



CHADWELL HEATH POLICE

Late in 1839 the intended expansion of the 1829-formed Metropolitan Police force from its early central London limits was put in hand. The enlarged area to be taken in was arbitrarily arrived at by including all those local authority areas falling within 15 miles of Charing Cross. This yardstick resulted in the approaches to the Metropolis usually being marked by the "Coal Posts" erected as a marker for a now defunct tax on coal for the Capital in the wake of the Great Fire of London in 1666. It was not until 1965 that progress was to change the significance of this marker as far as Ilford and Chadwell Heath were concerned.

In mid-January 1840 sixty of the best men the force possessed were marched out to undertake the patrol of the Outer District of 'K' Division. This outer area, including the manning of the areas situated at Barking, Beacontree, Chadwell Heath, Chigwell, Dagenham, East Ham, Lambourne, Loughton, Wanstead, Woodford and Woodford Bridge, was under the jurisdiction of a single inspector operating from Great Ilford.

crop

K. Division.

pieces taken in, and the distribution of Men, Stations, &c

Names of Places taken in	Distribution				Men Mounted		Stations where Charges are to be taken	Petty Sessions Places & Times of holding	Places Magistrate's Office
	Inf.	PS.	PC.	PC.	Inf.	PS.			
<i>Inner District</i>									
<i>Shazford</i>		1	8	1			} Bow Station	<i>Longfild Street Police Court</i>	
<i>Eastonsstone</i>		1	6						
<i>Haristow</i>		1	5				} Poplar Station	<i>the same</i>	
<i>West Ham</i>		1	6	1					
<i>Total</i>		4	25	2					
<i>Outer District</i>									
<i>Great Ilford</i>	1	1	8	1		5	<i>Ilford</i>	<i>1.15. Saturday at Ilford, for</i>	
<i>Barking</i>		1	5			7	<i>Barking</i>		
<i>East Ham</i>		1	4			7	<i>Ilford</i>	<i>Ilford, Barking, Dagenham and Woodford.</i>	
<i>Dagenham</i>		1	3			7	<i>Dagenham</i>		
<i>Chadwell Heath</i>		1	3			7			
<i>Beacontree</i>			3			7			
<i>Wanstead</i>		1	3			7	} <i>Ilford</i>		
<i>Woodford Bridge</i>		1	3			7			
<i>Chigwell</i>		1	3	1		7			
<i>Lambourne</i>			3			7			
<i>Woodford</i>		1	5			7	} <i>Woodford</i>		
<i>Loughton</i>			3			7			
<i>Total</i>	1	9	46	3					

The Chadwell Heath area, still very rural, was allocated a single sergeant and three constables. As the original station possessed no charging facilities of its own, all prisoners were walked or carried to Ilford to face all charges and subsequent court appearances.

In the distribution of the force published in Police Orders of January 11, 1864, Chadwell Heath was shown as a station with no cells and still unable to take charges. By that date the single sergeant had seven constables under his control.

SLANG TERMS.

25.11.69

1. It has been brought to the notice of the Commissioner that some members of the Police Force have, when intimating to individuals the necessity of taking them into custody, made use of such slang expressions as that they "would run them in." The Commissioner cannot too strongly point out to all members of the Police Force the absolute necessity—if they wish to remain in it—of abstaining from the use of such language. The Police should remember that they are the only persons in the community to whom the power of arrest is entrusted, and it is a power that must be carefully and gravely exercised. An intimation to any person breaking the law that it will be necessary to take him into custody is surely more becoming to an officer of Police, and less likely to provoke recrimination, than the use of vulgar slang.

2. It is to be clearly understood that the use of slang expressions by the Police in the execution of their duty will be visited with prompt and severe punishment.

In 1881 a new station for the area was taken over in the Romford Road, this being a very short-lived structure in police service. Surviving documents state that the building in use during 1884 was a poor cottage in use by police only as a place of parade.

Whether this property is that situated at 5 Grove Terrace, Romford Road cannot be confirmed. The Grove Terrace property was rented at £20 per annum from Thomas Hearn of Chadwell Heath for seven years from 25 December 1885.

On 23 December 1889 a further new police station site was acquired in the High Road, at the corner of Station Road, from Mr. Pritlove for £400. On this site a new station was built. It was designed by the incumbent Chief Police Architect John Dixon- Butler, cost £2,159.5.7d and opened to the public on 12th December 1892. Although this building was considerably smaller than the structure that remains evident today, it was far larger than its predecessor and offered two cells and a two-stall stable. The old station building was given up on 24th December 1892.



As first built

The site of this station is said to be on a plot of land closely associated with pre-police law enforcement. Although the exact prior use is unclear it would seem that the lock-up was located there. In addition, the site was directly opposite one of its own predecessors in the Romford Road [now High Road].

Chadwell Heath was one of only fourteen police stations in Metropolitan London not to have an ABC wire telegraph fitted by mid-1888. They had to await this simple device being replaced by the more familiar Teleprinter many years later. The Teleprinter's arrival resulted in the station eventually acquiring a pair of shorthand; identity code letters as its telegraphic call sign. The initial pair was CH [as in Chadwell Heath] but these were changed in 1938, as part of a forcewide restructuring, to KH [the first letter denoting that it was on K Division].

In a 1904 survey of married quarters situated within operational police stations, it was declared that only a single set, at a weekly rental of 4/- [four shillings equal to 20 pence], was contained in this station.



The side view of a now extended Chadwell Heath Police Station as recorded from Station Road during the occasional survey of Metropolitan Police stations undertaken in 1911

Two more images from this survey appear on the next page



The Ilford U.D.C. complained about the lack of police manpower in the area in 1932, one of a number of such complaints usually directed at Ilford Police. It was claimed that police were spending so much time reporting minor offences, specific mention was made of cycling on the footway in Chadwell Heath and traffic speeding along the Eastern Avenue. The complaints were rounded upon by the police who had records of only 19 instances of the cycling offence, 13 of which were dealt with by caution. None of these had been reported at Chadwell Heath. The 126 cases of speeding found, 43 of which were dealt with by caution, led to the speed trap (undertaken with a stop watch in those days) being temporarily suspended.

On February 14th 1933 P.C. William Frederick King (851K) and PS James Bowden were called to a house fire at Chadwell Heath. The two officers rescued a 17 stone bedridden woman who was already herself on fire in the blazing room. Dragging her to safety with great difficulty both officers were themselves overcome by smoke and heat and placed sick for several days. Unfortunately the woman died later in the day from her injuries. Both officers received an award of £10 from the Bow Street Reward Fund and a bronze medal of the Society of Protection of Life from Fire. In addition, P.C. King was awarded the King's Police Medal in the New Years Honours of 1934.

With the worsening situation becoming evident on the Continent - as the German army smashed its way through the Holland, Belgium and France - the authorities in the United Kingdom were forced into looking at whatever defence measures might be possible to deflect a Nazi war machine intent upon invasion. Discussions took place between the Home Office, police and military on May 13 - 14. It was decided that a general request for volunteers to form a civilian defence corps should be broadcast on the BBC at 9.10pm on May 14 - the day of the Dutch surrender. To cover this appeal by Mr. Anthony Eden, 20,000 leaflets were quickly printed and 50 delivered to each police station. It was not to be enough.

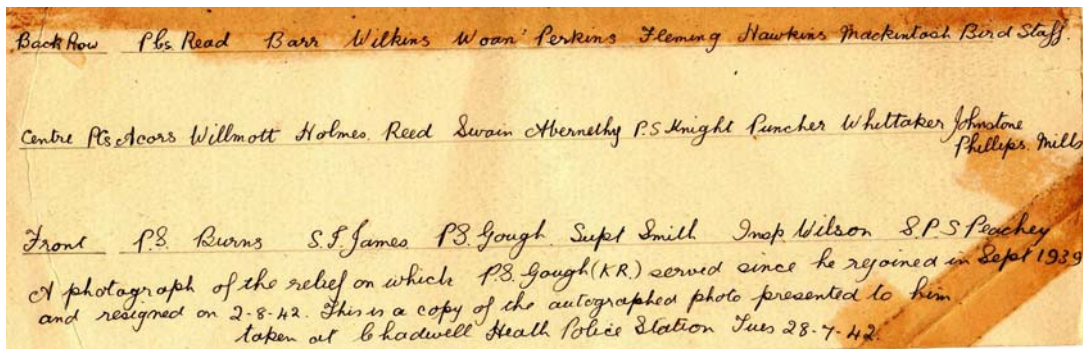
Further appeals were broadcast requesting weapons for the Local Defence Volunteers (L.D.V.) - later known as the Home Guard. On May 16th the request was for the loan of rifles these, together with spare military equipment, allowing the London area to share out 6,000 rifles to the volunteers. Before the month of May was out, the rifles were followed by successful appeals for shotguns and all types of ammunition. A number of these weapons were issued via the police at Ilford, of the 200 weapons delivered there, half went to Chadwell Heath L.D.V. and half to the Goodmayes contingent.

The police at Scotland Yard were a little worried that the whole matter of setting up the L.D.V. appeared to be devolving upon them, and direct involvement in the setting up of an armed unit was not then seen as something the Police ought to be involved in. It was soon explained that after the initial involvement, the L.D.V. would look after its own affairs. Fears

that the groups might set themselves up on police premises, like an armed branch of the Special Constabulary, were allayed.



A group of Chadwell Heath officers taken in July 1942



The original caption

In spite of extensive rebuilding of the High Road site, effectively doubling the building's original size, in 1962 a further site for a new Chadwell Heath police station was acquired to the rear of the old on the corner of Wangey Road and Cedar Park Gardens.

Chadwell Heath remained on the 'K' division for over 125 years, it did not join the J Division (first formed in 1886) until the extensive force re-organisation of April 1, 1965, brought about by the London Government Act 1963. With this transfer changed its telegraphic identity code to JH. Later still this code was changed to 01.JH reflecting London telephone codes of the time.

This change involved the changing of some of the station area boundaries which had last been set in the 1933 re-organisation but, more importantly,

also resulted in the Chadwell Heath section no longer serving at the gateway to the east. Romford, previously an Essex County Constabulary police station, took over that role and removed the significance of the coal posts in this area of the Metropolis.

The new 1962 police station site was built upon and the new station opened in 1969. The old building, which had only briefly served on J Division, was sold and became offices and a storage yard for Messrs. Ward, a local building company. Ward's superimposed their signs on top of the clear 'POLICE' signs which remain carved into the stonework. The building has since changed hands.



The new police station in an image from the 1983 police station survey

Below the old police station lived on with new owners [1991]

