

Constable Ronald Penney

Ron joined the Metropolitan Police after National Service with the RAF during the early 1950s, in fact just in time to serve at the funeral of King George VI in 1952. Married in the same year, he lived in The Gladway, Waltham Abbey, with his wife May and their family of twin girls and a boy.

Ronald ["Ron" or "Copper"] Penney PC623J was a well loved member of the Waltham Abbey community during and after his police service as a constable in the town from 1952 to 1977. Ron was considered by most something of a gentleman but that hid a hard core that all police need to survive.

He spent most of his 26 years police service at the police station in Sun Street Waltham Abbey until he retired from his position as the original 1965 home beat officer for the Town Centre in November 1977. Among his skills was as rider of the Velocette lightweight motor cycle – The Noddy Bike – and the police collection includes his former motorcycle raincoat.

With fellow officer John Chilcott, Ron was commended for his part in saving the life of a woman viciously attacked in her home by an ex-partner during July 1971. Called out from performing station office duty in the early hours, in order to rescue her he was obliged to clamber up the outside pipe work of the three storey Highbridge Court building, Highbridge Street, and break in through an upper bathroom window and get himself in the flat. Once inside he opened the front door for other officers to enter and John Chilcott's actions ensured her survival from some very serious injuries.

On retirement he moved from the Gladway police house with his family to live at 31 Blackdale in Cheshunt and went on to seek a different way of life.

Following his police service Ron went to Edmonton County Court as an enforcement officer but it was not long before his preference for the outside world took precedence and he joined the Lee Valley Regional Park in January 1979 and set up the LVP Ranger service which continues today. He stayed on as Head Ranger until he retired again in June 1985

He maintained his links with the townspeople of Waltham Abbey, to many in the town he was better known for his voluntary stints as doorman to major events at the Town Hall and a range of sporting activities which included snooker and table tennis. He played for the High Beach Football Club.



PCs commended

TWO POLICE constables stationed at Waltham Abbey, PC John Chilcott — left — and PC Ronald Penney, have been commended by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

They have been commended for their "action, courage and determination leading to the arrest and conviction of a vicious criminal for causing grievous bodily harm."

The two policemen climbed through a bathroom window of a flat in Waltham Abbey in July and arrested a man armed with a knife.

At Essex Quarter Sessions

In October, the man was sentenced to seven years for causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Both policemen were commended by the court for their action.

PC Chilcott has six children whose ages range from 17 to nine. He has been in the Metropolitan Police for 15 years, the last 15 at Waltham Abbey.

PC Penney has spent 19 of his 20 years' service at Waltham Abbey. He has three children.

It is the first time either man has been commended by the force.

November 11, 1977



"Copper Penney" doffs his hat and says farewell to his friends and colleagues.

The death of Ron Penney was announced in Cheshunt, Herts in 1996. Aged 65 he was just about to add his old age pension to those he already had from the Metropolitan Police and the Lee Valley Regional Parks Authority. His funeral was scheduled to take place on August 22, 1996 at St Laurence Church, Church Lane, Wormley, followed by a private family cremation at Enfield.

Beside the police raincoat in the museum collection, a simple plaque marks his passing alongside the Waltham Abbey church path and goes some way towards indicating his preference to the town rather than the Cheshunt home he lived in after leaving the police service.