

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS 1876



Attached is a copy of photograph showing twenty gentlemen. Below it is written 'Supts Met. Police. Police Fete at Crystal Palace 1876' (or is it 1875?)

It came from some papers belonging to R.G.Fenwick, a detective in the Met before and during WWII, later Chief Constable of Shropshire then H.M. Inspector of Constabulary in the Midlands. (The late Geof Floy was one of his staff officers). Mrs Fenwick, in her mid-nineties, still lives in Shrewsbury and gave some papers to me recently.

I can find no reference to an 1876 fete on line but there is an account of the 1875 annual police fete in The Theatrical Observer and Daily Bill of the Play (Volume 1875 v2 no 16586 (July 1 to Dec 31 1875) by Simon Henry Gage:

The Police Fete was held on 3 July 1875 at Crystal Palace, 'an annual fete given in aid of the Funds of the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage', founded as a charity five years before and housed at Twickenham. It was reported that 33,326 persons attended the 1875 fete 'a large proportion of whom evidently belonged to the working classes, proving their sympathy towards the London Police.'! The proceeds of the fete went to the charity to help 'lodge, feed, clothe and educate 77 boys and 65 girls, many of whom were at the fete.'

The event included popular music by eleven divisional police bands and the band of the Orphanage. 'There were athletic sports by police, amusements, a double balloon ascent and on 'the great stage' two ballets were performed as well as 'the daring feats of the gymnasts known as 'The Hanlon Midgets'. Skills in swordsmanship were also on display and as the weather cleared 'dancing parties formed in a hundred places, in spite of the wetness of the grass.'

The Charity is the world's oldest police charity and when the Twickenham premises closed in 1937 the charity metamorphosed into the existing Metropolitan and City Police Orphans Fund based in Putney, which continues the work in looking after the needs of police orphans.

I am sure one or two Metropolitan officers will have further and better particulars of this worthy charity and may even be able to name some of the superintendents!

Derek Griffiths.

Dated 17th Sept 2012