

Sergeant Arthur Fenner

Arthur Fenner was born on the 28th July 1890 at Guildford in Surrey.

Whilst he was a child he suffered from rickets which left a permanent reminder of a bow legged stance and robbed him of some of his height. His other brothers were each over 6 feet tall, but he failed to reach that height. His bow legged appearance earned him the nickname of 'No deformities' in police service at Waltham.

From a line of military men, his rickets had also robbed him of the opportunity of following his brothers into the army, and in 1911 he barely managed to join the police service. Having been accepted he served as a constable at Holloway police station for fifteen and a half years before taking and passing the sergeants promotion examinations and being transferred to Waltham Abbey station in 1926. He and his family took over the flat vacated by Sergeant Hiscocks with the front room overlooking Sun Street. His number was 43N.



Arthur Fenner P.S. 43N in the rear gardens of 35, Sun Street in 1932

Seven years later, along with the other officers at the station, in August 1933 changed the N for a J when Waltham Abbey joined the extended J division.

Not long after arriving at the station he had fallen in with the ways of Waltham Abbey policing and had gone to the rear .of a Honey Lane public house on his bike to collect a glass of beer to refresh himself. As he came out, still clutching the beer beneath his cape, he found himself joined by a fellow sergeant. He kept the brimming glass beneath the cape out of sight of. his fellow, and they both set off along Honey Lane up Woodredon Hill to the Wake Arms junction. The effort of holding the beer glass and pushing the bike had the inevitable result of the beer sloshing about until almost all of it had gone. When his secret was revealed, at the Wake Arms, the fellow sergeant, who of course was an unknown quantity to the recently arrived Arthur at that stage, burst out laughing. He had known exactly what had been happening

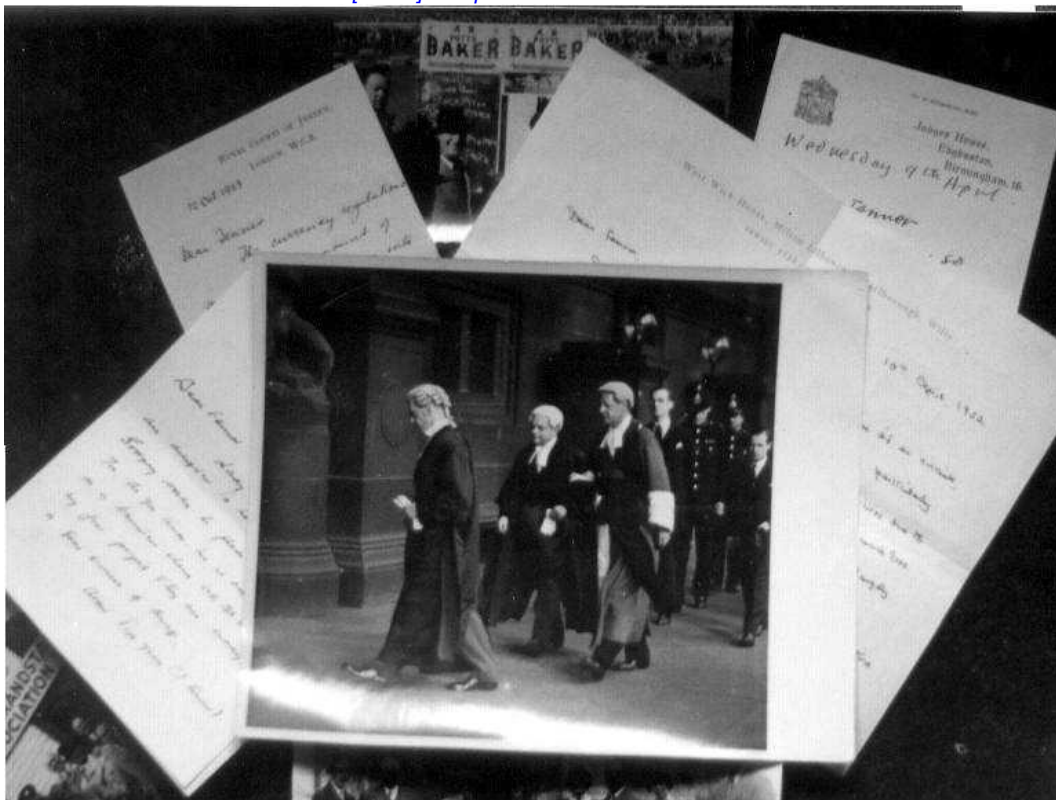
throughout the long one mile walk up the hill! No doubt they both made use of the two public houses that then stood at the junction.

He became a great member of the Waltham Abbey church choir during his time here, which by all accounts relating his 'earthy' nature, is a little surprising. He was a pillar of the choir for many years. In 1931 'he left the station flat and moved into 107 Honey Lane. During the last few years of his service he became the coroners officer.

Arthur Fenner retired, after 26 years service, on the 8th August 1937. He took up with assisting Circuit Judges, including being on the Autumn Circuit at the Liverpool assizes in 1938.



*[Above:] Scotland 1937 with Sir George Clarke
[Below] Liverpool Assizes Circuit 1938*



TC., N^o EDGBASTON 1890.



Judges' House,
Edgbaston.
Birmingham, 16.

Wednesday 9th April

Dear Fenner

Thank you so
much for looking after
me so well + helping
me in my duties. I
have thoroughly enjoyed
the circuit.
With many thanks

Brodie.

A letter to Arthur Fenner from a famous Judge of the time.

In August 1938, he was recalled to one month's duty during the Munich crisis.

In late 1939, he was again recalled for war service as a police sergeant at Sun Street.



P.S. Arthur Fenner in the Epping Road just north of the Wake Arms (1939-42)

He served until the 25th August 1942 and left the police service for the last time.

His new appointment was with the Foreign Office.

On the 20th August 1942 a letter was sent from the foreign office officially offering him a new occupation as a travelling security officer with the Communications Department of Anthony Eden's Foreign office. His duties, as escort to the King's Messenger paid him £300 per annum, with a war bonus of £19.12.0d from the 26th August. He was to travel the World for eight years on his duties to many countries, Russia, Bulgaria and America included. In that period he used up three passports, so many were the stamps and visas.

Arthur later wrote of the new job....

A DAY IN MY LIFE - which, will always be memorable to me was during the war in 1942. I had been appointed by the Foreign Office as a Travelling Security Officer and my first assignment was to accompany a member from that Office to Lisbon by air. I was 52 years old at the time, had not travelled beyond our coasts or in the air, and my only language was my Mother Tongue. I was to remain in Lisbon for an indefinite period, at least six months, and travel in and out of Spain.

We had arrived in Bristol the night before, rooms having been reserved for us at a hotel.

My day commenced next morning as I rejoined my companion for breakfast. I had not much appetite, my thoughts being of this great decision I had taken; leaving my wife and two daughters and my first flight in a plane.

A porter attended to our baggage and we accompanied him to a car and were soon on our way to an airfield. We arrived far too soon for my peace of mind. I was not looking forward to flying. We drove to a plane, a small two engined affair, entered and took our seats in the front part, our baggage in the passage way between us. A few more passengers were seated behind.

The skipper arrived. The propellers started to revolve and we moved slowly to the runway. We stopped the propellers began to go faster. My thoughts were far too uncomfortable to notice at first a lighted signs, 'Fasten Safety Belts'. I could not see one. My companion, a seasoned traveller, was calmly securing his around his waist. He noticed my agitation. 'You're sitting on yours' I was, and praying the plane would not move before I was secure. It did not. The engines began to roar and we were moving and gathering speed. I shut my eyes, gripped the arms of my seat and pressed my feet against the bar in front of me and hoped. Within a little while the engines became quiet. I opened my eyes to find we were well away. Involuntarily I swallowed and I could bear again the noise of the engines. I regained my peace of mind and began to look about.

We were over the sea, the waves appeared still and looked like the sandy sea-shore at low tide. I saw two or three ships they too seemed motionless. I was beginning to enjoy this strange experience my eyes glued to the window. I was brought back to reality by the steward, handing me a cardboard box, my lunch, the first meal off the ration.

Time was passing quickly. My companion spoke and pointed 'Your first glimpse of Spain.' It was a misty outline and it remained in sight until we began to lose height and circle. Again the lighted sign. No flurry this time on my part. I could not bear the engines again. I swallowed. They roared.

I could now see people and buildings on an air-field. We touched down; to me, I must admit, with relief.

The door opened and waiting close by a uniformed man stood, who smiled at my companion and introduced to me as the Head Chancery Servant. With his help and porters, our baggage was dealt with and we were soon through Customs and other formalities, and led to a car. I felt a great thrill seeing the 'Union Jack' at the bonnet. The journey to the Embassy was swift and noisy, the hooter incessant. Another new experience, a foreign driver.

I arrived with no impression of the six mile drive, for too intent clutching my seat against the swaying and listening to my companions conversation. We were soon rid of our baggage, except my personal; said 'Goodbye' to my companion from London, and was taken in tow by the Chancery Servant. Many introductions, but no colleagues. He invited me to his quarters to meet his wife and partake of a real English tea. They were most kind and I began to lose a sense of home-sickness which the sight of the tea-pot had surrounded me. After a good natter, he safely installed me in my hotel with a promise to fetch me in the morning.

I unpacked and rested and decided on dinner. A most enjoyable and unhurried meal, but I felt the solitude and strangeness as my thoughts dwelled on my family and what they were doing. Suddenly I hear a Page calling my name. I acknowledged. He pointed to a telephone. To my joy, an English voice. The colleague I am replacing extending an invitation to join him and two others, holding a farewell celebration. The Page took over again, calls a taxi, directs the driver and away I go, naturally excited. A wonderful welcome, they belonged to my background spoke my language and we had much in common.

It was nearly midnight when I regained my hotel room, enthralled by the brilliantly lighted streets and shops after the customary 'black out' at home. As I write, my mind

is back in that room and in retrospect I see the eight years following this day as through a magic crystal ball. It will be nearly two years before I see my Family again; within a few months, the plane on which I travelled is shot down, all passengers lost, including Leslie Howard the actor*. Many, many similar journeys by land, sea and air; mounting a plane would be no more than a bus in London. Many capitals would be my starting and ending points; the heat of Middle East to the cold of Russia and the Baltics; the ancient of Egypt to the modern of America; many strange peoples, tongues, customs and foods; kindnesses from many, and wonderful sights.

Would I have been scared or fearful had that ball been real? I don't know. I do not think so, because it would also have told me all will be well in the end, and that there would be glorious memories on which to dwell.

[Leslie Howard the actor was lost on a BOAC DC-3 G-AGBB ex- KLM PH-ALI c/n 1590 which was shot down 1 June 1943 over the Bay of Biscay. The attacking aircraft is believed to have been a Junkers Ju88].

BRITISH EMBASSY,
MOSCOW.

ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНСКОЕ ПОСОЛЬСТВО

CERTIFICATE.

It is hereby certified that
Mr. FENNER Arthur
a British subject, whose signed
photograph appears below, is an
Assistant King's Messenger.

Above certificate expires on
31st December, 1945.

Secretary of Embassy.

Moscow,
23rd April, 1945.

УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ.

Сим удостоверяется что
г-н ФЕННЕР Артур
Беликобританский подданный, чья
фотография с подписью помещена
ниже, является помощником Дипло-
матического Курьера.

Срок этого удостоверения
истекнет 31-го Декабря 1945 года.

Секретарь Посольства.

Москва,
23-го Апреля 1945 г.

Not quite spies and intrigue 1945

In 1947, whilst still on Government work, he left the Honey Lane house for a new home in Bognor Regis, Sussex.

In August 1950 his foreign office duties finished when he returned from Washington, by then aged 60 years.

From then on he did not retire completely but took many jobs including some which allowed him access to his love of horse racing, some part time, some full time, some social work in nature, until he was in his seventies.



Arthur Fenner's days at the races.

Arthur Fenner died in Bognor Regis In 1980, and his ashes were returned to Waltham Abbey and scattered in the New Cemetery on his mothers grave.