about this I am ruined.' Rather, it was, 'A charge of this sort would ruin anybody.' He claimed that he had asked Lawrie, 'Have you had other charges of this sort?' Lawrie (according to this version) had offered the news that the other day there had been a charges against an important foreign diplomat, but that it had passed off without notice. Lawrie must have been pretty upset by this testimony, as he was grimacing so much that Frampton got the magistrate to order him out of the courtroom.

Thomson denied that he had told Lawrie that if he forgot the charge he could leave the police the next day. He denied all suggestion that he had offered any temptation to Lawrie. He claimed that Lawrie reassured him that no charge would be made. But Duncan had said that he would have to make the charge, assuring Thomson that if he came early he would not be seen by the crowds. The defendant said his intention was to use the name 'Home Thomson', but he may have mispronounced it 'Hugh'.

Thomson mentioned that he was aware that there was to be a speech at Hyde Park that night, but under cross-examination by Vincent Evans he said that he did not know that it ended at 10 p.m. (before he showed up). Evans wanted to know why Miss de Lava never mentioned that she was a prostitute. Thomson said that she never did. He also claimed that many respectable people did speak to him to beg, and so had she. He admitted that he did not wish his friends to see him with the woman, as they would have misunderstood. Evans pointed out that Thomson's friends were aware of his literary research, but Thomson insisted that he did not wish them to see him. Evans asked if Thomson thought the research had been wise, and Thomson insisted that he did not think it unwise, in view of his object. He claimed that he did not know the reputation of the park, and misjudged the reputation of its police. He was angry on the way to the police station, and did not engage in conversation with the police.

Cancellor asked for the name of the Communist speaker that Thomson had gone to hear. Thomson would not tell him, and Curtis-Bennett insisted that matters of security prevented it from being revealed. Thomson did write it on a slip of paper that was given to the magistrate. Had he gone to try to find him? No, the police arrest prevented him. Had he told these facts to the police? No, Thomson said. Chancellor was amazed at this. Apparently, instead

of trying to explain why he was there, Thomson did not volunteer the information. He was not asked. After Inspector Duncan showed up, and showed that he believed the charges, Thomson was too angry to clear himself. The account in *The Times* of 6 January 1926 gives the gist of the testimony, but few details of behaviour or reactions. However, Thomson's testimony ends here. It is apparent that Chancellor had no further questions, but one can just imagine a red-faced Curtis-Bennett looking at his client as a simpleton who had just given an improbable story to the court.

More character witnesses came forward. Sir Douglas Straight said Sir Basil had always had great integrity, and was writing a book on Hyde Park and the evils there. A solicitor, Henry Vincent Higgins, said that Thomson told him (on 11 December 1925) that he was writing a book on police matters in the West End. Thomson's brother, Sir Wilfred Thomson, repeated that his brother had a reputation for being a respectable and decent man.

Cancellor found against him. He admitted that there was conflict on what had been said between the report of Thomson and the four police officers. But what really clinched it was the improbable image of an innocent man refusing to tell Duncan or Reid that he had legitimate reasons to be in the park, in the face of such ruinous charges. Indeed, until Sir Henry and Thomson produced this as a defence in the courtroom, nobody had the slightest idea of why he would go to the park. In short, it is essential for an innocent man to assert his innocence. Thomson was guilty, and would forfeit the £5 he gave earlier, and would have to pay £5 more for court costs.

Curtis-Bennett gave notice of appeal, with Sir Douglas Straight and Sir Wilfred Thomson being sureties for £100 each.

At this point one wonders why Thomson even bothered to appeal. The damage was done, by his own tongue more than anything else. It would have been easier if he had paid the fines, and just taken a long trip until the publicity died down.

The appeal was heard in February. It was a repeat of the same case, except that one more witness appeared, Thelma de Lava. Her testimony sank him. She said that she was on a bench, that he walked by backwards and forwards twice. *He* started the conversation, and offered to walk with her. She agreed, but asked for money 'to buy chocolates'. He gave her two half-crowns. They went to the tree and sat down. Again, a vagueness descends on the record, as the actual 'lewd' conduct

is not described. However, Thelma told the court what happened. Then she mentioned that the police came.

Curtis-Bennett had been furious at the appearance of Thelma at the appeal, and her failure to appear at the original hearing. He wanted to get at the bottom of all of it. Had she wanted to come? No she had not. Why did she come? A policewoman went to the apartment and requested her to come to a police station for a statement. She had been arrested before? Yes, In November. Lawrie arrested her? Yes. She had seen him several times in the park since then. She went to the park when meeting boys. On that December night she was to meet one at 9 p.m. but he never showed up. She had only been sitting there five or ten minutes. She saw the police officers standing near Stanhope Gate when Thomson arrived, and when he spoke to her. She had told Thomson she was waiting for a friend. Curtis-Bennett wanted to know if she had invited him to sit down. She had. She believed the police were still watching. When they sat down on the grass, had Thomson asked her who the people were sitting around them? She did not think he asked that. This punched a hole into Thomson's research story.

Before the hearing in December, Thelma had received a visitor in her cell, possibly a policeman, who had said, 'If you like to have your photograph taken, you can get out.' Just before she entered the court, she saw Lawrie. She said to him that she hoped she would not be remanded. He suggested she tell them that she wanted the case finished, and they would fine her and she could probably go. She did so, and paid a 40s fine.

She told Curtis-Bennett that it was an hour after the fine was paid that she was approached by the uniformed man about being photographed. She did not recognise the man who approached her in the cell.

Percival Clark was for the prosecution. He asked, when Thelma had pleaded guilty at Marlborough Street, had she taken part in an offence. 'Had you done anything?' 'Yes,' said Thelma. 'What you have told us of today?' 'Yes.'

The appeal was upheld. Some action, termed 'lewd' by the law, had been committed by Sir Basil Thomson with Thelma de Lava. Thelma's admission that she and he were doing some sexual act wrote 'finis' to the whole matter.

Was there more to the case than meets the eye? Hidden in the evidence was the information that the Deputy Commissioner, Sir James Olive, was due to

retire. Thomson was preoccupied with Olive's forthcoming retirement on his walk to the police station with Lawrie and Hancox. It is possible that Thomson would have been very interested in Olive's job. With a Conservative government in power, he would have had a good chance to replace Olive, even though Thomson's old enemy Sir William Horwood, who was still Commissioner, would have fought it. It would have then been a matter of time, since Sir William announced that he would retire at 60, and Sir Basil would be the Commissioner.

The worst possible mischance had befallen him. There was no way that the government would appoint a man for a high-ranking post who picked up prostitutes, no matter what patriotic actions he had done in the past.

It is easy to see his motives in hiding his arrest, but what of the police? Did they have ulterior motives? Was psychological pressure put on Thelma to plead guilty? The police could have waited for Thomson to show up at the police court in December. He had gone to Bow Street, apparently by mistake, but he was in touch with Inspector Duncan. If they had held Thelma until Sir Basil arrived, both could have pleaded together. But that means both might have pleaded 'not guilty', for Thomson would have known that if Thelma pleaded guilty, there would be a police record that could smear him. He would have tried to convince her not to pay any fine, but to fight the charges.

It is just possible that Horwood did stage manage the destruction of his old antagonist. But there is no real proof of this. In fact, Thomson did a good enough job on his own to finish a resurgence of his career. And given his political views, there was much that we thankfully missed.

He lived until 1939, and continued writing to the end, but no book appeared on Hyde Park and its evils.

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The murder of Parish Constable Henry Thompson

Reginald Hale

On the morning of Wednesday 18 May 1817, Parish Constable Henry Thompson, aged 33, was murdered by William Turner.

Thompson, a farmer of Walters Cross (now Warfield Farm), Ruardean, Gloucestershire, had arrested Turner's wife and a female relative who had been caught carrying sacks of wheat on their heads, stolen from Mr Hall of English Bicknor. Thompson was taking them to the magistrate between 7 and 8 in the morning.

William Turner and his brother Richard, in company with John Whittingham and Richard Heath, arrived to rescue the two women and were instantly taken into custody. Although William Turner was guarded on both sides, Thompson and another gentleman each taking an arm, he contrived to take a screw gun (used for poaching and killing deer) from under his smock unperceived, and shot Thompson, who fell lifeless, the ball, as it was supposed, passing through his heart.

Though the act was perpetrated in broad daylight and in front of houses at Lydbrook, all the four were able to escape for a time. Whittingham was caught the same day in a barn near Ross-on-Wye and Heath was apprehended at Westbury a few days later, but the Turner brothers remained at large.

On the 19th, Mr Lucas, Clerk to the Magistrates at Newnham-on-Severn, published a notice in the Gloucester Journal, offering a 50 guinea reward to the person who apprehended William Turner and 20 guineas for Richard Turner. William was described as being 32 years of age, 5 ft 6 ins tall with a rather hooked nose, light brown hair and grey eyes. He was a deserter from the Plymouth Division of Marines and was last seen near Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire. He was dressed in a sailor's jacket over his smock. Richard Turner was about 22, 5 ft 7 ins, with light coloured hair and eyes and was pitted with small-pox which was almost worn out.

On Thursday 26 May 1817 the *Gloucester Journal* reported the arrest of Richard Turner, who was found in a cottage inhabited by Johnathan Cockett, a wood cutter, at Pantwych, between Llandaff and Llantrisant, and he was taken under a

proper escort to the county jail at Gloucester. The following Monday he was charged with aiding and abetting his brother in the wilful murder of Parish Constable Henry Thompson.

It was decided to use the services of a Bow Street police officer, Mr Vickery. He and two local men from Ruardean went in search of William Turner, who had rested at the same cottage as his brother, when he had appeared greatly agitated, groaned much while asleep and ate nothing. He was then traced from the cottage through Bridgend, Aberavon, Baylin, Morriston, Penclawdd and was last seen between Llanelli and Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire.

The most active pursuit was continued by police officers accompanied by Vickery from Bow Street and persons from Gloucestershire and it was hoped that the villain was not destined to remain at liberty much longer. When William Turner was last seen he had on a short flannel smock, which he sometimes wore over and sometimes wore under a blue jacket and Russian duck trousers and a pair of half boots.

Henry Thompson was buried on 18 May at the Church of St John the Baptist, Ruardean and on the bottom line of the Church Register, no. 134, the vicar had written 'Barbarously murdered while in the act of apprehending a thief, by a deer gun'. Henry Thompson had been baptised in the same church on 30 December 1785 by his parents William and Sarah Thompson.

The present rector of the church, with the assistance of the churchwardens, did a survey in 1990 on all the gravestones in the churchyard prior to 1900 which were still standing. There is no record of Henry Thompson's grave or headstone remaining. The rector carried out a search all over the churchyard, but could not find any gravestone for Henry Thompson. The Forest of Dean stone used in those days can flake away very badly and this gravestone must have either flaked badly or most likely totally disintegrated as time went by.

John Whittingham, from Hawle Hill in the Forest of Dean, was hanged at Gloucester Prison in 1817 along with Richard Turner and Richard Heath.

To date, no record has been found as to what became of William Turner, who would have been executed anyway as a deserter from the Marines. There are Royal Marine records at the Public Record Office at Kew but they have not been searched to see if William Turner was ever arrested as a deserter, and if so, whether he was hanged for it, or for the murder of Parish Constable Henry Thompson

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who helped in the research of this murder: Margaret and

Melville Thompson of Warfield Farm, Ruardean, whose family have for generations farmed this farm; Rev. Clifford Davis, of the Church of St John the Baptist, Ruardean; Andrew Sinclair, also of Ruardean, whose great-great-grandfather was John Whittingham; Len Perry of the Forest of Dean History Research Society, who carried out a search for the records of the Thompson family at Gloucestershire County Records Office; and finally Gloucester City Library for the extracts from the *Gloucester Journal*.

The Northern Rhodesia Police 1932–1939

Col T.B. Wright

On 1 April 1932 the Northern Rhodesia Police was formed into two separate forces, the Northern Rhodesia Military Police and the Northern Rhodesia Civil Police. The civil force was under the command of Captain P.R. Wardroper, MBE, who already held the title of Commissioner of Police. His annual salary was to be £1000. Captain T.A. Hamilton, MBE, Officer in Charge CID in the old force, became Assistant Commissioner together with Lieutenant H.G. Hart. Superintendent R.J. Verrall was appointed Paymaster and Assistant Superintendent E.S. Fold, Staff Officer to the Commissioner. The other senior officers were A. Pickup and C.R. Arnott, MC. The salary scale for superintendents was £400–£550 and for A/Supts £380–£500 a year.¹

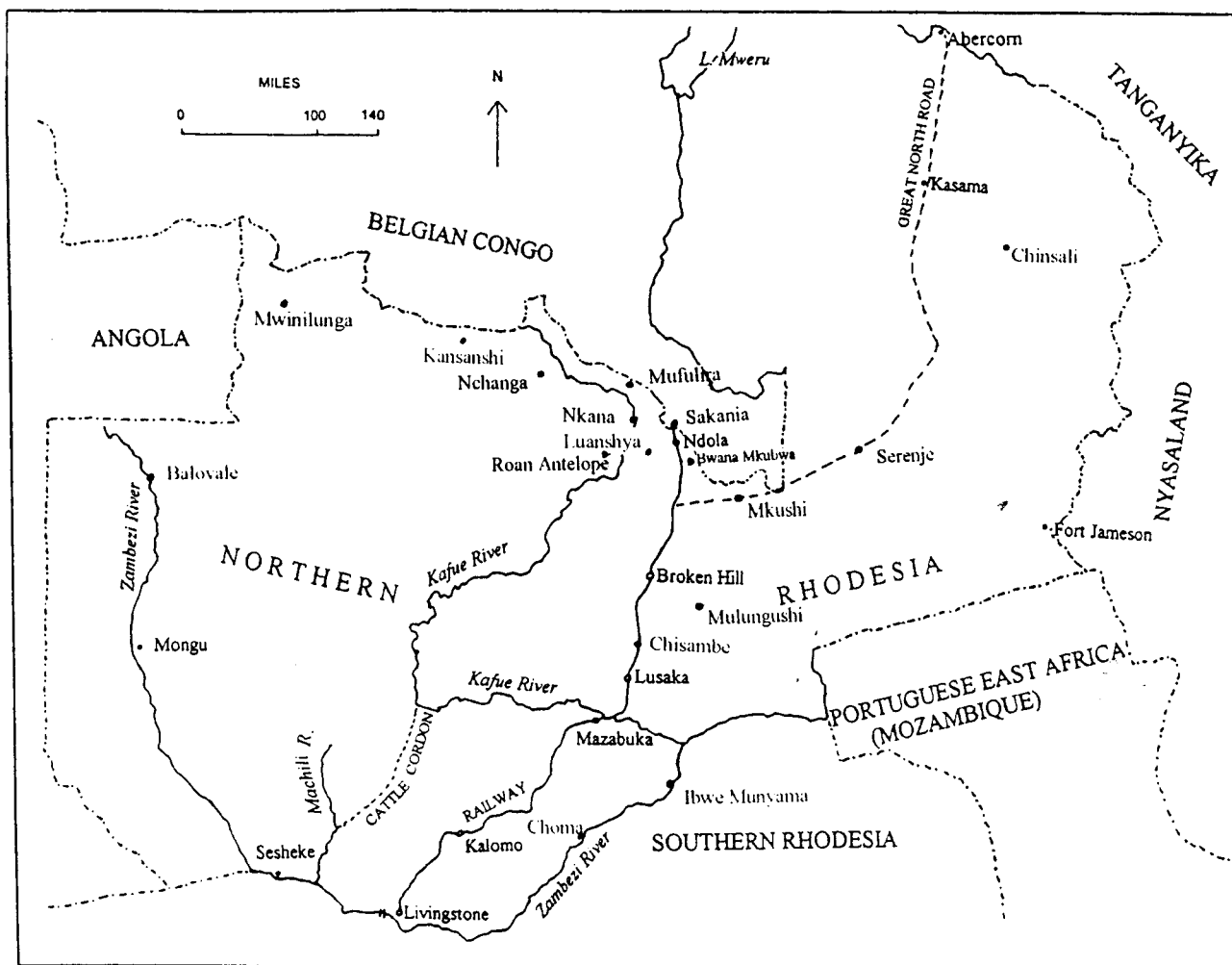
There was one Chief Inspector, R.A. Rowe,² in charge of the Training Depot, and one Chief Detective Inspector. Otherwise, the establishment of the new force was:

Inspectors and Detective Inspectors	11
Assistant Inspectors and D/A/Insp	22
British Constables and Detective Constables	40
Native Police	494
Native Detectives	42
Native Civilian Employees	31
Barotse Namwala Cattle Cordon Native Police	50
Strength was only just below establishment in the European subordinate ranks but there were only 447 African sergeants-major, sergeants, corporals, lance-corporals and privates, 41 African detectives and 45 Cattle Cordon police.	

Headquarters and the Depot remained at Livingstone. There were police detachments at Livingstone, Kalomo, Choma, Mazabuka, Sakania, Ndola, Bwana Mkubwa, Luanshya, Nchanga, Mufulira, Kansanshi, Nkana, Fort Jameson (now Chipata), Mongu, Kasama, Lusaka, Broken Hill (now Kabwe) and Chisamba. There were eighteen posts on the Cattle Cordon from Musa to Kasaya.

During 1932 Ibwe Munyama Preventive Post was opened on the Zambezi near modern Chirundu. There was still no bridge over the river other than at Victoria Falls, but a track to the south led from near the Ibwe Munyama Mission to the riverbank. Two British constables were posted here during the dry season, mainly for immigration and stock control. The post was closed during the rains as the track was then impassable.

As well as normal police duties, members of the force were responsible for: service of civil process, disposal of property in deceaseds' estates, collection of customs and hospital debts, inspection of trains under the Cattle Diseases Regulations, collection of landing fees at aerodromes, supervision of cattle dipping at Broken Hill, issue of permits for the export of hides and supervision of dipping prior to export, collection of dog tax in certain districts, issues to district commissioners of motor, dog and cycle licences, issue of film permits, issue of permits for the importation of arms and ammunition, provision of warders at local prisons where police detachments were stationed, fire brigade duties at Livingstone, and enforcement of the Weights and Measures Ordinance.



The European population of Northern Rhodesia had risen to 10,642 in 1931 but the world recession now struck the Territory. Bwana Mkubwa Mine closed in 1932 and the police detachment there, A/Insp. Tommy Davidson and ten African police, was withdrawn soon after. Nchanga and Mufulira mines also closed. Many whites left. Others had to be supplied with food and shelter by the government. Many lived in grass shelters. For more than a year D/A/Insp. Heatlie, Immigration Officer at Ndola, was employed solely in investigating destitute persons and making recommendations as to assistance required.³

Having been employed in protecting property in the almost deserted mine township since August and running the local telephone, telegraph and postal service, the police detachment was withdrawn from Mufulira in December. During 1933 the police stations closed at Kansanshi, Chisamba, Nchanga, Ibwe Munyama, Sakania, Kalomo and Kasama. Some of these were never to reopen. The British sergeant of the military detachment at Kasama assumed the duty of prosecutor in the court there.

Seventeen inspectors, assistant inspectors and British constables and about fifty African police were discharged on reduction of establishment. The salaries of all government servants were reduced.

In 1933 the Military Police became the Northern Rhodesia Regiment. The civil force resumed the title Northern Rhodesia Police under the Northern Rhodesia Police Ordinance, Chapter 44 of the Laws. The regiment retained the old crested crane badge, so the police adopted the arms of Northern Rhodesia, the fish eagle (Nkhwazi) grasping a fish over the Victoria Falls. This was surrounded by the title of the force on a scroll.

The badge was worn on the collar only by British ranks, who wore a diamond-shaped flash, top half blue, bottom white, on the left of the khaki Wolseley helmet. Senior officers had a top fold of blue on the khaki pugri. In full dress the Commissioner and his staff officer wore breeches, brown field boots and spurs. Otherwise shorts were worn with khaki puttees and brown ankle boots. Khaki ties and brown Sam Browne belts (with snake fasteners in place of buckles for inspectors and

below) were worn in all orders of dress and revolvers carried in working dress. All metalwear was brass. The Commissioner's badges of rank were a star surmounted by a crown. Assistant inspectors were identified by one, and inspectors two, blue worsted loops round the cuff of the long-sleeved tunic and shoulder straps of the bush shirt.

African police wore khaki shorts and puttees without footwear. They wore khaki drill long-sleeved tunics with black shoulder straps and brass shoulder titles, 'NRP'. Rank chevrons were khaki on red cloth and good conduct badges red on black. The black fez was worn with a black tassel but no badge. A brown leather waist belt was worn. On duty a brass brassard bearing an identification number was worn on the left upper arm and the short baton was hung from a hook on the belt.



A new capital was being built at Lusaka. On 15 February 1935 the Commissioner of Police moved up from Livingstone to occupy a corrugated iron

building near the grand new Secretariat. After eight months four rooms were made available in the Secretariat building itself for the Commissioner, his staff officer, a typist and their records.

On 17 and 18 May 1935 Africans on the Copperbelt were informed that their tax was to be increased from 10 to 15 shillings a year to offset a reduction for those in rural areas. This led to disturbances at Mufulira, where the mine had recently reopened, and at Nkana. On 28 May, Inspector Maxwell,⁴ in charge at Luanshya, heard that there would be a strike at Roan Antelope Mine on the following day. Two days earlier, Maxwell had sent off three of his twenty-six African police to guard the pontoon crossing over the Kafue on the road to Nkana. He now telephoned for reinforcements. At about 4.30 a.m. Superintendent Fold arrived at Luanshya to take command. He was followed from Nkana by about eighty African police in lorries.

At about 6.15 a.m. word reached the police camp that the Bemba workers had struck, but men from other tribes were trickling into work despite pickets of strikers. The police left camp by lorry for the mine. Some of those from Nkana had rifles but all ammunition was left at Luanshya. Parties were posted at the smelter, concentrator, power house, winding engine house, and the bridge connecting the mine compound with the plant.

This left thirty African police who arrived at the compound office shortly after 7 a.m. Several miners had assembled there, afraid to go to work without escort. A crowd of fifty or sixty strikers were threatening these men and were dispersed by Superintendent Fold and about twelve police. A large mob of strikers remained some way off dancing and waving sticks.

A number of those who wished to work were put in a lorry and sent off to no. 15 shaft with Colonel Stephenson,⁵ the former commandant of the NRP, now working for the mines. Maxwell and Constable Pipe each took out a patrol in a vanette and dispersed groups of armed strikers. The African police were issued with miners' helmets to protect their heads from missiles.

At about 7.30 a.m. a large mob charged the compound office but was turned back. An hour and a quarter later some 2000 returned to the charge hurling stones. Several police were injured before their attackers drew off. Maxwell and Pipe, returning with their patrols, had to run the gauntlet, driving through the mob which pelted the vanettes with stones. One police private was badly cut on the

head, his tin miners' helmet being dented. Others received minor injuries.

At about 9.15 the District Officer, another government administrative officer, and the mine compound manager and his assistant went, unarmed, to talk to the main body of the strikers who were on a football field. They mounted an anthill to address the men, who crowded around them, armed with sticks and stones, shouting. The DO promised to forward their complaints if they put them in a proper way, put down their weapons and returned quietly to work. His words were not well received and the four whites made their way back to the compound office through a hostile and threatening crowd.

Inspector Maxwell was then despatched with a party of African police in a vanette to assess the situation and collect ten rifles and ammunition from the police camp. The vehicle was again heavily stoned. Part of the mob had split off to attack the smelter. The police party at the mill was strengthened and those with rifles were ordered to fix bayonets. Some Europeans who had been exchanging stones with the strikers were told to retire into the buildings to avoid provocation.

The vanette was also stoned on the way back from the camp. On arrival at the compound office the ten rifles were given to members of the Luanshya police detachment but, on instructions from Superintendent Fold, no ammunition was issued. The African police were lined up in front of the office facing the howling mob and being subjected to further stoning and threats. One charge was repulsed but a second drove the thin line back onto the veranda. The crowd, estimated at between three and four thousand, advanced rapidly to envelope the offices. Most of the windows were broken by the hail of stones, iron bars, pieces of piping and other missiles. One African policeman was knocked unconscious by a large piece of rock and several others were hurt. Finally, the line broke. The police poured in through the doors, asking for ammunition, saying 'This is war! We shall all be killed!' Fold was beset by rioters at the rear of the building, and as Maxwell, hit on the head by a stone, went to ask his permission to issue ammunition, the African police appear to have helped themselves. Several fired through the windows. As the crowd drew off, the police advanced beyond the veranda, still firing, until Colonel Stephenson and Superintendent Fold came and knocked up their rifles ordering them to cease

fire. Seven rioters had been killed and twenty wounded.

A lull ensued during which, at 10.50 a.m., Captain Tysoe, Lieutenants Cree and Hughes,⁶ Sergeant Burne and forty-four soldiers of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment arrived. A flight of Victoria troop transport planes of the Royal Air Force had happened to be at Lusaka on a training flight from Cairo to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Early in the morning the troops had emplaned and had been flown to Nkana. They lined a ditch in front of the veranda twenty yards from where the mob was now uncertainly waiting.

Tysoe and his officers went forward and began to collect weapons from out of the hands of the strikers, until the surprise wore off and they began to encounter resistance. The crowd began to press forward again threatening and insulting the troops and the police who were now merely in support. Tysoe made four arrests before it was clear that any further such action would merely spark off greater violence. The rioters were pressing the troops 'belly to belly'.

Hosepipes were turned on the crowd but the pressure was insufficient. The troops had been stood for more than two hours when some were struck in the face. This caused the soldiers to throw their rifles up into the standing load position, and the crowd shrunk back. Some soldiers began to load but were stopped by their officers. Captain Tysoe ordered 'Fix bayonets' which caused the mob to retire further. Tysoe was standing in front of his men when one fired accidentally in the course of clearing a jam in unloading. The bullet passed just over Tysoe's head and harmlessly over the mob, which fled a considerable distance.

The troops and police were redeployed to protect Luanshya Township as well as the mine and compound. In the evening dissidents began looting a grain store but fled when Captain Tysoe approached with a Lewis gun section.

That night, another 150 troops arrived by train from Lusaka, so that the exhausted police could be relieved. Further use was made of the aircraft to fly up Captain J.E. Ross⁷ and fifty Europeans of the British South Africa Police from Salisbury to Ndola, while a hundred members of the BSAP of both races came by train from Bulawayo. Peace quickly returned to the Copperbelt.

The strength of the Northern Rhodesia Police at the time of the riots was 475 including 50 on the

Cattle Cordon. The establishments for the Copperbelt stations for 1935 were:

Ndola : 4 European & 42 African police

Luanshya: 3 European & 31 African police

Nkana : 5 European & 44 African police

Mufulira : 3 European & 20 African police

TOTAL : 15 European & 137 African police

The fact that eighty African police were available at Nkana to reinforce Luanshya and that, according to the Commissioner Captain Wardroper's evidence at the inquest into the deaths there, seven of the twenty-nine African police at the Roan Antelope Compound had been drawn from the Cattle Cordon and were only partially trained, indicated that there had been some effort to form a reserve to deal with disturbances following the announcement of the tax increases.

The Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances was satisfied that the detachments of the force available for normal policing on the Copperbelt were quite insufficient to deal with such unrest, and that a reserve of manpower was required close at hand. Accordingly, a detachment of the NRR was posted at Bwana Mkubwa and remained there until after the outbreak of the Second World War. The establishment of the NRP was increased by nine European and ninety-six African police, the majority for duty at Copperbelt stations.

Tear gas, respirators and goggles were obtained from South Africa to be held at stations in case of riots. The gas was in liquid form in glass spheres about the size of cricket balls. A pamphlet, 'Instructions on the use of armed force for civil, military and police officers', was prepared and issued. Amended from time to time, this pamphlet was issued to all assistant inspectors on appointment for the remainder of the existence of the force.

Housing was a problem as well as manpower. At Mufulira in early 1935 two tents had to be used for office accommodation as the station roof did not keep out the rain. By August the European police there had to vacate their quarters and build grass huts because the Kimberley brick was infested with bugs and white ants. The Officer in Charge, Inspector G.W. Rees, lived in a grass hut throughout the rainy season.⁸

In January 1936, four newly joined British constables commenced a 12-week course of instruction at the Depot, now commanded by Superintendent Verrall. That year the first 'Standing Orders, General Instructions and Dress Regulations' were issued, 58 single-sided pages compiled by

A/Supt A. Pickup, now staff officer. In 1936 seven African youths were enlisted as boy buglers, an experiment which was a success. Boy buglers, usually the sons of policemen, remained a feature of the force.

On 6 April 1936, Captain Wardroper proceeded on leave pending retirement. Mr Hart, who had been recently appointed to the new post of Deputy Commissioner, became Acting Commissioner with Verrall as his deputy. Superintendent Pickup took command of the Depot.

The population of Northern Rhodesia was now estimated to be 1,378,000, of whom 9,913 were whites and 342 Indians. 11,123 cases were taken to court by the police during 1936. On 1 January 1937, Native courts were established to deal with civil disputes and minor crime involving only Africans as both complainants and defendants.

There was then no Inspector General of Colonial Police. Sir Herbert Dowbiggin, CMG, Inspector General of Police in Ceylon for the past twenty years, was regarded as the leading expert and had inspected the Cyprus Police in 1926 and the Palestine Police in 1930. In December 1935, the Northern Rhodesia Government asked him to inspect the NRP.⁹

He arrived in March 1937 and found a force of some 636 including the Cattle Cordon and recruits, leaving some 465 trained Africans. Strength on the Copperbelt, where the population had risen to 70,866, was now:

Ndola – The Superintendent, 1 white detective, 5 other Europeans and 62 African police (including 6 employed on the railway).

Luanshya – 5 European and 55 African police.

Nkana – 6 European (including 1 CID) and 56 African police.

Mufulira – 5 European and 55 African police.

Dowbiggin recommended that an assistant superintendent be posted to Nkana to be responsible to the superintendent for the supervision of Nkana and Mufulira while his superior concentrated on Ndola and Luanshya. European detectives should be posted to Luanshya and Mufulira.

African police strength elsewhere was:

Broken Hill: 45 plus 6 on the railway

Lusaka: 60

Mazabuka: 31

Livingstone: 51 plus 6 on the railway

Fort Jameson: 23

Choma: 13

Mongu: 13

At the Depot were two intakes a year for the six month-training course, each of forty-two recruits. Twenty-five African police attending six- to twelve-week refresher courses on return from vacation leave formed the only trained reserve.

Dowbiggin reported that the European police, seven officers and sixty-one inspectors and constables, compared favourably with the police in any country he had visited, but the whole of police work proper was done by the whites assisted by the African detectives. The uniformed African police must be given more thorough police training.

Mongu was still a three-week journey from Livingstone although it was hoped that a new road from Lusaka would reduce the journey to three days. Dowbiggin rated the African police at Mongu the weakest and most inefficient body he had seen. They had nothing to do. Prosecutions had dropped from 162 in 1935 to 81 in 1936 with only seven in the first four months of 1937. The station was manned only because of an old stipulation that the Resident Commissioner be provided with a suitable suite and escort. Dowbiggin's recommendation that the police strength be reduced to one African detective was not followed. Instead of the European gaoler he had suggested, a European police officer was posted in. He found plenty to do. Two years later, when criticised by an inspecting officer, he pointed out that being in charge of prison industries he was responsible for repairs to government houses, furniture, roads and bridges, the painting of buildings, prison sanitary and water services and building a brick runway for a new aerodrome. He also had to maintain all government transport.

The Chief Secretary to the Government pointed out that in twenty-two districts there were neither police nor troops. This was dangerous in view of the poor communications in the Territory. It took nine days to reach Balovale from Mongu by river and three to ten days to drive from Ndola to Mwinilunga, depending on the weather. Chinsali was three days' march from Kasama. Dowbiggin's solution was for landing grounds to be prepared at each district HQ and wireless installed. Prompt reinforcement by air would then be possible all over Northern Rhodesia.

As a result of the Dowbiggin Report, the rank of British constable was abolished with effect from 31 December 1937 when all serving constables became assistant inspectors grade II. Their pay remained on the scale £246 to £300 per annum. Bicycle

allowance was payable at 2/6d a month. African police ranks now became:

Sergeant-Major : First, Second and Third Class

Sergeant: First, Second and Third Class

Constable: Merit, Long Service, 1st, 2nd & 3rd Class.

Merit Class constables wore a two-bar chevron, gold braid on blue; Long Service two bars, khaki braid on blue and 1st Class one chevron, khaki on blue.

Constables were paid 15 shillings a month with free quarters, rations, uniform and medical treatment. A small literacy allowance was payable to those proficient in English.

By 1938 moves were afoot to unify the Colonial Police Service. Gazetted officers were to be permitted to transfer from one colony to another, thereby increasing opportunities for promotion and furthering efficiency by cross-fertilisation. Inspector Eric Halse transferred to British Somaliland in the rank of superintendent.¹⁰ Plans to institute a common Colonial Police uniform were shelved on the outbreak of war in 1939. The only pre-war change in the uniform of the NRP was the adoption of black gorget patches in place of collar badges by the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Staff Officer.

Motor transport was still scarce. Mufulira, which now had a complement of one assistant superintendent, seven members of the inspectorate and forty-seven African police, had one motor vehicle. This was reported to be 'worn out, useless and a danger to the driver and the general public'!

In October 1938 a Photographic Bureau was established at CID Headquarters, still at Livingstone. It was equipped to develop and enlarge spool film received from stations.

Progress towards modern police methods and up-to-date equipment, and perhaps more importantly, the general development of the Territory suffered a further setback with the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939.

Notes

1. Capt. Wardroper OBE KPM, see *PHS Journal* 8:24, n. 5.
2. Capt. T.A. Hamilton MBE, see *PHS Journal* 9:1-n. 9.
3. H.G. Hart, see *PHS Journal* 9:14, n. 8 and 11:36, 1.
4. Maj. Robert John Wyndham Verrall MVO (194 CPM (1950), born 1896, Tpr BSAP 1920, NF 1928, A/Supt 1929, Supt 1931, DCP 193

- CofP Bahamas 1951, Mgr Mine Police Dept Rand Mines Ltd 1957, Rtd to Isle of Man 1963.
- E.S. 'Gerry' Fold, Insp. i/c Bwana Mkubwa 1930, A/Supt and Paymr 1931, Staff Offr 1.4.32, still serving 1946.
- Lt Col Andrew Pickup CPM (1945), OC Depot 1937-38, DCP Aden 1940, Military Svce AdInt and Sy NR 1943, Supt 1945.
- C.R. Arnott MC, see *PHS Journal* 11:36, n. 1.
2. C/Insp. R.A. Howe MSM, see *PHS Journal* 7:75, n.15.
3. Thomas Middleton Davidson CPM (1951), Const. NRP 1929, Insp. Ndola 1937, A/Supt 1939, OC Depot 1939-51, Supt 1948, S/Supt Ch Cmdt NRPR 1951, ACP 1953, Rtd to Ndola 1960, served NRPR, d. 1987.
- L.A. Heatlie, see *PHS Journal* 11:36, n. 4.
4. C/Insp. James Maxwell, i/c Broken Hill 1920, Lusaka 1929.
5. Col A. Stephenson CMG CBE DSO MC, see *PHS Journal* 11:35, n. 1.
6. Maj. W. Tysoe DSO MC, see *PHS Journal* 11:36, n. 1.
- Maj. A.B. Cree, see *PHS Journal* 9:14, n. 11. A reproduction of one of his watercolours accompanies this article.

7. John Ellis Ross, 1771 Tpr BSAP No. 1 Mobile Colm 1914, att'd Rhodesia Native Regt 1916.
8. C/Insp. Geoffrey W.L. Rees, Tpr BSAP 1923, Const. NRP 19.6.28, Insp. Oi/c Mufulira 1935-37, C/Insp. Oi/c Lusaka, Rtd ill health 21.11.46, Desk Offr SB HQ Lusaka, d. 10.1.64.
9. Sir Herbert Layard Dowbiggin CMG (1926) KPM, b. 1880, s/o Rev. R.T. Dowbiggin, ed. Merchant Taylors', Ceylon Police 1901, IG 1913.
10. Lt Col Eric Harvey Halse OBE (1961) QPM (1954) CPM (1945), b. Peddie, SA, December 1912, s/o Capt. Harry Halse SAP, Tpr BSAP 1930, No. 48, Const. NRP June 1931, A/Insp. 1936, Supt Br. Somaliland P. 1938, Military Svce 1940-46 E. Africa, Ethiopia, DCP Somaliland 1946, MBE CofP Somaliland 1950, DCP NR 1953, CofP NR December 1962-1964, d. Somerset, West SA, 17.8.82.

Sources: V. R. Brelsford, *The Story of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment*, Government Printer, Lusaka, 1954; *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 June 1935; *Nkhwazi*, the magazine of the Northern Rhodesia Police; The Dowbiggin Report.

Inspector Peter Lennon

Essex Weekly News – 16 February 1923

Researched by Elizabeth Sellers

Police Officer's retirement

Eventful career on sea and land

To have followed the sea for seven years, during which period he sailed round the world three times and was shipwrecked twice, to subsequently serve nearly 30 years as a policeman and to retire on a pension in the prime of life, is the experience of Inspector Peter Lennon, of Witham, whose connection with the Essex Constabulary will cease at the end of this month. His forthcoming retirement will sever a link that has existed between his family and the Essex police for more than 70 years, for his

brother, ex-Supt. John Lennon, of Clacton, served for 36 years, relinquishing duty at Colchester in 1916; and his uncle, the late Supt. John Lennon, had completed over 40 years service when he resigned at Epping in 1899.¹

Saved at sea

On leaving school Insp. Lennon, who is a native of Ireland, and belonged to a well-known Wexford family, served for four years on a mail boat between England and Australia. Once his ship struck a reef in the Red Sea, and the passengers and crew were rescued by two British men-of-war and landed at Aden without loss of life. On an earlier occasion an old vessel on which he sailed foundered in the Pacific during a gale, but all on board were saved by a passing ship. Once while awaiting the refitting of a vessel at Sidney the then Governor General of

Australia, who had been a passenger, gave the crew a free pass over all the railways in Australia, and Insp. Lennon took full advantage of the opportunity to visit important centres of the colony. After reaching the position of chief steerage steward in the R.M.S. Oratara (which was sunk during the war) he left the sea in October 1893, and a month later joined the Essex Constabulary.

Insp. Lennon was first stationed at Coggeshall, and then successively at Lambourne End, Theydon Bois, Epping Upland, Purfleet, Grays, Upminster, Romford, Warley, and Southend. When Southend as a County Borough started their own force in 1914 Insp. Lennon, who was then sergeant, removed to Grays. In April 1915, he attained the rank of Inspector and was transferred to Thorpe-le-Soken, where he remained until June 1920, when he left to take charge of the Witham Sub-Division.

Discovered stolen jewellery

During his service he has been commended by the Justices and his Chief on numerous occasions. After a burglary and the theft of a large quantity of jewellery from a residence at Theydon Bois in 1897 Insp. Lennon was prosecuting inquiries in plain clothes in Epping Forest; not far from the scene of burglary, when he noticed a stranger searching in the wood. He turned out to be the burglar, and after his arrest the Inspector found a bag containing all the missing jewellery buried near the spot. The prisoner, who had been released from gaol only two days previously, was subsequently sentenced to seven year penal servitude for the offence.

Crew picked up

But Insp. Lennon's exploits were not always confined to the land. Early one morning, while serving at Southend, he noticed the pleasure boat Sunbeam, which was anchored about a mile from the end of Pier, on fire. He and P.c. Dibbin hastened to the end of the Pier, jumped into a boat, and rowed to the burning ship, as it was known that the crew was on board. By the time they arrived the vessel was enveloped in flames and suddenly sank. As she went down there was a terrific explosion, which temporarily lifted the boat out of the water, but did not capsize her. The crew, who had fortunately jumped overboard, were all picked up and saved by the police officers.

Insp. Lennon has been acting-superintendent for periods at Braintree and Clacton. While at the seaside town he was concerned in the arrest and conviction of a person described as a "gentleman money lender", who obtained sums by fraud. On

that occasion he was not only commended by the Justices and several of the victims, but by the defendant himself, who, after serving his sentence, wrote thanking him for the fair way in which he had dealt with him, adding that he "did not expect to find such a gentleman in the Police Force." He also expressed a wish to meet the Insp. again. The desire was gratified in a dramatic manner, when sometime afterwards, Insp. Lennon went to Lancaster Assize to prove previous convictions against him after he had again been found guilty of similar offences.

From 1915 till 1920 Insp. Lennon acted in close co-operation with the military authorities at Thorpe-le-Soken and received their thanks. When he left Thorpe-le-Soken he received a cheque subscribed for by the inhabitants, the presentation being made by Lady Byng. On his retirement he intends to reside at Witham.

Notes

1. Peter Lennon, PC 112, 23 on 10.11.1893. Born Moyeady, Wexford. 6' 1½". Formerly a ship's steward. Single. Acting sergeant 1.11.1903; sergeant 1.5.1907. Pensioned, as Inspector, at Witham 28.2.1923. Married - 1 son 2 daughters.

John Lennon - brother of the above. PC 14. 20 on 20.8.1879. Born Moyeady, Wexford. 5' 10½". Formerly a labourer. Single. Sergeant 1.3.1885. Pensioned as Superintendent, at Colchester, 31.3.1916. Married.

John Lennon - uncle of the above. PC 102. 24 on 7.1.1850. Born Meade, Wexford. 5' 8½". Formerly Irish Police. Single - Married 1853. Sergeant 1.8.1863. Pensioned as Superintendent, at Epping, 30.9.1891.

(Essex County Constabulary, Force Registers 1840-1909 - J/P 2/1, 2; Distribution of Force Registers - J/P 1/4, 1/24, 1/26; Essex Record Office)

*Elizabeth Sellers' interests include the demography of fourteen rural west Essex parishes, especially personal mobility in the 19th century. She discovered the importance of the rural police as a well defined group of mobile working men, whose origins and careers could be followed, when working with census returns.

A story of heroism and betrayal

Peter Cole

Last year, Keith Robinson, Divisional Secretary of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, Reigate and Banstead, received a request out of the blue from France for information about an RAF bomb aimer. The writer asked to be put in touch with wartime Flying Officer Edgar Jackson or his family. Keith Robinson, who, with the help of SSAFA volunteers around Britain, has traced many families of shot-down aircrew, set about the task with help from Peter Cole, SSAFA Press Officer. The two men pieced together this account with help from Edgar Jackson's widow, Rose, now living in Eastbourne; the wireless operator in his crew, Arthur Palmer, of Henley on Thames; a French patriot, Mlle Rolande Roy, of Orleans, who hid him after he baled out; and other records from the end of the War.

The story begins three-and-a-half weeks after D-Day, on the night of 30 June/1 July 1944. Edgar Jackson, a former Bradford police constable, now Flying Officer, was bomb aimer aboard Lancaster M-Mike LM619, flying at 18,000 feet. It was turning for home after dropping its high explosive bombs on the key rail centre at Vierzon, ahead of the Allies' advance.

The RAF sustained heavy losses. Fourteen of the 118 Lancasters taking part in the raid did not return.

Suddenly, rear gunner Victor Locke reported a German night fighter dead astern and called to the pilot: 'Corkscrew starboard. Go!' as he opened fire. Then the gunner called to the pilot to make the turn tighter to shake off the fighter still hard on their tail.

Seconds later, the huge four-engined bomber rolled over and hurtled towards the ground.

Wireless operator Arthur Palmer described the chaos inside the aircraft. As the Captain, Pilot Officer Dave Rees, struggled with the plane, using just one hand on the steering column, the navigator, Pilot Officer Jack Martin, went to help, thinking Rees must be badly wounded.

In fact, the pilot was busy operating the trim wheel behind him with the other hand in order to make the plane tail heavy to pull out of the dive.



Flying Officer Edgar Jackson

'Jack didn't hear Dave telling him to lay off because his intercom was disconnected,' said Mr Palmer, 'Then I noticed that the forward escape hatch was being opened by Eddie Jackson, the bomb aimer. Mike Dunphy, the flight engineer, was holding Eddie's lapels and looking at the Captain for his order to bale out. The aircraft was shuddering violently. Suddenly, Eddie disappeared out through the hatch, and immediately the aircraft pulled out of the dive and shot up again.'

They had dropped to 2000 feet in seconds. The violent manoeuvre ripped the ailerons from the wings. With only the tail to steer by, Pilot Officer Rees brought M-Mike and the rest of the crew safely back to RAF Waltham, Lincolnshire. The aircraft was a virtual write-off. Pilot Officer Rees was awarded the DFC. 'The navigator should have got one too,' said Mr Palmer.

The morning after the raid, Rolande Roy, a petite, pretty young woman, returned to the remote cottage she rented a few kilometres from her home near Orleans railway station. She had moved there to escape the bombing but, because it was

considered dangerous for a girl on her own, she spent the nights with a cousin nearby.



Rolande and Raymond Roy

As she approached the house, the towering figure of Edgar Jackson, clad in flying suit, rose from his hiding place in the vegetable garden. Frightened to speak, but without a second thought, she indicated to him to run into the house.

The situation was fraught with danger. Rumour was rife that Germans posed as Allied airmen to trap local people into revealing their sympathies. And the cottage had no escape; all windows and doors opened on the same side.

In a rural community where everybody got to know everyone else's business, she dared not confide in a soul. It came as a surprise to her brother, Raymond, when he called at the cottage.

'He went off in search of Edgar's parachute,' she said. 'We knew that if the Germans found it they would search all the houses. It eventually turned up when the wheat was harvested.'

Mlle Roy did confide in the local nurse who was in charge of rationing. She replied: 'Thank God it is you – and not me.'

But Mlle Roy knew someone in the Resistance. A schoolteacher called to take Flying Officer Jackson to Orgères. Wearing a jacket which had belonged to Mlle Roy's late father and the nurse's son's trousers, the bomb aimer departed from the cottage – minus his very English moustache.

Three days after emerging from the vegetable plot, he was heading for Paris in the care of the Resistance. A week later, to add to the Roys'

consternation, the Germans arrested Monsieur Brossard, the Resistance leader involved in getting him away. Rolande had given M. Brossard the plans of her house. But he did not betray her and went to the concentration camp keeping his secret.

Edgar Jackson had left Mlle Roy his address in Ilkley. But where was a safe place to hide it? 'First, I hid it in a bobbin of thread,' she said. 'But I thought that was too obvious. Then Raymond wrote it into his English exercise book. He thought the Germans would not notice it there.'

When Orleans was liberated a few weeks later, Mlle Roy wrote a letter to Edgar's wife, Rose, and gave it to a British airman, asking him to post it when he returned to England.

Rose Jackson was in hospital after the birth of their daughter, Christine, when a nurse read to her the news that her husband was safe. He had been listed as 'missing, presumed dead.'

After the war Edgar wrote: 'I realise, Mlle Roy, that I should have stayed with you a bit longer, but I thought of the great danger that I was putting you in and I should never have forgiven myself if my presence under your roof had brought you disaster. I consider myself fortunate to have known such a brave woman as you.'

Had it been possible for Edgar Jackson to have remained hidden in the area he would have returned home soon, for Orleans was liberated by the Americans on 17 August, just six weeks later.

Instead, within a week, he was in deepest trouble. The group in Paris where the Resistance had taken him told him a car would take him to Spain and freedom. But the car was packed with Gestapo who sped him away at gunpoint. The Paris Resistance cell was a front for the Gestapo, who threw away Jackson's ID disc and announced that he would now be shot as a spy.

In Fresnes prison, just south of Paris, he found nearly 200 allied airmen who had been captured by the same group. But worse was to come. And Edgar Jackson wrote it all down in pencil in a neat little brown-papered book.

'The first sign of an ill wind approaching was the arrival of the Gestapo uniformed police sent to transport us to Germany,' he wrote. 'A brutish looking officer read us the riot act,' says the log. 'We were being taken to a railway station in Paris by motor coach, and if anyone tried to escape, a hand grenade would be thrown in and the whole coach wiped out.'

Their final destination was Buchenwald Concentration Camp. But the rail journey was a nightmare of harsh conditions, brutality and the cold-blooded murder by the guards of a 17-year-old French youth. Two of the airmen in the truck were ordered out to bury the lad.

Page after page records everything he came in contact with in Buchenwald. 'Up to now we had thought our Gestapo guards to be the worst possible,' he wrote, 'but we were soon to realise that Germany had a worse product – the SS.'

Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben							
Kriegsgefangen, Lager Nr. 3 d. Lw. (Oflag I.)							
Des Kriegsgefangenen	Name:						
	Vorname:						
	Geburtsort und -ort:						
	Religion:						
	Vorname des Vaters:						
	Familienname der Mutter:						
Lichtbild							
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Größe	Haarfarbe	Bk					
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On arrival, they were marched off and stripped naked. All belongings were confiscated. Heads and bodies were shaved and they were doused with buckets of disinfectant. The clothes issued to him had been worn by men murdered in the camp. 'I wore the cap of one exterminated Russian prisoner and the black Russian-style blouse of another. With the crematorium burning away all day, there were always garments to be issued to such as me.'

In this block of 800 prisoners, 500 were gipsy children whose parents had been murdered in the gas ovens of Auschwitz. 'They were completely wild,' he recalled after the War. 'They killed one man, a prisoner, with their hands, tearing him to pieces.'

His log details the history of the camp and lists the categories of prisoners: red triangle = political; green = criminal; purple = religious; yellow = Jew; yellow Star of David = Polish Jew; pink = homosexual; black = saboteur; yellow armband with three

black balls = insane. He wrote a gruesome account of the medical museum including sadistic exhibits.

Nothing missed his attention. One chapter is headed 'Jolly experiences with the Russians at Buchenwald.' With Russian and German communists interned there he enjoyed political arguments. He got the nickname 'Flash', from passing on news flashes from the Russian Tass news agency. Others called him 'Tovarish'.

Meanwhile, once it was known that he was safe, the Red Cross had been trying to find him. They were able to have him moved to Stalag Luft 3, after ten weeks in Buchenwald, and now he started a new chapter in a notebook supplied by the YMCA.

'After Buchenwald this is heaven,' he wrote. He regained his strength and played football again. He lists books he read, a film he watched – Marlene Dietrich in 'The Spoilers', and made notes from Hobbs' *How to Manage a Private Hotel*, which must have stood him in good stead when he went into that business with his wife and mother-in-law. He collected recipes by the score – all written down in his Stalag Luft 3 log.

When the camp was liberated by the Russians at the end of the War, Flying Officer Jackson made his way to the American lines. Soon, he was back with his family in Yorkshire.

And the Nazi collaborators in Paris? They were rounded up and their leader, Jacques Desoubrie, who tried to commit suicide in prison by taking poison, was executed. The gang had combined betrayal of allied aircrews with smuggling Normandy butter for the black market. When their house was raided a bathtub of butter showed that the investigators had found the right place.

After the War Edgar Jackson returned to Orleans to introduce Rose to Rolande and Raymond Roy. The families became lifelong friends, exchanging letters up until Edgar's death a few years ago.

Mlle Roy, a pretty, animated lady of 83, shares with her brother Raymond's family the same house in Orleans where they lived during the War. She still has Edgar's flying helmet and a certificate expressing gratitude for her action signed by Air Chief Marshal Tedder.

Rose Jackson, a warm and delightful person, lives in Eastbourne where the family moved after the War.

Edgar Jackson, who started his police career with the Met before moving to Bradford in 1938, re-joined the police after the War and resigned a day later, on 4 May 1946, to go into the hotel business.

More than just a square mile

Bernard Brown

Ever since the Metropolitan Police force came into existence in September 1829, an envious eye has been kept on the City of London, with a view to it being placed under the jurisdiction of that force.

A century ago, however, the role was reversed when a Bill was presented to Parliament which would have allowed the City Police to take over responsibility for several parishes south of the river in the Borough of Southwark.

The City's interest in the borough goes back much further than the last century, in fact back to 1086 and the Domesday Book, where the borough, then part of Surrey in the Hundred of Kingston was generally thought to be outside the tenural system of that county and was recognised as an asylum for fleeing serfs who had escaped their manor. Many felons, therefore, would escape from the City authorities and take refuge in the borough by passing over London Bridge, a practice which was to remain virtually unchanged up to the nineteenth century.

During the reign of Henry IV (1406), a charter granted the right to arrest criminals beyond the city walls and carry them off to Newgate Gaol to be tried before the mayor and magistrates of the Gaol Delivery. Many inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark preferred to allow offenders to escape untried rather than bear the cost of travelling to the Surrey Assize at Reigate, Kingston or Guildford.

It was not until the following century, in the reign of Edward VI (1550) that, for the sum of £647 2s 1d, several lands and tenements in Southwark late pertaining to the Monastery of Bermondsey were bestowed upon the mayor. Up until May 1550 the Guildable Manor (acquired in 1327) at the foot of London Bridge was the only manor under the jurisdiction of the City and was bounded by the present St Mary Overly's Dock in the west, to Hays Lane in the east, to just south of the George Inn in Borough High Street. The two new manors, known as the Great Liberty Manor and the Kings Manor, were acquired between 1536 and 1538 by Henry VIII from the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bermondsey Abbey respectively.

The Great Liberty Manor, although stretching only a short distance along the Thames from Hays

Lane to St Saviours Dock (Shad Thames), took a meandering and circuitous route to the east of the borough culminating in a narrow strip bounded either side by the present Tabard Gardens until it reached St Thomas-a-Waterings, in the (Old) Kent Road.¹

The Kings Manor commenced south of the Guildable Manor, just beyond the Elephant and Castle where it ran west towards Bedlam (the Bethlehem Lunatic Asylum, now the Imperial War Museum), along the present Lambeth/Southwark Borough boundary where it crossed south of the Lambeth, Westminster, Waterloo and Blackfriars Roads to run north-easterly down to the Thames at St Mary Overly where it again met the Guildable Manor.

There were eventually to be five such manors within the jurisdiction of the City. Paris Garden Manor (later Christ Church Parish), stretching from the present Lambeth and Southwark boundary at Barge House Stairs, crossed Blackfriars Road near Pocock Street to run back down to the river at Bankside. (The present Paris Garden dates only from the First World War when it was renamed from Brunswick Row due to anti-German feeling.)

Finally we come to the Liberty of the Clink, once known as the Bishop of Winchester's Manor, which we now associate with the word prison. This small liberty nestled between the Paris Garden and Kings Manor.

Stow's survey of London undertaken in the reign of Elizabeth I (1598) describes Southwark as a ward of London 'without the walls', or to give it its correct title 'Bridge-Ward-Without', the 26th in number, consisting of the Borough of Southwark in the County of Surrey.

By 1770 the parishes within the various Southwark manors employed the following number of constables:

¹ Tabard Street, formerly Kent Street, was the main road between London and Dover and was in such a mean and dilapidated condition that the Surrey and Sussex Turnpike authorities constructed the parallel Great Dover Street in 1814 so that travellers need not avert their eyes from such depredation.

St Olave	5
St George	6
St Saviour	5
St Thomas	2
St John, Horsleydown	4

In 1785, in the aftermath of the Gordon Riots five years earlier, William Pitt proposed an abortive new Bill whereby a 'District of the Metropolis' would be established which was to be divided into nine police districts (including the City). Needless to say, the proposals were greeted with widespread dismay by the City authorities who thought it 'a violation of their corporate dignity and right to self government'.

A Middlesex Justices Act (32 Geo. III, ch. 53) was, passed, however, in 1792 which, though not including the City, did include the County of Surrey, where a police court was established at Union Hall, Southwark, consisting of three justices and six constables, as its jurisdiction covered that of Bridge-Ward-Without. A clause was inserted preserving the right of Charter, within the City's manors.

A *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* was written in 1797 by Patrick Colquhoun which was not enthusiastically received in the City. In spite of this opposition the Thames Police was formed the following year, and even today patrols that part of the Thames running through the City between Tower and Blackfriars Bridges.

In 1818, during the mayorship of Christopher Smith, the boundaries of the Borough of Southwark were surveyed, and several boundary stones were erected bearing the City arms, some of which survive to this day.

In 1829 Peel's Bill 'For improving the Police In and Near the Metropolis' was passed on 19 July with virtually no opposition, mainly due to the exclusion of the City, in whose affairs Peel had remarked that 'he should be afraid to meddle'. In

September 1829 two companies known as the 'F' or Covent Garden Division and the 'G' or Finsbury Division were established on the north-western extremity of the City. This was followed in February 1830 by the 'H' or Whitechapel Division, while in March 1830 the MPD was extended across the river into Surrey with the creation of the 'L' or Lambeth and the 'M' or Southwark Divisions.

'L' Division had a station-house in the parish of Christ Church (Manor of Paris Garden) while 'M' Division covered the remaining City domains within the borough, leaving the City to its decrepit system of 'Charlies' until finally reorganised between 1832

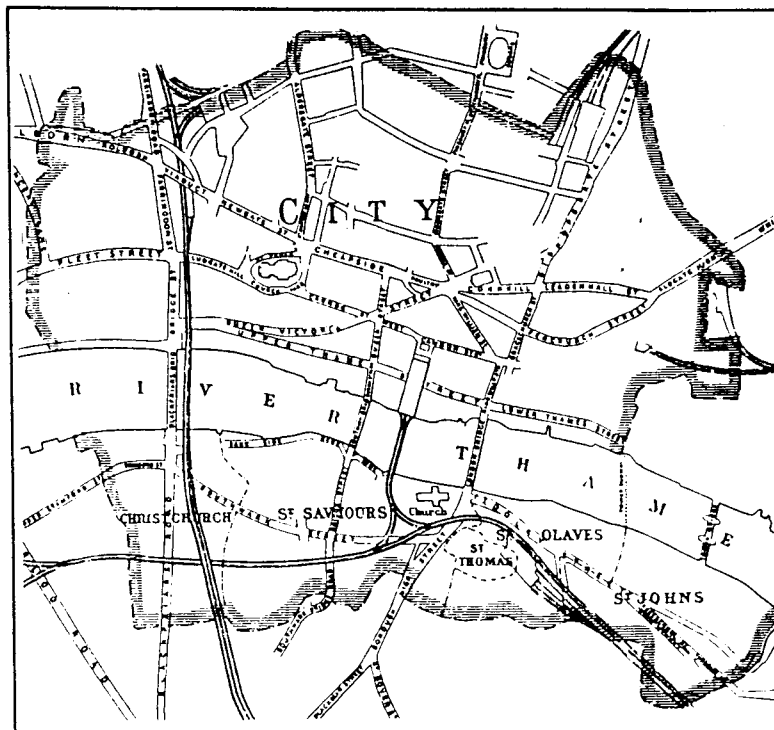
and 1839. In this latter year, yet another Bill was proposed by Lord Joseph Russell to amalgamate the City and Metropolitan forces which resulted in the Corporation promoting a City of London Police Bill of its own (2 & 3 Vict. cap. 94).

The City Fathers always considered the calibre of their recruits to be far superior to that of the Met. However, this was not always the case as the following Metropolitan Police

Order of 15 November 1843 shows, when PC Samuel Brindley of 'G' Division was dismissed for 'entering the force under false pretences, he having been previously dismissed from the City Police on the 30th March last, for being drunk and convicted of an assault by a magistrate'.

The Metropolitan Management Act 1856 united several Southwark parishes into districts under the Metropolitan Board of Works. Christ Church and St Saviour (including the Liberty of the Clink) were formed into a larger, latter-named district, while St Olave District became responsible for St Olave, St Thomas and St John parishes. The inhabitants, fearing an increase in taxes, petitioned to be annexed to the City but to no avail.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, a memorial was presented to the Court of Aldermen by several of these parishes wishing to be included



in the City of London (Inclusion of Southwark) Bill which was drawn up in February 1892, leading to a Royal Commission the following year.

In July 1895, a further petition was made to the City from the various parishes with a view once and for all either to be included in the City or be entirely separated from it! The parishes of Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and Newington were all against the Bill and a plan of the proposed new city area does not include that part of the Kings Manor south of the borough and the Kennington area nor that part of the Great Liberty Manor leading to the Old Kent Road.

The Bill was finally introduced into the House of Commons on 4 February 1897 with a second reading on 22 March. Southwark stood to lose over £13,000 on the police rate if the various parishes were to become part of the City Police area and had clearly underestimated the cost of policing 'Bridge-Ward-Without'. The Metropolitan Police stations at Stones End, Bermondsey Street and Grange Road were to remain with the Met.

In a three-hour debate, the Bill was narrowly rejected by 187 votes to 169. Events had in any case overtaken the City Police extension proposals, as since 1889 the borough had passed from the County of Surrey to the new County of London under the new LCC, whose aim was to absorb the City Police into the Met. Had the Bill been passed then the Act would have been effective from 21 December 1897

and we would have seen the Met. replaced by City bobbies in Southwark, police magistrates replaced by aldermen, and parishes replaced by wards.

The City jurisdiction over the borough was virtually severed as a result of the London Government Act which received the Royal Assent on 13 July 1899 creating the new Metropolitan Boroughs of Southwark and Bermondsey (proposed as East Southwark).

As a new millennium approaches, the City Police still remains defiantly independent and its ancient links with Southwark are still perpetuated by the existence of the obelisk which, since July 1905, has stood at the junction of St George's Road/Lambeth Road near the Imperial War Museum.

Erected in the fourth year of the reign of George III in 1771, during the mayoralty of Brass Crosby, it originally stood at St George's Circus and shows the distance to Fleet Street, beneath which is engraved the City of London Arms.

ONE MILE
CCCL Feet
from
Fleet Street

The career of Stephen English

Fred Feather

In 1840, as many English counties began to organise constabularies, it became obvious that there was no bank of experienced policemen from which to choose. It is not surprising that the procedures for selection of supervisors produced some diverse results. No more so than in Essex, where at Rochford Superintendent Job Yardley absconded and his successor Superintendent Algernon Low later transferred to Cambridge as a Superintendent (Acting as Deputy Chief Constable), then went missing with a young woman, leaving his wife and family. He was last heard of in Australia. Others rapidly achieved commands in other forces and competition for those who could be seen to have police proclivities must have been fierce. In the year

1857 it became compulsory for all areas to have a professional police and these required supervisors.

A strange case in the Court of Common Pleas of 6 February 1857 may help to illustrate the picaresque peregrinations of one such senior officer, Stephen English. It may also help to show the differences which could arise between the chief constable of a constabulary and the commander of the police of a borough.

Captain Black, then Chief Constable of the County of Norfolk, held strong views about the title he held. There were other police forces in Norfolk at Lynn, Thetford, Yarmouth and Norwich. As in the five forces in Essex, titles such as Superintendent, High Constable and Watc

Commander were also in use. When Stephen English, with the consent of his Watch Committee, styled himself Chief Constable of Norwich, there was a sharp exchange of letters. Black maintained that he was the only Chief Constable in Norfolk and concluded one his letters to Norwich Watch Committee with the final sentence: 'Under all circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that to permit the superintendent of the Norwich police to hold the title of chief constable is an insult to every country police force in England.'

This provoked English to sue him for slander and to prove the truth of the statement was what Black set out to do. English, the plaintiff, began the case by setting out his career. 'I am from County Clare. Born in 1819, I was educated at Ennis College. My family had misfortunes and I joined the Metropolitan Police in 1838. My mother persuaded me to resign, but in June 1840 I obtained an appointment in the Lancashire Constabulary. I served under a superintendent called Fenix at Middleton for about 11 months. I applied for an inspectorship in Hertfordshire, but got the offer of first class constable at a guinea a week. I was discharged by Captain Robertson (Chief Constable of Hertfordshire). I was then introduced by Lord Shaftesbury to Mr Bramston, Member of Parliament for Essex and I was made a superior officer in the Essex force.' [Our records show 26 April 1842 to 30 November 1843.] In another version he stated that he tendered some service to Captain McHardy [Chief Constable of Essex] during a riot at a race meeting near Chelmsford. He continued; 'I then resigned and went to Suffolk, where I was appointed to a private police force formed at Polstead for the suppression of incendiarism. I then went to Bury St Edmund's as superintendent of the police of a society for the detection of incendiarism. I was then a parliamentary agent at Westminster, and from thence I went to Newport as superintendent of police. I was also sanitary agent there during the cholera time. I resigned and went to Pontefract where I was in charge of a large district and was then appointed to be superintendent at Norwich.'

It was now the turn of Captain Black's counsel, Sir F. (later Baron) Thesinger, to cross-examine English. His initial answers were that he did get a certificate when he left the Metropolitan Police in 1838; that he did get a certificate for his 11 months' service in Lancashire, but not until many years later in 1856. Then the questions began to bite. English agreed that he was dismissed from Hertfordshire. He

claimed that it was because he had allowed two prisoners to get drunk as he took them to Hertford Gaol. He admitted to knowing Mrs Ferraby, the former licensee of The Chequers public house, Wheathampstead. He denied partially unrolling and offering to show her French prints, soliciting rum and, whilst she was on a chair reaching for the spirits, that he had taken liberties with her or used his hands improperly, or that he had used indecent language.

Captain Robertson was examined and swore that English, having been suspended, was finally dismissed on the charge of having taken improper liberties with Mrs Ferraby, but added that he had later written to English to say that he would give him one more chance of regaining his character.

The evidence disclosed that there was some form of discipline register kept in Hertfordshire at that time. Ian Lockyer of the Hertfordshire Constabulary Museum advises that many county records were destroyed in 1900 on the orders of the then Chief Constable.

And so to English's 18 months in Essex as inspector. After two months he wanted to transfer to Ipswich. According to Chief Constable Captain (later Admiral) McHardy, he was required to resign. The reason was a letter that he had written to his tailor whilst stationed at Braintree. It is alleged that he bought the original back from Mr Martin for £10, which he denied. He did admit that he had destroyed it. He denied that McHardy had spoken directly to him about the letter and alleged that he had already resigned before the threat of dismissal.

McHardy's secretary, a former sailor called Burke, had expressed his regret to English that he had written such a letter, adding that 'it would be a caution to English throughout his life'. A copy was produced and was read aloud, to the sensation of the court.

Braintree Police-station, Nov. 2nd 1843

Dear Martin,

I received your letter this morning. What the hell's blazes have I to do with Wagstaff, Falstaff, or any other b— staff but my own, which is a d— bad one and wish you d—, you ought to have known me better. Well, I'm b— if you don't want to have my name in all the books in London with your humbugging bills. D— the bills. You fret me at the name of hell. I am very sick and have been so since I came here, but I am doing my duty. I am truly miserable, and in the present a d— passion. I

send you £3, and, after I pay my debts here for grub etc. wont have a b— coin to spare. But, no matter, I promised to send you the money, and I cannot put up with all the inconvenience for my word's sake. I have always behaved honourably to you and still continue to do so but that beggaring nickname has drained my purse, but no matter, all will be right in a short while. You will see yourself that I could not spare £5 this month, but I know you will see my difficulties and are contented. One day I will be happy in mind when my honour with your book is cleared. Offer up a b— prayer for a d— unfortunate b— of an inspector.

Yours very gratefully.

Stephen English.

McHardy added, 'I should have been unworthy of the office I hold if I had allowed him to remain in the force after writing such a letter.' In cross-examination he denied that the Rev. Mr Sims had reproved him (McHardy) for using bad language, nor did he say 'I do not care a Royal damn.' Both chief constables agreed that English was an excellent police officer.

What was not apparently given to the court were the details of his career between 1843 and 1857. An interesting facet was the transfer between the regular police and private police forces. Tom Howells of Gwent Constabulary Museum told us that 'Stephen English from London', was the third superintendent of Newport Borough Police, which had been formed on 1 February 1856. He served there from 5 February 1848 to April 1852. It is reported that in 1850 he was tried and acquitted at Assize by Mr Justice Patterson. The specific charge is not known but the Watch Committee declared their confidence in him. At the next Assize Lord Chief Justice Campbell commended him with Constable Harlow for the part they took in the case of two men charged with the murder of Mrs Lewis. They were awarded £5 by the judge and Harlow was made sergeant by the Watch Committee.

On 10 February 1852, English was again before the Watch Committee, accused of borrowing money from beerhouse keepers, receiving bribes, allowing spirits to be drunk on unlicensed premises, failing to report those matters and acting with cruelty and arrogance in the discharge of his duty. In April he resigned. Committee minutes refer to him as a 'sober, intelligent and active officer'.

West Yorkshire Police cannot trace his service at Pontefract and the Lancashire Constabulary has

not yet replied. We are indebted to John Mason of the Norfolk Constabulary Collection for his guidance.

In command at Norwich, English fell out with Sergeant Smith. He was asked to tell the court about a complaint against him; that a house had been kept open late by the publican Mrs Brown. English explained that he was charged with having said to her, 'You should not keep your house open after hours; but let me give you a piece of advice – lock your door and when anyone knocks say, "Wait, and I'll get a key;" then get someone to clear the glasses away, open your bible, and look religious.' He added, 'I was admonished for this.'

The Town Clerk of Norwich has referred to his official book to see if there was any record of such an admonition. There was not, but it was Mr Meadham's idea that Mr English had been cautioned to be more careful in future, on account of the ill will of Sergeant Smith.

This then was the man that Captain Black felt should not hold the title of Chief Constable. The jury found that English had been slandered and awarded him £50 damages. The legend 'Chief Constable' was chiselled into the stonework above the old police office in Norwich Guildhall. In April 1857 it was reported that, led by the Earl of Leicester, the squirearchy of Norfolk had commenced a subscription to defray Captain Black's costs, and this now stood at £200. The *Norwich Mercury* commented: 'The public will be pleased to see that the county had thus determined to mark its sense, both of the action and verdict so contrary to evidence. It must be most satisfactory to Captain Black to feel that the sympathies of noblemen and gentlemen in the county, men of the highest honour and character, are with him.'

The story gives an interesting insight into the system of promotion which prevailed, at the same time that commissions were being bought and sold within the army.

In Essex it was clear that things soon settled down. Men who joined with McHardy in 1840 were still serving when he retired in 1881. Andrew Rome joined in 1840 at the age of 22, was inspector in 1842 (we did not appoint sergeants until 1855) and retired holding that rank in 1897.

Acknowledgement

Thanks are given to the Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Gwent Constabularies.

Sources

Chelmsford Chronicle, 1857, Essex Police Records

Essex Police Museum

The Essex Constabulary dates from February 1840 and is believed to be among the earliest county forces to be raised. Other constituent boroughs include Colchester (1836–1947), Saffron Walden, Harwich (both 1836–1857), Maldon (1836–1889) and Southend-on-Sea (1914–1969). From 1969 to 1974 it was a 'joint constabulary'. The force has a lively museum, set up in 1992. A previous museum was broken up some 20 years ago, and the artefacts and documentation distributed to local record offices and museums. Much has been recovered and they are now looking to expand their current 1000 square feet.

The museum is interested in all types of policemen and policewomen in the Essex police district, including the military, docks and railway forces. They are proud of their badge and medal collections. There is a vast uncatalogued photograph collection. They have a large genealogical input, holding registers which provide information on the vast majority of all serving officers from 1836. The service was featured in the November 1995 *Family Tree Magazine*. The computer indices include 'Giggins' (Essex Constabulary, 1840–1940),

'I.Steele' (Colchester Police, 1836–1947), 'Baylis' (Census entries, 1841–1891 for adjoining forces MPD/Essex in East London, Cambs, Herts, Suffolk, Railway, Docks) and 'AlanCook' (Specials, War Reserves, Parish Constables). A programme for the Southend-on-Sea Constabulary is a future project.

Featured displays include 'The capture of Zeppelin L33' in September 1916, 'The Moat Farm Murder' of 1899–1903, and the first court use of ballistics in 'The Murder of Constable Gutteridge' in September 1927.

They produce tapes, videos, books, booklets and postcards. There are two general histories available at the museum, *Essex Police*, by John Woodgate (1985) and *Sworn to Serve* by Maureen Scollan (1993).

Visitors number about a thousand a year and the museum is a preferred point for many VIP and guests at HQ. Visit by appointment only. The curator is F.E. Feather and the address is P.O. Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6DA, tel.: 01245 491491 (ext. 50770) or fax: 01245 452259.

A prompt and plucky rescue

John Welch

Oliver Wise was born in January 1868 at Catford Hill, Lewisham, where his father was a master confectioner. The beginning of 1889 found him working as a paper hanger for his brother in London's West End. Oliver obviously wanted work of a more challenging nature, for in April he joined the Metropolitan Police.

He was given the warrant number 74421 and posted to 'V' Division (Wandsworth). Except for three days in 1900 when he was in 'H' Division (Whitechapel), he was to spend 26 years in Wandsworth as Police Constable 148 'V'. His period of service covered three reigns, and this was reflected in three of his medals – Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897, Edward VII Coronation of 1902 and George V Coronation of 1911. These

were all of a special issue for the Metropolitan Police.

Oliver Wise did not have long to wait after joining for an opportunity to show his courage and initiative.

Mid-day on Thursday, 1 August 1889, found 10-year-old Albert Leeper playing with some friends by the River Wandle in the heart of Wandsworth, not far from the Buckhold Road bridge. Their ball fell into the river, and Albert tried to recover it by wading into the water. However, he found himself sucked into a hole some 10 feet deep.

His horrified friends at once ran into South Street, where they found Constable Wise on 'fixed point' duty. He immediately ran to the river and, having ascertained the last point at which Albert had

been seen, took off his helmet and tunic and dived in without hesitation.

He found nothing, but on diving under a second time managed to locate Albert. Constable Wise got the unconscious boy ashore, and at once applied artificial respiration. Albert's friends, at the urging of the constable, went off in search of a doctor. They returned quite quickly with not one but two – a Dr Howell and a Dr Roe. The resuscitation being successful, they had the boy moved to a nearby laundry and covered in blankets.

Constable Wise managed to obtain a change of clothes, and returned to find the boy breathing normally, but delirious. The doctors felt that they had done all that was necessary. They agreed that the constable could get a cab and take Albert to his parents' home at 480 Wandsworth Road.

The local press reported what had happened in some detail and concluded: 'Doubtless but for this prompt and plucky rescue the lad would have lost his life.'

The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, James Monro, shared this opinion, and forwarded details of the matter to the Royal Humane Society. The Committee of the Society met on 20 August with Mr A. Travers Hawes in the chair. After due consideration they decided to award PC Wise the Society's bronze medal.

Mr Monro visited Wandsworth Police Station on Thursday 26 September. After lunch, Acting Superintendent Dodd called together a parade of 19 inspectors and 120 sergeants and constables. Also present was Mr Bird, Chief Clerk at the Police Court.

The Commissioner called Constable Wise forward, and proceeded to relate the circumstances surrounding the rescue of Albert Leeper. He made particular reference to a number of adults who saw the boy disappear under the water 'but contented themselves with shouting Police'. He presented Constable Wise with the Royal Humane Society's medal and certificate. There then followed three cheers for the constable, three cheers for the Commissioner and one for the Metropolitan Police. Superintendent Dodd then presented Mr Monro with a pictorial representation of the incident, made by Constable Humphrys.

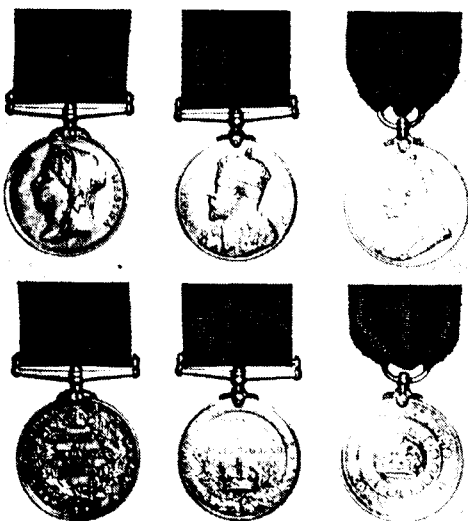
Oliver Wise continued as a constable in Wandsworth for the next 26 years. During this time he married and had children. His great interest was swimming, and he was a member of the Wandsworth Police Swimming Club. This body operated on quite strict rules – a committee member who missed a meeting without reasonable excuse would be fined sixpence, and a member who failed to swim in a race, or play in a water polo match, would be fined a shilling. He was awarded the Royal Life Saving Society's bronze medal in July 1907.

His last day with the Metropolitan Police was 26 April 1915, at which date he was 5 feet 9½ inches in height, with brown hair turning grey, grey eyes and a fresh complexion. The pension he received amounted to £69 11s 6d per annum. He was by now a widower, and lived with his daughter Daisy at 88 Merton Road.

Oliver Wise moved to Reading and died there on 18 October 1928, at the age of 60.

The medals

Jubilee and Coronation Medals

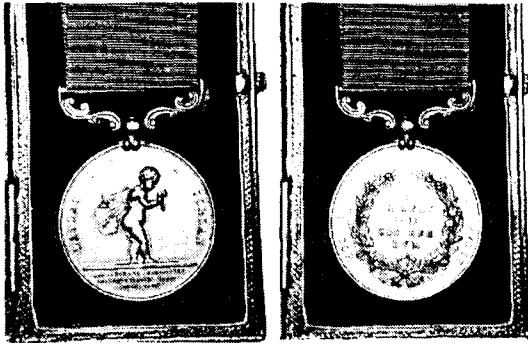


Metropolitan Police Jubilee Medal 1897: An interesting indication of the strength of Wandsworth Police can be seen in the figures for this medal in 'V' Division. Constables who received the actual medal numbered 353, whilst 323 received a bar (clasp) for adding to the Jubilee Medal of 1887.

Metropolitan Police Coronation Medal 1902: Some 715 Constables in 'V' Division received this medal.

Metropolitan Police Coronation Medal 1911: All ranks received this medal in silver, unlike the 1902 medal which was bronze except for very senior ranks. This was the last police coronation medal to be issued.

Royal Humane Society's Medal



The Society had been founded in 1774, and issued bronze and silver medals for saving life. These were reduced to 1½" in 1867. A similar type was issued in gold in 1873, and was known as the Stanhope Medal. Bars were awarded for further acts of life saving.

John Welch is a member of the PHS and the Orders and Medals Research Society. He lives in Croydon, where he is a lay visitor to police stations.

Alex Riley: a unique Aboriginal tracker

Peter Farmery

The award of the Kings Police and Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service to Sergeant Tracker Alexander Riley in 1943 was both rare and unique. Rare because it was awarded to a person who was certainly not a high ranking police officer, and unique because it was awarded for an exceptional career in tracking criminals, fugitives and missing persons in outback Australia. Furthermore, Alex Riley was not a 'sworn officer' in the police force, and it is the only such award made to an aboriginal, who was not even allowed to vote as a citizen in his own country until the late 1960s.

Alex Riley was an exceptional man with highly developed senses which enabled him not only to track people over great distances through inhospitable terrain, but also to anticipate their actions and movements, which resulted in his phenomenal successes. His exploits are to this day part of the history of the city of Dubbo, some 450 kilometres west of Sydney in New South Wales, Australia.

Born on 26 May 1884, in Nymagee, western New South Wales, Alexander Riley was of mixed parentage, and is described on his police service record as 'half-caste'. His early life was spent like many aboriginals, with his own people, and it was not until he was 27 years old that he first began to work with the police in Dubbo, over 140 miles from his home town.

Aboriginal trackers had been used by the police in Australia for many years with great success. However, they were never 'sworn officers', and when not being used as trackers, were often given menial jobs around the police station, such as caring

for the horses of the mounted troopers. This was a task which Alex Riley enjoyed, so it was no hardship for him.

After a short spell of tracking for the police between 1911 and 1914, he left to work on some local cattle stations. However, in 1918, he returned to service with the police, and thus began his illustrious career which continued until his retirement at the age of 66 in July 1950. The stories are legion, and it would be impossible to relate all of them here, but to give an idea of his skill and tenacity, and devotion to his work, the following incidents readily spring to mind.

Early in 1913, stock was regularly being reported missing from a station near Mogriguy, just north of Dubbo. Whilst Riley was out on patrol with Sergeant Loomes, they came across several head of cattle. Suspecting that they had been stolen, Sergeant Loomes gave Riley the task of driving them back to Dubbo, some 25 miles away, while he continued with other enquiries.

Riley noticed that he was being followed by two known criminals called Hudson and Green, but night fell before he reached the town. One of the men, Green, spoke with Riley and suggested that he rest the cattle in a nearby paddock overnight. Riley was suspicious, and although initially agreeing to the proposal, he drove the cattle further on, and then camped and kept watch. He saw the two men return in the dead of night, and search the paddock for the cattle, which they had obviously intended to steal again. The men were later arrested and charged with cattle stealing and other offences.

Also in 1913, after two men had escaped from Dubbo gaol, Alex Riley was called upon to assist in the search. He found tracks beside the Macquarie River, which was low at the time, and using great skill, he alone tracked the men for over 25 miles downstream, even though the escapees had walked for many miles in the water in an attempt to cover their tracks. Eventually they were spotted in a camp, and Riley called in the local police from Narromine and the men were recaptured.

He was called in to assist in almost every case of serious crime in the Dubbo district during his service with the police, and as his reputation grew, so did the number of occasions on which his skills were in demand.

On Christmas Eve 1918, in the middle of an especially hot spell in the Australian summer, a 6-year-old girl was reported missing from home, and over two hundred local people together with a large contingent of police joined in the search. After making a search of the area around her house, Riley found the child's bare footprints, and began to track her over rough, dry and stony ground. For over six miles with the other searchers fanned out behind him Riley continued to follow the faint tracks which only he could see with his unique skills, before he found the girl, exhausted, and trapped in a boggy creek in the bottom of a gully. This little girl later became a respected schoolteacher in Dubbo.

Many times, Alex Riley was called upon to track criminals who had broken into houses and shops in the district, and he was almost always successful in pointing out the culprits to the police officers who were accompanying him.

On 10 November 1921, Alexander Matheson was murdered at Yeoval, 40 miles south of Dubbo. After initial enquiries, the identity of the murderer was known, and although police officers had made extensive searches for him without success, when Alex Riley went over the same ground again, he eventually obtained information which led to the discovery that a horse and sulky were being used by the murderer and his father. Riley then tracked the sulky for some considerable distance by identifying the hoof marks of the horse and the tracks of the sulky wheels. Eventually the murderer, George Earsman, was arrested and later sentenced to death.

After a burglary was reported at Beni, near Dubbo, in 1930, Riley followed foot tracks to the main road where they disappeared. Eventually, the offender was identified by the imprints of his boots, and the same boot tracks were followed to some

railway sidings, where all the stolen property was recovered with the offender being arrested at the same time.

In August 1936, Ruby Green, aged 21, was reported missing from home in Dubbo. A search was mounted, and Alex Riley, after finding some evidence including an imprint of a human head in the soft mud beside the river, was able to locate the her dead body some distance away. She had been subjected to an illegal abortion operation from which she had died, and then her body had been dumped in the river. A woman called Inez Clark was arrested and charged with murder. The judge in this case highly commended Riley for the tracking and observation he had displayed.

On many occasions he was called in to trace missing persons, children as well as adults, some of whom were violent or disturbed mental patients who had wandered away from the Clyde Bank Mental Hospital in Dubbo.

In February 1938, the Western Stores in Trangie was broken into and property stolen. Riley was called in after the vehicle used in the burglary was found broken down some 20 miles away. He was able to track the offenders for several miles to a water hole, where the stolen property and the offenders were located. The same year, after a man was murdered, Alex Riley tracked a man named Moss over many days and many miles, from camp site to camp site, until he eventually located him in the mountains.

In September 1940, after a shopbreaking offence in Dubbo, Riley tracked the offender for over 34 miles over open scrub country, where the man was arrested.

These, and many other stories of his amazing skills, indicate the unusual talent of this quiet and respected man, who did not drink or smoke.

On 10 April 1941, Superintendent Edward Allen prepared a report to the Commissioner of Police for New South Wales, in which he described in more detail the exploits of Tracker Riley that he considered worthy of recognition. However, he did not specifically recommend the award of the Kings Police and Fire Service Medal, or in fact any other medal. His report in full was forwarded to the Home Office by the Commissioner, with the added recommendation for the award of the Kings Police and Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service, which was announced in the *London Gazette* on 1 January 1943. Alex Riley was also commended on many occasions by the judiciary for his skill and

persistence, and received three police commendations on his service record.

In 1942 he was promoted to Sergeant Tracker, and continued with his work, in addition training other aboriginals in the skills he had developed over

the years, until his retirement in July 1950. He died on 29 October 1970, aged 86, and is buried in Dubbo Cemetery.

Acknowledgements to Bernadette Riley, Alex Riley's great-grand-daughter.

Book Reviews

Bomb Squad – a DI Molly Watson Novel by Brian Windmill, Brandwell Books, 39 School Road, Wombourn, Staffordshire, WV5 9DZ, 01902 898259, 1996, paperback, £7.95, p&p free in Great Britain. ISBN 0 9527317 0 3.

We first met DI Molly Watson in *Drug Squad* (1994). In this very topical sequel, she returns to Westhampton Police to be put in charge of its new bomb squad. Molly is reunited with her faithful side-kick from *Drug Squad*, Bill Bannister, but I'm sorry to say that her inconvenient dog has been callously run over before the story begins. This enables her to spend more time in plush London hotels at the expense of the Met while the provincial DI sorts out their problems for them.

The plot of this political thriller, set during the IRA cease-fire, is worryingly plausible. Lots of dialogue and terse descriptions bring us right into the operation of two major incidents and we can see the cock-ups only too clearly. The style of *Bomb Squad*, Brian's second book, is fresh and realistic and his characterisations are colourful. His police

and army officers are human beings first and professionals second.

It's easy enough to narrate something simple like a police interrogation one to one, but it's a very different thing to put over to a reader the ordered chaos of the incident room where everyone is talking at once. This kind of scene is much easier to convey on TV or film, but Brian handles it with practised ease.

He is very brave to choose a female hero, but he gets away with it, and why not? Inspectors Adam Dagleish, George Wexford and Roderick Alleyn were all created by women.

My only criticism of the book is that the picture on the cover gives away too much of the plot – which, you'll notice, I haven't done. Read the book to find out.

Brian, a retired Midlands Commander, also gives talks to UK and US audiences about policing and the writing of his DI Watson books. He is currently working on *Crime Squad*.

Jenny Ward

Much is known about Oscar Wilde and his Ballad of Reading Gaol as epitomised in the No. 10 1995 issue of the *Journal*, but far less is known about the un-named prisoner whose execution was the main topic of the ballad.

He lay as one who lies and dreams
In a pleasant meadow-land,
The watchers watched him as he slept,
And could not understand
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
With a hangman close at hand.

The prisoner was in fact Trooper Charles Wooldridge, Royal Horse Guards, who was executed at Reading Prison on the morning of Tuesday, 7 July 1896 for the murder of his wife at Windsor. The executioner was Charles Billington.

Richard Ford

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