



Tatum's address was given as 36 Cambridge Road. Southampton. He was found guilty at the



Hampshire Assizes in Winchester and sentenced to death. His appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal was dismissed in April 1959 and he was executed at Winchester Prison. Tatum was one of the last persons to be hanged at the Gaol. The last criminal hanged at Winchester was Dennis John Whitty in 1963.

### **ROD ELWOOD** **POLICE PRINTS**

I keep a large stock of police oriented prints, pictures and other ephemera. I have many antiquarian originals that cover most aspects of policing. These include the subject matter of Courts,

Prisons, Magistrates, CID, Dogs, Mounted Police, Women Police, Transport, cartoons, Vanity Fair etc. I have also acquired a good selection of miscellaneous pictures that include photographs of almost all the original London Police Stations  
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### **The AA versus Surrey Constabulary:** **The advent of the Motor Car and speed-** **ing in Surrey 1900-1910** **Luke Franklin** **Archives Officer Surrey Police**

It seems that a day does not go by without hearing a complaint from the motorist about the 'tyrannical' regime of speed enforcement on the roads of the UK. The arrival of speed (or safety) cameras over the last 10 years has greatly increased the ability of the Police to detect the speeding offences of the British Motorist, despite the numerous signs warning of a 'safety' camera ahead. The older motorist would hark back to a time when freedom ruled the roads. However, historical records strongly indicate that this is not the case. Since the advent of the motor car during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century speed enforcement on the road met with uproar from the motorist and battles on the road and in the press between the motorist and the local constabulary. In the midst of this struggle, the Automobile Association (AA) was formed to fight on behalf of the growing motorist gang. For the first time the Constabularies of the UK would have to enforce the law against the upper classes and their new love of the motor car.

#### **The Origin of Policing**

The formation of uniform police during the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century was largely the result of a growing urban working class and an increasingly fearful middle and upper class, alarmed at the apparent rise of crime and disorder. Despite initial unwillingness to fund a new and expensive constabulary, local boroughs saw the need to set up a police force to combat what they saw as growing unrest amongst the urban poor that seemed to manifest itself in the form of the chartist movement and increasing attacks against property. The reaction of the working classes to the new police force was hostile since the duties of the new force was limited to dealing with petty offences such as drunkenness, theft and fighting-crimes mostly committed by working people. Many amongst the working classes objected to police tactics during marches and demonstrations, especially chartist marches that often led to rioting. In contrast it was unusual that a member of the upper class would ever encounter the police.

#### **The beginnings of motoring legislation**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the upper class elite had legislated to control much of the leisure activities of the working classes, leaving its own, similar pursuits alone: the obvious examples being the prohibition of cruel sports involving animals, except fox-hunting, beagling and shooting, and the prohibition of street betting and gaming while similar behaviour, in more genteel surroundings or on the race course, was permitted. However, concern about excess speeding by affluent motorists began to fill the correspondence columns of *The Times*, reaching parliament by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, forcing anti-motorist legislation to be passed. This was the Motor Car Act 1903 which set a speed limit of 20 miles an hour.

#### **The Automobile Association**

According to Hugh Barty-King in his History of the AA, "police trapping had grown to such proportions by the time of 20<sup>th</sup> century broke the motoring fraternity regarded themselves as the victims of organised persecution". It was in Surrey along the Ripley road between Guildford and Ripley that Police



trapping became notorious among motoring circles. This led to

Charles Jarrott, director of the English office of the French motoring firm, Panhard and Levassor, to persuade his firm to fund cyclists to patrol the road and warn motorists exceeding the speed limit and thus avoid police action. Along with the passing of the 1903 Act, the formation of such patrols would directly lead to the creation of the Automobile Association (AA) in 1905. From its beginnings the AA had high ambitions for itself and its motoring members. Creation of a legal department to protect members' interests was mooted. However, it was AA's insistence on protecting the motorist from the law that led the new association to clash with one particular police force surrounding London, namely Surrey Constabulary. The Constabulary of Surrey was eventually formed in 1851 despite the appointment of a committee to look into its creation during 1840. This delay was probably partly due to arguments among Surrey's dignitaries about who should pay and how much, a common theme in the formation of various county forces throughout England in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the time Surrey's second Chief Constable took up his position in 1899, motorists were starting to become a problem in Surrey, owing to its open roads and close proximity to London, although cyclists were already long established as the main menace. Surrey's second Chief Constable was Captain. Mowbray Sant formerly of Northumberland Fusiliers and Chief Constable of Northumberland Constabulary.



**CAPTAIN  
SANT**

**MOWBRAY**  
Chief Constable of

Surrey 1899-1930

Captain Sant was traditional in his outlook and had little sympathy for modern development, especially the motor car. He was often heard to say that the greatest curse of modern civilisation was the invention of the internal-combustion engine. He strongly opposed road widening, saying that the straightening of sharp corners would only encourage motorists to drive faster and increase road accidents. Sant once said that the narrow roads of Surrey should remain, as that would force motorists to drive slowly for fear of breaking their own necks. Captain. Sant wanted strict enforcement of the law on motorists and was consequently under attack from the public and the press.

#### The Clash in the Press

It was inevitable that a clash between the motorist and Captain Sant should come quickly. Sant's general order 451 read:

*"Having given cyclists and motor-car drivers due notice, I am now anxious to take such steps as may be practicable to put an end to the nuisance and danger caused by reckless riders and drivers and show them that the warning were not idle ones"*

The first speed check on motor cars was not performed until June 1905 but Sant's attitude to the motorist had been long criticised. An article from the Daily Mail entitled

"Motorphobia" was one of the first in the national press to

attack Surrey's Chief Constable's attitude to the motor

car: *"I will stop them at any cost, is reported to be the expressed sentiment of Captain Sant . . . referring to the automobilists who love to make a refreshing breeze for themselves on the glorious Surrey roads*

*when no one is in the way"*

The article went on to say that:

*"Automobilists are becoming very indignant, because they say the police are not playing the game in a sportsmanlike way".*

It was often the case that the national press attacked Captain Sant, whilst the local press defended him. The Daily Telegraph went as far as to question the motives of Captain Sant in setting speed traps. The Telegraph lamented that when motorists:

*"Invariably and spontaneously show consideration no policeman is ever visible, but whenever their judgements tell them that they can put on a little extra pace the Surrey Policeman is probably lurking in ambush. The question that is now being asked is whether Captain Sant's fifty-guinea uniform has been paid or not".*

but the local newspaper, The Surrey Advertiser defended their local constabulary on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1901 saying *"We do not believe that the members of Surrey Constabulary have an animus against cyclists or motorists".*

When the magazine "The Cyclists" complained that *"On the occasion of a recent trip of the Automobile Club to Guildford the road was picketed about every half-mile with constables, some of them hidden in ditches, with a man in plain clothes on the bank to watch",*

The Advertiser's reply was that this *"was complete rubbish adding "we know on the occasion of the Club's Easter tour the police was particularly forbearing, and anxious that there should be no unpleasant sequels in the police court".*

The Surrey local press often took this line, mainly as a result of the many complaints made by Surrey residents about disruption caused by motoring through their towns and villages. A poem published in the satirical magazine Punch aptly describes much of these complaints:

*I have never clung to a motor car  
Or crouched on a motor bike;  
Worry and scurry, clank and jar  
I cordially dislike  
I do not care for grimy hair,  
For engine that explode,  
But if one and all I've the put and call,  
-For I live on the Ripley road.*

*I drank the country breeze at first,  
Unsoiled by fetid fumes,  
But now I'm cursed with a constant thirst  
That parches and consumes.  
I am choked and hit with smoke and grit  
When I venture from my abode,  
My pets are maimed and my eyes inflamed,  
For I live on the Ripley Road.*

*I pass my days in a yellow fog,  
My nights in a yellow dream  
Haunted by handlebar, clutch and cog  
And eyes that goggle and gleam,  
I am not robust, but I dine on dust  
Gratuitously bestowed  
And for two pence I'll sell my house in the dell  
By the side of the Ripley Road.*

#### The beginning and end of hostilities

The event that really made a clash on the roads inevitable was the decision of the AA to appoint scouts on cycles to look for police speed traps and warn members of their presence. A police speed trap was during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a simple operation. A plain clothes policeman would stand at the end of a straight piece of road at the beginning of a pre-measured length. When a car approached the first policeman would signal to a



second policeman at the end of the measured length, who then set a stop watch going and stopped the clock when the car passed. If the clock had stopped before it had reached a certain point on the dial the officer knew the vehicle was speeding.

The second officer would signal to a third and uniformed officer, further down the road to stop the offending motorist.

The motorist often did not appreciate the unsportsmanlike tactics of the Surrey Constabulary. The head of the AA Stenson Cooke regularly received letters from members complaining of police traps along the Portsmouth Road between Kingston and Hindhead, asking what it was going to do about it.

The 1<sup>st</sup> October 1905 saw the AA take the decision to deploy scouts along the Portsmouth Road. Friction between the AA scouts and Surrey Policemen should hardly come as a surprise, however Captain Sant felt that this should not be the case and that the Scouts where disobeying their own instructions when warning members of police traps. The Surrey Chief wrote various letters to the head of the AA, Stenson Cooke complaining about the deployment of scouts. Even the Permanent Under Secretary at the Home Office, Edward Troup was infuriated. He liked the AA's use of scouts to "an association of burglars employing scouts to warn them which houses are and which houses are not watched by the police. The first clash took place at Witley where the AA scout William Henry Mason claimed Surrey Sergeant Baker assaulted him. Mason's solicitor demanded an apology from the Sergeant to end the hostility shown towards the AA scouts. He added that you only had to sit in the courtroom to see the friction between members of the Police Force and the unfortunate people who happened to drive a motor car. However, it was revealed in court that Mason had been previously reported for interfering with police traps and that the assault merely consisted of Sergeant Baker grabbing Mason's badge. The case was dismissed and described as a miserable, petty and spiteful charge by the defending solicitor. Clashes continued to occur between the AA Scouts and Surrey Constabulary, with the AA scouts frequently coming off the worse. In the courts the whole affair peaked with the case of Betts v Stevens (1909). This was an appeal against the conviction of an AA scout called Fred Betts of unlawfully obstructing Surrey Constable Christopher Charles Pike during a speed trap on Rodborough Hill, Witley. During this incident Pike had to move his speed trap three times, as Betts repeatedly stood ahead of the police trap, warning AA members only of the trap ahead. The case looked promising for the AA initially, as it was revealed that the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Alverstone) was a member of the AA as was one of the other of the three justices. In addition, the counsel for the police did not object to this blatant conflict of interest. Despite this, Bett's original obstruction was far too obvious to ignore or dismiss. The appeal was then consequently dismissed. However, the AA's Stenson Cooke would not be cowed by something as trivial as the law:

*"We naturally regret the decision, but we are not in the least dismayed. On the contrary, we shall fight on, if anything harder than ever. . . I may say we have no intention of withdrawing our patrol organisation, or of altering the policy which has made the association so popular".*

#### The Aftermath

Tensions eased after this case and by the 1950's no conflict of interest existed between the two bodies, according to Surrey Superintendent A.J. Durrant. Unfortunately, Durrant does not explain how this occurred in his work *A Hundred Years of the Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951*. The decrease in tension was probably the product of the growth of motorcar ownership and

acceptance of the motor car within society at large.

The introduction of the Road Fund during the 1909 budget that specifically paid for the tarring of the roads and thus creating less dust probably helped. Chief Constables whom themselves started to own motor cars, began to see motoring and speeding as a problem to be managed rather than opposed, the AA should be consulted rather than confronted. The leadership of the AA did much to influence this view by mounting an elaborate propaganda programme directed at the police. All Chief Constables were sent a copy of a pamphlet containing several explanations on why speed limits would damage the motor industry, and then separate appendices on the relative stopping distance of the motor car and the horse. The AA also called upon its members to use their economic power and boycott Surrey during the summer and warned Surrey estate agents that there would be less demand for Surrey's properties if the county remained unwelcoming to motorists. The economic power of the motoring lobby had finally taken its toll and Surrey Constabulary, after the departure of Captain Sant, took a friendlier line towards the affluent motorist.

**Today**  
Police speed traps in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are no more accepted by the motoring public than they were during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The difference today is that the motoring public is now in the clear majority, as opposed to the rich minority of the 1900's. As motoring grew throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and speed cameras emerged as the police's favoured tool of capture, the constabularies of England and Wales had to accept publication of speed camera locations by the AA and other motoring bodies. The Police now even have to place signposts warning motorists of speed cameras ahead and paint them in a visible yellow. What would Captain Sant have thought of that?

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