

A subsequent enquiry showed that Mr Fox had brought his office into disrepute, although quite surprisingly, it was decided that, as he had resigned his position, he should not be prosecuted

During his Chief Constablenesship, the population of the county had come to accept the new force which had grown from 156 to over 200 officers and for the vast majority of time he had carried out a remarkable job. This had been commented on by the Police Committee upon his resignation

Willoughby died at Fulham in 1885



*Mike Baker is a retired Derbyshire officer, now a civilian employee, with a particular interest in that county's forces*

*The late Terrence (Wayne) Johnson was also a retired Derbyshire officer and civilian. He had organized a new Police Museum at Derby Old Gaol*

## ***Inspector John Soutar Suttie, Arbroath Burgh Police: died on duty 8 March 1914***

by Patrick W Anderson

Recently I purchased a publication called *Scottish Police Roll of Honour*, edited by David Acheson but published by the Police Roll of Honour Trust. I found that in the Tayside Police pages, there was an entry:

**Inspector John Soutar Suttie, Arbroath Burgh Police - Died 8 March 1914, aged 48**

The entry recorded: *Whilst visiting two of his constables he collapsed and died in front of them.* I decided to make further researches on this Police topic and visited the Arbroath library where I was able to find the newspaper report on this sudden death of a serving Officer of the Arbroath Burgh Police

Back in early 1914, there were a number of Police Forces within the County of Forfarshire as it was then called (renamed Angus in 1928): they were Arbroath Burgh Police, Brechin City Police, Dundee City Police, Forfar Burgh Police and Montrose Burgh Police. Kirriemuir Burgh Police and Broughty Ferry Burgh Police had ceased by 1914. The Arbroath Burgh Police had its Headquarters and Police Office in Market Place in Arbroath. The town of Arbroath was covered by the Burgh Police within the Burgh boundary and the County Police covering the landward area. The population of the town in 1911 was just 20,647. The Burgh Police ranks were Constable, Sergeant, Inspector and Chief Constable with one of the Inspectors being the Chief Constable's Deputy. The Burgh Police did not have ranks like Lieutenant such as the City Police of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen had at this time. That Lieutenant rank was replaced in the 1940s by the rank of Chief Inspector. During the years that Inspector Suttie served with the Burgh Police Force, the Chief Constable was Duncan McNeill. He had been its Chief Constable from 1884 and the *Arbroath herald* of 6 December 1913 reported that Mr Duncan McNeill had tendered his resignation as Chief Constable. The report said that he had succeeded John Mime 30 years before

At 9pm on Saturday 7 March 1914, Inspector Suttie commenced his duty of the night shift section of the Burgh Police. Although he had not been feeling well lately, he went on duty anyway. From 9pm until 3am on Sunday 8 March, he attended to his duties within the

Police Office in Market Place in the town. It was his habit to make a round of the town in the early hours of the morning and he left the Office at 3am, went onto the High Street and then to Kirk Square where he met Constables Smith and Lindsay. The newspaper obituary did not report whether this was one of the night shift points or not: I recall in my early policing years making police points and being met by either the Sergeant or the Inspector or even a more senior officer. The newspaper reported that Inspector Suttie spoke to these two constables for several minutes but while talking to them, he complained of having severe chest pains and almost as these words were spoken, he collapsed and fell into the arms of the constables. He was carried into the office of the White Hart Horse Hiring Company close by and Dr J E G Thomson was immediately summoned from his nearby home in Hill Place. The doctor attended immediately and it was seen that there was nothing that he could do for the Inspector. He recorded death at 3.40am on Sunday 8 March 1914 from heart failure

The *Arbroath herald* reported that Inspector Suttie was born in the district (Inverkeillor in the County of Forfar on 3 May 1865). At the time of his death, he was 48 years of age. He had completed 23 years' police service in the Arbroath Burgh Police, having joined the Force on 26 February, 1891. At the beginning of 1901, he had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant and his abilities were further recognized in March 1902 when he was promoted to the rank of Inspector. He was regarded as a faithful and diligent officer. He was survived by his widow, Helen Braid or Suttie, and their three sons and two daughters. The newspaper reported also that his funeral took place on the Wednesday (11 March 1914) and there were a large number of mourners including members of the Town Council and the Police Force as well. The funeral services were conducted at the family home at 80 St Vigean's Road, Arbroath, by the Rev J S Cuthill BD and the Rev T Meredith MA from Arbroath Parish Church. The coffin was borne from the hearse to the grave by members of the Arbroath Burgh Police night duty section

The death certificate dated 9 March 1914 records that in Arbroath in the County of Forfar. John Soutar Suttie, Inspector of Police, married to Helen Braid, aged 48 years, died at 3.40am on 8 March 1914 at Kirk Square, Arbroath, and death was recorded as being *cerebral haemorrhage (half hour)* as certified by J E G Thomson MB. The death was reported by Andrew Suttie, son residing at 16 Ramsay Street, Montrose, and recorded by Alex Smith, Registrar at Arbroath. There is a correction confirming the information of Dr Thomson but correcting the home address to that of 80 St Vigean's Road, Arbroath, and the correction of the location to be White Hart Hotel, High Street, Arbroath. The death certificate was finally confirmed by the Procurator Fiscal and the Registrar on 14 and 16 March respectively. Dr Thomson later served in the Great War with the RAMC, being awarded the Military Cross for his action in the field. He returned to the town in 1919 to care for his patients

The *Arbroath herald* of 13 March 1914 carried a notice of the death and a short report: *Chief Constable MacDonald took the customary oath of office today. The oath was administered by Provost Thomson.* In fact, Mr MacDonald had come on promotion to Arbroath as he had been a Detective Inspector in Ayr. In the same newspaper, there is a fuller report on the new Chief Constable recording that there was a meeting of the Police Force held in the Police Chambers the previous day, when CC McNeill introduced CC MacDonald. After referring to the death of Inspector Suttie and paying tribute to that officer's work and expressing sympathy with his bereaved relatives, Mr McNeill invited his successor to address the meeting. MacDonald associated himself with what McNeill had said regarding the Inspector. He went on to hope that he would gain the confidence of the Burgh Police as Mr McNeill had done

On 4 August 1914, the Great War broke out. CC MacDonald and nine officers of the force applied to join the Colours, but only the Chief and four officers were granted leave of

absence by the Town Council Watching Committee. Inspector Robert Pyper acted as CC until September 1917 when he retired from the police after 37 years' service and Inspector Wilson acted as CC until MacDonald returned to his duties during January 1919. MacDonald had served in the Boer War in the Scottish Imperial Yeomanry and then during the Great War in the Cameron Highlanders, where he served in France. He was severely wounded requiring seven months in hospital, prior to serving in the South of Ireland in the later stages of that war

There were three casualties from the Arbroath Burgh Police and all during 1918. Gunner Stewart Wilkie Paterson, Royal Marine Artillery, was killed on 10 July 1918. He was having dinner when a shell exploded, killing him instantly. He had joined the Burgh Police in 1907. The second was Lance Corporal Alexander Sturrock, Military Foot Police, who died of pneumonia in France on 27 October 1918. He joined the Burgh Police in 1908, was one of seven Arbroath policemen who joined the Colours and he was the second to die on service. The third constable was Lance Corporal William Lindsay, Military Foot Police, who died at Cambrai on 6 November 1918 of influenza. He had 16 years' police service and he may have been one of the two named constables that were with Inspector Suttie when he collapsed. Also serving in the Royal Marine Artillery were Burgh Police constables D Findlay and William Smith, who survived that war. Constable Smith may have been the other named constable that the inspector met on his fatal night shift back in 1914

James MacDonald commanded the Arbroath Burgh Police until 1946, when he finally retired from the Police. From 1946 until 15 May 1949, Robert R K Ogilvie, CC of Angus Constabulary, took joint command of the County Police and the Arbroath Burgh Police until the burgh merged with Angus Constabulary on that date in 1949. It is sad that Inspector Suttie does not have a headstone at his grave in lair M 357 in the Eastern Cemetery, Arbroath

*Sources:*

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*Acknowledgments:* Derick Lamond, Cemeteries Dept, and Angus Council; Stuart Braid, Assistant Registrar, Arbroath; Derek Robertson, Arbroath



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