



PEELERS PROGRESS

Policing Waltham Abbey since 1840

Bryden 1980

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By Bryn Elliott

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Foreword

The police in Waltham Abbey are not a unique band of men and women in themselves. The station buildings occupied by the police in the locality were never structures considered in the forefront of architectural style. Although there were a few well known cases, no mind shattering, world famous crimes were ever said to have taken place in the area, and yet..... Here is a story of one relatively insignificant police station situated for 160 years on the outer edges of the Metropolitan Police District. It may be a surprise to learn that from the pages of this story that some well known cases were indeed enacted within its jurisdiction, and that the officers serving there were, on occasion, embroiled in famous events outside of the town.

In writing this history of Waltham Abbey police officers, and the buildings in which they served, I have attempted to refrain from setting down the whole history of local law and order. Brief mention is made of the arrangement in force prior to the arrival of the Metropolitan Police in the area, hopefully in context. Other than those few instances I have avoided the period that would inevitably include such well known figures as the highwaymen Dick Turpin and the Gregory Gang, who included large swathes of Epping Forest in their plundering forays. Highwaymen have strong connections with the area during the 18th Century, but this is primarily the story of the modern police and the locality they served.

It is unfortunate that few of the 19th Century local historians thought fit to make more than a passing mention of their local police force. Their omission had the effect of placing me in the position of unearthing the whole story, and a great joy it has been too. In a number of instances much of the Victorian era is served by recounting matters of a general nature, these fortunately being supported by a number of enlightening local incidents which are set, perhaps unfairly, against a far greater weight of modern material. It is to provide balance that many well documented recent cases are often deliberately in receipt of only scant coverage.

The basis of this story was a short document produced in the 1970s for the 150th anniversary of the 1829 formation of the Metropolitan Police. This document has been quoted freely and, in time, checked against archives. This project took so long to bring to print, over two decades, other matters have tended to leave it temporarily in the shadows. That time has now passed.

To the compilers of the original short story must go the lions share of the credit. Without the work of three ex-Sun Street policemen, John Creagh from the 1940s, Robert Draper from the 1950s and Anthony Sharples from the 1960s and 1970s there would have been no easy start. Working with the Archives section at New Scotland Yard these three produced an inviting, but empty, substance. Having started a quest for detail I was to find many supportive groups and individuals both inside the town and beyond. Many were reticent to start with, but these were amply outnumbered by enthusiasts. To these dozens of people I extend my thanks. I am sorry that I cannot list all of the contributors by name, I only hope that the results will be thanks enough in themselves.

The principal thanks undoubtedly go to the fact that I was a policeman at the time I was asking the questions. At that time policemen continued to enjoy a status of trust, a trust sadly now rarely widespread. The Epping Forest District Museum, its past Assistant Curator Alisdair Wilson, and Curator Kate Carver and the embryo Metropolitan Police Museum Collection taught me a great deal about research and interpretation, skills which have stood me in good stead for many years afterwards.

The Waltham Abbey Historical Society, and in particular the late Dr. Kenneth Bascombe, provided me with free access to documents and photographs which I suspect even they knew little about at the time. Each group has saved me many fruitless hours of travel in search of source material which I often failed to realise existed. Mention must also be made of the following individuals for their major contributions to text and potential sources: John Back, Bernard Brown, John Bunker, Robin Gillis, Robert Gould, John Hamer, Fred Hook, William Hooper, Robert Kent, Richard Sharp. Some did not live long enough to see the final result in print. Additional thanks are extended to my family who had to put up with over a decade of numerous absences from their company writing and researching on this and other projects. In particular my wife Linda should take credit for many hours transcribing my unintelligible scribbles into clear type until I was able to acquire a modern machine that could improve my spelling!

There are sections of this book where I have expressed an opinion. I must point out that these are either my own personal assessments or those ascribed to other parties, and are not necessarily those in line with the policy of the Metropolitan Police Service.

Since the main body of this book was completed in 1993 while I was still a serving police constable at Sun Street and running the finest police memorabilia collection [The Waltham Abbey Police Historical Collection] in East London, there have been changes. I retired from the station early in 1996 and the police artefacts were donated to the local museum service. In 1998 it was learned that the area was to be ceded by the Metropolitan Police to become a part of the Essex Police area from April 2000. This development effectively provided the storyline with a finite ending to 160 years of the Metropolitan Police in Waltham Abbey.

Waltham Abbey

October 2021 © Bryn Elliott

EARLY DAYS

The Metropolitan Police, the first such civil peace keeping force in the world, was formed in 1829. This small band of men was, however, confined to an area now considered to be Central London. Many outlying parishes, now within the Metropolitan Police District, continued with existing localised law enforcement arrangements.

The Parish of Waltham Holy Cross, Essex, some 14 miles north of Charing Cross, and close to what still remained of Epping Forest, was one of those left out of the original formation of police. The presence of forest land had long ensured that the area suffered from the depredations of footpads and highwaymen. Like many areas of old Essex, it holds the dubious honour of having the infamous Richard 'Dick' Turpin as one of its 18th Century parishioners. In spite of this shady past, prior to 1840 the arrangements for law enforcement were not extensive.

Three Parish Constables were employed locally to cover the Waltham Abbey area. Only a single man is known by name, he was Anthony Childs. The adjoining village of Chingford, part of the early police area, employed one Joseph Jessop in the office of High Constable. Jessop, a Waltham Abbey based solicitor, comes to the fore in the early years of the police story.

Below the Parish Constables the active law enforcement role was devolved upon a number of watchmen. Doubts were cast on the worth of these men. Some were employed because they were already dependent upon the receipt of financial support from local charities or the Church. The role of "The Watch" was mainly confined to a static presence in a number of wooden sentry boxes during the hours of darkness. It was not unknown for these posts to be overturned upon the dozing occupant by unruly elements.

In addition to "The Watch", a Horse Patrol was maintained on the main routes into London by a small force of ex-cavalrymen raised at Bow Street. The nearest posts for this Bow Street Mounted Patrol, nicknamed the "Robin Redbreasts" from their garb, lay at Enfield, Epping and Loughton. In 1837 the patrol formed the basis of Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch.

The Bow Street Horse Patrol was inaugurated in 1805 to combat the many highway robberies taking place on the roads around London. Set up by Sir Richard Ford, Chief Magistrate of the Patrol Office in Bow Street, and Mr. Day the newly appointed Clerk to the Horse Patrol and later an inspector. From 1813 the Secretary of State took over the appointment of patrol constables from the Chief Magistrate. This patrol was not the first peacekeeping force formed in response to the attacks by highwaymen and footpads, but an earlier arrangement created by Sir John Fielding of Bow Street dating from 1763 was halted because of high costs.

The Bow Street Horse patrol was reserved for married ex-cavalrymen aged between 30 and 65. Tasked with the patrol of main roads to London up to a distance of 20 miles from Charing Cross many of these areas, including Abridge, Epping and Romford, were to fall outside the Metropolitan Police District when the police forces were formed from 1840. The average daily distance covered by each of the patrols varied between 14 and 23 miles according to district. The duties performed by the men were onerous. As in the case of the later police foot patrols, each working day was often of 12 hours duration and there were no regular days off duty.

The Horse Patrol constables were each paid four shillings daily, they wore a uniform consisting of blue trousers with blue double-breasted greatcoat bearing yellow metal buttons over a scarlet waistcoat, wellington boots with steel spurs and tall black leather hat. To complete the uniform the protective leather stocks were available as a guard against garrotting. Not all of the uniform was provided free, the spurs, greatcoat and hats had to be paid for out of the patrolmen's wages. The horse harness and loaded pistol completed the equipment. Although the pistol was supplied no officially sanctioned means of carrying spare ammunition was available until pouches were added to the saddles from December 1852.

Horses suitable for patrol work cost an average of £25 each, although Inspecting Superintendent Labal Mondiere of 1858 was allowed a new mare costing £42 - his "Unfit" mount being sent to patrol work. Forage for the patrol was delivered monthly by a London merchant. For convenience local farriers shod the

mounts. Although the police were formed in central areas of London in 1829, by the mid- 1830's it was the task of the 308 horses in the whole of the Bow Street Horse Patrol to cover the outer districts. Prior to its 1837 incorporation into the divisions of the Metropolitan Police the Horse Patrol consisted of four areas; that covering the Waltham Abbey area being known as the Fourth Division.

There were fifteen Horse Patrol stations, numbered from 51 to 65, within the Fourth Division in 1836, these included three at Woodford, two each at Ilford and Stratford and single stations at Chigwell, Epping, Loughton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Romford.

Patrolling locally in 1836 was Constable Thomas Jacques at Station Number 57, owned by Mr. Wilks in Loughton, and Richard Watkin from Bulls Cross, Enfield. Other stations nearby, both manned and owned by the Metropolitan Police until given up, were at Epping and Abridge. The Epping station, number 58, was let from Mr. Conyers on the Copt Hall Estate. Constructed of brick with a slate roof, this building was not finally ceded by the police until 1853.

In 1845 the Abridge property was let to the police by Mr. Chinn" of Loughton. Little is known about the construction of this ex-horse patrol building, possibly shown as Station 60 (Chigwell) in other sources, although this had an East End owner in 1836.

Station 60 was tasked with the patrol of the roads between Abridge, Chigwell and Leytonstone. In line with a tendency toward flexibility in areas patrolled, it was only finally given up by the Metropolitan Police in mid - October 1867.

The original, late 1839, intention to base a mounted police sergeant at Waltham Abbey appears to have been thwarted, either by a lack of men or, most likely, of stables close by. By February 26th 1840 only two of the projected three sergeants (one of whom was to have been mounted) had arrived. It would appear that the missing officer was temporarily added to the strength of the stables at Enfield, Bulls Cross.

It was not long before a number of the men gave up their mounted duties. A mixture of disliking the changes brought about and advancing age lead to them being adjudged as "worn out". Most of the 1836 patrolmen had seen between ten and twenty years extremely tiring service in the saddle already. There is a massive difference between spending 2-3 hours in the saddle and the Victorian expectation that the officers would be riding for around 8 hours. The attitude to the welfare of the horses was at a similar level.

One result of the expansion was that the Loughton station was moved to Chigwell. Constable Jacques left, with a total of 16 years service, by 1842.

Probably the last former Horse Patrol officer to leave the Metropolitan Police was Moses Lander. Kent born Moses Lander had joined the Horse Patrol in January 1834. In 1836 he had been stationed at Hayes, patrolling the roads around Uxbridge in the 3rd Division, a common situation with a requirement that the men stayed in any given locality only for relatively short periods to save the likelihood of familiarity arising between patrol and populace.

With a relaxation of the residency rule from the 1840 expansion of the police, Lander spent most of his subsequent service in Waltham Abbey. Married to Emma the couple had at least nine children between 1835 and 1850. In addition to service at the Hayes station he had patrolled at Woodford in 1839 and, as a sergeant, at Enfield in 1842.

By 1848 the matter of stabling in Waltham Abbey was resolved and there was both a sergeant and a constable in the town. Moses Lander was Sergeant 41N at this period. On September 29, 1852, new stabling was obtained to the rear of a building at 31 Highbridge Street, then called "St. Kilda's" but more recently known as "The Old Courthouse." It was ideal in that it was close to the police station and backed on to the tail of the Cornmill stream near the modern "Elphwood" scout centre, thus providing a handy source of water for the animals.

The owner of the stables was Joseph Jessop, the local solicitor resident in "St. Kilda's." In addition to being a local solicitor, he was landlord and Clerk to the Court in Waltham Abbey. He also held similar positions in surrounding parishes. and courts. A very influential man of his day.

Entry to the police rented stable was by way of a tall arched doorway at the side of the now demolished 33 Highbridge Street. Similar to gateways still remaining in number 31, it was a tight squeeze for horse and rider to pass through. These stables remained in use until the new police station was taken into use in 1876.

Sergeant Moses Lander and his large family lived nearby in Highbridge Street. He resigned from the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch suffering from "general debility" at the end of March 1857. In common with many of his colleagues at that time, although only 47 years old, Moses was plainly 'worn out' from performing his duties under onerous circumstances.

We are getting ahead of ourselves. Waltham Abbey may have had a wish to make good use of the new police being offered by the Metropolitan Police but first it needed to be enacted into law. Preparations for great changes in both mounted and foot patrol police work were contained in the Metropolitan Police Act 1839, and advertised on local notice boards from Saturday January 4th in that year.

A few days later, in accordance with arrangements organised in the previous year, Waltham Abbey was incorporated into the Metropolitan Police District, as part of the 2nd. Outer Section of the 'N' Division. The old style "Watch" and Parish Constables were displaced, the latter taking on a new, wholly honorary, role. The members of the former group largely returned to living off Parish Relief, which had been the prime cause of their employment in the first instance.

The Metropolitan Policemen allotted to serve were extracted from the best men available in the small original area. In those days the police constables were streamed into a class system. Those sent to the outer areas were the 1st class. Men of the 2nd class replaced this denuded group, they in turn were replaced by the 3rd.

New recruits to the force formed a new 3rd class. Four sergeants, one of who was mounted, nine constables in the town of Waltham Abbey and four constables in the outlying areas were scheduled to be sent in. In the event one of each rank was delayed for some weeks due to a shortage of suitable men and stabling. Working almost wholly alone, their trustworthiness could not be in doubt. The outlying area officers were split to allow one each for Sewardstone and High Beach and two in Chingford. The latter area was then little more than a hamlet with a few farms, close to the forest areas. The area covered from Waltham Abbey included both The Green and The Mount, whereas the police in Walthamstow Village covered that part known as The Hatch. The areas were open countryside, farmland and a few small cottages, a description difficult to take on board in the 21st Century knowing that both have been built up for over 100 years.

The area worked by the original Waltham Abbey police was bounded to the west by the twists and turns of the River Lea, to the east at the parish boundary, close to the London to Newmarket Road. The northern boundary, also that of the furthest extent of the Metropolitan Police, was marked by cast iron posts placed by the roadside.

After the disaster of the Great Fire of London in 1666, a coal tax was imposed to help pay off the debts incurred in rebuilding the ravaged areas. The point at which the duty became payable was marked by the 'coal posts'. The present day posts are 19th Century replacements for the originals, providing a convenient marker for the extension of the police area although the tax itself lapsed in 1889. As previously mentioned, the southern boundary lay in Chingford.

The police station in Waltham Abbey, for all its drawbacks, enjoyed a far greater eminence in 1840 than has been the case since. Until the mid- 1860s it remained the principal police building for miles around. For those twenty or so years it was the only place with facilities for charging and holding prisoners for a distance of seven miles around - further in some directions. It enjoyed the prestige of its own Petty Sessions Court for over a century, and was sited in a busy centre of commerce—then the largest centre of population for some distance. This position has undergone an almost total reversal, a position brought about by the town failing to attract rail and tram ways to its centre. Waltham Cross, an area adjoining, grew from being solely the site of an ancient monument and two public houses at a road junction to that of a main centre of population by the very presence of the railway during the 1840s. The stunted growth of Waltham was to be reflected over the years by the status of, and manpower allotted to, the police station. In the early years the station would call upon manpower equalling that of Tottenham, Ilford and Walthamstow, whereas late into the 20th Century today the number of officers manning the same area was but a small percentage in comparison.

The seventeen men policing the area were dressed in a uniform consisting of a blue tailed jacket and trousers. The coat was high necked and swallow tailed, the trousers, white in summer months and blue in winter. The collar of the jacket could be reinforced by the addition of a four inch high leather stock designed to prevent garrotting, a not uncommon means of attack. Also reinforced was the 'stovepipe' design top hat headwear chosen because of its civil appearance. For defence the officers were also equipped with truncheon, rattle and cutlass. The first was at that time made from male bamboo, but a variety of woods were tried out. The rattle was used for summoning assistance but, like the later whistle, its use ("springing") for obtaining help from the depths of Epping Forest was somewhat limited. In addition to the lethal qualities of the cutlass, night duty officers had a limited call on firearms well into the 20th Century. The truncheon and rattle were kept in pockets provided in the tail of the jacket.

The men employed were literate, some only just so, coarse and often over-fond of their drink. They were not exclusively drawn from the lower orders of society, but it certainly was not the occupation expected for a gentleman. The pay was low, but adequate. A starting rate of £1 1s 0d (£1.05p) had been introduced in 1829 and remained unchanged until 1869.

For this small monetary return the men were required to work every day of the week, on either a twelve-hour full shift or only eight hours split over sixteen. Initially the uniform was worn at all times - both on and off duty - a situation which led to the introduction of an emblem signifying the man's duty state. Worn on the left sleeve until finally abolished in 1968, the duty armlet was to be worn only during duty hours.

With such hard conditions and long hours, large numbers of men were dismissed from the service before their pension was payable as "worn out". Amongst the earliest known to have suffered this fate in Waltham Abbey was Sergeant 15N Henry Sturgeon in 1872.

Aside from the officers of the Horse Patrol, John Goodhall (sometimes written as Goodall) represents one of the earliest police officer's identified as serving the Waltham Abbey police area. Patrolling Chingford for a large part of his service, he was nonetheless nominally a Waltham Abbey officer.

John was a Yorkshireman with his roots in Shipley, Bradford. He was born in 1812, the son of an innkeeper, James Goodhall, and his wife, Elizabeth. As far as is known he had a brother, a half brother, and a sister. On June 11th 1832, at the age of 20 years, he married Sarah Scott, 19, in Bradford, they were to have eleven, or more, children.

John joined the police in London on January 13th 1840, a few days prior to the expansion of the force boundaries that led to Waltham Abbey and other outer districts coming under the Metropolitan Police. The two referees, or references, he called upon when applying to join the Metropolitan Police were J S Waine and W Nicholl, an innkeeper, both of Shipley. The latter appears to have been William his half brother who had probably taken over the inn from their father who died in the summer of 1833. He was issued a warrant number of 16215, an unique reference that signified he was the 16,215th man to join up since 1829.

The area he first worked is unknown, he probably first arrived in the London area alone, but it is known that he was working as a constable in the area of Epping Forest by the summer of 1845. At that time John lived with Sarah and their children at Fairmead Lodge, that stood just to the west of Fairmead Road and not far from the present Suntrap building in Church Road. On August 17th 1845 John and Sarah took two of their children, Abraham and Mary Ann, to be baptised at High Beech church, St. Paul's, built in 1836. In those days the church for the area was in Church Road (hence the name) rather than in the present location occupied the current, 1873 vintage, Church of the Holy Innocents. The late christening for one of the children may have been as a result of a separation enforced by John's initial arrival in London.

Within six years of joining the police John and his family had moved house again and in 1851 he was shown in the census return to be living in Chingford Green with Sarah and six of their children. The very scattered parish area of farms and isolated cottages was then still under the control of Waltham Abbey and John would have continued to regularly visit Waltham in the course of his duties policing Chingford.

Chingford at that time boasted only an ancient "lock-up" structure opposite the site of the present police station. This was undoubtedly used for the temporary incarceration of wrongdoers prior to policeman and prisoner undertaking the four mile journey to Waltham Abbey.

In 1854 John Goodhall was widowed at the age of 45 years. Sarah was buried in the churchyard of the 1844 built church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Chingford Green. John never remarried.

John left the Metropolitan Police, after completing only 17 years service, on August 4th 1857. During his time in the police he earned some fifteen rewards. If matters then followed their normal course at that time any pension due to 47-year-old John will only have lasted some five years. Six years after leaving the police, in 1863, he took up a post as an officer for the Enfield Local Board. He was appointed Inspector of Nuisances, a post he held until 1878 at which time he was appointed Road Surveyor, Coroners Officer and Parish Beadle for Enfield.

After a final illness lasting three weeks, John Goodhall died at his home in Chase Green in Enfield town centre on Saturday March 21st 1879 at the age of 68 Years.

Four days later a number of the local shops closed as a mark of respect and a bell tolled for two hours at St. Andrew's Church in his memory. Although resident in Enfield, he was buried, re-united with his wife, in the Chingford churchyard, some 25 years after her death. Five sons and one daughter survived him. It is interesting to note that even at the time of his death Chingford still did not have a police station of its own and the village cage lock-up still stood in its stead at the spot now occupied by the 20th century war memorial.

In spite of the great esteem that this old policeman was undoubtedly held in, the Metropolitan Police had no idea that he had died. The short-term pension arrangement ensured that he (and hundreds of his ilk) just passed away, an event not recognised by the police force. It is unlikely that any police attended the burial.

The two-storey building that the 'new police' occupied was in Highbridge Street, opposite the Parish Church that had once formed part of the great Abbey. Immediate neighbours included the then notorious dwellers of Camps Court, a row of filthy wooden slums beside the stream, and the original National School. The brick and slate built building was small, poorly constructed, and lacking rear windows that might have overlooked the school. As a result the interior suffered from poor light and insufficient ventilation, a matter aggravated on warm days by the stench from the earth closets in the cells. It is doubtful if these cells were any improvement upon the town's previous places of confinement, two lock ups. The earliest of these was in Green Dragon Yard near to the Market Square and the other in Bakers Entry (Cornmill). The first had crumbled away, the second was still extant but itself starting to fall into a state of decay. Water for all purposes was drawn from the Cornmill Stream, the tail waters of the water mill by the church, passing under and by the "station house" building. The quality of the water will have been low, with safe drinking water only being available from the deepest public wells.

As was common in the police service until quite recently, little actual space was required to undertake police duty in, accordingly only the ground floor was available for exclusive use by police. The upper part of the building was set aside for use as the Parish Meeting Room and, for a number of years, the Petty Sessions Court.

The position of that first police station house was useful in that it was at the centre of the major special events, the fairs held in May and September each year. These short events occupied the street between the Market Square and Romeland, including the Parish Church forecourt, and dated back to 1253. The numerous amusements and market stalls drew large numbers of people from the surrounding areas into the town centre. Until 1846, in addition to the plentiful established public houses, anyone could sell beers from home. The householder merely had to fix a green branch of a tree to his door, and, the house then become what was termed a "bough house" for the duration of the fair. With the addition of very liberal licensing hours many difficulties were created with drunkenness, a situation exacerbated by the starting of a livestock market in 1850 as an addition to the Tuesday food market.

In the same period, the upper floor of the police room was less used with the opening of a new County Court building in Highbridge Street. The Petty Sessions moved there on Tuesdays, to sit weekly, in addition to the monthly civil court sessions. The Parish meetings continued to be held in the upper room of the former police building, until the place was pulled down in 1900 to build the town hall. Notices of meetings at this period always referred to the venue as being "the police station".

In 1859, a single storey fire station was erected to the south side of the police building to house the appli-

ance and equipment of the volunteer fire brigade. It was the duty of police to call out the volunteers when needed - and to go to the Waltham Marsh to collect the horses which were brought in to be hitched up prior to the appliance setting off to fight the conflagration.

The Metropolitan Police introduced a custom-made handcart for heavy carriage work in 1860. The cart, known as the Bischoffsheim hand ambulance, was almost the sole means of transporting the dead, ill or merely drunk, to either mortuary, hospital or police station until the Great War period brought motor ambulances into use. At this period the nearest hospital to Waltham Abbey was at Tottenham. At walking pace the journey there for the injured party might take over four hours!

Known locally as "The Barrow", the three wheeled cart was mainly used for the transporting of drunks on market days. Fitted with a folding canvas hood, it was finished in chocolate brown with red lining - the Royal coaching colours.

From April 1st 1860, the Metropolitan Police took charge of security within the Royal GunPowder Factory (RGPF) on the northern edge of the town. This development soon provided accommodation for the single men who had previously lived in lodgings. The manpower at the RGPF and adjoining Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) was closely connected with the town police, but generally undertook a style of policing more akin to site security [see chapter 14].

In 1864 the men changed their uniform for a new design. The white trousers were no longer worn for summer wear. A frock coat replaced the previous jacket, which in turn required the truncheon to be housed in a spring loaded leather holster worn on the belt. The following year, a variation of the helmet, with its plate badge, was introduced for the first time. The introduction, and eventual acceptance, of the dome shaped helmet as police headgear was an attempt to continue to provide the police with a uniform that could be considered civilian rather than military in nature. This aim was thwarted later in the 19th Century by the adoption of the developed shape by much of the army. The original Metropolitan Police helmet of 1864 included a flat brim and a rear spine similar to that retained by the City of London and other forces in modern times.

In Police Orders published on January 11th 1864 - showing the distribution of the Metropolitan Police force - Waltham Abbey was shown as a station on 'N' (or Islington) Division. Until the middle of the next century, Police Orders were a daily issue, often amounting to only a single printed sheet, used to transmit information which, in later years, would be entrusted to teleprinter and telephone. In the same year, the Commissioner, Sir Richard Mayne, directed, in Police Orders dated December 31st that Superintendents were to take immediate steps to find sites for new police stations to be erected in various parts of the Metropolis. Included were Waltham Abbey and Chingford.

The early relative eminence of the station in Waltham Abbey started its downward slide from 1865. In that year the station found itself joined in the 'N' Division by Chigwell, Loughton and Woodford, all stations previously on the 'K', (Stepney) Division. Loughton had a new station building but Chigwell and Woodford were, like Waltham Abbey, older premises, the first being still in a converted cottage. All of these stations were using the Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions for their court cases. Police Orders issued on June 11th 1866 announced: -

'Greenyard appointed at Waltham Abbey. N Division. In consequence of there being no proper pound or Greenyard at Waltham Abbey in which animals falling into the hands of police can be taken for safe keeping until restored to the owners, arrangements have been made with the landlord of 'The Cock' Inn, who is willing to provide accommodation and take care of animals at the following scale of charges, and not give them up until authorised by the police: -

Cattle and horses 1s 6d per day

after first day 2s 0d " "

Sheep and pigs, per score 5s 0d " "

after first day 7s 6d " "

Dogs or poultry, each 0s 6d " "

RICHARD MAYNE

It was in 1873, when Woodford received a new police station, before any further major changes took place. In October that year a new sub-division was formed within the 'N' Division, based upon Woodford.

Waltham Abbey was a part of this reorganisation, along with Loughton and Chigwell. This early arrangement was destined to last until 1886. A revised version was introduced in 1988, to serve through into 2000.

In spite of Waltham Abbey's subdued part in this formation, the manpower allotted was second only to the Woodford station. Woodford mustered an Inspector, three sergeants and eighteen constables, compared with two sergeants and nineteen constables working from Waltham Abbey. At this time Chingford remained an area without its own police station. The men of the sub-division were split into ten sections ('reliefs' or 'teams' in modern parlance), five working nightshift and the other five, days - turn about. With the exception of the mounted men patrolling remained wholly on foot from the station house or the men's scattered houses. Even those men working from home were expected to meet up with the patrol sergeant at prearranged points, at times which ensured that they could not remain at home beyond their duty times. The prime purpose of these meetings was control, but it also ensured the safety of the patrols in that a failure to meet with the sergeant suggested that something might be amiss. It was little use knowing that a man was missing if you did not know where he should have been in the time since he was last seen. Regimentation of patrol patterns was an essential prerequisite of this system. The officer in charge of the police room at this time, a sergeant, was busied in the supply to his superintendent, chief inspector and inspector of reports into the condition of the existing facilities, and looking around on their behalf for suitable properties for a new police station. Visits by the superintendent in person, for first hand information, were few and far between. It was in this period that the state of the existing police station house, mentioned earlier, was reported upon. On March 8th 1872, James Francis, vicar of the Parish Church of Waltham Abbey, requested the Commissioner to find a suitable site for the erection of a new police station. In the form of a memorial signed by many of the prominent citizens of the town, it ran: -

'We the undersigned residents of Waltham Abbey beg to draw the attention of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the present insufficient accommodation for the Police stationed in this town. The Commissioners are doubtless aware that the small room at present used for a police station was built by public subscription and, although it has answered the purpose in a certain way for many years, the time, we think, has now come when a suitable building should be erected. Apart from the in-convenience which must be felt by the police themselves, the magistrates and others now have to attend the court (which is over the police room) find themselves greatly incommoded, and we feel assured this has only to be brought to the Commissioner's notice to ensure some steps being taken to remedy it.

Waltham is an increasing town, and property is yearly becoming more valuable. It would be advisable therefore in every way, that immediate steps should be taken to supply what has become a public necessity'

On March 18th 1872, the divisional commander of the 'N' Division, Superintendent W.F. Green, produced a report setting out the poor state of the police room in Waltham Abbey.

In a further report, dated March 29th Green wrote of two possible sites for a new police station in the town, The first of these was a house in Highbridge Street, three doors from the new County Court. This property was owned by the War Office as a part of the RGPF. A local valuer, Mr. Stephen Chetwood, offered the second, in Sun Street. The former site was withdrawn and the second found to involve too much expense and the added complication of a portion of it being covered by Copyhold. It was to another site in Sun Street that the police eventually turned. An orchard, 90 feet by 150 feet, and previously inspected in 1869, was being offered on behalf of the estate of the late Mr. Richard Clayton Brown Clayton for the reasonable sum of £400. The deal was signed on September 29th 1872. Shortly afterwards a small section of the site was re-sold for £25 as an addition to the adjoining estate of Mr. Stephen Chetwood. The police valued this small plot at only £11.10s (£11.50p) and so considered that the offer made was more than reasonable. In both instances the buyer was to pay the legal and transfer expenses of the seller.

The purchase by Chetwood of the small addition to his lands resulted in him being additionally liable for the re-building of that section of the west wall along its new line, to be matched to the other walls encircling the station site. Although most of the original front wall of the orchard was demolished, the small section incorporated into the Chetwood property was merely raised in height with additional layers of brick. The untidy result of this cost cutting measure is clearly visible in Sun Street today. In the event the wall building works were finished far ahead of the transfer of the section of land to its new owner.

The building of the station was put out to tender in 1874, resulting in the receipt of nine quotes ranging up to £3,984. Two local builders, John Bentley and William Gardener, had quoted for the task, but it was

Lathey Brothers of Battersea Park who succeeded with theirs, the lowest quote of £3,430, on Christmas Eve 1874.

That same year the small force at Waltham Abbey was temporarily increased in strength to combat a serious outbreak of arson. The first haystack fire at Holyfield on May 4th 1874 had largely been ignored in its isolation, but after a number of further fires mild panic set in amongst landowners, fearful of losses not being covered by insurance companies. In August, two fires had destroyed property at a builder's yard in North Place and a haystack at Quinton Hill Farm. In September a single haystack was found alight in Crooked Mile.

As if that were not enough, in November matters came to a head. On the 6th at two in the morning, a stack and a barn were found afire at Cold Hall (near Station Road), on the 11th, three well spaced stacks were lost on Abbey Farm, and on the 16th, three were lost to two different farmers at Galley Hill. The local Board of Health put up a massive reward of £50 for the apprehension and conviction of the offenders. Hearing of the numbers of fires in the locality of Waltham Abbey, the Commissioner, Col. Sir Edmond Henderson (1869-86), directed Superintendent Green to ensure that the problem was addressed. Green sent in twenty constables and a few men from the CID, a set of measures that seemed to solve the immediate problem of stopping the fire raising, but failed to find the culprits.

NEW HORIZONS

The new two storey, brick and slate built building was substantially constructed, in a style typical of many police stations of the period designed by Frederick Caiger the police architect, at a total cost of £3,570. The operational accommodation was confined to a single room - much as the previous building had provided.

The major portion was set aside for living quarters for one sergeant and constable and their families, and four single constables. The original arrangement of rooms left little provision for privacy. All the sleeping accommodation was on the upper floor with each room opening onto a common passage. The four single men shared their bedroom, and the married men's wives shared the kitchen and laundry rooms. A meal room on the ground floor was not only communal but also the only place available for non-residents to eat whilst on duty. The operational room, to the right of the main entrance door, had three secure cells leading from it.

In December 1875, the police surveyor reported that the new station building in Sun Street was ready for occupation by police. On January 10th the next year, Police Orders announced the taking into use of the new station. The same publication set out the levy of charges upon the residents for their quarters. The married sergeant was to be charged 4/- (20p), the married constable 3/- (15p) and four single men 1/- (5p) each.

These residents, six police officers, two wives and up to ten children at times, led a somewhat frugal lifestyle. The single men were expected to comply with rules made for larger single men's accommodations (such as the Powdermills Barrack block) which, in 1873, had been set down bluntly in the force Instruction Book. It was stated that: -

'No article of furniture, and no picture, print, or statue is to be put into any of the sleeping rooms of the single men..... except..... (that) supplied by the receiver'

It was usual to hire a servant or married constable's wife to look after the domestic needs of the single men, the food and the washing. That might be advantageous to the men but they were not always the masters of their own fortune and no doubt some servants and wives were less than skilled homemakers. The families living at the station had the use of gardens at the rear of the building. Regulations were strict in this area also. They were forbidden to keep any pigs, rabbits or poultry of any description on police property. This directive remained in force throughout the period the building was occupied by families. As we shall see, it was largely ignored.

Coal for heating was issued free to the men to the level of 40lbs (20kg), per man, per week in winter. A single man's allowance dropped by half in summer, whereas that of the married men remained at a constant rate throughout. The station had the capacity to order 440lbs. (200kgs) of coal weekly for residential purposes. All heating for the living quarters was in the form of open fires in the control of the occupants. Men living in outside accommodation were paid an allowance of 3½d (1½p) weekly for heating.

A boiler room in the basement supplied heating for the working section of the station house, primarily for the cells. This heating was confined by regulations to the period between October and March. Each day at 4pm the boiler could be lit and maintained until 10pm. If no prisoners were in the cells at that time, the fires were left to die down.

This ritual was unfortunately very rare at the Sun Street station and it was unusual for the fire to be lit until someone was actually arrested. According to information from the 1940's, the residents found the building very cold, even with fires raging in the various rooms. The rare occasions when the cell was occupied resulted in a dramatic, and welcome, boost in temperature in the upstairs rooms.

A problem arose with the water supply for the new building. Reliant upon a shallow, 16 foot, well into a spring below the station, the supply looked quite clear, but was subject to contamination. Water from this well was pumped through a filter into a cistern holding two days supply, by a policeman delegated from his police duties. In those days, before a piped supply to each home, the residents were forced to resort to the use of one of the deeper, 160-foot artesian wells for their drinking supply. As Mr. Brown, a miller, about 80

yards down Sun Street privately owned the nearest, it was considered inconvenient. No water could be drawn after 6pm, or on Sundays, which required resort to public artesian wells in Fountain Place and Powdermill Lane, at least 380 yards distant. In spite of written requests from SDI Todman and Superintendent Green, the provision of a deep well for the station, at an estimated cost of £160, was rejected.

The living conditions, typified by well water and the lack of real privacy, brought about by common corridors, mess room and scullery, might not be to modern tastes, but they were sheer luxury for the period. Set against modern tastes, the institutional colour scheme also left a great deal to be desired. The lower part of the walls, to about chest height, were a far from homely dark green leaded paint, with a one inch moulding painted black, separating this colour from the cream adorning the upper part of the walls. The grimy remains of this paintwork came to light during structural work in 1992, suggesting that this dowdy scheme remained in use until at least 1932.

A great deal of discipline was required of all. There was little opportunity to allow children to play, or display tantrums, in a building inevitably containing a number of sleeping night duty policemen. In the 1880s the inclusion of accommodation within the main structure of newly built police stations was avoided where possible by a new police architect, but, even so, many more outer area stations continued to provide integral homes.

Across the gravel surface of the yard new stables were provided for the mounted officers. The new police station stables provided conditions bordering on sheer luxury in comparison with the "St.Kilda's" building. Photographic evidence points to the Highbridge Street stables being wholly of wood construction, where the new site provided for a two storey, brick built building with hay loft and dung pit. Originally planned to be twin stall, the design was soon extended to three-stall configuration, possibly prior to the completion of the station, with a blue engineering brick and cobble frontage.

There were two horses posted to the station for most of the period from 1876 to 1911, the third stall being intended for visiting senior officers. In 1886 a small stable was constructed for the police on a site at Kings Head Hill, Chingford, opposite the old village cage. Intended to be for the use of the visiting police inspector as he undertook his supervision rounds but also useful as a rest point for the mounted patrol from Waltham Abbey, the site was soon afterwards built upon as a police station that was opened in March 1888.

Metropolitan Police horses were often obtained from a variety of private sources prior to 1873, when a system of contracts was introduced. This new idea failed partly due to the natural shortage that occurred during wars such as the Crimean and Franco-Prussian, both leading to military expansion of horse needs, leading to a general return to the private market place.

According to instructions on the care of horses laid down at this period, like the men, the horses were known primarily by number and were also graded in a class system. The fore feet of the mounts were branded with "M.P." to the right and the individual number to the left. In the class system it was laid down that horses for use by sergeants and constables would not normally be ridden by higher ranks. The set daily rations for the horses, stored in the hayloft, were 12lbs of oats, 12lbs of hay or green forage and 8lbs of straw each. The inevitable waste product was stored in a specially constructed pit alongside the building, for sale to the highest bidder. Quarterly accounts were to be submitted!

The mounted patrols were equipped with truncheons as their sole means of defence for normal patrolling. Somewhat shorter than modern equipment, they were cased in a spring-loaded holster attached to the saddle. Swords were available for most of the Victorian era, but the otherwise acceptable, carriage of firearms on night duty was generally unavailable to the men of N division because of the local Superintendents dislike of them. Many other divisions carried them as a matter of course.

Due to changing policy the mounted constables suffered numerous changes in collar number identity throughout the period that Waltham Abbey had horses. Originally known by N (Islington) divisional numbers like their foot duty colleagues, at one period they had numbers issued in the "AR" series, centrally from Westminster. Robert Dickinson, who served as "mountie" at Waltham Abbey between 1870 and 1893 was issued with collar numbers of 53N, 203AR and 217N in the period and yet did not move his posted station.

The hand ambulance was provided with a separate shed situated in the lee of the main yard gates. This arrangement was far superior to that in the cluttered old station building.

In the 1870s, officers were working two thirds of their duties as night turn, with but two days off monthly, if they were fortunate, and little in the way of annual holiday leave. This latter was allowed at a rate of 14 days for inspectors, 10 days for sergeants and 7 days for constables. Requests for any period over three days at one time had to be submitted to the Police Commissioners Office first. Sick leave was not to be used lightly for extra days off. All sick officers were required to report to the police appointed Divisional Surgeon before going sick. The rate of pay was cut by one third for the duration of the sick period.

The architect, Caiger, lost his job with the Metropolitan Police in 1881. An outbreak of diphtheria at Rotherhithe police station brought to light a lack of medical facilities at the station. After Caiger's demise, his deputy, John Butler, set about installing a suitable room in all the old stations. At Waltham Abbey the third cell was converted into a Police Surgeon's room by closing the old entrance onto the cell passage, rerouting the main ground floor corridor and providing a new access through a previous coal store to the corridor. The structure remained that of a typical vaulted cell. The room retained its new use until after the last prisoners were charged in the late 1970s.

The person holding the police post of Divisional Surgeon in Waltham Abbey tended also to be employed by both the RGPF and the Local Authority as their Chief Medical Officer.

The class, or seniority, system among the police that had existed in 1840 lasted well into the 20th Century. The least misdemeanour detected would result in removal of seniority, leading to a pay cut and the task of then regaining the seniority payments in the future. It was a cut-throat business as the numbers in each of the higher classes were regulated, therefore requiring a "dead men's shoes" situation to arise prior to the hoped-for regaining of status and wage level. A hard core of lower ranks was trapped into the pay levels of the 3rd class through continued instances of often trivial, misbehaviour. These men - and their families - were faced with a catalogue of fines levied in lieu of pay cuts, transfers of station, and eventual dismissal.

At the end of individual officer's service, he could look forward to a pension. Unfortunately, the regulations for the receipt of pensions were a somewhat grey area heavily weighted in the favour of the Treasury. Theoretically any man attaining 60 years of age, or 30 years total Service, could get a life pension. Unfortunately, few ever reached these difficult milestones and were consequently often only given five-year pensions at the best. The elusive full pension amount, thirty fiftieths of pay, was nonetheless creditable - if unattainable. Although the matter was redressed somewhat from late in 1873, older officers were still not eligible for life pensions for many years after the changes and died destitute.

It might reasonably be expected that at least the widows of police dying in service might be well catered for. Sadly, this was not the case at this period either. After seeing over £50 in pay annually, the widow's pension of up to £15 per annum, plus £2.10s 0d (£2.50p) for each child, was paltry, even allowing for the possible offer by the police of a free place in a boarding school. The pension could be supplemented by a single collection amounting to not more than one penny (½p) per constable.

Higher ranks were allowed a slightly enhanced rate of contribution, but as different ranks could not subscribe to the widows of another rank the actual amount that might be collected was similar. It might be that this particular stringent ruling was to protect the serving officers from their own generosity, as deaths in service were very common.

The manner in which constables were to work their beats was set out in regulations that strictly only affected a very small, town centre, portion of the local area. Officers were to patrol on the kerb during daytime, and close to the buildings at night. At this period, a crime occurring on a man's beat, especially if undetected, was considered a dereliction of duty.

After the new station was opened for business, the local newspaper carried a lengthy report on the event, complete with a brief description of the interior layout. The reporter summarised by telling the readers that the building was "impressive" and ranked alongside the County Court and new school as the three best buildings the town possessed at that time.

The newspaper, then locally published in Highbridge Street, was the Waltham "Weekly Telegraph". It ran a number of out of the ordinary police stories that year, these including two reports in September. The first mentioned the arrival of new style headgear (a further stage in the evolution of the helmet), and the marching out from the station of all the men wearing the new pattern. A few days later there was a report

of four of the sergeants being promoted in situ to the rank of Station Sergeant, thereby collecting a fourth stripe each. The sergeants who were given the new rank were Robert Hole, Charles Tubb, James Ware and George Rolfe. Unlike modern practice, it was not then uncommon for newly promoted men to remain in the same area. Robert Hole was still in Waltham Abbey, further promoted as an inspector, in 1881.

Another of that year's reports concerned the sad death of one of the Waltham Abbey acting sergeants. The substantive sergeants were then assisted in their duties by constables who wore only two stripes on their upper sleeves, two of whom were incorporated into the Waltham Abbey manpower until 1939.

Constable 84N Jephthah Farrow had been transferred from the RGPF police station to take up duties as acting sergeant, or A/PS, in the old, Highbridge Street, police building. Shortly after the opening of the new premises he was taken ill and did not return to duty before his death on November 9th 1876 leaving a widow and two young children. Aged 39 years, he had served most of his fifteen years locally. The funeral drew representatives from all over the Woodford sub-division ranging in rank from constable to the chief Inspector of the RGPF.

The station suffered the first of many deaths within its walls less than two years after opening. Ellen, the thirteen-month-old daughter of Sergeant George Rolfe and his wife Sarah, died on November 21st 1877. The cause of her death was given as measles and pneumonia. Each of the subsequent deaths in the quarters at Sun Street involved family members, there being no recorded instance of a serving police officer dying in the building.

In the winter of 1880, the country was beset by a particularly severe spell of winter weather, with heavier than usual falls of snow. The falls blocked all the roads in the locality - some with drifts up to seventeen feet deep. In Sun Street the snow lay waist high, requiring the digging of channels to allow anyone to even leave any of the buildings, let alone allow the police to undertake any meaningful patrol work. All roads were cleared by hand, creating 'canyons' through the drifts for the passage of supply carts. The freeze lasted for weeks on end into April. The dead, whom it proved impossible to bury in the frozen ground, was stacked in a sub-zero temperature cemetery chapel to await the thaw. The main means for collecting the dead, the police hand ambulance, would have been extremely difficult to handle in such conditions.

The weekly pay on Wednesday April 20th 1881 was somewhat delayed, under bizarre circumstances, for the men of the Woodford sub-division. It was incumbent upon the Sub-Divisional Inspector (SDI) in charge of the subdivision to pay each of his men in cash (mainly gold coin) each Wednesday the earnings up to the previous Sunday. The Woodford SDI was Robert Todman, then aged about 45 years and with eighteen years police service. He had been in charge since 1873 and had conducted his duties without any cause for concern throughout. On this particular Wednesday, Todman attended the head police station in Kingsland Road, Islington, and was handed £154.12.0½d, in coin by Superintendent Green. It was just another day, similar to those that had seen a total of £50,000 handed over in similar circumstances over the years.

Robert Todman left Kingsland and set off for Woodford. He did not reappear at the station, although it was later discovered that he had returned to his rooms and exchanged his uniform for civilian attire. When the pay parades failed to materialise men started to look for him, initially upon the assumption that he had been attacked and robbed. The alarm was eventually raised by the most senior officer in the locality affected by the non-appearance of Todman. Chief Inspector Charles Goble of the RGPF, who outranked all others in the immediate area, may well have been the only one to dare suggest that Todman was being tardy in his delivery of the money.

As it became clear that the only foul deed was that undertaken by the missing SDI, his description was circulated in "Police Gazette". In the meantime, other money was obtained from Kingsland Road to pay the men their delayed dues. It fell to Constable Bardsley, stationed at Lostock Junction, two miles from Bolton, Lancashire, to unearth the identity of the stranger in their midst on Tuesday May 10th. Two days later Robert Todman was held in the cells at the Waltham Abbey police station, prior to a preliminary hearing at the local Petty Sessions.

It seems that, because of the recovery of £135 and suggestions of mental imbalance, Robert Todman was found to be "Not guilty" by the subsequent jury trial. The Metropolitan Police were made of far sterner stuff than the jurors. Paying no heed to excuses like the 'stress' suggested in court by a whole host of witnesses. Robert Todman was dismissed from the Metropolitan Police without back pay or pension, on July 13th. 1881. There is no record of any attempt at an appeal. He was undoubtedly extremely lucky that the jury

took the view it did.

QUEEN TO KINGS TWO

By 1871, the previously great Epping Forest had dwindled alarmingly. In that year the City of London started buying up sections of it, eventually obtaining 6,000 acres in all. The Epping Forest Act, 1878, regularised the acquisitions. The ensuing years were to bring many clashes between officials and the local populace. Fortunately for the officers at Waltham Abbey, most of the use of police that resulted involved the Loughton station area more than the more westerly town. Officers posted into the forest beats were, however, unable to avoid the constant bickering over lopping - the right of the common people to take kindling wood from the forest. On a number of occasions, Inspector Anderson, Todman's predecessor, and a number of officers had been involved in the removal of enclosures in forest lands.

On Saturday May 6th. 1882, Queen Victoria set her seal of approval on the future use of the forest lands by officially opening the area to the common people of London. The arrangements for the visit of the Queen, including the provision of some 1,529 police, were set out in Police Orders of May 4th. This grand total equated to approximately 20% of the whole police force at that time. Seventeen of the divisions sent men to the forest under the leadership of the Superintendents of A, H, K and S Divisions. A route stretching from Chingford Railway station to High Beach, by way of Rangers Road and Fairmead - 3½ miles - was lined by men at intervals of between two and twenty yards. The men of 'N' Division, including the locals, took the last stretch from Crossroads to the Royal Enclosure entrance to Queen's Green by the "King's Oak" public house. This enclosure was the security domain of the Westminster based 'A' Division officers.

Although the majority of police employed arrived by railway with their Inspectors at, or before, 1pm, the Queen herself did not arrive at the Chingford railhead until 4.05pm. All police were attired in the best uniform - "Number 1s" - with capes carried and white gloves worn. All these meticulously thought out arrangements were for an event that barely lasted one and a half hours. The Queen arrived at Chingford, journeyed to High Beach with an escort that included mounted police, declared the area open and returned to leave on her special train to Windsor at 5.30pm.

It was estimated that as many as half a million people were present in the area to see the monarch perform this simple task that meant such a great deal to many of them. Ten thousand were officially invited to the ensuing entertainment in a temporary building set up on Queen's Green. This, without any doubt, was the largest event to be held within the Waltham Abbey police station area. The Secretary of State for the Home Office authorised the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police to pay out one extra day's pay to each of the men employed upon the High Beach visit. This welcome news was published in Police Orders of May 23rd.

In 1883, Waltham Abbey was connected to the expanding electric telegraph system slowly being introduced to most stations in the Metropolitan Police. The station received its connection in June of that year, whilst others had been connected to the system for a decade or more. The equipment itself dated back to the 1860s, the standard unit being the ABC Telegraph, patented in 1858.

The telegraph was not as sophisticated as later machines only withdrawn in the late 20th Century, but it was easy to operate. Transmitting only a single letter at a time, the method of operation is best explained by quoting from the book "From Rattle to Radio" by John Bunker (KAF Brewin Books 1988): -

"The machines consisted of an upper and lower dial, the top was the receiver and the bottom the transmitter. The key, located opposite to the letter on the lower dial, was pressed and a handle turned to generate the power when sending this letter. The pointer on the receiving dial moved to the same letter and was written down by the person receiving the message. Skilled operators could reach speeds of twenty to thirty words in a minute"

This simple method of passing messages, relatively slow though it was, was far faster than the previous horse-back messenger. The transmissions from Waltham Abbey were to the Enfield Lock station at the Royal Small Arms Factory. Any stations requiring the message beyond there, Scotland Yard for instance, entailed that station manually switching the line to the next station in the link - Edmonton, followed by that station undertaking the same task. Simple though it was, the ABC Telegraph, with its single letter transmissions, was to remain in widespread use into the 20th Century.

The following June saw the withdrawal of the rattle as the officer's means of summoning assistance. Their replacement by the familiar whistle - the design was to remain unchanged for a century - resulting in two major gains, handier size, and greater range. In spite of what the official records tell us, the rattles were certainly not out of service in Waltham Abbey very quickly, or even by mid 1886, two years later, a point that will become clear shortly. The cutlasses were withdrawn from general issue the following year. This move was also far from universal, for the next thirty years instances arose where Divisions asked the Commissioners Office for directions regarding the disposal of various batches re-discovered long after they should have been scrapped. There seems little doubt that weapons including cutlasses and firearms were not immediately removed from the inventory of men stationed in the outer stations.

The nominal withdrawal of these weapons left the constable on the beat with the truncheon as his sole official means of defence against attack, the whistle and oil lantern his means of calling for help. A new truncheon, a 15½ inch Lancewood model, came into general force issue. In 1886 the leather truncheon case was withdrawn in favour of a separate trouser pocket. This particular change will have been long drawn out, with its introduction being dependent upon the supply of trousers, and the liability of the individual to be due to receive a new issue. It would be inconsistent if the change was complete before the turn of the decade.

Although extensively researched, there are few periods in the story of the Waltham Abbey police where the exact identity of each man is known for any given year. Fortunately one of these dates was January 13th 1886. According to a private notebook left by PC 515N Henry Dobson, who served locally from 1883 until 1909, the station strength on this day was: -

Inspector 53827 Charles Cowell 3rd class
Inspector 54376 John Broadbridge 3rd class
384N 39686 Henry Merritt 1st class
54NR 45760 Joseph West 1st class
53NR 46081 Robert Dickinson 1st class
108N 47066 George Gutteridge 1st class
346N 51326 George Crabb 1st class
340N 52050 John Terry (Act.P.S.) 1st class
327N 53378 George Hearmon 1st class
507N 55556 Clermon Barrow 1st class
261N 56029 Frederick Hockley 1st class
314N 58088 Henry Erry (Act.P.S.) 1st class
265N 64738 Joseph Brooks 2nd class
417N 65616 Joseph Kimber 2nd class
515N 67875 Henry Dobson 3rd class
684N 68018 Henry J. Cobham 3rd class
103N 68289 Bernard McCauley 3rd class
422N 69138 James Wright 3rd class
509N 70524 Harold Richardson 3rd class
205N 71524 James Barry 3rd class

The list is very much a 'one moment in time' affair, a number of those in the list, including Inspector Broadbridge, moved on very shortly afterwards. Some were to return after a spell in one of the government arms factories, each usually to be replaced with another name in a constantly changing sea of faces. There were those, Dobson and Wright included, who stayed for many years but, then as today, the latter category of policemen were relatively few in number.

The fruits of Constable Dobson's notebook, in which he chose to duplicate some of his most interesting official reports, brought to light the story of the tragic death of one of the men on the list on May 12th 1886. In this period it was common for each of the men of Waltham Abbey to be seconded to both the RGPF and the RSAF for lengthy periods or just single days to make up the numbers of constables undertaking duty. It was not a duty that was particularly disliked, as they were able to claim the daily "danger money" supplement of one shilling (5p) for the inconvenience of making their way to whichever factory was allotted. In the case of the RSAF it did require that the officer set off for duty quite early.

Harold Londesborough Richardson, PC 509N, a 19 year old officer who hailed from a small village outside

Hull, Yorkshire, was posted night duty (10pm to 6am) at the RSAF, to replace an officer who had taken early retirement the month before. On that fateful night in May, he reported to Inspector Charles Butcher at the Sun Street station after leaving his quarters there, and left the town at 8.53pm. Setting off along Highbridge Street, he encountered Inspector Cowell, who was on his way to night duty at the station, and walked on towards the towpath alongside the Lea Navigation to Enfield Lock police station. He had not arrived when the night duty there was paraded at 9.45pm.

The ABC telegraph from Enfield Lock clattered out its message in the station, and Richardson's quarters were checked, lest he had returned to them unseen. Constable McCauley was despatched to check the tow path route in an attempt to find the missing officer. By the time McCauley walked and searched the route to Enfield Lock, an hour had passed. At 1.30am Inspector Cowell and two constables set to dragging almost two miles of canal alongside the route. At 2.50am the drag team found a police helmet floating in Corbal's Dock, a feature about 150 yards from Highbridge Street, recently known as the Highbridge Marina.

Mrs Corbal, wife of the well-to-do gentleman who owned the dock, lived nearby at Cold Hall House. She and William Clark had both heard a sound like screaming at about 9.5pm, but when each had gone outside to seek the source, they were greeted by foul weather, with high winds and rain, which had suddenly blown up, but otherwise all was quiet.

Chief Inspector James Hocking, from the Sub-divisional station at Woodford, arrived at 8am and rode over to Enfield Lock to consult with Mr. Childs, an engineer with the River Lea Conservancy, about drawing off some of the water. It was midday before Constable Richardson's body was found, fully clothed, the outermost garments being a heavy great coat, which was buttoned up to his neck, and a glazed cape. He was lying on his back with his arms raised, as if he were reaching for something above him by which he might have saved himself. PC Dickinson recovered the body from the dock, one of the station's mounted officers, and John Webb, a labourer from Waltham Cross, and taken to the police station to await an inquest.

At first it was thought that young Richardson, with only 13 months service in the police at Loughton and Waltham Abbey, had been attacked, but when he was stripped, there were no marks of violence. It is interesting to note the contents of the pockets of this young man, so recently in the police. In his right hand pocket there was a bottle of cold tea (a common enough item for the times), and a police rattle—an item supposedly withdrawn from service long before he even joined the service. His truncheon case, due for withdrawal that year, was still intact and unopened. In his other pockets he carried 7/4½ (37p), in coins, and his pocket watch which had stopped at four minutes past nine.

The inquest was held on the Saturday. It was decided that the cause of his falling into the water was a sudden squall, which had probably either caused him to seek shelter, from where he had slipped into the water, or that his cape had been lifted by the wind and carried him into the water.

However he arrived there, once in the water his clothing would have hampered any attempts he might have made to swim, and in particular the cape, and he would have quickly foundered in the chill waters. He was not the only Waltham Abbey officer to meet this fate. After a verdict of "Accidental death", his body was released for burial in his home village in Yorkshire.

July of 1886 saw the formation of 'J' Division, which Waltham Abbey was to join 47 years later, to the East of the Epping New Road. Meanwhile, the twenty-four men of the town station continued as part of 'N' Division, back on the Enfield Highway sub-Division. The men in that year consisted of two inspectors, two sergeants, two acting sergeants (two stripes) and 18 constables. With additional men from the RGPF, many of whom lived in the town, the area was extremely well policed, particularly during those hours of change-over, when the factory men were swelling the visible police presence. Being part of the Enfield Highway sub-Division, along with the RSAF at Enfield Lock, greatly assisted in the security arrangements for both of the factories. The existence of the RSAF upon the 'N' Division greatly increased the availability of firearms to that division in time of need.

With the continued lack of widespread mobility, officers continued to live and work away from the town centre to serve areas like Chingford, High Beach and Upshire, in a type of 'home beat' policing style. One of these out-stations received a degree of undeserved eminence in the 1886 edition of Kelly's Post Office Directory when the almanac listed a building called "Rose Cottage" as being the High Beach Police Office under the supervision of 'Constable Gatheridge'. This building was one of two used for police to live in near High Beach, being occupied by PC 108N George Gutteridge and his family since about 1869. In

many ways it was similar to those others used for the purpose. Proof that it was never intended that this small clapboard cottage should reach the heights suggested by Kelly's came in November 1888, when George retired and the premises were re-let. It became a small shop and, later, the High Beach Post Office. Although its clap-board exterior is now covered in a rendering of sand and cement, this structure remains, now simply 16 Mott Street, more than a century after its police use.

On March 5th 1888, the first police station was opened at King's Head Hill, Chingford. The new station was on the same site, opposite the old lock up and next to the "Kings Head" public house, as a stable had been erected the year before. The lock up, which had served the local officers as a temporary means of incarceration until the prisoners could be taken to Waltham Abbey, was demolished shortly afterwards.

With the opening of the station, a number of men were transferred away from the nominal strength of Waltham Abbey to man it. A number of these officers had already served and lived in the community of Chingford for years, the transfer being merely a matter of administration. Station area boundary changes affected both Walthamstow and Waltham Abbey. The area South of Mott Street in Sewardstone was ceded to the new station, along with the men. The new station left the Enfield Highway sub-Division and became part of Walthamstow sub-division, this still being a part of the 'N' Division.

On April 3rd 1890 the Receiver of the Police applied for the redemption of land tax on a sum of £21.17s.0d. which had been taxed at 13s.7d. It is possible that this related to the section of land re-sold for "£25", to Mr. Chetwood in Sun Street. It was re-paid on 17th April 1890.

Throughout the 19th Century police officers had not had a regular day off each week. Days off duty were infrequent, and even if rostered, liable to cancellation. The maxim that "as crime had a seven day week, so did the police officers job" continued as before. In 1894, agitation had been started to remedy the situation by an organisation allied to the magazine "Police Review". Calling itself "The Police and Citizens Friendly Association", this band of people was then the nearest thing the police had to a union. Meeting with official indifference, it failed to gain ground.

On April 5th 1895, Mr. John Bentley, the builder and contractor of Sun Street, who had been among those tendering for the station building contract twenty years earlier, wrote to the Commissioner: -

'I find on looking at the apportionment map of Sir Hereward Wake Bart: - Manor of Waltham Holy Cross, I have hitherto been charged with lot No. 1288 (tithe map) which is the land upon which your Police Station stands in Sun Street and adjoins my property.

May I therefore ask you to have this matter looked into with a view to adjustment with the Agents for Sir Hereward Wake (Messrs. Alfred Davell and Sons, 39 New Broad Street, E.C.) and that the tithe paid by me on this portion may be refunded.'

Mr. Bentley had purchased plot number 1286, alongside the police station, at the same time as the station had been purchased, and had been charged the tithe (an agricultural rate) for plot 1288 as well for a number of years. Mr. Bentley had paid 3s.6d. each year, without realising that 2s. 1 d. was for the police station land. He eventually over-paid £4.8s.10d., quite a sum in those days. Mr. Bentley asked for a full refund. He arranged for the tithe to be re-apportioned by the Board of Agriculture, and incurred charges of 7/6d [37½p]. The police solicitors stated, however, that Mr. Bentley was not entitled to more than two years reclaim, in spite of tacit approval by the Home Office for a full refund. It would appear that the unfortunate Mr. Bentley received only 4/2d in August, and 7/6d in January the following year.

The Bentley family's building business continued to operate alongside the police station for a further twenty-five years, until it was closed with the death of John Bentley's last surviving son.

In the early evening of June 30th 1898, Mr. Robert McLaughlin, a 39 year old Irishman, of the Market Place, was walking with his wife to the parish room over the old police room, for a church meeting. Upon arriving at "the bridge, just beyond the pound" (Highbridge Street) he was hurled to the ground when struck by a tandem bicycle ridden by two men. Thrown down with such force, he fractured his skull, and lapsed into unconsciousness. The men rode off, promising to fetch a doctor, and were never seen again. A doctor was called by someone else, and he sent the unconscious man, who had only been in the town for eighteen months, off to hospital. He had to go to Tottenham, a distance of ten miles, probably by hand ambulance. He stood little chance of surviving, and he died the following morning. At the subsequent inquest on the Irishman, the jury passed a verdict of "Manslaughter, by persons unknown". Calls were made

by the inquest jury, and echoed by the vicar in the parish magazine, for the registration of all bicycles, in order that they might be traced by number in the case of such accidents.

The same year, 1898, saw the closure of the parish reading room, the former police room, prior to its demolition. From Henry Dobson's notebook, as well as local and national newspaper stories, comes a tale of a successfully solved case of housebreaking in August 1901. There is, though, a twist in the story. Mr Peters of Sewardstone was the victim, Arthur Childs of Islington being the villain of the piece.

Having been arrested and brought to Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions, Childs was remanded in custody to Holloway Gaol (then not the single gender establishment it is now). A common problem was that the transfer was not as simple as might be thought. In the custody of Henry Dobson, Childs was escorted towards the prison, past and through his home territory. After a railway journey to Liverpool Street, in spite of his shackles, the prisoner escaped from an ordinary carriage that Dobson had obtained for the final stages of the trip. After a struggle with the constable, he fell about twelve feet from a bridge onto the tow-path, swam across the canal and successfully lost the constable in the back streets near New North Road. The prison "Black Maria" service did not regularly serve distant places like Waltham Abbey until almost a century later.

The resultant publicity, some of it reinforced by the most lurid of illustrations, was on Henry Dobson's side. The pictures of the struggle which depicted the constable and the prisoner falling, fighting fiercely, from the Hackney cab onto the road and then on to the tow path from the bridge, must have helped shield him from the normal severe disciplinary action for losing a prisoner. Dobson escaped with severe bruising from his fall. The ultimate fate of Childs is unknown.

The police station in Sun Street was connected to the public telephone system in 1907, and issued the number Waltham Cross 200. Growth in the telephone network resulted in variations on this number remaining in use for over 70 years; the last, prior to the introduction of the Lea Valley exchange, being Waltham Cross 22200.

An additional facility originally was a private telephone line connected direct to Cheshunt police station. This was not the first police telephone system locally, the RGPF having had an internal system from 1888. Until 1907, no statutory right existed for any class of worker to take a weekly day of rest, although most did as their employers closed down on Sundays. It was this common practice that enabled Goddard Clark, the Member of Parliament for Peckham, South London, to get his bill for a statutory rest day through Parliament.

The police were excluded from the provisions of the Weekly Rest Day Act. It required the promotion of a separate bill, The Police (Weekly Rest Day) Act of July 1910, to place the officers of the law in a similar position to that of their neighbours. Generally, men worked seven days and took off the eighth. These days were still subject to cancellation without notice or recompense.

The accommodation at Waltham Abbey had undergone some changes by 1907. Instead of there being two married officers and their families, and three single men, resident, there was only a single married officer and seven single men. A similar situation had occurred since at least 1891, when Inspector Joseph Edmonds presided over his wife Louisa, two-year-old son Harold, and eight single men in the quarters. In 1908, this situation caused difficulty in finding a replacement Station Sergeant in charge to replace the retiring SPS William Brooker, who lived in outside accommodation. The majority of possible candidates required space for their families, space that simply was not available.

Belatedly realising that the posting of so many single officers to an out-of-the-way place like Waltham Abbey was not fair, when so few entertainments were available locally, it was decided that all of them would be moved out as soon as possible. This move restoring the availability of two reasonable sized flats for married officers. No conversion work was involved; the flats remained largely communal until the 1930s. Rent was to be charged at 7/6d (37½p) weekly.

Although these arrangements were in hand, in the event the replacement SPS in charge of the station, Henry Skeates, then a single man transferring from duty at the Dockyards, took up residence in outside accommodation in Honey Lane. The first officer to take up residence in the available flat, Sergeant Hiscocks, did not move in with his family until 1913.

Shortly before three o'clock on Wednesday May 27th 1908 - pay day - the village of Upshire (Cophall Green), was shaken by the loss of its 'home beat' constable. James Hoare, PC 585N, stationed at Waltham Abbey since February 1894, set off from home in the village with two female companions. The two ladies, his wife Lucy and her friend Alice Leader, left slightly ahead of him on their bicycles on the journey to the town station, and pay parade.

James, 39 years old and, some reports state, a little high on alcoholic beverage (which, no doubt, came from "The Horseshoes" public house two doors from his home), followed a short distance behind the ladies until the hill was reached. As the split trio entered the steep double bend of Horseshoe Hill, James overtook the ladies at a reckless speed and continued down the hill. All went well until he had almost reached the bottom. He was confronted by the expected second, right hand bend as well as the unexpected horse and cart driven by Albert Parrish of nearby Wood Green Road slowly ascending the hill on the correct side of the road. James rode into the side of the gravel roadway on his own side of the road as he passed beside the cart, but got caught in the ruts. He managed to keep his saddle for some yards before failing off onto his head and fracturing his skull. The three distraught witnesses carried the unconscious constable home, put him to bed and called the doctor. The police surgeon arrived at 3.30pm. The skull fracture was too serious for medical science of the time to treat—always assuming that he could be transported the dozen miles to the nearest hospital by hand ambulance or a horse drawn cart. He died the following morning.

Such was the esteem in which Hoare was held by the local populace that a subscription was raised for his wife and children. Five members of the subsequent Coroners Jury gave up their fees. The verdict was accidental death. He was buried on June 1st in the Old Cemetery, Waltham Abbey. Frederick Besant PC 612N took his place in the village police house.

Besant was one of a dozen Waltham Abbey men involved in the infamous "Tottenham Outrage" on Saturday January 23rd 1909. This two-hour long incident, evolved from the murder of a police officer and a young boy in a wages hold up near

Tottenham police station, and drew in dozens of police from far and wide. Called out from their stations and homes, the officers endeavoured to reach the area by all means to intercept the two armed suspects as they fled from the scene. In a hail of gunfire, across the Lea Valley marshland towards Walthamstow, thence by way of Chingford they were chased by police and public alike to their deaths near Woodford, some six miles from the site of original incident. Although none of the Waltham Abbey men succeeded in reaching the immediate proximity of the fighting their supreme efforts were recognised by the head of N Division, Superintendent Jenkins, in a report covering the momentous events that afternoon.

1911 was Coronation year for King George V. It was also the year in which the last of the two police horses were withdrawn from the Sun Street police station stables.

The last horse was withdrawn from Waltham Abbey in November 1911, when PC 35NR Edward Bilman was transferred to the Chingford police station stable. Bilman had been on the Enfield Highway subdivision since 1900, but it is not certain how long he had been the mounted officer at Waltham Abbey, possibly less than two years prior to his move. Bilman did not remain as the mounted officer at Chingford for long before returning to ordinary foot duty at the same station. The loss of the horses from Waltham Abbey in 1911 preceded by only a few years an extensive review of the stationing of police horses after the Great War. At that time almost all horses were assigned to inner London areas. It had been the combination of the arrival of both the telegraph and the telephone, both far more efficient means of communication, and the wider use of the bicycle for patrol that had brought about the reduction in horses.

Bereft of its horses, the stable block was provided with a bench seat and served as parade room for the next half century. Many of the fixtures and fittings remained in place for many years, allowing the building to support occasional visits of police horses from other stations. Little used in its new intended role, it saw greater (and more useful) use as the resident children's play room, although most tended to get into trouble from time to time when caught jumping down into the yard from the hay loft. On numerous occasions local senior officers missed policemen and residents' children playing in various parts of the station by seconds. Impromptu games of cricket with youngsters, held in the station yard, broke up and young bodies were hastily bundled out of the station office windows as the supervisor walked in the door.

The original fixed wooden slat hay loft ladder and exterior horse tying rings survived, almost unnoticed, into the late 1970's, it was only when the former was replaced by a metal ladder and the latter disap-

peared overnight that anyone realised their potential significance. The loft served as a repository for out of date books, some gems among which have survived the passage of time. Even in the absence of the police horses the station environs and the town was not short of animal life. The Romeland livestock market continued to flourish, bringing with it the sights and sounds of animals being driven through the streets. In the summer of 1911 Marshall's the Chemist in Sun Street had been invaded by wayward sheep on market day, an event leading to the proprietor resolving to ensure that his ever open door would be closed on the next Tuesday. Unfortunately for Marshall the word seems to have passed around the sheep population, for on the following week's market day the shop was again invaded by a flock of sheep. The closed door was simply smashed through by the leading invader. That area of Sun Street supported a thriving butchers and a slaughterhouse - with its attendant problems - until the 1960s.

If the 1909 "Tottenham Outrage" illustrated the involvement of Waltham Abbey men in unexpectedly distant incidents, the 1911 Coronation, Dock Strikes of 1912 and the infamous 1913 Derby Day at Epsom in Surrey, provided ample illustration of planned assistance to other police areas.

Much in the same way as late 20th Century Waltham Abbey police were to be seen working in areas other than those accepted as 'Home' ground, on occasion the situation was similar in the past. The opening of Epping Forest by Queen Victoria had resulted in other areas providing the bulk of the 1,529 men used to police the event. It was to be expected that this arrangement would be reciprocal. As the event of 1882 had been almost unique, the flow of assistance has tended to be away from the forest areas.

Assistance rendered at the Epsom Races, particularly The Derby, was regularly called upon from other divisions. In 1921, for instance, 855 men were assigned to duty at Epsom and 524 at Ascot. Until very recent years, this assistance included men from the eastern side of London also. The 3pm race, The Derby Cup, run on June 4th 1913 may best be remembered, not for the winner, but for the activities of a suffragette, Emily Davison, who attempted to stop the King's horse by grabbing the reins. She was trampled by the falling horse and rider, dying a few days later from her injuries.

The letter "R" following the usual single divisional letter worn by officers signified that they were part of the divisional reserves, men liable for such special duties at any location, or kept at stations as a quick reaction force. Their name led to the adoption of the term "Reserve Room" for police station communications rooms.

Originally, the early communications were placed in their care. They were usually the only spare officers in the station, awaiting any calls to come through for which they were on instant call – or 'reserve'.

Inspector Whitebread of the 'N' Division led a contingent of police to Epsom including sergeant 4NR Bunn and constables 85NR Johnson and 59NR Eady.

It was this group of men of the 'N' Division Reserve who were on hand by Tattenham Corner to witness the action of Emily Davison and be first on hand in attempts to save her life. After Emily was bowled over by the galloping horse which she had foolishly attempted to stop, the officers picked up her broken body, carried it to a nearby motor car, and sent her off to Epsom hospital where she later died.

Sergeant Bunn's pencil-written pocket book report, which appears in full in the Appendix, recorded all the salient facts of the incident, and listed the contents of Emily's handbag. It is from the contents of this bag that some deductions as to her frame of mind can be made. The presence of a return railway ticket, and other tickets for a theatre performance in London that same night, at the very least suggest that death was very far from her mind as she leapt out on to the course in front of the horses.

Bunn's report ends with identifying the prime police witness of the events at Tattenham Corner that June afternoon as ' ... PC 59NR Eady of Waltham Abbey'. As the prime police witness to the act which led to Emily's death. Eady was recalled to Epsom to give testimony at the subsequent Coroners Court hearing which eventually arrived at a verdict of 'Accidental Death'. Samuel Eady retired from Waltham Abbey after the Great War. He died in 1941 and is buried in the town cemetery.

On a smaller scale the Waltham Abbey police area was also to receive the attention of the Suffragettes. As a part of the massive publicity campaign that was the women's protest movement the carefully tended greens of a number of golf courses were damaged. Over one weekend greens on the West Golf Club in Sewardstonebury joined those of the Mid-Surrey, Richmond, Royal St. George's, Sandwich, and half a

dozen others in being damaged.

The retirement of local police almost always received some attention in the local press. Generally, such events, although often fully reported by the press, were low key affairs for single retiring officers, and held out of the glare of publicity in one of the many public houses in the town. On one occasion though, the retirement of three men in quick succession led to the arranging of a grand event.

In July 1913 the retirement of two officers from Waltham Abbey and one from Cheshunt in a short period provoked the head of 'N' Division, Superintendent Jenkins, to lay on a reception for them in the yard of Waltham Abbey station. The three, Sergeant S. Beckett and Acting Sergeant H. Cole of Waltham Abbey, and Acting Sergeant Willoughby from Cheshunt, brought family and friends to the presentation of their retirement gifts. The gifts, subscribed for by colleagues, were typical of the period, an engraved marble clock for the sergeant and silver services for the others. To round up this extraordinary event, the superintendent had arranged for the presence of the 'N' Division police band, which rounded off the proceedings with "For they are jolly good fellows" and "Auld Lang Syne". It is difficult to imagine many of their modern successors wishing to associate themselves with such a public event.

The officer in charge of Waltham Abbey police station, SPS William Brooker, retired from the police in 1908 and went to live in Sewardstone Street, his replacement being SPS Henry Skeates. In terms of the effect this pair had upon the local populace there was little to choose between them. Skeates was born in Ashford, Kent in 1876, spending all of his youth in the county. In March 1898, at the age of 21 years, Henry joined the Metropolitan Police as a constable initially serving in East London.

Six years after joining the police in 1904 he transferred to undertake service at HM Dockyard Chatham, Kent, as a sergeant of the Dockyard Division, Metropolitan Police. At the age of 32 Henry was still unmarried and still serving within the relative isolation of the docks when he was further promoted to the rank of station sergeant. Posted to 'N' Division as SPS 13N he found himself posted to the Enfield Highway subdivision and then to the sectional station at Waltham Abbey. Although the RGPF boasted a barracks of sorts it was not now in keeping with his rank, a factor resulting in him finding private lodgings in the town at 4 Broom Hall Road (now 7 Broomstickhall Road).

Now able to distance himself from the restrictions brought about by living upon police premises, Henry was soon courting Miss Elizabeth Stephen from Enfield, the daughter of Metropolitan Police Inspector William Stephen who had retired from the Chatham Dockyard in June 1906. In October 1910 Henry married Elizabeth, 13 years his junior, at Enfield and they moved their lodgings from Broom Hall Road a hundred yards up the road to 2 Dersham Villas in Honey lane, a house now simply known as 24 Honey Lane. Their first child was born at the house in 1914. In the same year Henry was to have another, less happy, example of involvement with a youngster.

Until they were destroyed in bombing during 1941 Abbey Cottages were a group of houses occupying the bank of the Cornmill stream between the church and the Romeland cattle market. On Monday May 11th 1914, William Mitchell, a four-year old lad from number 15, went missing from home at 3.30pm. William had last been seen playing with children of a similar age in the nearby Abbey Gardens. His grandmother, Mary, with whom he had been left whilst his mother worked, searched the area without success.

Eventually, shortly after 4pm, Mary sent for the police. SPS Henry Skeates, on duty at the Sun Street police station, promptly mounted his bicycle and set off upon the short journey to the church. Immediately prior to the arrival of the sergeant at the scene of what he still presumed to be just another briefly missing child, Mary Mitchell found her grandson's playmates. Directed by them to the millstream close to the site of the old water mill and the ancient gateway, she became hysterical. Below her, under six or seven feet of still water, lay the body of William.

The sergeant, now joined by PC Gibbs, immediately jumped into the water and recovered the child's body to eager helping hands on the bank. The constable and others gave artificial respiration, but to no avail. The local doctor and police surgeon, Doctor Priest, arrived shortly after the body was recovered, and pronounced that they were too late to save the four-year-olds life.

At the Coroner's Court hearing, held in the nearby Town Hall the following Thursday, Sergeant Skeates was commended for his action. A recommendation was made that the area alongside the stream be fenced off to avoid a repetition of the tragedy.

In the same manner as the earlier local proposal for number plates on bicycles had come to naught, the banks remain unguarded to this day. The actions of Henry Skeates were amply rewarded on June 9th 1914, with the presentation of a certificate to him by the Royal Humane Society.

The last weeks of peace were busy in the town. The 57th Essex Agricultural Show, an event held at a permanent venue near Great Leys, Chelmsford, in recent years, came to Chapman's Field, Crooked Mile, Waltham Abbey on June 10th and 11th 1914. Previously held locally at Capershotts in 1885, the show included a number of special attractions for the thousands who flocked to the town. Primarily an agricultural event, the show featured a flying display by Essex aviator B C Hucks in his Bleriot, performing the then novel 'loop the loop' manoeuvre. The military bands of the Essex Regiment and Essex Yeomanry also attended. Hucks required special permission from the War Office to fly in such close proximity to the secret place that was the RGPF.

Extra plain-clothes police were drafted into the area to counter an expected large number of pickpockets. In the event, the show caused a great deal less trouble than had been the case with the 1885 show. The weather took a hand in limiting the numbers attending the event. One heavy downpour managing to halt the short flying display for three hours on the Thursday evening. Over 14,000 attended, paying entry prices varying from 1/- (5p) to 2/6d (12½p) on the day or 9d (4p) in advance

A MOST TERRIBLE WAR

The Great War period was destined to be the first occasion on which civilian police forces became directly embroiled in the actions of a foreign power against the British populace. The positive response of the police to this new form of duty brought credit upon those involved.

Large proportions of the regular police stationed in the town either volunteered immediately, or were recalled as reservists to their previous regiments. The remaining regular officers were issued with certificates in 1916 declaring their reserved occupation status. Such luxuries were eventually voided by the disastrous progress of the war. The Special Constabulary was the main strength of the Waltham Abbey station at this period, numbering around fifty men called in at the very start of hostilities. The group was to outnumber the regular police officers and those others recalled to duty from retirement. Those working in the urban areas were generally the elderly shop keepers, business people and their employees.

The Special Constabulary Reserve, as they were originally called, were constituted by Act of Parliament in 1914. Prior to the war, special constables had been called out to deal with specific disturbances, principally the 19th Century Fenian scares, and major strikes. For those earlier periods, they had retained their civil appearance throughout, with the addition of a police duty armband (worn on the upper left arm), whistle, truncheon and notebook, their equipment had been simplicity itself. On each of the previous calls to duty 'the specials' had been disbanded immediately after the cause for concern had passed.

In the period from 1914-19, the Special Constabulary Reserve took up a far more permanent status. Although the first few months of the war saw up to 114 members undergoing duty in their own clothes, with only the simplest of police equipment, it was not long before articles of uniform appeared. The issue of a cap and badge by 1916 allowed the introduction of colour coding to signify ranks. A plain bronze badge denoted constable, a sergeant being supplied with the same badge bearing a splash of yellow on the crown surmounting the design and inspectors, red. Other, higher ranks were supplied with silver-plated badges. As more articles of uniform became available, conventional badges of rank appeared. The arrival of these items was extremely slow, many not being seen prior to 1917.

The initial issue of police equipment to the Waltham Abbey town squad of Specials included 61 duty bands, two to each of the two sergeants, one to each of fifty men and the remainder in store. A similar situation applied to the whistles, truncheons and notebooks. Capes, then the standard form of rainwear, were early items to appear, to be followed by greatcoats in August 1917. The coats and a small supply of boots were initially issued to only the 16 most active members of the town squad. Steel helmets were a smaller issue, eleven finally appearing in February 1918 on issue to sergeants and above, and one especially active constable. Six helmets were stored, three at Sun Street and three at High Beach. In spite of their late arrival, they would have been appreciated.

A number of the hundred or so special constables rarely appeared on the regular callout in the town station. Working from home, small groups of farmers and farm hands banded together to provide coverage of the rural areas when required. It was only a relatively small proportion of the total strength that undertook the majority of police duties. In the later years of the war, duties reflected the air raid activity, whereas early employment related to the guarding of fixed points of possible strategic importance.

Throughout the war, the specials and regular police were employed in assisting the running of the temporary hospital, one of many throughout the country, set up in the Waltham Abbey Town Hall. The local branch of the voluntary Red Cross had initially equipped the building with 32 beds. As this number proved to be inadequate, the unit grew to a total of 59 beds. Assisted by the police, the civilian Volunteer Aid Detachment (VAD) regularly went to Waltham Cross railway station to assist with the transport of every new influx of the war casualties into the town. Station Sergeant William Brooker, the officer in charge of the town police station from 1903 to 1908, played an active role in the formation of the VAD in his retirement from 1908. He served, as a recalled pensioner, during the war years. In addition to the hospital runs were calls to guard aeroplanes which often littered the local fields. Early in the war the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) had a new aerodrome in Chingford, to the south of the Lea Valley Road, from which defensive patrols and flying instruction were undertaken. The combination of unskilled pilots and foggy conditions in the Lea Valley caused a number of minor crashes and diversionary landings that it was the duty of the police to guard. After the war the conditions at this airfield were judged to be so poor that it soon closed. Lat-

er in the war a new Royal Flying Corps (RFC) airfield opened at North Weald, which further increased the number of local incidents.

The danger of air raids by the enemy became apparent, resulting in a number of fixed posts being placed upon every conceivable bridge and structure in the area to defend them against possible sabotage. In addition to a post at Rammey Marsh, by the River Lea, and the reservoir at High Beach a post was set up on the roof of the "King's Oak" public house at High Beach. The High Beach post, as it was termed, was manned throughout the war in conjunction with the special constabulary stationed at Chingford. It was a major link in a chain of air raid observation points in the London area. It was equipped with a field telephone system and operated in conjunction with the public telephone, other private lines and the elderly telegraph system, in providing a reasonably effective early warning system by 1917.

During the war the Chingford Specials ran one of the finest motorised transport groups in the Metropolis. A number of cars and motor cycles, all privately owned, were lent by local people to the unit for the greater part of the war, thereby assisting them in their duties. Their presence allowed relatively easy access to the more distant posts. It should be borne in mind that this transport unit was far in advance of the facilities available to regular officers at this time - or for another 15 years for that matter.

Whether the officers at Waltham Abbey (then on an entirely different sub-division) benefited from this transport as a matter of course is unknown. The only record of the use of transport by the Sun Street specials is reference to a motor cycle combination run by Special Constable (later Sergeant) Arthur A. Bond, a jeweller living opposite the station until his untimely death from natural causes in December 1916. After receipt of a call out at the station, Bond would ride up to Beech Hill Park House in Pynest Green to collect the Assistant Commander of the local unit, Arthur J. Edwards, and transport him to the scene of the incident. Edwards was a well to do public personage, benefactor, magistrate, and member of the council, in addition to his temporary wartime police role.

With so many new police to accommodate, a temporary shed was erected, on a portion of the gardens at the rear of the police station, late in 1914. Wooden framed and metal clad, it soon became the home of several recreational activities. A number of fables grew around the exact provenance of this building. Among the distortions of the truth, it was said that both the building and its recreational contents were post war gifts of "a rich special constable" or "the RGPF". The truth lay between the two. The RGPF, which was at that time policed by the same force, supplied the shed, and A.J. Edwards financed the supply of the snooker table and other items that served its conversion into a recreation room in post war years. Recovered numerous times, the same snooker table continued in use until the Metropolitan Police left the station in 2000. The only major change was that later in its life the one time recreation room bore a fitting, but modern, name of "Crooks Hall". In the post war period, Mr Edwards regularly played host to the Waltham Abbey Police cricket team at his home, Beech Hill Park.

Initially, the greatest local threat lay in the minds of the populace. Largely due to the presence of the RGPF and RSAF, both expanding and active in war work, the presence of all strangers tended to create grounds for the deepest of suspicions.

Today we are vastly more aware of foreigners in our midst, often we can identify a foreign tongue even if we cannot speak it. Back in Edwardian times the exposure of the population to people from other areas was rare and many would consider an unfamiliar Yorkshire or Scottish accent akin to one from Germany, the enemy.

Numerous passing strangers were arrested by the police or military for having foreign-sounding voices, or acting in some manner alien to local practice. In 1915 alone, eight persons were detained at the station for "suspected espionage", with numerous others questioned and released on the street. Much of this attitude was undoubtedly fuelled by an item that appeared in the local newspaper early in August 1914. The London based German Hospital was holding its sports day at High Beach on August 3rd when a message was sent up there recalling the athletes and their supporters to Germany to fight for their army against Britain, the country within which they were performing their activities! This news report plainly suggested that this party were allowed free passage to their homeland. By the end of 1916, the problem had largely passed.

Attack by airship had been feared since the very early days of the war and slowly defences were set up. To this end, a limited form of blackout to street and building lighting had been introduced, and a protective layer of sandbags ringed numerous structures, including the police station.

As a means whereby the RGPF and RSAF might be hidden from the view of the enemy at night all the townspeople were forbidden to show vehicle lighting within half a mile of either government owned factory or the private Nobel ammunition works in Farm Hill. Police manned posts were set up, beyond which cyclists and the like could at last light their lamps. Specific posts were at Avey Lane, Eagle Gates in the Crooked Mile, Botts Lane off Galley Hill and the base of Woodredon Hill, Honey Lane. Effectively the whole of the town area was unlit.

The enemy tested the effectiveness of the precautions on Sunday April 2nd 1916. At 10.40pm a German airship was tracked crossing the East Coast and heading inland near the River Blackwater. At 11.20pm the machine, Zeppelin LZ90, was reported over Chelmsford and still heading west at about 60 mph. A "Special Parade" was called at Waltham Abbey police station at 11.30pm, and outlying groups of volunteer officers alerted. Communication was largely word of mouth so everything took time. The entire town group of specials paraded sixteen constables, two sergeants and A.J. Edwards. The number of regular officers involved is unknown.

The huge airship came in from Theydon Bois in the east. Picked up by the Chingford searchlight, five miles away, at about 11.50pm the lighted envelope at last became visible and was engaged by the few, inaccurate, guns of the Waltham Abbey Group.

The enemy appeared quickly drawn to factory workers bicycle lights commencing from the checkpoint at the base of Woodredon Hill and heading towards Theydon Bois and Epping. It had recently snowed, presenting the airship crew with a patchwork of dark and light areas below which might have been mistaken for buildings. The craft was already under fire from the guns and conditions for bombing were far from ideal for the German crew. As the airship passed in the vicinity of the junction at the "Wake Arms" on the Newmarket Road it proceeded to drop dozens of bombs onto the targets they imagined were presented below.

Airship bombs of 1916 were somewhat different compared with aeroplane bombs of the same, and later, periods. The bombs carried by LZ90, although containing some explosive, were mainly incendiary devices, consisting of pitch in wicker casings shaped like shopping baskets. They were, fortunately, fairly inefficient. Dragged to the doorways by the crew and dropped over the side after priming, the missiles were not aimed at any specific targets, merely the general vicinity. Many of the hastily lighted fuses were extinguished in the fall from the airship.

At least seventy-five of these bombs were heaved out of the control cars into the blackness below. The first fell to the rear of the "Wake Arms" and the last near Windmill Hill, in Honey Lane, on the edge of the town that they had apparently come to bomb. In between the bombs fell in groups, mainly in the trees but occasionally

upon some worthwhile targets, such as Woodredon Farm and the gravel roadway outside "The Volunteer" public house. Woodredon Farm received twenty-eight of the bombs. Of these, the nearest to target fell ten feet from a building, that device failing to explode. The inefficiency of the bombs' fusing system fortunately saved the day.

The attacking machine, lightened of its bomb load, gained height and sought the cover of the clouds to lose the illumination of the searchlights and the incessant barking of the guns. By 12.05am, LZ90 was reported over North Weald. Fifty-five minutes later the airship had crossed the coast near Clacton on its way home.

Back in Waltham Abbey, the next few hours were spent finding the bombs in the dark. The special constabulary abandoned the difficult task at 3.30am; they had fulltime jobs to attend later that morning! During the rest of that night and the following morning over eighty (some reports claim ninety) bombsites were investigated in the forest and farmlands. As the majority of the bombs had failed to function in the manner intended each had to be dug free of the ground. The drop from the airship had resulted in craters up to three feet deep and eight feet in diameter. Each of the recovered bombs was taken to the Sun Street police station. The easiest means of transport evolved was to place one bomb on either end of a pole and carry them both in "coolie fashion".

The bomb distribution was widespread but had little to show for it. Only four houses received minor dam-

age from the few explosive bombs to operate correctly. Areas of burned grass were the sole result of the incendiary weapons. The only damage considered 'severe' was that outside "The Volunteer", where a bomb had impacted into the gravel roadway. The damage was easily repaired. Miles away, beyond Epping, one of the many anti-aircraft shells fired at LZ90 had ploughed into Parndon Lane without exploding. Attempts to dig it out were given up a fortnight later, and the hole filled in. It is probably still there.

Some good actually came out of the incident. Being a new and exciting event to the majority of the surrounding populace, it attracted the crowds. The great pile of dozens of bombs sited in the rear of the police station gardens and the large number of, now empty; holes in the stack yard of Woodredon Farm were put to good use. The farmer opened his yard to all corners at a charge of 3d each. Contemporary reports show that it was not just Waltham Abbey folk who were drawn to the spectacle. The money was given to the Red Cross Hospital in the Town Hall.

The police station yard was also opened to all. It is uncertain whether any charge was made to enter it, but presumably smoking was strictly controlled.

It is uncertain whether the two events were connected, but some six weeks after the enemy ordnance was displayed in the yard at Waltham Abbey police station, on Wednesday May 24th Scotland Yard issued a Police Order to the effect that in future

'On no account (*are unexploded bombs*) to be handled or moved about'

Although marking a lack of success for the German crew, that particular attack by LZ90 can be recalled as unique in that it marked the dropping of the greatest number of individual bombs along any single British roadway (Honey Lane) in the Great War.

This claim would be difficult to support in the light of the modern acceptance of the extent of Honey Lane. Until 1984 the road extended as a single unbroken carriageway from Farmhill Road to Wake Road at the Wake Arms. Following the building of the M25 motorway some of the recent members of the local population came to believe that Honey Lane stopped at the new motorway; this erroneous belief being reinforced by the length of the road being interspersed with a number of named hills, particularly Woodredon Hill.

Even among a class of war machine not endowed with startling offensive success against the British enemy, the airship LZ90 was not one of the most successful of its ilk. Following the raid on Waltham Abbey this airship underwent a short conversion to re-emerge at the end of April with the same military designation but a new c/n of LZ60A. On a further raid on England during 1916 the airship lost its sub-cloud observation capsule near Colchester, the cables suspending this substantial item being cut by the crew to jettison it in a moment of danger. Subsequently retrieved by the enemy and it now hangs, largely unnoticed, in the main gallery at the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth, London. LZ90's final flight took place in November 1916, the craft finally being destroyed in a storm.

The commander of the LZ90 during its attack on Waltham Abbey, Lehman, was one of the better-known German airship fleet commanders. Credited with the invention of the type of sub-cloud observation car's carried [and subsequently lost] by LZ90 and others, he survived the war to become a director of Deutsche Zeppelin-Reederei.

He was fatally injured in the disaster that befell the airship Hindenburg at Lakehurst, USA, in 1937. On two memorable occasions the local populace were able to witness the demise of airship raiders from a safe distance.

In the early hours of the night of September 2nd/3rd 1916, one of number of German airship's attacking Britain was destroyed. One of the few attacking rigid airships not of Zeppelin origin, a Shutte-Lanz SL11, was chased by a lone Royal Flying Corps [RFC] pilot to a position near to Waltham Abbey. The local guns engaged the craft ineffectually, as it ponderously made it's way west. The pilot of the attacking BE2c aircraft, Lt. William Leefe- Robinson, from the airfield at Sutton's Farm, Hornchurch, engaged the airship with his single machine gun. The ammunition employed was the recently introduced mixed load of "Buckingham" and "Pomeroy" incendiary bullets; the latter was invented by J Pomeroy and produced at the Nobel factory in Farm Hill Road, Waltham Abbey. Some sources claim that the former round was the "Brock" rather than the "Buckingham", although this was supposedly not adopted until three months later. In general the use of incendiary ammunition early in the war had been abhorred, with its use only finally being allowed after

the airship situation became accepted as particularly threatening to the British populace and, perhaps more significant, government.

Shortly after 2am on this September morning, three full magazines of the incendiary mix from Leefe-Robinson's Lewis machine gun provided success and the hydrogen gas and wooden framework of the airship started to glow and then burn. SL11 plunged 17,500 feet into the ground at Cuffley, Hertfordshire. The crew perished and most of the flammable structure was consumed in the fire.

Although not the first loss of a German airship by any means, the fate of this Shutte-Lanz represented the first successful shooting-down of one of the attackers to take place over British soil. In good weather, the victory had taken place in full view of most of London. The reputation of the RFC was temporarily boosted. The weather conditions were such that to all of the thousands of North London audience it seemed as if the machine was directly overhead as they woke their children from slumber to witness an event that they would, regardless of age at the time, remember into old age. Later that Sunday morning, 10,000 sight-seers inundated the small Hertfordshire village. The pilot of the aircraft, Leefe-Robinson, soon to be decorated with the Victoria Cross [VC], became a hero overnight.

Not long after this event, a metal Zeppelin airship was shot down over Potters Bar by a fellow 39 Squadron pilot to Leefe-Robinson, Lt Tempest. Again, this success relied partly upon the lethal properties of the Nobel factory ammunition and was a spectacular event clearly visible from most of North London. Again the pilot was awarded the VC.

With the passage of time many people recall as youngsters being taken out to see one or other of these spectacles. Naturally few of the many thousands involved are able to state with certainty which of the events was witnessed by them. At that time few did not believe that the attacks upon the London area were now beaten by these and other successes against airships. In part they were right, and the attacks waned until the following year. Although the airship attacks never stopped completely, as newer improved types were introduced, it was to be aeroplane attacks that brought about a greater degree of fear.

The summer of 1917 was to be known as the "Gotha Summer". The Germans sent over just nine aeroplane raids, but these few killed, maimed and damaged more than all the raids before and afterwards in the Great War. Only one of these nine raids passed close to Waltham Abbey. Twenty Gotha bombers passed slowly over the centre of the town at 10.20am on Saturday July 7th 1917 on their way towards London, unchallenged by all except the Warlies Park gun. In spite of the clear weather conditions, the bombers chose to ignore the large target presented by the RGPF, and went on to drop over seventy bombs in London and Margate, killing forty-seven people. Only one of this enemy formation was destroyed. The new threat brought about a radical change in the fairly lax air raid warning arrangements then in force. It seems odd that, until the aeroplane raids started, no specific warning had been given to the general population that a raid was about to commence in the vicinity. Unless it was noticed that police and fire brigade were in a state of alert, most people only became aware when firing was started by, or against, the enemy. From mid-July 1917, some attempt at giving prior warnings was at last sanctioned.

The system of warning employed in the latter part of the Great War was completely different to that developed for The Blitz almost a quarter of a century later. One method employed was to send out police officers on bicycles, each man being equipped with printed placards bearing a warning. The furiously riding policeman drew attention to his message by blowing his whistle. An additional system was the firing of maroons from the station yard. An obvious problem with the exploding rockets in Waltham Abbey was the constant likelihood of similar sounds being generated by tests in both the RGPF and RSAF. The "All clear" or stand-down after raids was sounded by bugle. Although arranged by the police, youngsters from the Scouts and Boys Brigade undertook the actual blowing of the instruments.

By July 1917 some 158 members of the Special Constabulary Reserve had enrolled for duty in Waltham Abbey. A great number had gone on to fight in the war, but 52 remained of whom almost thirty had undertaken at least 150 tours of duty or two years service. As a reward for these many hours of unpaid, and largely thankless, duty these men were awarded a long service medal. Somewhat different from its post-war replacement, the original medal was cheaply made from base metal and not provided with a ribbon. The surviving officers attended Beech Hill House to receive their medals. As those receiving the medal included both Assistant Commander A.J. Edwards and Inspector Morrison, Mrs. Edwards performed the ceremony. Unfortunately SC Webb had since died at war in France; his medal was presented to his next of kin.

After the series of daylight raids the bomber aeroplanes and improved airships switched to night attack. The only other recorded raid on Waltham Abbey in this period was an attack by two airships on the RGPF on the night of October 19th 1917.

Little damage was achieved as most of the bombs fell on the marshes of the River Lea. One air raid, probably this one, is reported to have bowled a policeman over close to the "Green Man" public house in Farm Hill Road. The officer's injuries were negligible.

At 10.23pm the two airships, the L52 and either L53 or L44, were offloading incendiary bombs when Lt Chabot intercepted them in a BE2e night fighter from North Weald. Although the single poorly armed aircraft was little threat to them, the two German craft broke off their attack and climbed away after dropping only twelve of the bombs. Five fell on the factory; another five were spread between Waltham Marsh and Cheshunt Marsh and a further two, well to the south, beside Avey Lane.

Similar in design, and poor performance, to those of the 1916 airship raid and, according to the recently arrived PC "Napper" Avis from Waltham Abbey, they were again collected up by police employing the now tried and trusted "coolie method". In view of the previous, [1916] instructions relating to the disturbance of these missiles, it seems unlikely that they were again put on display in the police station yard. Not for the first time, or the last, the actions of the officers were at variance with the official edict that they should not move the unexploded ordnance. The senior officers in Scotland Yard might make the order but the reality of the situation was that there was no-one else to move them?

Although it is surprising that the police became intimately involved with the weapons in view of the earlier order, the evidence supports at least the movement of the bombs from their original positions. Although this final airship raid on Waltham Abbey had again resulted in total failure for the enemy, elsewhere in the country, but mainly in London, 36 men, women and children had been killed and 55 injured in attacks by eleven airships that night.

Copped, or Copt, Hall, the derelict shell of which stands on a site that now places it in full view of the modern M25 motorway, burned down in 1917. At about 7am on May 6th there was an electrical circuit fault in the ceiling of an upstairs bedroom. Initially the resultant fire caused little concern and was tackled by the small manually operated fire-fighting appliance belonging to the Hall. Epping police called out the fire brigade at about 7.30am. The Epping Town Volunteer Fire Brigade could muster only three men, due to the majority of their strength being creamed off to fight in the war. The three used their old horse-drawn steam appliance rather than the new Dennis motor engine that was still unprepared for service. It took them thirty minutes to arrive at the blaze, with the Dennis towing the old steam pump. Using water from contents of a substantial pond some 900 feet away, they battled unequally against flames fanned by a high wind, until eventually joined by other brigades with their horse-drawn machines. The first police on the scene were the Essex Constabulary, both regulars and specials, from Epping. Men summoned from Upshire and Waltham Abbey (the gardens of the Hall lay just inside the Metropolis) joined these groups. The group from the Metropolitan Police eventually numbered around thirty; four sergeants, eight regular constables, Sub-divisional Inspector Rayner, A.J. Edwards and fourteen specials. Some of this party did not set off to the fire until 10.15am, three hours after the alarm was raised. To add to this multitude came specials from Theydon Bois, men from the Epping Volunteer Regiment and a variety of estate workers. These groups, totalling a hundred or so, were set to help in clearing Copped Hall of its valuables.

Almost the whole structure was eventually burnt out. The majority of the helpers drifted away towards evening, leaving the firemen with the unequal task. Epping's old steamer engine performed very well, pumping non-stop for a total of thirty-three hours until the boiler burst.

Special Constable Stickels, a resident of Powdermill Lane alongside the RGPF, and member of the town squad of the specials was posted on watch duty at High Beach on September 15th 1917. Even during the war years, Epping Forest was frequented by large numbers of people pursuing leisure activities and Stickels was called out of the "King's Oak" to Wellington' Hill, opposite, to help someone in difficulty. Miss Coombes from Stoke Newington, London, had fallen in a fit and was unconscious. A doctor was called from nearby Loughton, but by the time he had arrived, if not long before, the woman was dead. Sun Street was called to arrange for the removal of the body. It fell to James Wright, one of the war-recalled police pensioners, now well over 50 years of age, to collect her. Although motor ambulances were at last available, they were largely for the living. Wright had to wheel the police hand ambulance from the station, two miles uphill to High Beach and back again to the mortuary in the town cemetery.

By 1918 police were falling seriously behind in the pay scales, many families being almost on the bread-line. Many major commodities had become difficult to obtain, even by the well off. Barter was often resorted to. Mr. George Tuck, a farmer, Justice of the Peace and Local Councillor, living in Pynest Green, close to Beech Hill Park, was the supplier of fodder to the draught horses of a local brewery throughout the war years. In spite of this connection, even he was finding it extremely difficult to obtain a supply of ale for his own use. Eventually, he used the fodder supply contract as a lever to enable the purchase of a seven-gallon barrel for himself. It was unfortunate that the great lengths he was put to failed to ensure that adequate security for the precious liquid was arranged.

Farmer Tuck made two serious errors. He failed to keep the barrel under lock and key in the outhouse chosen as store, and became far too trusting in letting the whereabouts of the barrel be known. PC Wilfred Noble, "Copper" as he was known locally, was a great beer drinker and suffered from the reduction in supply as much as anyone. When invited in from the lane, as he passed by the farm on patrol one day, he readily took up the offer of a drink. This error in the judgement of the farmer disclosed the quality and insecure location of the prized liquid.

All was well in the Tuck household for some time. Unfortunately one day the farmer ordered a pint from the maid that she was unable to draw. After some misgivings as to his own sobriety the farmer realised that he had not abused the contents of the barrel and that quite clearly someone else had. By the time that the finger of suspicion had clearly fallen on "Copper" Noble he was, temporarily, no longer an officer of the law.

Along with many of his colleagues he had been overtaken by the heavy losses in France. The 1916 exempted occupation certificates were now cancelled. In May 1918 he was drafted into the army. By the time the pair met again in the bar of "The Volunteer", Noble was on embarkation leave following his brief training. Private Noble offered the farmer a drink, which was unexpectedly refused. Until Noble finally admitted the numerous raids to the outhouse, the offer continued to be refused. Before the evening was out Noble was able to purchase the first in a series of drinks in recompense.

"Copper" Noble came back from the war safely, thus enabling the compensation to be forthcoming for a period afterwards. George Tuck never treated the matter as anything more than a funny incident in life. The story filled bars throughout the town with laughter for years to come. "Copper" Noble died whilst still in the police service, at the age of 44, in 1936 and is buried in the town.

On July 15th 1918, Special Constable Edgar W. Davies, who lived in "Stonecroft", Mott Street, on the southern edge of High Beach, noticed a column of smoke drifting up from Aldersgrove Wood, close to his home. The 25-year-old farmer, destined to own most of the surrounding farmland in his lifetime, wandered over towards the small wood. He surprised three dishevelled men huddled over a fire. Two of the group immediately gave themselves up, but a third ran off into the trees. It was soon evident that the three were escaped German prisoners of war who had slipped away from a camp at Mill Hill a week earlier. Appearing at the end of their tether, the two recaptured prisoners were taken back to the farm and fed as police assistance was called.

Sergeant Creagh and four constables arrived some time later. Among the reinforcements were Constables Tilling and Avis, the latter arguably the best known policeman in the history of Waltham Abbey police. "Napper" Avis had transferred back to the town of his birth in 1917 after eight years service in West London.

The previously captured Germans were unlikely to cause any problems, so, leaving them with a light guard, most of the police party set off to look for the third man in the same section of woods. Tilling set off into the right hand side of the trees and Avis into the centre. It was the latter who came upon the escapee first. Obviously startled, the German jumped up, threw something to the ground and ran off. The unarmed constable, not relishing a long chase through the undergrowth, dropped down onto one knee and drew his truncheon from its pocket. Holding the inert lump of wood as if it were an object far more lethal in nature, Avis shouted out "Stop, or I will fire!" The exhausted German was clearly taken in by this ruse, for he stopped, raised his hands in surrender and ran towards his captor to be placed under arrest.

The final German arrived at the farmhouse in sufficient time to join his compatriots in the taking of food prior to the three-mile march to the police station. They were kept in the cells overnight, awaiting an army escort the following morning. Accompanied by Sergeant Carter and some constables of the specials (or "Special Branch" as Avis always called them) the group was accompanied to Waltham Cross railway sta-

tion en-route for Mill Hill. A J Edwards commended Davies, the officer who had started the episode by his curiosity.

Police pay had not risen throughout the war years, in spite of severe inflation. As a means of reducing the hardship suffered by the men, a number of supplementary allowances had been agreed periodically. Unfortunately, they were far from adequate and feelings were running high. At the end of July 1918, many of the police went on strike. No local police are believed to have been involved in this action, this withdrawal of labour mainly affected inner city areas. The strike was short lived, and not taken advantage of by the criminal fraternity. The Government of the day secured a return to work after making limited concessions and pointing out that the situation was difficult as the country was still at war. When peace came more could be done.

As a result of this limited success achieved by the proscribed National Union of Police and Prison Officers (NUPPO), hundreds of the men now joined its ranks after the strike. Active support of the Union, prior to the events of 1918 had been punishable by dismissal, but such was the upper hand held by it afterwards that even senior officers, like Station Sergeant Henry Skeates, joined up with impunity.

On numerous occasions the waters in the Lea valley claimed the life of the unwary pedestrian. The police were only rarely the victims; far more of the civil population fell into the waters by accident or design. Suicide by drowning was regular. The true reasons behind the death by drowning of 51 year old Mary Ann Waters of Hornsey were never discovered.

On the evening of Sunday August 11th 1918, Constable Arthur Bellerby from the RGPF was walking along the riverside path some distance behind Mary when she went in and disappeared beneath the water. The policeman ran over to the spot but only found bubbles where she had apparently gone under without either calling out or struggling. Stripping off his jacket and cap the officer threw himself in after her. In spite of diving down three times he failed to find Mary in time. An hour later, with darkness now fallen, her body was brought to the surface. The subsequent inquest jury recommended that the policeman should be rewarded for his efforts. Although such an action was beyond the power of the coroner, the following month Bow Street Court awarded Bellerby £10.

The fighting in the Great War ceased in November 1918. The requirement for the continued presence of the remaining Special Constabulary Reserve waned daily. From a peak of over one hundred men in August 1914 the strength had reduced to less than sixty. Women police patrols directly employed by the Ministry of Munitions (rather than the Metropolitan Police) had served within the RGPF on security work in the war years. These duties had led at least one of their number attending Sun Street with a miscreant in custody but none took to the streets of the town in a conventional police role. The reserves either left immediately spent more time with their peacetime employment's, parading less often but some still officially representing an active formation. The recalled police pensioners like Station Sergeant Brooker and Constable Wright returned to their retirement, often with enhanced pension rates as a result of the extra police service undertaken.

The severe outbreak of influenza which struck a civil population already reeling from the loss of loved ones decimated in war, killed large numbers in 1918. In addition to the public figures - William Leefe Robinson VC the hero of the Cuffley airship being one - two police officers serving in Waltham Abbey were amongst those succumbing to the virus.

Constable's Roderick Bain, 38, and Cecil West, 43, were both admitted to the Sandhurst Hospital in the RGPF. Bain served at Powdermill Lane and West, a married man normally resident in Sewardstone Street had been at Sun Street since he joined the police in 1904. Both men died in November 1918.

After the service funerals afforded to Bain and West, the members of the Special Constabulary Reserve were again drawn back into their uniforms by the sad occasion presented by the funeral of one of their number. In May 1919 Special Sergeant E.J. Carter, a greengrocer living in Rue de St. Lawrence, behind the Sun Street police station died from natural causes. The funeral brought together an almost full contingent of regulars and specials for the funeral on the 10th of the month at the Sewardstone Road town cemetery. They disbanded shortly afterwards.

Through a collection of his hand-written diaries E J Carter ensured the ready availability of the details of police activities in the Great War. This particular trait was to be repeated 20 years later through the war

diaries of his son, the Chief Air Raid Warden, in the Second World War.

THE PEACE

Although the police strike of 1918 had managed to squeeze promises and some half-hearted action from the government; it was clear by the summer of 1919 that the spirit of the agreement was to be honoured by the official side.

Many of the younger men, including many recently returned from the misery of war, let it be known that the continued lack of action was to lead to a repeat strike. At the end of July, large numbers of men went on strike again. The renewed strike was, in many ways, less successful than the first. The absence of police was taken greater advantage of by the criminal classes, which resulted in widespread retribution being taken against the strikers. All were sacked, never to be re-employed.

It was fortunate that no Waltham Abbey men joined the strike. The prime calming influence was Henry Skeates. He remained in charge of the station until his own retirement in 1925 and, in spite of his own membership of the NUPPO, he was advising caution and, eventually, the severing of all links with the discredited union in favour of the newly formed Police Federation. One constable who joined the strike had recent Waltham Abbey connections. George Allerton, having served at the RGPF for a large part of the war, returned to E Division earlier in 1919 as manpower was reduced – unfortunately beyond the wise council of older men – and took up with the strikers.

As a result of the strike action by a fairly small number of men, those remaining (supplemented- by a number of previously sacked NUPPO supporters) enjoyed a belated rise in pay from a pre-war 30/- [£1.50p] to 43/- [£2.15p] as well as other benefits.

The anniversary of the cessation of fighting in the Great War was faithfully observed on each November 11th, Armistice Day, for decades afterwards. Large numbers of police were, and indeed are, drafted into the Central London area to line the pavements and control traffic in the vicinity of Whitehall and the Cenotaph. Until long after the Second World War, men posted to temporary duty away from their own stations continued to make their own way to the Cenotaph using public transport.

They were also responsible for providing their own refreshments. Other officers remained in Waltham Abbey to mark the occasion in an appropriate manner.

In the early years marking of the traditional two minutes silence entailed the stopping all traffic movement throughout the country. The timing relied upon the chimes of Big Ben, and the guns in Hyde Park. Waltham Abbey had its own part to play in this annual ritual. The station was one of a number selected to match the coordination of the chimes of the bell and the guns of the army in the central area with the launch of a maroon from the station. True co-ordination was extremely difficult, but often achieved. The ideal required the launch of the rocket from the back yard up to 30 seconds prior to the time the explosion was required. The ritual maroon firing continued to be performed by police in the town for over fifty years. Influential townspeople led the raising of money for the erection of a long overdue cottage hospital in the town as a war memorial. The previous medical facility, in Honey Lane, was an Isolation Hospital and still had not removed the requirement for normal emergencies to be transported great distances. A Danish born resident Hans Ove Larsen, who owned vast nurseries and Quinton Hill Farm to the south of the town provided a tract of land at the junction of Farm Hill and Honey Lane for a small sum. Public donations quickly paid for the building of a small hospital building and it was ready for opening in December 1921. Originally scheduled to be opened by Princess Mary on the 3rd of the month, after cancellation the deed was eventually undertaken by HRH Prince Henry on the 10th.

Continuously updated and extended the War Memorial Hospital continued to dispense on site remedies for around sixty years through the continued support of the townspeople, their pennies and sixpences being the main regular income until the creation of the National Health Service in 1948. The eventual profit-taking sale of the site as a building plot by the local health authority decades later cut the older residents very deeply. Their peoples hospital was snatched away from them and the NHS moguls did not even have the decency to pay for the relocation of the war memorial stones to a site nearby. Another fund raising event paid for that also. This sorry event also returned the injured of the immediate locality to travelling excessive distances for their medical help, initially Epping but later Harlow. By co-incidence Harlow is

roughly the same distance from Waltham as Tottenham.

The use of the birch, judicial corporal punishment, is known to have been administered at the police station in Sun Street into the 1920s. Unfortunately no one recorded the name of the recipient of the final blows, or his crime, for posterity.

In 1923 the Metropolitan Police, N Division ceased to police the RGPF. Where possible the men previously stationed at the Powdermill Lane police station were transferred to other stations locally. As the RSAF also discarded most of the Metropolitan Officers shortly afterwards (in 1925) large numbers of officers severed their local connections. A number of police still used the government-owned married quarters in Powdermill Lane and Highbridge Street for some time afterwards. The removal of these officers was left to natural wastage, the last actually moving out when PC Parker retired in 1928.

Finally on April 5, 1925, after 27 years service, sixteen of them at Waltham Abbey, Henry Skeates left the Metropolitan Police. At a parting ceremony he was presented with a fine engraved gold pocket watch, a gift from the officers and men of the Enfield Highway sub-division and those of the newly formed War Department police, recently formed to take over the RGPF and RSAF. The inscription reads: -

'Metropolitan Police. Presented to ex-SPS Skeates by the officers and men of the Enfield Highway and War Dept. sub-divs. on his retirement after 27 years service 5.4.1925'

Shortly after retiring Henry and his family packed their bags and moved to Ipswich in Suffolk. Although members of his family were to make the pilgrimage in search of their roots some sixty years later, he never returned to the town.

Henry found new employment soon after moving to Ipswich in the field of racecourse security, but soon tired of that and took up the more traditional occupation associated with retired police of bailiff. During the second world war he again donned khaki for the first time since 1898, and the East Kent's, when he took up with the Ipswich Home Guard at the age of 63. At the end of the war, at the age of 68, he finally retired. After meeting the dream most of us have (but frequently fail to attain), retirement in excess of the years in the police, Henry Steven Skeates died peacefully on February 5, 1964 aged 87. He had been out of the job for almost 39 years.

It is surprising that a man who left the town that witnessed the greater part of his police service almost immediately for distant parts was still remembered with some affection by some of the older generation even before his family came in search of their roots. It is both the mark of the man and says much of his real service to the community. In fairness, ten years on from when the writer learned of him each of those with fond memories of the sergeant have also passed on. Nonetheless I very much doubt that the people of either G or Chatham divisions had the same kind thoughts of the man in his time, any more than they would have such thoughts of the flitting appearances of the modern day "Bramshill Flyer". Unfortunately such men lead policy and fail to appreciate such finer points of real policing.

Albert Gloyns, PC 690N, was transferred away from Waltham Abbey as a punishment in 1923. Sergeant Royall charged him with not working his beat in the correct manner by failing to patrol Back Street, Cobbin End and Long Street in Copthall Green, Upshire on the afternoon of April 30th. Brought up before the Superintendent, Albert was fined a total of four days' pay, amounting to £2.10.4d (£2.51 p), cautioned and transferred out of N Division. Although we may never know the true background to the charge preferred by Royall, it is worth noting that the actual removal from the division may well have been the greater burden to bear.

Transfer, a common measure taken in the more extreme cases, left the officer with no other option but to move home almost overnight, and it was a severe punishment to the family also. The nearest other division to Waltham Abbey (even assuming that he might be given another outer area posting, having already failed to work one such adequately) was Loughton four miles away. Although commuting by bicycle was common, even that had its limits.

In spite of numerous commendations, Sergeant Royall also fell foul of the disciplinary codes only eighteen months later. He had presented himself at the police station on December 11th. 1924 two hours late for booking off duty. Unfortunately the reason for his lateness was readily apparent. He was as drunk as a lord. There is little doubt that the state of the errant officer would have been quietly forgotten if he had only

been a minute or two late. Unfortunately the manner in which the safety of the officers was assured at that period required good time keeping. It would not have been long after booking off time before the alarm was raised and a search instigated lest some harm had befallen the missing man. By the time Royall returned to the station in an inebriated state, half of the police in the Metropolis would have been alerted. Henry Skeates' replacement, SPS George Quantrell, will have been presented with no option but to report the matter. The result was demotion and a transfer away.

In spite of the severe consequences of being found out, the majority of officers continued to take in large quantities of beer and other alcohol. The local system was designed to further the habits of the drinkers. It was a common, locally accepted, practice for local public houses to ensure nightly visits to their closed premises by leaving a container of ale and a packet of sandwiches for the local policeman at the rear door. The sheer number of licensed premises locally at that period resulted in large quantities of ale being drunk by the individual police patrols in the course of a single night's duty.

A major factor that served to perpetuate the heavy drinking by police at this time was that the town of Waltham Abbey was widely known to be a haven of the heavy drinker. The produce and cattle markets on Tuesdays only added to the inevitable rowdiness to be expected at the week's end. The police drink problem was merely a reflection of a wider social problem. Drink brought violence, a matter that was usually controlled by the sight of the uniformed presence, but occasionally not. Many a man would appear at the Petty Sessions with a freshly stitched face from a drunken argument in a bar, or as a result of a subsequent disagreement with a police truncheon. Fines were then around half a crown (12½p), for straight drunkenness, but this levy was raised to 3/6d (17½p) for being disorderly. One particularly difficult customer for the police in this period was a very strong character called Nightingale. His own particular party piece was overcoming the smaller members of the police force sent to arrest him, and lifting them up bodily by the thick leather belt that formed part of their uniform, to hang them from the produce hooks outside Gutteridge's the butchers shop at 10 Sun Street. The only officers to avoid this fate were "Napper" Avis and "Copper" Noble, both being far too heavy for even the strength of Mr. Nightingale! Regardless of the work originating from the markets, the nature of the small local population meant that Waltham Abbey court still tended to be dealing with far more cases from the Chingford area than locally.

Youthful derision directed at the local officers in this period was rare. The police at that time enjoyed a far greater level of public support, being able easily to identify the majority of children in the far smaller community, and able to dispense corporal punishment with greater ease than became acceptable after the Second World War.

It is often said that it was a far better way to treat children, short, sharp and effective, than any recourse to the time-consuming, and often ineffective, court system. That opinion did not survive the passage of time.

Whilst the system of instant justice meted out by police, or indeed any adult, was acceptable and backed up by parental harshness for "tale-telling", the amount of youth crime was negligible. Minor misdemeanour, like the scrumping of fruit, were dealt with by a swift blow from a rolled cape or a coin loaded glove, and quickly forgotten by all except those who foolishly told their parents. The more agile youngsters might make good their escape at the time, only to receive a totally unexpected blow days later from a passing constable who had managed to recognise the fleeing form.

One of the major sufferers from the scrumping problem was retired Station Sergeant William Brooker. After retirement in 1908 he had lived on his pension and the earnings of extensive orchards situated to the south of the town. Home was an old house called "The Gardens" situated opposite the Parish Hall on the corner of Sewardstone and Greenfield Streets. This later became the Royal British Legion Hall.

Brooker was later to become the only known Metropolitan policeman to have a road named after him. In the mid-1930s, whilst serving on the Waltham Holy Cross Urban District Council, he sold up his property holdings for re-development. The housing occupied Audley Gardens, Orchard Gardens and Brooker Road. The demolition of the "The Gardens" house provided the site for a building known, until recently, as the "Corner Shop". Today this is also a house.

On Sunday July 4th 1926 the body of Christine Cordell was found in a ditch at the side of Sewardstone Road close to the "Royal Oak" public house in the hamlet of Sewardstone. Albert Pitt discovered the 38-year-old spinster some 20 yards on the Chingford side of the pub at 7.30am. Albert had been motorcycling from his home in Wormley towards work beyond Chingford when he came across an abandoned bicycle on the roadside and Christine dying in a ditch close by. Pitt immediately went for help, but it was three

quarters of an hour later before the first professional help arrived from Waltham Abbey. Dr. Streatfield, the police surgeon, found that his task was simply confirming the obvious fact that the woman had died from a single head wound which appeared not to be accidental - a murder hunt was about to be launched.

At this period the greater part of Sewardstone was part of the Chingford police area. The prime reason for the involvement of Waltham Abbey appears to have been that Pitt chose to return there to alert the authorities. The first police to arrive at the scene of the incident were SPS Quantrell from Waltham Abbey and PS Pittam from Chingford, the latter presumably alerted by telephone. A search of the substantial hedge beside the road revealed the presence of a discarded captive bolt-humane killer, a mallet and two rounds of ammunition. The mallet was the means by which the weapon was fired. There were clear signs that the head injury, a bloody hole behind Christine's left ear, and the weapon were connected. At about 11am the body was taken to the mortuary in the Waltham Abbey town cemetery, using the inevitable hand ambulance, for post mortem examination.

In the meantime, at Chingford Police Station, a man had walked in claiming to be responsible for the death of Christine Cordell. He was George Gordon Pavett, a 36 year old married man living with his wife at Woodford Wells. Transferred to Waltham Abbey, he was seen by the Divisional Detective Inspector, Frank Page, at 1pm. A full statement of admission to the killing was made.

Locally born Christine had been employed in Woodford as a domestic servant. Eighteen months earlier she had moved in with George and Lily Pavett and their adopted daughter as a lodger. Unfortunately, George became "fond" of his lodger and started to take her out to social events, such as whist drives, much to the understandable annoyance of his wife.

The events leading up to the death were wholly due to George's insistence that Christine act as he required in her free time. She frequently visited her three brothers and sister at Kingsfield Cottages in Sewardstone, occasionally against the expressed wishes of her employer. It was as a result of one such disagreement that George rose early on the Sunday and walked to Sewardstone to see her at her family home. In the event he came upon her a short distance from the cottages, cycling back to Woodford. She stopped and spoke with him on the side of the road.

Although armed with the humane killer, ammunition and mallet when he set off to meet Christine, he maintained throughout that these were only for the purpose of frightening her. The conversation degenerated into argument and threat. Eventually a one sided fight broke out between them. George managed to hold the humane killer to the side of her head and strike it with the mallet - surely very much a twohanded operation - leaving Christine dying beside the roadway as George set off on foot to give himself up at Chingford.

Pavett was charged with murder at Waltham Abbey at 11.45am the next day, one of many persons to be charged in the station over its long history, but among the very few to have faced that, the most grave of charges, there. The following day, he appeared before the Justices at the Petty Sessions in Highbridge Street. At this hearing and the Coroners Court on Thursday July 8th Detective Inspector Page gave the full evidence of the case. The Coroners Court verdict was "wilful murder by George Pavett". The local newspaper printed every scrap of the evidence and verdict immediately. Such a step, within a week of the event, would be inconceivable today. Equally beyond belief was that part of the legal process to come. Christine was buried on Friday July 9th. At a ceremony performed by the Reverend Botheras and attended by the family, she was laid to rest in a corner of the town cemetery, close to the mortuary. She has initially been laid in The grave is still clearly marked, although paperwork for the burial plot has mysteriously been mislaid in the years since and the former mortuary has been demolished.

The legal processes continued the following week with a committal for trial at the Old Bailey on July 13th. The trial was set for the 21st, but actually delayed for two days. On Friday July 23rd a jury, having heard the evidence, found George Pavett "guilty" of the lesser charge of manslaughter. The Judge, Mr. Justice Branson, perpetuated the apparent miscarriage of justice by sentencing the prisoner in the dock to only six months imprisonment. It would appear that the all-male jury and the judge chose to assume that the deceased carried a great deal of the fault herself.

Regardless of the actual result achieved, the case illustrates how the whole procedure witnessed a complete case of murder being dealt with at all levels well within a calendar month. A similar case today might take at the very least a year.

Sunday February 19th 1928 saw Great Britain's first ever motor cycle speedway on a cinder track at the King's Oak Speedway, a new use for an old running track to the rear of the pub, at High Beach. This first event drew a crowd of around 30,000 and extensive press coverage that included a "Daily Mirror" front page. Regular crowds in excess of 20,000 attended the racing events, each one policed by no more than half a dozen police at a time. The very success of the High Beach track spawned purpose-built tracks elsewhere, and it failed to re-start profitably after a break created by the war. Eventually the neglected track was returned to the forest, and a portion built upon to provide the modern day Conservation Centre opened in 1971.

In April 1929 the local authority, Waltham Holy Cross Urban District Council, wrote to the police architects and surveyors requesting permission to erect a siren on the roof of the police station for fire brigade call-outs. The brigade was still a volunteer force called out through the police station and had since 1912, used a system of police-activated electric bells in the homes of the individual fireman. Like similarly equipped police home addresses on recall, most of them were close to the police station. It was realised that, whilst the volunteers were not at home during the day, it was difficult to call them out from their scattered work places. The new siren was required as a more efficient means of calling the men from their diverse locations to take out the appliances from the fire station at the Town Hall.

On April 26th Mr W C Holloway sent a letter to the Receiver of Police on behalf of the council setting out the requirement and specification for the siren. For months, letters passed to and fro between, the council, the police and the General Post Office (GPO) telephone branch who were to fit the equipment. Eventually the matter was agreed. The siren would operate during the day and the existing bell system at night. By July, both the council and the GPO were pressing the police for a final go-ahead. In August the police signed the consent for the various works to be done. In December the same year, only eight months since the matter had been officially raised, further correspondence was entered into on the subject. A request was made for an additional "3 magnet generator magneto in a wooden case" to be installed in the ground floor inspector's office by the Highbridge Tool Co., North Place, Waltham Abbey, with which to run the siren. As this final item of equipment was not in place until June 1930, it can be presumed that the system took 14 months to bring into use.

Each April 1st the princely sum of 5 shillings (25p) was charged to the local council for the housing of the siren installation on police premises. The charge for this use actually lasted until December 1946, in spite of the equipment taking on a more sinister day and night role in 1939. The police administration at Scotland Yard appear to have failed to notice the change of use (and presumably the war itself) as in mid-1947 they queried the failure of the Waltham Holy Cross UDC to pay the rental. Tolerantly, the town hall pointed out that the brigade use of the system had in fact ceased since September 1939! In the light of the so called "Peace Dividend" then evident, the Waltham Abbey air raid siren system (much modified over the years) was finally deactivated and removed from the roof top of the station in April 1993 as part of a new Cold War "Peace Dividend".

In May 1930 the Metropolitan Police re-introduced compulsory first aid courses in the service. Although these soon fell by the wayside, only to be resurrected yet again in November 1932, some officers with more than 24 years' service or ranking above station sergeant, were never to learn the basics of life saving. In Waltham Abbey, officers had undertaken such training since shortly after the war. In April 1923 twenty-one officers sat a test set by the local VAD in the station Recreation Room and nineteen of them passed first time.

The police generally managed to steer clear of the worst effects of the depressed state of the national economy until October 1931. Following inevitable rumours, the bad news was broken in Police Orders in September. A supplementary deduction in wages was to be made to save the country £900,000 in the first year. It cost each constable 5/- (25p) and the sergeants 6/3d (31p). The junior constables, then earning only 78/- (£3.40p) a week, were hit badly by the deduction. The following year at least a further 3/6d (17p) was taken. The reductions in pay remained until July 1935.

A supplement to the ordinary pay of the officers was their ability to hire themselves out in their own time. Usually it was duties that might be expected of police. These included preventing rowdyism at public events, a pair of constables on hand at the swimming pool to the rear of the "King's Oak", High Beach on summer week-ends, or attending to the security of some thrift club paying out near to Christmas. It was the occasions where constables were hired as more ornaments that brought the system into disrepute and finally to an end in June 1934. Until then anyone could rent a constable for 3/- (15p) an hour. Both sides

had abused the system, and, to be fair, the extra money had probably saved many officers from the bailiffs during the pay cuts, but it had to go. In the event, it was a difficult arrangement to remove overnight, the unauthorised protection of thrift club payouts, for a payment of a few pints, continued for at least three more decades.

A new Metropolitan Police Commissioner took up office in November 1931. The new incumbent, Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Lord Trenchard, brought along many changes including the founding of a Police College at Hendon in North London, the intention being to produce an officer class in the police. Although this site is that of the present day training school, the college set up by Trenchard evolved into the present day Police College situated at Bramshill House, Hampshire. The system, as envisaged, was that better men would be processed into the Trenchard ideals. The first problem faced was that it was considered politically prudent to offer about half of the places in this establishment of excellence to the ordinary man on the beat, in order that he might further his career and better himself at the same time. Police Orders accordingly requested volunteers.

Two constables from Waltham Abbey put their names forward. The instigator of the application was PC Percy Burrell, an officer who had successfully coerced another constable, Reginald Hurdwell, on the pathway to improvement. Both had less than five years service. Surprisingly both officers were accepted for interview at Scotland Yard.

The two young men were called in turn to face a smart panel of well brought up, highly polished, senior officers. It was clear from the start that at this stage the interview was more about breeding than knowledge of police duties. The nervous Reggie Hurdwell went in first - leaving the ebullient Percy Burrell confidently to sit it out for a little longer.

The verbal probing faced by each of the applicants were totally alien to police duties. Included in the number of weighted, but relevant, posers were "Where did he meet his wife?" "What did he know of the Classics?" "What newspaper did he read?" and many more. Having done his best against such an unusual line of questioning, Reggie left the room, by a different door, filled with a sense of failure. In spite of not being warned about the odd line of questioning, Percy Burrell eventually emerged from the presence brimming with confidence. Percy, a died-in-the-wool Cockney, had faced the identical questions with a completely different attitude. Rather than answer each poser with the truth, he distorted his replies to match the type of answer he imagined the brass required.

The question about where he had met his wife presented few problems. Realising that the truth 'in an East End pub', would be less than ideal, he changed the venue to a far more suitable posh hotel. Having successfully averted a number of trick questions, he was over the moon with enthusiasm when asked by the panel to let them know of his knowledge of the Classics. This, he thought, was right up his street. The Classics he had studied for many years, poring over them daily for hour upon hour. Enthusiastically he replied *"Yes, I know about the classics, there are five of them, the Derby, the Oaks, the One Thousand Guineas, the Saint Leger, and the Two Thousand Guineas..."*

Reggie tried in vain to explain the truth -that Percy had not done as well as he might have thought with that particular answer! It was to be a few weeks before the formal rejection arrived.

In spite of the severe depression affecting the whole country, plans were put in hand to change the arrangement of the living accommodation in the Sun Street police station. The previous communal arrangements were discarded, the builders quickly putting into place the works meeting plans drawn up in 1931. The result of their labours was to remain, virtually unaltered for thirty-four more years. The split flat, with bedrooms to the front and living rooms to the downstairs rear, were designated the sergeant's quarters. The remainder situated upstairs and to the rear were allotted to the inspector. The former communal upper corridor was now partitioned and fitted with doors.

On August 1st 1933, Waltham Abbey police left Enfield Highway sub-division of 'N' and joined the Walthamstow sub-division on 'J'. Likewise Walthamstow and its sub station Chingford were leaving the 'N' division after over 90 years. The move, which was a small part of massive boundary changes for the Metropolitan Police, brought Waltham Abbey back on to the same division as Loughton and Chigwell after a break of about fifty years. It was to be a great deal longer before they were to actually work together again.

As part of the Police Orders giving notice of the many changes entailed in the reorganisation, complete lists of men appeared, to provide a printed record of their old and new numbers, warrant numbers and rate of pay. As these lists were in station groups, a complete list of the men at Waltham Abbey on this date is known. One inspector, six sergeants, two acting sergeants and twenty-two constables, including the Petty Sessions staff of one sergeant and one constable.

*N to J Inspector 105743 (129s. per week) Alexander Robertson
N (86) to J (86) PS 097830 (112s.6d per week) Arthur Reade
N (43) to J (43) PS 100384 (112s.6d per week) Arthur Fenner
N (29) to J (28) PS 100469 (112s.6d per week) James Rae
N (91) to J (91) PS 102479 (112s.6d per week) James Styles
N (62) to J (26) PS 104491 (102s.6d per week) Bertram Carpenter
N (789) to J (95) PS 114158 (102s.6d per week) Edward Banks
N (661) to J (759) Acting PS 099536 (95s per week) Thomas Haynes
N (662) to J (662) Acting PS 107866 (90s per week) Benjamin Ratty
N (447) to J (448) PC 102648 (92s.6d per week) Albert Clare
N (313) to J (313) PC 102700 (92s.6d per week) William Knight
N (1079) to J (719) PC 103981 (92s.6d per week) Wilfred Noble
N (807) to J (805) PC 104554 (92s.6d per week) Harry Howe
N (278) to J (718) PC 105774 (90s. per week) Frederick Barrick
N (1049) to J (196) PC 106576 (90s. per week) Ernest Wiseman
N (219) to J (218) PC 107872 (90s. per week) John Ruskin
N (559) to J (558) PC 108265 (90s. per week) Ernest Beckett
N (492) to J (49 1) PC 110402 (90s. per week) Walter Loveday
N (153) to J (531) PC 110753 (90s. per week) Ernest Crofts
N (372) to J (372) PC 111968 (90s. per week) Walter Redward
N (381) to J (83 1) PC 112987 (88s. per week) William Codling
N (765) to J (765) PC 113846 (86s. per week) William Tutton
N (901) to J (701) PC 114055 (86s. per week) Frederick Jarman
N (463) to J (464) PC 114631 (84s. per week) Ernest Vincent
N (354) to J (352) PC 114890 (84s. per week) Thomas Hart
N (544) to J (454) PC 115528 (84s. per week) Percy Burrell
N (730) to J (71 0) PC 116984 (80s. per week) Dennis Riley
N (653) to J (652) PC 117017 (80s. per week) Arthur Barrett
N (801) to J (81 0) PC 117613 (80s. per week) Reginald Hurdwell
N (641) to J (642) PC 118521 (78s. per week) Albert Ross
N (563) to J (564) PC 120488 (74s. per week) Leslie Welham*

At the time of this move of divisions, serious thought was given to the complete closure of the station. The threat was sufficient to cause a number of men to move voluntarily to Chingford or Walthamstow when suitable opportunities presented themselves. As Reginald Hurdwell and Percy Burrell were among this group, the list was soon out of date. Although the mood passed, it was difficult to find volunteers to serve at the station for some months.

PC William Haywood, now 768J, was awarded a bronze medal for saving life from fire in April 1934 following an incident on October 22nd 1933, in the Eleanor Cross Road, Waltham Cross. Coming upon a serious road accident, he snatched an adult and child to safety from an over-turned car that burst into flames. The Commissioner and Bow Street Court also marked their recognition of his bravery with a commendation and a £8 reward respectively.

From 1936 - long before the days of personal radio sets - police officers were in contact with their stations mainly by the use of police boxes. Public telephone boxes existed, but only in restricted numbers and usually in the centres of population. The police requirements included the presence of a telephone network in out-of-the-way locations that suited police work rather than extensive, and therefore financially rewarding, public use. The police boxes, large blue painted wooden or concrete structures, were subsequently made familiar to television audiences as the 'Tardis' time machine in the series "Doctor Who".

The boxes contained a private line telephone in a cabinet available to police or public. Connected to one

of the local police stations, these dial-less telephones provided only police or emergency messages. Police officers patrolling locally could be summoned to answer the telephone by means of a flashing light on the top or an internal bell. In addition to its obvious emergency uses, the boxes provided a relatively cosy refuge for the patrolling police to contact the station or write reports and take a meal break. The rudimentary facilities included a tall stool, fixed table with drawer and a small electric heater. A first-aid box was also included.

The availability of fixed points of contact resulted in the requirement of the patrolling police to contact the station at specified times. This was an extension of the earlier scheduled meetings with the patrol sergeants. In the same manner that failure to meet with the supervisors or book off on time had been viewed, failure to "make a ring" courted disciplinary proceedings. These arrangements continued well into the personal radio era before the boxes were finally demolished and their passing marked by the appearance of ordinary public telephones or in some cases only by access manholes.

From January 6th 1936, there were six boxes used by the Waltham Abbey police officers on a regular basis; some were also available for use by officers from adjoining station areas.

26J. *Sewardstone Road, opposite Mott Street, connected to the Walthamstow police station switchboard, originally on the border between Chingford and Waltham Abbey police areas. This box was finally wrecked just once too often by an out of control stolen car in 1968, and not re-built.*

27J. *Holyfield Road, by Fishers Green Lane was its final position. Connected by private wire telephone to Walthamstow switchboard. Being situated on the outside of a bend, suffering from crash damage a number of times before being taken out of service September 28th 1970. Believed to have been moved a little way at some time in its lifetime, a total of four siting plans have come to light for this box number. The only plan bearing a date may, at '9.8.35', be the earliest. This places the box on the west side of Crooked Mile (sic), almost opposite the entrance to Monkams Golf Club and Holyfield Farm. A second suggests that the box was to be sited further north on the outside corner of the Holyfield Hall turning (that now serving Hayes Hill Farm). The final two site plans relate to the known final location of this box. One is a site plan and the second, similar, places the box 10 feet from the carriageway on the west verge. Each of these illustrations committed the cardinal error of extending Crooked Mile beyond its true extent into Holyfield Road.*

28J. *Originally in Upshire Village, outside the Village School, and connected to Walthamstow, this box was later (1948) moved into Upshire Road by Broadgate. Subsequently, a number of internal fittings were preserved from this particular box when it was taken out of service in 1970.*

38J. *In the Epping New Road, at the "Robin Hood" roundabout, and connected to Woodford switchboard. It was taken out of service on October 5th 1970.*

40J. *Sited in the Epping Road, just north of the "Wake Arms" junction, connected to the Woodford switchboard. This box was moved a short distance north when the roundabout was inserted.*

56Y. *In Highbridge Street, opposite the "Old English Gentleman" public house. Connected to the Enfield police station, and therefore an Y Division box. It was officially in operation from 22nd April 1935 making it the longest serving of all local boxes when it was taken out of service on July 16th 1970.*

In 1937 a great deal of national publicity surrounded the introduction of an emergency "999" system on the public telephone system. This replacement for the ad-hoc free routing of emergency calls directly to police stations did not come into operation in the area of the Waltham Cross Telephone Exchange until after the war. In the meantime the telephone exchange continued to route emergency calls direct to local police, fire and ambulance stations rather than the designated '999' control rooms - including the Information Room at New Scotland Yard.

At the time of the main police box building programme police started using motor vehicles in increasing numbers. Although Waltham Abbey was not issued with any motor vehicle before 1939, divisional and then sub-divisional stations were issued with motor vans from 1932. These vehicles were intended to answer calls placed by the public from the boxes. Clearly any response using a slow motor van based at Walthamstow would be slow in modern terms but faster than the prior experience.

In 1934 the Area Wireless Car system was introduced to increase police cover and shorten response times. In the same year a wireless school was set up to teach new skills to selected policemen. A course lasting a minimum of two months was mainly involved with the teaching of Morse Code. Operator skill at this code was considered so vital that any officer not operational for more than a month was sent back to the school for a few days re-training.

An aid to identifying the increasing number of stolen motor vehicles was the introduction of a special gridded 'Form 964' upon which the numbers of missing cars were entered in pencil. The numbers were rubbed out and added to daily by the foot officers, and constantly by those employed on wireless cars. These cards remained in use for over thirty years, until the sheer numbers of missing cars, and the arrival of computers, made them obsolete.

As well as the markets, a constant source of trouble in the town were the regular visits made by representatives of the "Black Shirts". These members of Oswald Mosley's Fascist movement held regular meetings in the Market Square. The very presence of the group invariably caused a public disturbance even before they spoke. Fist fights and stone throwing quickly resulted from their unwelcome presence. Not since the early days of the Salvation Army in Victorian times had such disturbances been caused regularly by one group. Where the "Sally Ann" became an acceptable group in time, the Fascists never even tried. The arrival of police invariably made matters worse. It was rare that the group would move on without trouble when inevitably faced by only a single officer. It is said that some officers called in at a local hostelry on their way to do battle to take in a quick pint of Dutch Courage prior to their single-handed tussle with Mosley's thugs.

Three boys from the Pynest Green section of the forest were playing, as many locals did, in the small Pack Saddles Pond just off Gravel Hill, Avey Lane on the afternoon of August 6th 1938. This pond, situated at the base of a hill, was fed by a spring which at that time was piped to supply the nearby Beech Hill Park with its only available, if untreated, water.

One of the three boys was 12 year-old Cedric Davies, a Welsh boy only recently arrived in the locality. His two companions were aged 14. As the three swam in the pond, playing on a floating log, they upset their precarious craft and Cedric was thrown into and under the water. When he failed to surface panic set in and the two other boys ran for help. One of them, Maurice Cordell, happened upon Sub Divisional Inspector (SDI) Deedman, the chief officer of the Walthamstow Sub-Division patrolling from Walthamstow in his small open tourer police car, and called for help.

In spite of the quick recovery of Cedric's body, all attempts to revive him failed. The Inspector was commended at the Coroner's Court hearing and subsequently awarded a Royal Humane Society award and a Commissioner's Commendation for his lifesaving efforts.

Sergeant Reginald Warner and his family moved into the station accommodation in 1938, joining another resident Sergeant George Wood and his family, residents since 1936. In the time Warner was to remain there, twenty-one of his thirty years in the service, he became known as the "Mr.Fixit" of mechanical items. A variety of broken objects, having defeated the repair abilities of the owner, were brought before him for miraculous repair to working order. Prior to his arrival in the town he had built himself a tandem motor bicycle. A keen pedal cyclist, like his wife, he had found an answer to the problem of transporting their young son on a tandem by incorporating a substantial sidecar in the design. Although this feature was not in itself unique, the next stage was. To overcome the hard work involved in riding this tandem combination, in 1936 an engine was added.

Whilst stationed at Wood Green police station he modified it and added the assistance of the power available in a Villiers 98cc 2 stroke engine and Albion 2 speed gear box coupled to the rear wheel. His efforts were featured in the "Motor Cycle" magazine of November 4th 1937. Thus converted, the contraption and its family load arrived in Waltham Abbey police station to serve as transport for them until wartime fuel shortages decreed otherwise.

During the later, post-war, stages of Sergeant Warner's stay his technical prowess resulted in the construction of a small boat, using redundant aircraft parts, and a caravan. Each of these was constructed in the rear gardens alongside well-kept gardens that supplemented the produce of a forty square rod section of public allotment. George Wood was a little less of a handy man, but he laid the groundwork for the gardens, and there was his furious knitting on a quiet tour of night duty - a hobby that was the talk of the town for many a year! If nothing else, police serving the people of Waltham Abbey were characters of note.

The availability of the two sergeants as residents was a bonus for others of their rank on special occasions, like Christmas. Both could usually undertake station duty shifts without undue trauma, releasing others to enjoy the festivities at their own homes. That is not to say that there is any great enjoyment to be had eating Christmas dinner as a picnic meal, alone in the station charge room!

A further portion of the station gardens was sacrificed to building works in 1938. Unlike the construction of the 1914 shed for the wartime contingent of the Special Constabulary, it was always intended that this later structure would be permanent. A heavily reinforced brick and concrete constructed block, later used as two garages, was attached to the west side of the old stable building as part of preparations for the looming war.

When complete, the new structure joined the old to serve as one of the gas decontamination centres for the town. One section of the block (the original stable) was set aside for the treatment of 'foul dressings'. Another section was for 'clean dressings'. The intention was that this would allow members of the police and Air Raid Precautions (ARP) to swill themselves off under showers and progressively remove gas contaminated outer clothing before emerging at the western end of the blocks suitably cleansed of the toxic material. Because of the limited manpower the use of the old stable as a parade room was never a feature strongly adhered to. Its loss to notional ARP duties at this time had little effect.

At the same time, plans were set for the re-introduction of sandbags for the main building and further stores for ARP equipment. A temporary ARP store in the rear gardens was eventually sold to Sergeant Warner, after the war years for £5 when they came to demolish it. The unexpected call caught him out as he had long since acquired it as his tool shed. It remained until the 1965 removal of the gardens. The detention room, off the cell passage, was set aside for ARP uses and eventually contained the station rifle, a .303 Ross.

At the time of the Munich Crisis, in 1938, a year before war eventually broke out, large numbers of retired officers were recalled to temporary service at Waltham Abbey, their nearest police station, to supplement the usual strength of 25 regular officers. The majority of these recalled men were recently retired and considered still quite fit, but at least one ex-Waltham Abbey man failed to meet the set standards.

Sergeant Creagh, who had finished a somewhat chequered career shortly after the Great War, was sent back home after only a single day of this limited service. They said he was too old. About the same age as "Napper" Avis who was accepted in spite of the spectacles adorning the bridge of his nose, this pair was to outlive a number of those subsequently accepted by the police as fit. In some instances this margin of survival was many decades.

Additional to these middle-aged recalled officers there were two newly recruited groups of civilians who were to be assigned as police reservists in the event of conflict. The Special Constabulary and the War Reserve were yet to find a niche in the peacetime police force. Their spare evenings were taken up learning as much as they could about police work in addition to the demands of their usual employment. This training was split between spells at Waltham Abbey and Walthamstow.

Although a number of the War Reserve served at Waltham Abbey, Special Constables were rarer than had been the case in the Great War. The Royal Observer Corps were members of the SC, wearing the traditional police armband, but they were not under direct local police control.

In February 1939 an ARP Department was set up in offices at 26 Highbridge Street under the leadership of Edward J Carter the manager of the Waltham Abbey Building Society. Ted Carter was the son of the Great War police diarist. In many ways his duties were to reflect those which his father had pioneered in the Special Constabulary Reserve. Most duties undertaken by police twenty years earlier were now to be undertaken by the ARP and associated groups.

With most of the more urgent tasks completed by the late summer, many snatched brief holidays to await the outcome of a worsening International situation. Most people were back from these holidays, the last for six years, by early September with a deep sense of foreboding.

DEFEND THE PEOPLE

Late August and early September 1939 saw the official recall to duty of the retired and the taking 'on pay' of the War Reserve and Special Constabulary. Although the pensioners received full pay, and often improved their rate of pension by the time they again left the service, both of the latter categories were poorly paid and did not receive most of the allowances enjoyed by the regular officers and the recalled pensioners.

Large numbers of the peacetime-trained War Reserves left within weeks of the declaration of war. Many were young and preferred the idea of spending the years of forthcoming conflict with one of the armed services, others, like George Tuck, the son of the Great War farmer, found that the equally important duties on the farm left little time to carry on the police role efficiently.

All of the police were treated in a similar manner as far as duties were concerned. A variation on the initial Great War practice of posting officers to fixed, anti-sabotage, points was the insistence that at least one officer remained at each police box at all times. The boxes, reinforced with sandbag or concrete walls, became a home from home for policemen in the early months, as the nation awaited the enemy bombers to strike. With the protective wall in place, the entrance to these boxes, always tight, was extremely awkward due to the inclusion of a blast screen in the design.

Although the initial erection of the sandbagging around the police station and police boxes was a task falling upon civilian contractors, the general maintenance fell upon the police officers. It soon became clear that this task was not to be shrugged off either. In the particularly bad weather experienced in the first winter of the war, the sacking of the bags soon rotted away, allowing the loose contents to spill everywhere. It was no mean feat to replace a number of bags that might well lie under the weight of hundreds of others. Numerous police boxes were to receive concrete or brick blast walls as a result but the police station was less easily treated.

As well as receiving the blast protection rendered by the sandbags some effort was made to seal the building against gas attack, no mean feat in an operational police station and a Victorian structure that was already over 60 years old.

The regulations relating to the 'Black-Out' of buildings and vehicles related as stringently to the police station and boxes as any other buildings. Large and heavy screens were issued to the station to effect this section of the requirements. Similar substantial screens were bolted in place over internal glazing primarily to prevent glass flying about the place in case the building suffered damage.

Each officer was issued with a protective metal helmet, a military pattern gas mask, an item which was stored in a canvas haversack and constantly carried, a heavy two piece rubber coverall gas protection suit, anti-gas ointment and light-weight goggles.

The latter gas protection items were never called upon for the purpose envisaged, but the suit was excellent wet weather protection.

With a few of the reservists being in the enviable position of owning a car as a result of their pre-war occupations it was not unusual to see the duty constable sitting comfortably in the seat of his car within earshot of the box telephone. The regular police still could not then afford such luxuries – let alone the petrol. Even those less fortunate occasionally resorted to partaking of a picnic tea with their family on fine days. Some time before the 'Phoney War' situation changed, the constant manning of all of the police boxes ceased. The exception to this was the few air-raid-siren equipped boxes, these remaining manned until 1943-4, by when all box sirens could be operated remotely from the police station. After the action started in mid-1940 the men were posted to boxes only during periods of alert.

The arrival of the car driving reservists had an immediate benefit. At the outbreak of war Waltham Abbey was issued with its first motor car - a medium sized Wolseley 14 saloon - with little thought being given to the provision of capable drivers. Only two regular officers, Sergeant Warner and Constable Redward, were used until the availability of three reserves was acknowledged. The Wolseley, recalled as bearing

the registration mark FXE500, was issued primarily to ease administration rather than patrol work. Because of fears for their safety, the larger part of the 3 District Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch was initially transferred to Theobolds Park Hotel in Cheshunt from their normal stables in north-east and central London areas on September 5th 1939.

The Waltham Abbey car was initially used to deliver weekly pay and other items to them. As the 'Phoney War' dragged on the horses returned to their earlier station stables in November 1939. In February 1940 the rental agreement relating to the hotel was cancelled. When air attacks actually resulted in the police horses again being moved, other arrangements were made and Waltham Abbey was not involved. A shortage of sixteen issue lanterns became apparent with the arrival of greater manpower calling for their use. SDI Deedman spent day's attempting to acquire extra lamps from all sources to balance the books. He was unsuccessful. The lamps had long been out of manufacture, being an obsolete design using problematic wet cell batteries; all spares having long suffered allocation to other units in the headlong task of re-armament.

In addition to the police reservists a number of other unfamiliar groups took to the streets of the town to learn their tasks in the relative calm of the 'Phoney War'. The various sections of Civil Defence; wardens, fire watchers, rescue, stretcher and damage control parties undertook various exercises in and around the town centre at all times of the day and night. Officers were only called in to assist with traffic control whilst the ARP undertook their antics on a single occasion. Asked for the closure of certain streets, they found that no vehicles came up to the various roadblocks to pass them in any case. The police, considering that the arrangement was shown up to be a complete waste of their time, tended to ignore or decline further requests for this type of assistance.

As a means of saving manpower and fuel, the County Court building in Highbridge Street was closed down for the duration. All of the monthly County Court business was transferred to Edmonton. It was destined never to return. The Petty Sessions business was transferred to the smaller 1914 recreation room shed at the rear of the police station, supposedly for the duration of the war.

As the room was never intended for its new purpose, the situation in it bordered on farce, with the Justices, court officials, police, press and witnesses all accommodated in the single room, warmed by a cheery pot-bellied coal fire. Unfortunately, when The Bench was hearing cases, all witnesses waiting to give evidence had to be excluded from the court. This resulted in these unfortunates being sent out into the station yard regardless of the weather, to wait their turn. As the winter of 1939-40 was well known for its atrocious conditions, including sub-zero temperatures, it was a matter that required an urgent review.

It was not long before the voice of reason prevailed. The Home Office eventually gave permission for the County Court to be taken back into use - on the understanding that no heating would be used!

With the notable exception of the Petty Sessions, though, normal peacetime police work continued as before. The war situation, the extra laws and regulations it imposed, were all additional items to cope with. As the population was required to carry identity cards, in an effort to reduce the numbers of those arrested for 'suspected espionage'; police were expected to check these documents. In a typically British manner the police of the time were also required to carry a pad of 'late production' slips to issue to those of the public who had forgotten to carry this all-important document!

Although the amount of civil road traffic had reduced to a shadow of its former self, military movements took up any slack. Road accidents, especially at night and in fog rocketed in the 'black-out' conditions imposed on the streets. Even the liberal application of white paint to the extremities of vehicles, lamp posts and kerbs failed to cut the road toll to pedestrians. The hooding of vehicle lamps effectively resulted in even a fully lit vehicle being almost totally invisible to those on the ground. Conversely official trials at the time proved that even shrouded vehicle and building lights were anything but invisible from the sky.

In the early months of the war, the army was the sole defensive presence in the area. A number of anti-aircraft gun positions were again set up in the vicinity, including sites at Galley Hill, Quinton Hill and, of later police interest, Lippitts Hill.

Great anti-tank ditches, reinforced with substantial brick built pillboxes, were excavated in and around the 'Wake Arms' and along the line of the Epping New Road during the period when invasion seemed an imminent danger. A far greater military presence was to appear later, when thousands of soldiers from many

Allied nations undertook manoeuvres in Epping Forest prior to the invasion of Europe in 1944.

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 13th and 14th. 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 14th - 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. The police station in Sun Street, Waltham Abbey was besieged by local inhabitants aged between 17 and 65 answering the call for volunteers to form the, so called, Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) - later better known as the Home Guard - 'Dads Army'. Overwhelmed by the numbers attending the station, the initial supply of forms soon disappeared, alternative means being found of recording the names of the many male volunteers. Four groups of LDV were set up in Waltham Abbey the area.

Further appeals were broadcast requesting weapons for the LDV. 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. These weapons were issued via the police at Walthamstow; one hundred weapons being initially allocated to Waltham Abbey and twenty-five each to Holyfield and Copthall Green. The twenty-five weapons for the LDV at High Beach were supplied via the police at Woodford.

The police at Scotland Yard were a little worried that the whole matter of setting up the LDV 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 LDV 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. In Waltham Abbey the Home Guard trained in the school behind the station with their real and broomstick 'rifles' and other makeshift weapons.

The fire brigade finally severed its tenuous connections with the police because of the war. After the formation of the National and Auxiliary Fire Services, the days of volunteer brigades had passed. The siren, erected at their behest, took on a far wider use as an air raid warning device for the whole community and far more sophisticated than the rockets in the Great War.

The war in Waltham Abbey opened with a succession of 'own goal' incidents that did little to promote the victory sought.

After being run down for the many years of peace, the RGPF expanded its production capability for the early part of the war, it being the sole source of the major explosive used by the British, RDX, for a considerable period. In keeping with the general rundown of the canals in the face of competition from the railways and road it was found that the extensive system of canals, serving the two factory sites and facilitating transport to the south, had silted up through neglect. Safety decreed that the large quantity of explosive to be moved should be taken on the canals so steps were taken to return them to use. As it was to be months before the dredging task was completed, the highly dangerous factory produce had to be sent out by road. Fortunately no accidents occurred.

Inside the factory perimeter fate took a different turn. Possibly caused, at least partly, by the rapid influx of inexperienced workers, the first of two major accidental explosions rocked the town during the evening of January 18th 1940. Five workers died and many were injured as a mixing house erupted and caused a chain reaction of fires and explosions. The first explosion was reportedly heard as far away as Brighton on the south coast. Vast tracts of the factory had to be rebuilt. In the town most buildings suffered at least broken windows. It is assumed the police station suffered [nearby shops certainly did] but it is not recorded. The roof of the Abbey Church was lifted off and crashed down again some feet out of true. Even today there is no stained glass in the windows of the north side of the church.

Even as they cleaned up the damage on the site there were further smaller explosions and an accident with a single fatality. Again on April 20th a further blast killed five more workers - fifteen were injured, as another mixing house erupted. Further widespread damage was caused to Waltham Abbey town centre,

and lesser damage to places up to four miles away.

The police from the Sun Street station were called in by the War Department police to assist with the hunt for human debris outside the fence of the RGPF. It was becoming more difficult, and therefore rarer, for the 'outside' police to be able to enter the extremely security conscious interior of an establishment they had so recently policed. This 'them and us' attitude by the factory police remained a stumbling block to any meaningful co-operation with outside organisations until the late 1980s - by which time the site was rapidly reaching closure.

Accidental crashes by RAF aircraft from North Weald and elsewhere were a further aspect of the 'own goal' scenario which mirrored problems encountered by the Great War police contingent, one of whom, 'Napper' Avis, was with them on reengagement from his pension.

One aircraft was reported to have come down through the trees of Epping Forest to crash alongside Lodge Road near the Copt Hall Estate gates. The policeman posted to the police box at the 'Wake Arms', the only person to see the incident, was unable to leave his post, but quickly summoned help from all the emergency services. In pouring rain the pilot was freed from his parachute, which had snagged in the trees close to the burning fighter aircraft, and sent off to hospital.

A far more public crash was the accident that befell a Hawker Hurricane aircraft on the afternoon of Sunday, February 18th 1940. Three aircraft from 151 squadron at North Weald were giving an impromptu free air show to the town as they practised combat manoeuvres on each other. One of the aircraft swooped too low and struck the tops of trees at Honeylands near Honey Lane. The resultant damage caused the aircraft to crash into a field, killing the 19-year-old pilot, Harold Lovell.

Apparently little damaged, (there was no fire) the wreck drew large numbers of the town's residents. By the time the police and ARP arrived, there were small boys running off in all directions with prized items from the wreckage-strewn field. Initially, only those at the head of the crowd realised that the pilot had died.

On this occasion, it took the police and other emergency workers some time to retrieve much of the debris from those who had helped themselves. Over the period of the war there were to be numerous instances where the local officers were involved in disarming small armies of youngsters in possession of the most terrifying weapons. The worst instance, late in the war, was when a group of Upshire youths collected together a plane-load of American machine-guns, ditched over the side of a crippled bomber as the crew struggled to lighten the load as they came home from active duty.

Black humour always tends to enter the policeman's life, particularly in times of extreme adversity. The officers of the Walthamstow sub-division were called to action to repel the 'invasion' of Nazeing Common. During the long hot summer of 1940, as the fighter pilots of the RAF sought combat with the enemy by day, a call came in from Nazeing that an enemy airship was off-loading troops to the north under the cover of darkness. With the knowledge of hindsight we know the enemy did not use airships in the 1939-45 war, but of course the police officers of the day would not be equipped to realise that. If the message was that the enemy was invading by airship then that was the task they must repel.

The site was then some distance into the territory of the Essex Constabulary, and was watched over by a post of the Observer Corps (OC), so the claim was taken seriously and assistance sent from Walthamstow. A van was sent off carrying officers and rifles to call in on Chingford and Waltham Abbey to collect extra 'troops' from the morning shift for the task ahead. The briefing was to be undertaken as they drove towards Nazeing.

No further reports had come in from the area, or the OC, as the police van trundled northwards at a best speed of around 40mph towards its meeting with the might of the German military machine. It was as they approached the scene that one of the officers, realising that something was missing from his unfamiliar rifle, spoke up from the gloomy interior of the van asking the inspector to pass along the ammunition. Only then did it dawn on the others that not only were they all carrying empty weapons, but that he, and all the others, had forgotten to pick up any ammunition! As a group world famous for being unarmed the police force their lack of familiarity with weapons plainly showed through.

Fortunately the debacle was not as serious as it might have been. In the glow of dawn the 'airship', dis-

gorging hundreds of well-armed troops, took on the far less menacing mantle of a stray barrage balloon, partially deflated and barely able to carry itself. It was a laugh at the time, but the incident amply illustrated the problems inherent in suddenly arming wholly untrained men with weapons that they did not understand.

In spite of this relative ineptitude with weapons, born of a lack of familiarity, they were to be drawn from the station time and time again in the war years. Police were regularly called upon to deal with the 1940s version of the espionage suspect, infiltrating the bushes and fields of Southwest Essex. Almost all of these call-outs were at night-time and always led to the police stalking, often on hands and knees, ancient Webley gun in hand, some wandering bovine or sheep as it chewed its way through its evening meal of grass in the total blackness. It is difficult now to imagine the area in true darkness. In modern years the strong reflection of the lights of London has robbed the Epping Forest area of true nightfall.

Even as the Battle of Britain raged in the skies over the Home Counties, the war remained far from Waltham Abbey. The various arms of the ARP had exercised themselves as much as they could, but still no attack had come to test their readiness.

Although the police station had the basement boiler room and the newly built hardened 'Decontam' building beside the stable as possible air raid shelters, a small Anderson shelter was erected in the rear gardens specifically for the purpose. In spite of these available options, the most popular area for taking cover in raids turned out to be the cells on the ground floor. The heavy door and arched roof gave the impression of great strength, a feature fortunately not tested in action. The only drawback was that the residents had to make use of the other facilities on those rare occasions when prisoners were in. It was August 2nd 1940 before any objects were dropped in the area. On that Friday night, a bundle of propaganda leaflets, a broadsheet entitled 'A last appeal to reason by Adolf Hitler', landed intact at Woodredon Farm. These were sold off, at a penny each, for Red Cross funds, a direct parallel to the events of April 1916.

Towards the end of August, there was an increase in air activity. The first siren alert to actually result in action near the town wailed out at 3.30pm on Friday 23rd. The enemy aircraft formation of around 30 machines passed overhead on its way to bomb North Weald. A repeat warning on the afternoon of the 30th resulted, like many before and after it, in no action taking place in the vicinity.

The consequences of total war eventually arrived in Waltham Abbey at 1.50am in the early hours of Wednesday September 4th, one year and a few hours since the conflict had been declared. All the previous day, large enemy formations had passed close by the town on their way to bomb North Weald and other targets. A single line of ten 50kg bombs was dropped in a line from Mott Street to Farmhill Road. Most of these small bombs fell quite harmlessly, but three hit the chemical works of Pan Britannica Industries, and one the Abbey Filling Station. Two large fires, punctuated by several fuel and chemical explosions, resulted. Numerous fire and ARP units fought the blaze for the rest of that night and into the day. The raids on North Weald that day resulted in a hail of 200 bombs falling there, with two deaths.

From that point on, bombs continued to fall in the area with monotonous regularity. Very little damage resulted from the majority of these explosions in open fields, although the RGPF suffered a fire in a guncotton magazine, as a result of falling incendiaries, on September 18th. The next serious incident occurred on the night of October 16th 1940. In pouring rain, a single 250kg bomb fell in Rounton Road, off Honey Lane, wrecking a number of the houses. Again no one was killed or seriously injured, but a number of the residents, having had remarkable escapes, had to be dug out of the rubble of their homes and air raid shelters.

Three days earlier, Constable Barrick, one of a number of Waltham Abbey policemen resident in Abbey Road, Waltham Cross, suffered a near miss at home.

War shortages resulted in many of the populace growing crops in their gardens or in allotments. Frederick Barrick was one of the keener gardeners. Although confined to the size of his own garden in Abbey Road, he undertook to use every part of it in growing food. In spite of the small space available, two green houses were erected in the garden, one 12 feet by 8 feet (4 metres by 2½ metres) and the other 6 feet by 4 feet (2 metres by 1½ metres). A large, freshly arrived, pile of farm manure lay awaiting Frederick's attention in the garden as the family settled for the evening.

At the sounding of the air raid alert, the family vacated the house in favour of the local public shelter. As

they sat in the cramped conditions of the shelter, they clearly heard the sound of bombs falling close around them. A stick of ten bombs had straddled the Waltham Cross area killing three people, and the Barrick house in Abbey Road.

A single bomb had landed squarely in the garden, causing the pile of manure and much of the rich topsoil to travel in all directions. The ripe deposit decorated most of the external walls and roofs close by. The two greenhouses, like every other glass item in the street, had disappeared into a million fragments. A prized long extending ladder, hanging in its usual place on the garden fence, was soon found to be useless as each of the rungs was smashed. Two bicycles were never found. War damage compensation, amounting to £50, was never to replace the variety and quality of the items lost.

There were very few weeks where two or three nights were not disturbed by the enemy right through until December 1940. A lull then occurred until the following March, when a few bombs were dropped in the area.

Large numbers of unexploded bombs, mines and shells were dealt with by some of the most inexperienced hands. Many, particularly the numerous incendiaries, were delivered direct to the station office for storage and disposal. The recipients at the station were often none too pleased at the deliveries of explosive devices. There were many instances where the caller was informed that the particular item brought in was either only being dealt with by the ARP Depot in Brooker Road or the police station in Chingford! This bluff appears to have worked quite adequately, with numerous bicycle trips being undertaken by gullible members of the public with an incendiary bomb in a saddlebag.

In spite of this tendency for some to resort to bluff to distance themselves from unfamiliar tasks, many of the simpler items of unexploded devices were defused by local ARP and police as a matter of course. There were insufficient numbers of fully trained members of Army Bomb Disposal teams to deal quickly with all of the items encountered, resulting in a small number of locals training themselves on a 'work experience' basis to deal with a variety of items. Even local youngsters undertook a measure of involvement in the task. One parachute mine was left in a defused state on top of Lippitts Hill for so long that when a military party came to remove it, all they found was the shell! As in the instance of the air crashes, everything was liable to be a war souvenir to both young and old. With the children on one long holiday at this time (schooling was restricted to one or two mornings a week), the authorities had to keep on their toes if they were to reach the 'booty' first.

The turning of every corner was liable to bring a surprise encounter. One fire engine crew, driving along Avey Lane, almost blundered into a parachute mine that had failed to explode only because it was hanging in a tree by its shrouds just short of contact with the road surface.

In December 1940, after a number of instances of the station siren sounding 'Raiders Passed' as the bombs were falling, Chief ARP Warden Carter complained directly to Scotland Yard. Whether he had attempted to pass on his feelings at the station itself without success, or had been advised to approach the 'Yard after they had ignored station level complaints is unknown. As well as the siren on the station, there was repeater equipment sited on poles at some of the police boxes and the public system unit situated in the RGPF. Policemen were still occasionally expected to cycle around the town centre with the Great War vintage type of placard warning.

On the evening of Sunday December 8th, the defences succeeded in crippling and shooting down an enemy aircraft within the Waltham Holy Cross area. A Junkers Ju88A twin engine bomber with a crew of four men was approaching London from the East Coast when hit by guns firing in the vicinity of Chigwell Rise. As it passed over Loughton, the stricken aircraft, fired upon by searchlights in the grounds of the girls school in Alderton Hill. Shortly afterwards, the tail unit fell off and the aircraft went into a terminal dive from 15,000 feet (5,000 metres) into trees lining the edge of Lodge Road near the 'Wake Arms'.

In spite of torrential rain, the trail of fire and following fireball as the aircraft crashed were clearly visible from the observation posts in the town. Directed by the officer at the nearest police box and others, after only a short delay emergency services raced to the scene.

First at the scene were the men of the Loughton fire brigade, soon joined by an increasing number of other units. The first police on the scene were Sergeant Styles and War Reserve Constable Albert Newton, who quickly made their way in the station Wolseley. The pair of policemen, Newton being armed with the

station rifle, was soon to realise that the venue was not as exciting as might have been imagined. The blasted area alongside the country lane was still lashed by the rain and very muddy, with the flames giving the scene a bright light that few had seen

since the war started. Numerous parts of the wrecked aircraft presented themselves to the policemen as they stood around guarding the perimeter that few outsiders had any intention of penetrating in any case. It was not until one of them picked up a discarded glove - only to find a portion of the late owners hand was still resident –that they jointly decided that idle picking up of the debris was best avoided in the half light of the flames. Both of the officers found that they were to be put off their food for many days afterwards.

The whole area, blackened and blasted, was scattered with many parts of the four unfortunate crew members. It was later discovered that the surrounding trees bore a previously unnoticed gory harvest of aircraft and human parts as a result of the night's dreadful happenings. It was many days before a mixture of RAF airmen and civilian undertakers were able to collect the remains for burial. In the event, only enough remains were found to account for three of the crew, all these being temporarily buried at Chingford Mount in a single coffin. It was only in the light of information available post war that the record was amended. The crash site was excavated by aviation archaeologists in 1976 and again in 1979 and unexploded bombs removed from the cavity.

Another parachute mine came down near the town centre on April 19th 1941. This explosive device landed in the cress beds situated to the north of the Abbey Church, close to the Ancient Gateway, and besides liberally coating most of the area in a black mud, it again severely damaged the church and most of the town centre buildings. Most of Sun Street, including the police station, lost windows. The old housing in Romeland, the properties surrounding the cattle market, was declared unsafe and demolished. It was an old area of the town where it might have been possible to repair many of the buildings if a 'modern' view of conservation was held, but that was not the manner in which such decisions were taken in war time.

In October 1941 the Metropolitan Police decided that they would arrange the release of as many railings as they could from police stations for war scrap. After a survey of the stations in the November, SDI Deedman signed a release for the removal of the Waltham Abbey railings on January 14th 1942. The forty-five feet run of three feet high plain railings on the Sun Street frontage were situated on a low wall, a matter which prompted the suggestion that this wall should be painted white so as to reduce the danger to pedestrians in the blackout. Also surrendered from over the entrance porch was the original station lamp and bracket.

After 1941 raids were relatively rare. It was not until early in June 1944 that any further regular attacks took place. The resumption of enemy attacks locally was almost wholly as a result of the flying bomb campaign against London.

The first few V1 flying bombs (then known as either the PAC - Pilotless Air Craft - or "Fly") to appear in the vicinity were a mystery to the majority of the onlookers on the ground. Although known to the security services, no one had been given a full briefing on the new weapon, its manner of operation or its devastating capabilities. It was not to be long before such ignorance evaporated.

The first of the V1 weapons to explode within the Waltham Holy Cross area fell in a field to the rear of 'The Grange' in Sewardstone Road at lunch time on Monday June 26th. Although the building was blasted to a shell from the impact of the weapon into a paddock, no serious injuries resulted.

Fortunately the station was little troubled by these particular weapons. In spite of the siren wailing on the rooftop, the residents often slept on as if their ultimate survival were assured from being within the police station. Rare were the days when the Wood's and Warner's actually deigned to evacuate from the warmth of their rooms to the cold and damp iron 'Anderson' shelter erected in the rear gardens to tempt them away from their warm abode!

Only the simplest of precautions were taken. One of the young Wood children, Brian, who was aged between 6 and 9 years during this, the worst, period of the war, was allocated a bed space underneath the heavy horsehair police surgeon's room couch close to the cells. Young Brian's slippers were strategically placed on the lino-covered floor alongside his usual bed upstairs, ready for any hurried exit.

The same old solid couch remained in use within the surgeon's room for another forty years.

This belief in the strength and resultant protective properties of the station spread to two local District Nurses, named Barritt and Reeve. Fortunately friendly with the occupants of the station, one indeed being godmother to young Jean Wood, the pair moved in to the building on many nights and settled down with the residents, having previously arranged for their temporary telephone number to be noted.

On another occasion, on the night of July 18th, the recalled pensioner duty sergeant went outside the main doorway of the station to join the constable posted upon the usual fire watch. They stood in the lee of the sandbags to watch the nightly pyrotechnics display as the guns attempted to destroy the passing PACs.

It was easy to be brave in the relative safety of the entrance sandbagging, in spite of the knowledge that two officers had been struck down in a similarly protected station front door at nearby Loughton in May 1941. On this night all pretence at bravery by the pair quickly evaporated when the engine of a passing, westbound, PAC cut out, prior to its dive to destruction. Seemingly heading their way, the sudden silence caused a mad scramble for the gloomy gap between the sandbags and the station wall, and both officers were slightly injured. In the event, rather than immediately flipping over into a nosedive, the flying bomb continued gliding to the west, finally plunging to earth in Waltham Cross. The station residents remained totally unaware of the drama until it was recounted to them the following morning!

Of those few V1s that fell close to buildings in Waltham Abbey, none were to cause injuries. One fell into Cobbins Brook, beside Larsen's Park, just off Honey Lane, on the evening of Wednesday September 20th 1944.

A line of houses opposite the park, and two others incorporating shops backing onto the brook in Honey Lane bore the brunt of the blast. The row of houses suffered worse effects than the shops in spite of being a little further away from the site of impact. The residents, including Sergeant Styles and his family, were evacuated to temporary accommodation to allow the extensive roof repairs to proceed.

The switch of tactics that resulted in the launch of the more advanced A4, or V2, rocket weapon against London started from September 8th 1944, when the first of these Nazi vengeance weapons fell on Chiswick, West London. As in the case of the PAC a dearth of public knowledge about the rocket initially brought no extra fear to the majority of the population. Unheralded, the first anyone knew of any attack was the massive explosion that ripped through the area. It was only after this initial blast that any surviving onlooker heard the sounds accompanying the supersonic craft's arrival. There was no defence, and no general air raid warnings were given.

Siren alerts were largely confined to the lesser dangers presented by aircraft. In seven months 1,050 of these rockets, mainly launched from occupied Holland, killed 2,754 people and seriously injured another 6,523.

After a number of the V2s landed in the forest and fields around the town, causing little damage and no injuries, on March 7th 1945 one hit the town without warning. Seconds after 5pm, a bare two months before the end of the European war, the townspeople were going about their end of day chores. Mr Edmonson, the Clerk to the Court, and the natural successor of Joseph Jessop crossed from the County Court building and walked down Highbridge Street past the drill hall to the offices of Jessop & Gough, next to 'St.Kilda's'.

Meanwhile the police warrant office staff, Sergeant Robertson and PC Wiseman, remained behind clearing up their paperwork for another day in the courthouse.

Across the road in the 'Ordnance Arms' the landlady lay on her bed resting after another busy lunchtime session, attempting to ignore the sounds of children playing in the otherwise quiet street. A car and a Bedford lorry owned by Moss, who had a yard next to the police station, were in the street. The lorry was delivering to the Whitmetal Smelting Works just down from the pub.

And then it was all over. No sooner had Mr Edmonson closed the office door on the outside world that he had just walked through, than it ceased to exist. The area between the court and his office became a massive crater about 82 feet (25 metres) by 75 feet (23 metres) belching dust, smoke and burning gas from a severed main, slowly subsiding under a rising tide of water from breached water and sewage pipes.

Other than the ignition of escaping gas in the crater, there was no fire of consequence.

The lorry driver, Ellis, and three children died instantly. In the court, both officers were thrown bodily into the fireplace, where they met piles of displaced soot falling from the cold chimney flue. Once the shaken pair had picked themselves out of the grate, they emerged into a dusty Highbridge Street, covered in black streaks, to behold the lady in the 'Ordnance Arms' standing in her shattered and exposed first floor bedroom clothed only in her underclothes, and screaming her head off.

The well oiled, but little tested, rescue organisation swung into action. There was little need to close the roadway off, the massive crater performed that task far more efficiently than anything the ARP or police might have thought up. An initial cordon set up to exclude civilians was soon discarded as being too manpower-intensive for limited results. It soon became clear that every hand possible was required.

Nothing could be done to save the three children or the lorry driver (some of whose remains were found on the Town Mead area to the south), but immediate efforts swung towards looking after the fifty-four injured. By far the worst was Mrs. Peck who was rescued from an upper room of a house next to the shattered 'Ordnance Arms'. Unfortunately, she died later.

The County Court appeared to have survived the blast largely intact. Unfortunately, a structural survey decreed otherwise and the building was demolished. It is interesting to note that the 1872 Highbridge Street site for a replacement police station three doors from the court was an area totally obliterated in the blast!

For Waltham, having gone through more than five years of war before sustaining a fatal casualty, it was sheer irony that two days after the fatal incident in Highbridge Street; another took place in Sewardstone. A group of people were working in a nursery just to the south of Mott Street at lunch time when a V2 landed almost in their midst. There were ten casualties, two, including a woman from Greenfield Street, Waltham Abbey, being fatal.

The last V2 rocket landed at Orpington, Kent on March 27th eighteen days later. The last V1 Flying Bomb in the London area crashed into a tree at Claverhambury, Waltham Abbey at 8am the following day.

In six years of war, 878 siren alerts had been sounded and cleared (some it seems a little earlier than might have been prudent!) 500 bombs and mines, 30 incendiary containers, 14 flying bombs, 16 rockets and one enemy aircraft had been logged as falling in the area. In all, it was estimated that something like 5,000 separate items landed locally. Many are still being unearthed. The total cost was seven fatal casualties, thirty-five in hospital and 125 given first aid. Seventy dwellings were wrecked.

When the war in Europe finished in May 1945 a number of parades were held in London and locally as the state of alert was quickly done away with. As was the case with the Great War it was to be many months before the war reserve police were disbanded. Most of the remaining recalled pensioners returned to pensioned life very quickly, but at least two of the younger reserves, WRs Brewster and Newton, decided that they would make the force their career. Although it was to be two years before there was space for them at the training school, they worked on at the station as before. Like many serving on the home front, the men had little to show for their war service. Besides the memories, both good and bad, most were eligible to wear the green ribbon of the Defence Medal but nothing else. Some were even to be deprived of long reflection on these small blessings.

Ernest Crofts, PC 531'J', served at Waltham Abbey for twenty of his twenty-five years in the Metropolitan Police, and could leave on pension as soon as he wished. Ernest lived with his wife and four sons in Waltham Cross, a short bicycle ride from Sun Street. On Tuesday October 2nd 1945 he was working the late shift (2pm to 10pm). At teatime he was taking his break in the station meal room (then at the rear of the building on the ground floor) with Fred Barrick. Ernest went very pale and complained of feeling odd. The sergeant was called and allowed him to remain at the station beyond his set mealtime to recover. At around 9pm he declared that he now felt better and was going to go out on patrol again. The duty sergeant was having none of that and sent him home. On his way, cycling along Highbridge Street past the end of Lea Road, Ernest fell from his bike. He was found to be dead by the first passer by.

A service funeral, with six fellow-officers as pallbearers, was held at Cheshunt the following Monday. On

the other side of the coin, Fred Barrick, his meal companion, retired from the police and drew his pension for longer than he had worked. He died, more than forty years later, having attained his ninth decade.

POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS

In the early post-war years there were large numbers of wartime military establishments remaining in the area containing men and their now less-needed weapons and ammunition awaiting demobilisation. In 1946 there were still three military camps in full-time use for the internment of German and Italian prisoners of war in the Waltham Abbey area alone. These sites were to remain for at least a further two years. Police were, and indeed continue to be, responsible for some aspects of assimilating large numbers of the one-time enemy who chose to remain in the locality, rather than go home to an uncertain future in their own countries. Not all of those who chose to stay also renounced their nationality. A result of this is that, some fifty years after the conflict, there were regular visits being made to the station to gain an endorsement on a German form to confirm that the subject is still alive and therefore able to draw an old age pension from the old country.

On the evening of Saturday November 9th 1946, a courting couple drove into a roadside clearing off Fairmead Road, Loughton. The couple, from Woodford, were Kenneth Stuart Dolden, an LAC on his demobilisation leave from the RAF station at Warton in Lancashire, and Jacynth Bland, a local music teacher at Aldersbrook School, Wanstead. They had been going out together for only a matter of weeks, but considered themselves engaged to be married.

Having spent an enjoyable day together in Woodford, in the early evening the pair had borrowed Kenneth's father's Standard 14 hp car, FTW41, and gone dancing at the Walthamstow Technical College until about 9.15pm. As they had found the hall very crowded and hot, they left and took a short drive up to the forest near High Beach, where they arrived about a quarter of an hour later. The young couple, (he was 23 and she was 22), both got into the rear of the car and were cuddling when the door opened.

The figure of a man, wearing a cloth cap and some sort of facemask, stood beside the open door looking in. Dolden immediately took exception to this apparently blatant 'peeping tom' activity. He ordered the man to "Get out". Still in a crouched stance, Dolden moved forward towards the car door, and the stranger. He received a blow to the head and then shots, possibly silenced, were fired. It was 9.40pm.

Three bullets struck Dolden, and a fourth sank into the rear seat. Staggering forward, he fell to the ground as the shadowy figure ran off into the darkness. After helping the wounded man back to the rear seat of the car and making him as comfortable as she could, Jacynth ran off down the road towards Woodford, and soon encountered another couple in a car about 150 yards away. Gasping out her story to the occupants, she was let in and the three of them drove to the first police box they encountered. Box 36J situated in Epping New Road, by the junction with Rangers Road, put them in direct touch with the police at Woodford.

The group of callers were told to stay by the box to direct police to the location of the shooting, the car driver suggested that he leave both women there, and go to see what help he could give the wounded man. He was never seen again. It was always assumed that he was probably married, and did not wish to risk his whereabouts on that night being known to his family. He was not suspected of the crime that was unfolding. His female companion, who was married, had been picked up that evening in Leyton.

There was a delay in the arrival of the police from Woodford; the first van actually arrived at 10.08pm. Miss Bland was able to direct the first police officer, PC Walter Reddcliffe, quickly to the scene on the west side of Fairmead Road, where Dolden lay mortally wounded in the back of his father's car. Lying on his back in great pain, he was made comfortable until the ambulance arrived, at the same time as Detective Constable Stuart Osborn.

Quickly sent off to Forest Hospital, Buckhurst Hill, he died of his wounds later. Unusually, he was able to recite that rare legal nicety, the "Dying Declaration", prior to his death, to DO Osborn and Doctor Bell. If nothing else, the content of his last gasped breaths cleared Miss Bland from any complicity in the murder. This saved a great deal of unnecessary and distressing questioning for her and time wasting for the police.

Alerted by police at home in Monkams Avenue, Woodford Green, Dolden's father, Alfred, was able to get

to the hospital just as the last of the dying declaration was being given. He was present when his son died. After his death three bullets were extracted from wounds in his chest and abdomen. The first two were extracted at the hospital, but the third only came to light as a result of the post mortem examination undertaken by the famous forensic scientist, Dr. Keith Simpson.

Although the shooting had taken place well inside the Waltham Abbey police section, for a number of reasons, (and not for the last time in such cases), the enquiry took place at Woodford station. As well as Kenneth Dolden dying at

Buckhurst Hill, the first police enquiries were undertaken from the Woodford police station and involved officers from that area. In any case the facilities at Waltham Abbey were insufficient to house a large enquiry team.

It quickly became clear that the murder weapon was a handgun of .38 calibre, most probably one of the hundreds of Enfield and Webley military revolvers. Many of these were still in the possession of the large numbers of men awaiting demob, or perhaps one of those weapons taken home as a war trophy. Almost immediately, police interest in this type of weapon was circulated to all police forces. In the next two years, large numbers of similar weapons were submitted from police stations nationwide. They were turning up in the possession of people or being dredged up from rivers and canals quite regularly. Locally, numerous military men from the local camps in Waltham Abbey, Chingford and Chigwell were interviewed and armouries checked for missing weapons of a similar type.

An initial inquest, merely for the purposes of identification of the deceased, was held at Walthamstow Coroner's Court on November 13th. The full hearing at Walthamstow took place on January 23rd 1947. The jury returned a verdict of 'Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown'.

Eventually, early in 1948, the gunsmith charged with the task of testing each of the weapons submitted by police, Robert Churchill, asked for a halt to this time consuming effort. Churchill was of the opinion that the murder weapon would now have altered so much, either by rust if discarded, or by continued firing, as to be beyond forensic testing.

The issue of this decision in "The Police Gazette" of April 1950 effectively brought the intensive enquiries into the murder case of Kenneth Stuart Dolden to a close. As always in murder cases, the file remains open.

In 1951 it was decided that the handguns issued to police in 1911, the .32 Webley & Scott self-loading pistol, should be withdrawn from a number of stations. A spot check of stock showed that the weapons that had served through two wars, were becoming more dangerous to the firer than the target! The same two of these weapons, and their smart leather holsters, had been at Waltham Abbey since the date of issue. It seems probable that the number of times these particular weapons had been fired, even for practice, would have been extremely low. The best of the remaining weapons were concentrated in busy stations, whilst an alternative design of weapon was sought. It was eventually decided that the large stock of ex-military revolvers would provide the cheapest route. Accordingly, in 1956 two Webley & Scott .38 revolvers, one of the type of weapon suspected as involved in the Dolden case, arrived at the station in belated replacement for the 1911 weapons.

Shortly after noon on November 23rd 1951, two 14th century vellum and parchment scrolls, written in the Hebrew language, were stolen from the library of the Lady Chapel in the Parish Church of Waltham Abbey. This theft was to be paralleled twenty years later by the theft of a marble head from the same building, in that both thefts were of items with no real value at the time of taking. Although they were worth a great deal more to a collector, the nominal price given to the scrolls was a mere £30.

Unlike the 1970s 'head' theft, an item that returned at great cost from America in the 1985, and the continued loss of a valuable Bishop's Chair from the main church in 1990, the case of the scrolls was solved.

On February 26th 1952 two Chingford men were arrested and appeared, charged with taking the 600 year old documents, at Waltham Abbey Magistrates' Court (as it, like all the other old Petty Sessions, was now newly termed), sitting in the Town Hall. After pleading guilty of the theft to the court, and admitting to the intention of selling the documents to Jewish collectors, the ringleader of the pair, having three previous convictions for theft, was sentenced to imprisonment for six months. His partner was fined £50, or three

months imprisonment, an alternative that appears ridiculous in comparison with modern money value. The prime error that the pair committed was that they had failed to secure the market prior to the theft. It was enquiries they made subsequently that led police to catch them handing over their booty to a woman.

In the early hours of March 15th 1952, a big noisy car drove into Tennyson Avenue, Waltham Abbey and woke one of the residents. Wondering quite what was afoot the woman got up and saw five men get out of the strange car and walk around the corner into Honey Lane. A few minutes later Mrs Beryl Whiten of 55 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, was shaken awake from her sleep into the glare of torches in her eyes as she lay in bed with her two children. She soon became aware of no fewer than five men, each wearing a gangster style trilby hat and a scarf as a mask. One of the five pointed a Luger automatic pistol, and demanded the keys to the safe. It was not very long before the rest of the household was awoken, firstly her husband, Herbert Whiten, in the adjoining room, and then her sister, Miss Betty Freeman. As the keys were not at home, they were unable to give the gunman the items he sought. The Whitens, their young children and sister spent a terrorised half an hour as the five intruders tied them up and searched for alternative items to steal. In the end, the robbers made do with taking £4 in cash, a cigarette lighter and some 'Scroll' brand ballpoint pens, the whole lot costing less than £6. 10s. (£6.50p). The five then left the house, returned to Tennyson Avenue, and drove off in the American Buick car.

This incident, whilst not a particularly pleasant episode, was not all that remarkable in itself as a generally ill thought out crime, with little reward for the instigators. The prime historical interest of the robbery was the aftermath.

The big lumbering Buick crashed and turned over shortly after the robbers left. An area car crew found it at 3.15am, three miles from Waltham Abbey in the ditch adjoining a notoriously fierce double bend on the borders of Chingford. The police crew searched the abandoned car, and found some useful evidence of the crime in Waltham Abbey.

Another police car travelling down South Street, Enfield disturbed three men walking from the direction of the Lea Valley Road (and the car crash). All three ran into the shadows. One of these, local villain George King, 28, was picked up and linked, by fingerprints to the Buick, and, by possession of one of the still-rare ball point pens, the Honey Lane robbery. He was also already wanted for a £6,651 mail bag robbery in Bruce Grove, Tottenham, on February 29th, and had eight previous convictions. Considered by some of the policemen who knew him as 'London's number 1 gunman' he had only been released from a 7-year term for shop breaking in January 1951.

Having got the car and linked it to King, it was a natural progression to try and contact the registered keeper and then the new owner and question them about the crime. The first was 27 year old Cyril Burney and the second was 26 year old Niven Craig. Both of them were known in police circles, and they both went on the run.

The two gangs – one north of the River Thames and the other south of the river – were linked by a common interest in the criminal relocation of tobacco. The local interest was via a company called Messrs E Betser & Co Ltd of Rue de St. Lawrence near the police station in Waltham Abbey. Dealers in tobacco and confectionery were a regular target for criminals and it appears clear that the Kings Gang had paid more than one visit to Betsers storerooms.

George King, who was identified at Waltham Abbey by Betty Freeman, was dealt with alone for both of the crimes some time before the other two were traced. After being committed for trial at the Essex Assizes from Chingford Magistrates' Court, he was found guilty and sent away for 12 years on June 18th 1952. George King only served three months of his term. He died, still a very young man, in Pentonville Prison on September 11th 1952.

Three days later, on September 14th Craig and Burney were arrested in Bayswater. Craig was found in possession of a loaded gun and extra loose ammunition. That made the total of three of the five robbers known and arrested. The remaining two involved were never identified, but events in Croydon early in November that year gave at least a pointer to who one of them was.

Dealt with at the Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey, Niven Craig received a sentence of 12 years imprisonment on October 30th. In the court at the time was Niven's mother and younger brother, 16 year old Christopher. It is said that Christopher, a seasoned criminal in his own right, was deeply shocked at the

treatment his brother received and harboured a deep hatred for all policemen, and particularly for the Waltham Abbey police after this second run in with them. It was said that the first brush with the law in the town had resulted in the arrest of one of the gang for a raid on the premises of Betser's, a wholesale tobacconist and confectioner, in Rue de St. Lawrence. Niven Craig's defence had included both a denial of involvement and a veiled suggestion that Christopher was one of the, untraced, gunmen in Honey Lane.

A short while after the 12-year sentence on Niven Craig for the Waltham Abbey robbery, Christopher Craig carried through his deep hatred for the police to its ultimate conclusion. At 9.15pm on Sunday November 2nd 1952 Craig shot dead PC Sidney Miles on the roof of a Croydon tobacco and confectionery warehouse during a thwarted break in. The 16 year old, still attempting to evade capture, was injured in a fall from the roof and arrested. Craig's partner in this South London crime was 19 year old Derek Bentley, who had been arrested immediately prior to the shooting, a fact which led to a great deal of subsequent representation.

The pair of small time crooks was subsequently brought to trial for the murder of PC Miles at the Old Bailey. Craig's youth saved him from the hangman's noose, but Bentley, his accomplice, being that much older, was, in the eyes of the law, equally involved in the original crime merely by being present. Although Bentley was in police custody at the time the shot was fired by Craig, the jury considering the case found him guilty of the murder, with a request for sympathetic treatment of him. He was sentenced to death, and various avenues of appeal failed to bring about the remission of his sentence to life imprisonment. His subsequent death by judicial hanging in January 1953, and repeated attempts at securing a back-dated pardon for Bentley has placed this murder, with its roots in a Waltham Abbey robbery, amongst the most famous of cases. Eventually the family managed to gain the judicial review they sought.

A final twist in this tale relates to Barry Betser, the son of the family. In the 1970s, long after E Betsers had been swallowed up by the larger Palmer & Harvey concern, Barry was running the post office in Sun Street [now restaurant]. After a case of burglary at this post office the police decided that it had been an inside job and eventually arrested and charged Barry with the theft.

To cut a long story short, Barry was convicted and only at a subsequent appeal against the decision was it decided that it was a wrongful conviction that was squashed – but not before his world had crashed down around him.

Another instance of the large amount of wartime military weaponry falling into the wrong hands came to police notice on December 14th 1952. Constables 426J Ted Bayford and 765J Bill Tutton stopped two young men in possession of rifles. Ted was one of that rare breed in the Metropolitan Police serving in the area, or in this instance the town, of his birth, a decade later Bill was to be the Urban District Council mayor in Waltham Abbey. The answers they managed to squeeze from the pair of youths only heightened the officers' already- raised suspicions. Bayford and Tutton decided that the police station was the best place for the four of them, as the young men "helped police with their enquiries".

Subsequently it was revealed that the two rifles were stolen from North Weald airfield, then still an operational RAF station. After the youngsters were handed over to the police in Epping for further investigation an address in Stoke Newington was searched. A further cache of weapons and other stolen property were found there.

For their part in rounding up this ring of weapon thieves, mainly using their 'sixth sense', now a highly unfashionable characteristic, the officers were commended by their superintendent at Hackney.

Bill Tutton and George Wood were, as far as can be ascertained, the only officers at Waltham Abbey to receive the 1953 Coronation Medal. In the early days of the police, the Queen Victoria Jubilees of 1887 and 1897 had resulted in every officer in the service being awarded a standard Metropolitan Police medal. The same applied for the Coronations of 1902 and 1911. After the Great War the system underwent a drastic change which did away with police issue medals in favour of a standard medal for all recipients. The result of this was that for the 1937 and 1953 Coronations only two medals were issued to Waltham Abbey officers in each instance. Another aspect of this penny pinching was that many of the officers issued these later medals were all long in service and extremely unlikely to wear medal or ribbon on their uniform for an appreciable length of time.

In the post-war years the residents' gardens at the rear of the station reached their peak of productivity.

Sergeants Warner and Wood, and, later, Constable Kent, the residents, together ran a thriving business in eggs, vegetables and plants from the gardens and allotments each held in the town. In spite of the continued ban on the keeping of livestock, all ranks of police maintained a steady flow of customers, the senior of them seemingly unaware of the day-long clucking and raucous dawn crowing from behind the recreation room. All this business activity came to a halt in 1959, after the retirement of the driving force behind the scheme, Sergeant Warner.

The structure of the station appeared to be in a poor state of repair post-war. Not only had the building suffered from accelerated ageing from airborne soot, the effects of the war had taken their toll. The removal of the iron railings from the Sun Street frontage in 1942 for war scrap, leaving a low plinth which often caught out numerous drunkards and elderly people, even with the improved street lighting of peace-time. The major removal of the railings had left the frontage insecure and in January 1954 efforts were put in hand to start to fill the yawning gap.

The side entrance gates to the police station required moving back behind the line of the front wall of the station building. In this rebuilding the scant remains of the old hand ambulance shed were removed. These works in turn required the re-routing of a build up of General Post Office cables from the wall of the station to a telegraph pole, sited by the east wall, which was itself eventually made redundant and removed in 1991.

Central heating was installed on the ground floor of the station in 1954. As this was only to serve the operational part of the building, the living accommodation retained the use of open fires. An open fire was additionally retained in the station office, then situated to the left of the entrance door, for a further twenty years.

The heating system installed was, or became, eccentric. The coke-fired boiler replaced the one in the basement boiler house, below what was still the charge room. Neglecting to keep a wary eye on the state of the solid fuel resulted in repeated instances of the boiler expiring unnoticed. Its position was not exactly on the beaten track. Efforts to curb the likelihood of expiry, by over-feeding it with coke, were equally to be avoided. Over-stoked, the system over-heated to a point where the station officer had his attention drawn to the cell passage turning into a sauna. A header tank over the door between the charge room and the cell corridor hissed and bubbled until it overflowed. Usually, the first to realise that an all too regular disaster was occurring were the prisoners. The eventual changing of the system to gas firing in the early 1970s solved this peculiarity.

Gas firing also removed the oddities to be found in the recreation room heating system. Even if not neglected, this pot-bellied coke fire had an annoying habit of just expiring; a condition brought about by its age.

Although the issue of the Wolseley car to the station in the early days of the war had been a temporary measure intended to look after the welfare of officers not stationed at Waltham Abbey, the later addition of a motor cycle was for the use of the station alone. A variety of, invariably maroon painted, 500cc machines were to serve through until 1959. The manufacturers of these were drawn from factories of the, then, strong British manufacturers, Triumph, Norton and BSA.

In this period, an area wireless car was at last allotted to Waltham Abbey. The car, with a three-man crew - driver, radio operator and plain-clothes observer - was, like nearly all police cars of the period, of Wolseley manufacture. Initially, the radio call sign used in contact with Scotland Yard by this Waltham Abbey based car was 8J ("Eight Jay"), but later developments in the manner this code was presented changed this to J8, "Juliet 8", it was only a change in style.

Early police cars were devoid of heaters and demisters. It was not until the 1960s that manufacturers started fitting car heaters as standard, and it suited the planners and financiers at Scotland Yard to save the expense of such extras when the crews could wear their heavy overcoats instead! It was considered that officers who were inside a warm motor car would not wish to get out to question any suspects they came across, this attitude being a post war manifestation of a very Victorian set of standards. As more and more car heating equipment became standard, police workshops were ordered to remove heaters prior to the vehicles being issued for service. Eventually the effort to contain progress was abandoned, from being a simple task to remove a bolted on heater and feed pipes, manufacturers were increasingly integrating the piping into the design.

The station motorcycle fleet was due for modernisation from the mid-1950s. The types on trial for the purpose included the BSA Bantam, Triumph Terrier and the Velocette LE200, each having a smaller engine than the previous machines operated.

The clear winner of this trial was the Velocette. "Noddy" bikes as they became known by all the police forces to use them, first appeared at Waltham Abbey in 1959. In an effort to convey the effect of a foot duty policeman, the "crash" helmet issued to the first riders was similar to the standard helmet. The only concession to motorcycling and safety was the addition of extra vents and a small additional amount of cork reinforcement. There was no proper means of securing the helmet; the single strap provided being inadequate. Two later redesigns addressed most of these problems, although to the end of the Velocette's service the pressure exerted by the rear lip of the helmet meant that any rider falling unconscious from his bike was liable to expire through strangulation!

Aside from the problems the attempts to project a certain type of image presented, the motor cycle, and in particular the weather-proof coat the officers had to wear riding it, were liked by almost every rider. Fitted with a relatively small 198cc water cooled engine, a substantial amount of body-work, hand starter and gear change, they were not particularly fast or light. The creature of compromise, the "Noddy" was fast enough, nimble enough, comfortable (with a warm radiator handily placed by the riders toes!) and, most important, presented the perfect image. A drawback discovered by most riders was the liability to induce "Noddy Boot". Over-filling of the small oil sump resulted in the level dip stick being forced out of its housing and oil deposited on to the rider's right boot. Effective polishing after that treatment was out of the question!

Speed was one of the major considerations. It was decided that the winner should, if possible, be the slowest candidate or have its speed governed. There was no need for a speedy machine to respond to emergencies, that was the task of the area cars.

To ensure that the rider did not go too fast each of the bikes was modified so as not to exceed 40 mph. It became a battle of wits between those riders who were mechanically able and the mechanics that serviced the bikes in a struggle to ensure that the governor remained in place. The selection of a simple metal plate, placed in the float chamber of the carburettor, was an error on the part of the engineers. This plate was soon discarded after the return of the bike to operational use, ensuring the return of the 60-mph performance. It was only the later substitution of a longer needle valve in the float chamber that thwarted the efforts of the speed-seeking officers.

Three "Noddy" bikes served Waltham Abbey as patrol machines for a decade. After these three were superseded, a machine with conventional starting and gear controls continued to operate alongside the new "Panda" cars. This later machine was equipped with a radio capable of talking direct to Scotland Yard and a call sign of "Juliet 29".

On May 3rd 1960 the town celebrated the 900th anniversary of the foundation of the parish church in Waltham Abbey by King Harold. The Saxon King had undertaken this notable service to the area some little while prior to his fatal encounter with an arrow at Hastings.

This anniversary resulted in great pains being taken to spruce up the town in support of the civic celebrations to be held. The police station received a major cleaning of its brick facade on to Sun Street, which removed almost a century of grime and gave a brighter fresher appearance that continues to the present day.

A further aspect of this occasion was the great pains undertaken to improve the condition of the station gardens. Up until the previous year, when Sergeant Warner retired, the rear gardens of the station had reached untold heights in productivity from vegetables and livestock. Now alone, the surviving member of the police food production team, Constable Robert Kent, turned his attention to providing the best possible flower show.

Without readily available finance, all improvements had to be as a result of donation, or short term loan, from the still extensive local plant nursery industry. The interior gardens, visible through the constantly open vehicle gates on to Sun Street, were the site of the main displays; additional shows of colour involved the construction of window boxes for the front, using donated timber which had once served as the

casing for firearms at the RSAF. These boxes were adorned with, hard-to-come-by, helmet plate badges acquired from the J Division central stores at Hackney police station. The arrival of the station's first Austin-Morris J4 light van in that period assisted the proceedings considerably. This vehicle saw greater use as a foliage transporter in 1960 than as a means of carrying criminals.

In spite of some traumas, including a prized standard fuchsia on loan from Harker's Nursery in Sewardstone being decimated by the seekers of cuttings, the effort was a success. Not only was the town assisted in its decoration, but the police station in Waltham Abbey won a prize in the annual police gardens competition, an attainment which was to be repeated a further three times up until 1965.

The police owned facility at Lippitts Hill on the edge of Epping Forest, the home of the familiar police helicopters, of the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit, has been the property of the police since 1960. Lying wholly within the Waltham Abbey police section, the camp is home to a set of almost totally self-contained units. Its history is relatively short.

Prior to the 1939-45 war the site was a garden rose nursery in an area then still known by most locals as Leppitts Hill, that name itself being a distortion of the early Victorian Lipped Hill. As the international situation got worse in the latter part of the 1930s, the rose nursery was taken over by the army as a prime anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) site on the eastern approach to London. The first huts were erected in response to the limited needs of this site and its personnel in the period of the Battle of Britain and The Blitz on London. Developments were to continue throughout the war in response to the needs of its ever-changing residents. The most intensive period of building was during the presence of the next occupants, the Americans. The US 184th AAA moved into replace the British unit in 1942. It was not until two years later, in March 1944, that they fired their guns in anger. After leaving the Yanks did not forget their sojourn on the Essex hilltop site. They returned immediately after the war to place a memorial in the southwest corner of the camp.

Many years later a more permanent plinth also commemorating the 1776 revolution replaced this damaged item.

After the Americans it was the many Axis prisoners that were now held as Prisoners of War that took up residence. One of three local sites. The most obvious reminder of their time there is a statue crafted from solid concrete by one of the German prisoners, Rudi Webber 540177, in October 1946. This marked effort remains by the entrance gates to remind all visitors - and sharp-eyed passers by - of this aspect of the sites past history. Over forty years later, another of the ex-inmates, Walter Weiland, sealed his decision to seek British naturalisation by becoming the Mayor of Waltham Abbey.

Towards the end of the 1950s the army owned site was being used by the police to run Home Office Civil Defence Mobile Columns from. The other two local ex-PoW sites were left in a state of disrepair although only one of them was actually to be razed to the ground. Lippitts Hill would have joined them but for police interest. The Metropolitan Police purchase of the site enabling the continuance of both the Civil Defence (CD) role and the expansion of cadet and dog training. The locally unpopular Mobile Column effort was phased out towards the end of the 1960s.

The concept of sending out police officers to patrol and undertake rescues in a convoy of ordinary vehicles in the event of nuclear war was somewhat flawed, but it was finance that eventually put paid to the scheme. The few families living close to the camp had regularly complained to local councillors about the antics of a noisy column of vehicles entering, or leaving, the site at unearthly times of the day.

Although far less noisy than the helicopters that eventually roosted there; the CD effort created far greater problems with complaints.

Fortunately, at around the same period a newly found awareness on the subject of armed police brought to Lippitts Hill a newly created department, D3, to replace the CD activity. This, soon to blossom, section of the police set up firing ranges and classrooms in the old barracks.

The first instance of helicopters using the site for police operations was in June 1967. Three Army Air Corps Westland-Agusta-Bell 47G Sioux moved in for a brief period of police co-operation trials in conjunction with a mobile police station on the site. Although short lived, within the decade police helicopters were back in operation at Lippitts Hill. Following an instance of criminal damage to a hired machine at Elstree in

1976 the Enstrom machines moved in permanently. The helicopters may have changed type a few times in the years since, but they have not left. The units presently occupying the Lippitts Hill site are the helicopters, firearms branch (for whom a number of all weather ranges have been constructed) and local police dog handlers.

At 10pm on Sunday July 3rd 1960, Waltham Abbey police station closed its doors to the public. An experimental night closure that was to last almost five years was commencing its first six months trial. The first notification of this move appeared in Police Orders on June 24th 1960. Although the station closed its doors, the building remained occupied by officers on duty as well as the residents. Non-resident duty police entered by way of the rear door, using a police box key, and the whole range of police duties, including charging of prisoners, was performed. The prime saving was in the provision of a station officer during times when prisoners were not in the cells. It was still a very quiet, law-abiding area with no constant callers in the small hours, or need for arrest and overnight accommodation of many prisoners. That being said, upon numerous occasions the resident families were disturbed from their sleep when duty officers were called away from the station upon some urgent task.

As foot patrols were still to operate in Sun Street, a further police - public telephone was inserted in part of a front window of the charge room overlooking Sun Street. A flashing light, similar to those on the police boxes, was installed above the main entrance doorway and a step provided below the telephone cabinet, which was connected to the Walthamstow switchboard. This arrangement was the only private line telephone equipment to bear the title of 'police post' to serve Waltham Abbey policemen. Conventional police posts were confined to inner areas of the Metropolis.

Down on the River Lea at Fishers Green, at a spot not far from the police-owned fishery of modern times, a bungalow once stood on a small island alongside a wartime Bailey bridge.

The occupier was well known to the officers at Waltham Abbey, at least by repute, due to her naturist habits. Even in the 1960s, Doris Haines' naturism remained a quirky trait. The island she lived alone on could only be approached by way of a narrow footpath along an equally small causeway. The causeway was often flooded over; remaining so until the later digging of a relief channel which demolished both it and the bungalow.

Doris often sat out periods of being cut off by floodwaters without the least drama.

Unfortunately, not everyone accepted this. On Tuesday November 19th 1963, a call claiming that Doris was in mortal danger and cut off was sent to the police station by a passer-by.

Immediately two officers, John Hamer and John Chilcott, were sent on their "Noddy" bikes to Fishers Green, intent on helping the maiden in distress.

By the time they arrived, the flood was at its peak. The swirling waters had, long engulfed the line of four-foot-high wooden posts marking the line of the path along the causeway. The two policemen hailed Doris' cottage. Once contacted, the lady sensibly declared that she would remain in the safety of her home to see how the flooding progressed. John Chilcott, instantly realising that his chance of fame was slipping away with such a defeatist attitude, persuaded his chosen "damsel in distress" that rescue was indeed the only course to be taken! In the face of misgivings by his fellow officer (and of course, the subject of the rescue herself) Constable Chilcott set forth on his mercy mission through the cold and swirling waters.

Both rescuer and potential rescued set off to meet in the muddy waters of the causeway. Chilcott, confident of his route in spite of a lack of familiarity, waded in along the line of the path and moved towards the bungalow. The speed of progress was startling, allowing the officer's confidence to grow at a similar rate. Disaster arrived at the three-quarters mark. Up to his waist in chilling waters, and feeling ahead for the next marker post, the officer suddenly disappeared from view in the water. Any worry as to his ultimate safety soon evaporated as he re-surfaced within a second, spluttering wildly, from the depths in almost the same position, re-found his footing, and found himself being dragged from the water by Doris.

It was Doris that ultimately ended up confidently leading her potential rescuer quickly and safely to the riverbank that she had initially shunned. Once dried out, Doris was able to return to her home after the flood had gone. The potential white knight on a "Noddy" bike suffered greater hardships from the ribbing of his colleagues in later years than he did when the events were reported at the time in the local newspa-

pers. Treated in the gallant manner it was meant, not a word of the mishap that had befallen the rescuer passed Doris Haines' lips.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AUTONOMY

When the station opened its doors on April 1st 1965, it was upon a whole new way of policing. Night closure was cancelled, and the station was to have autonomy in the manner it operated. At this time, and for a decade hence, the station boasted the largest allotment of manpower in its history. Under one inspector there was six sergeants, thirty-seven constables and a civilian typist. The typist was ex- Sergeant Styles' daughter, Joan Andre. Jim Styles, as 91N, served at Waltham Abbey from 1927 to 1946. Joan had married a local German PoW, Kurt Andre, shortly after the war - much to her fathers chagrin! Included among the constables was a single woman, Jill Johnson, the first of her gender to serve at Sun Street.

Part of the reason for this increase in manpower was an increase in the area taken by Waltham Abbey. The London Government Act 1963, the spur for the widespread police changes, placed Sewardstone and Sewardstonebury under the WH+UDC for rating purposes. This political change resulted in Chingford police ceding part of its own area to its neighbour. One body that did not change its borders was the Chingford General Post Office, resulting in that area being given a London postal district of "E4" (much to the continued annoyance of the residents as a London identity resulted in increased charges for such as insurance).

To make room for the increase in manpower and to provide the extra office space required, the living accommodation had been closed in 1964, being quickly converted into offices. The under stair side entry door for the quarters, opened in 1932, remained in use for some time before it was sealed up. Most of the major structural changes took place in 1966.

The prime external works necessary to ensure full conversion of the temporary changes of use were directed at the single storey block at the rear of the main building. The rearward part of this block had housed the external male toilets since the station had been built and the rest had served as the meal room in recent years.

There had been numerous instances of the, now elderly, sewage system 'backfiring' into the meal room, so it was therefore fitting that the room would in future serve as a toilet in its own right. Close to the end of their lifespan, the old toilets had played a cruel trick on one of the oldest police inhabitants when he was using the facilities on offer.

Albert Newton, on the verge of retirement after serving 25 years since his days as a war reserve in 1939, had taken his now portly frame into one of the two outside WC's. Unfortunately for Albert, but to the lasting amusement of his colleagues, the pan of the receptacle gave up under his weight. The crack of the failure so startled poor old Albert that he rushed straight out into the adjoining yard with his trousers around his ankles. More unfortunate was the fact that he was seen in this state of complete disarray! Not only were the facts reported to the plumbers, but to half the town as well.

The conversion of this room to its new use destroyed a minor work of art that was installed only a short while beforehand. One of the officers, Constable Bill McKinnon, surveying the ceiling of the room one day, decided that the multitude of pipes criss-crossing the room reminded him of a London Transport underground railway guide map. Armed with paints of many hues, McKinnon set to painting each of the pipe runs and junction boxes to represent his vision. It can only be assumed that senior officers either failed to enter the room at this time, or realised that its presence would be short lived, so there was little point in creating a stir over the source of great local amusement.

The rear edge of the roof of the block required re-modelling and building up. It was while this work was being undertaken that an elderly worker fell from scaffolding into the yard. He died as a result of serious head injuries.

In addition to the changes in the structure of this adjunct to the main building a number of the Victorian fireplaces were panelled off, to be replaced by gas fires, and the gardens removed. The empty remains of chicken pens, sheds, a pond and various bushes were removed. The position and outline of many of the structures could still be seen on sections of the perimeter walls a quarter of a century later.

The prior existence of the pond managed thoroughly to confuse contractors at a later date. Initially, it was not removed, merely filled in and compacted. The area it had occupied, as might be expected, tended to retain moisture and appeared very boggy in nature. The eventual arrival of contractors to tarmac the new extended rear yard set both themselves and the police surveyors' branch into a state of near panic.

For many days they thought that a previously unknown spring had emerged. It was not until an officer with knowledge of the previous layout was consulted (a rare occurrence indeed) that the presence of the ornamental pond came to light.

Another, unofficial, building project that took place to the rear of 35 Sun Street at this time was the "rescue" of the 1914 Recreation Room.

Such were the fables that had grown up around this, now black painted, corrugated iron shed, that it was firmly believed that reports to the Police Surveyors Branch about a part of it collapsing would result in a case of summary demolition and the consequent subsequent loss of the snooker table and a sporting facility that allowed officers at the station to run boxing training for the local youth.

Fortunately, the concern about the building's future was felt at all levels of the police locally. It was arranged that a number of the officers would effectively be struck off from normal duty for up to a week to undertake the repair of the visibly sagging section of the building. Constables Bayford, Kent and McKinnon set to with a will.

The adjoining section of yard, still fortunately earth, was excavated and the brick pillar foundations exposed. The sagging structure was jacked up, with predictable creaks, groans and splintering, from the building, to a level close to the original. The output of a borrowed cement mixer was brought in to fill in the resultant void. When all was dry, the jacks were released and the shed bedded onto its new foundations.

Whether their fears were truly well founded is doubtful, but the continued existence of the building, now known as "Crooks Hall", almost thirty years, on suggests that the work might indeed have saved the building from an early decision on its continued viability. Erected as a temporary expedient of war, many of its features reflect this. The building did not feature a substantial rear wall; the western section of the 1876 perimeter wall suffices as a structure on to which wooden beams were fixed. The neglected corrugated iron panels forming the external cladding filled the space between the eaves and the wall top and, unfortunately, let in the damp. After standing for over eighty years many of the wooden beams were rotting. The shed was finally dismantled in October 2001.

At about 11am on April 8th 1966, police were called to the River Lea Navigation Canal, close to Highbridge Street, where two young lads had fallen into the water.

Somewhat different from the current shape of the waterways at this point in modern times, the channel was undergoing repair and remodelling works that had left a quantity of loose rubble on the banks. Walking too close to the edge both of the lads had lost their footing and slipped into the cold, dark, water. One of the pair managed to extricate himself, but 13 year old Bruce Hacket from nearby Walton Gardens had less luck.

After attempting to throw Bruce a rope from a nearby barge, only to see him slip from view beneath the surface, the youngster raced off for adult help. The first assistance came from "Riverside Cafe"; a long demolished establishment, that used to stand some 200 yards downstream from Highbridge Street south of the marina.

Michael Murphy, aged 20, raced up and jumped in to try and trace the position of young Bruce below the water.

Shortly after Michael plunged in, the first of the police arrived. PC 187J John Hamer, 26 years, rode up on his "Noddy" bike, discarded most of his clothing, and plunged into the canal. Michael, suffering from the chill of the water, was coaxed onto dry land and into the constables discarded coat by, off duty, Sergeant Arthur Bostock, who had just arrived.

Five times John Hamer dived below the surface, unsuccessfully seeking a trace of the boy by touch alone.

On the sixth attempt, directed by Arthur Bostock to bubbles breaking near the edge, he found the body in a hollow under the bank and pulled it to the surface. In spite of strenuous attempts at artificial respiration, for one and a half-hours, the boy did not recover.

Both the constable and Mr. Murphy were subsequently commended for their selfless efforts at the Coroner's Inquest held at Epping on April 18th. In August, both received parchment testimonials from the Chairman of the Waltham Holy Cross Council, Councillor George Tuck, the same man who had, like a number of other well known faces in the town, briefly served as a War Reserve in 1939.

In June 1966 the late evening calm was broken by the crack of a firearm being discharged in Highbridge Street at around 11pm. Not one person heard a thing. A short while afterwards Constable 366J Ian Andrew was patrolling on foot in Sun Street when a car stopped alongside him and reported a 'flat out drunk' lying on the pavement in Highbridge Street. PC Andrew arrived by the supposed drunk only to find that drink was definitely not the cause of this particular collapse.

As soon as a helping hand was stretched around the body of the still conscious man an obvious lump, the spent bullet, could be felt just under the skin in his back. There was little tall tale blood. The entry point was equally elusive and the injured man, 45 year old Edward Grant from Edmonton, had to point out the small hole in the centre of his chest to the officer. The tale he told was that he was attacked as he left work as a machine setter at Highbridge Turned Parts. A man had fired a .45 round hand gun at him from point blank range. Struck in the chest, Grant had been understandably floored and the assailant left him to die on the pavement, escaping in a red sports car. By sheer good fortune the bullet had hit him squarely in the sternum, being deflected around the body by this substantial bone and travelled, skin deep, to his back.

The injured man, and the police tending him, had to wait for $\frac{3}{4}$ hour until the nearest ambulance could reach them and convey him to St. Margarets Hospital, Epping.

Grant's injuries were successfully treated to full recovery, but from the police aspect the case fizzled out after the high drama of the night. A widespread search for the sports car, its driver and the gunman, led to quick arrests. The subjects of the arrests were not charged, and the case was closed by common consent.

Elsewhere in the Metropolitan Police area in the shadow of Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London, on Friday August 12th 1966, three plain-clothes police officers were shot dead. The crew of a Triumph 2000 under cover car were gunned down in the street by a team of three petty crooks they had stopped in Braybrook Street.

An immediate nation-wide search was launched for the three killers, who were quickly identified. Two, Whitney and Duddy, were swiftly traced and arrested. The third man, and leader of the group, 30-year old Harry Roberts, remained on the run.

For weeks police throughout the capital were constantly being sent by a multitude of well meaning members of the public, as well as cranks, to any man they didn't instantly recognise by name in pubs and streets. Any place with "Roberts" in the name was the greatest draw for the cranks, time and time again.

The detectives in the case came to the logical conclusion that the well trained, exmilitary, Roberts was probably living rough, and probably in Epping Forest. As early as Thursday August 18th a large-scale search took place, the first of a number.

Five hundred police, from a variety of Metropolitan divisions and the Essex Constabulary, were massed in very hot weather at the new Loughton police station.

Arranged by Loughton's Chief Inspector John Alabaster and overlooked by the heads of 'J' Division, the groups were briefed to sweep the selected section of forest.

In accordance with common practice at that time, no arrangements had been made by the Metropolitan Police to refresh the large group of police in such a remote area.

As a result only a small Essex Police unit were left to deal with the unequal task. A passing mobile motor-

cycle-and-side-car AA patrolman ably assisted this unit in its difficult task. The thoroughly business-like rider of this machine identified a need among the hot and rapidly expiring police in the forest. Filling his sidecar with bottles of fizzy drinks, he sold them to the thirsty officers at cost, and then returned for more. The only profit on his dealings was the deposit money on the multitude of bottles he subsequently took back to the shop.

Lessons were soon learned. It was discovered that the Scotland Yard mobile tea wagon, intended to refresh officers unexpectedly called out in an emergency, should have been pre-booked three days beforehand. This was not the only shortcoming brought to the fore very quickly in this rare operation. Large-scale searches are relatively easy to provision in built up areas with plentiful housing and generous occupants. Unfortunately, rural areas like Epping Forest have virtually none.

Another unfortunate characteristic of the terrain, compared with the regimentation and straightness of urban settings, is that all the trees get in the way and spoil the meticulously set up lines of police. The most dangerous shortcoming highlighted by this search was the woeful inadequacy of the police firearms training. A lack of trained men resulted in almost anyone being handed a gun and sent forth into the dense woodland and bogs, ostensibly to face a professional gunman known to have coldly despatched three police officers already. The greatest danger highlighted was the scrappy nature of the police line, which ended up facing each other, gun to gun, in the confusion.

The hunch that Roberts was living rough in the area was not wholly misplaced. Three months later, on November 15th he was captured in woodland near Bishops Stortford. An Essex Police sergeant, wearied by the long hours of yet another search, slipped into the cover of a lonely barn for a quiet smoke break and quickly realised that he was not alone. Guessing that the unseen companion might be the quarry, he called for Roberts surrender. In very poor shape, having lived in the wild for so long, Harry Roberts took the first steps towards a minimum 30-year term of imprisonment. In 1993, although Witney has been released Roberts is still serving his sentence. The third man, Duddy, died in prison some years earlier.

The two main results of the Epping Forest search were the setting up of an 'instant response' tea wagon for the future, and an in-depth review of training in firearms.

This latter led to the formation of a dedicated police firearms branch initially based at Lippitts Hill.

A further advance in technology arrived in the local district in 1968. The ordinary patrol "Noddy" bikes gave way to the newly introduced "Panda" car and the personal radio, and foot duty officers, including the new Home Beat Constables, also carried their own radios as a matter of course for the first time.

The replacement of the motorcycle patrols by the "Panda" car was not universally popular. The police were becoming increasingly hard pressed. They were now expected by the public to attend emergency calls within minutes. It was not long before the same public wished to see the return of a larger number of foot patrols; a style of police duty that was inconsistent with meeting the response expectations without a boost to the manpower.

With all the extractions of manpower caused by the setting up of specialist police groups in other parts of the Metropolis, at a local level police numbers were in fact falling. In the period 1965 to 1980 the available manpower working from Sun Street fell by about a third, this in a period during which the population of Waltham Abbey grew by some 40%. The first of the "Panda" patrol cars introduced were based on the stylish Ford Anglia saloon car. Erroneously believed by the public to be in some manner "hotted up" for the police role, the cars were quite standard production vehicles with distinctive blue paintwork set off by a white painted drivers door and sign.

Also changed, but not immediately, was the patrol sergeants' transport, a Morris Minivan equipped with a radio linked directly to Scotland Yard, which had served alongside the Noddy bikes. This vehicle was also eventually changed to a "Panda" car equipped with a similar Scotland Yard radio set.

In the decades following, the basic colour scheme of the "Panda" car remained very much the same, even if the source, shape and colour shade of the vehicle undertaking the task differed from time to time. The last type of vehicle bearing the "Panda" colours, was based on the Austin Allegro, withdrawn in the mid-1980s. The successor vehicles, primarily based upon the compact Metro, took up a standard "Jam-sandwich" white scheme, retained the name and duties associated with the earlier cars.

Another, less important, change took place with the change in vehicle fleets. Petrol, the liquid upon which each fleet relied for mobility, had been drawn (in penny packets) by the fleet of Noddy bikes under a contract from the local Regent Oil Company at the Abbey Filling Station garage in Farmhill. The change in fleet coincided with a partial change in fuel supplier. Although the cars and vans started to use Esso fuel, the diminished Noddy fleet continued to use Regent until withdrawn. Although there were hundreds of bikes still operating throughout the Metropolis, the single machine remaining at Waltham Abbey tended to make a mockery of the contract system as far as the Abbey Filling Station was concerned.

The radio sets introduced, at a cost of around two hundred pounds each, were initially far from perfect for the role they were to undertake. Made by "Storno", they were light and strong, but suffered from many teething problems, more related to their environment than sheer bad design, for many years. In the early years the officers, used to operating without the convenience of radios, found that their new 'toys' suffered from poor reception in a multitude of places and also that initially they were not very policeman-proof. Eventually, constant co-operation between the manufacturer and the police engineers overcame most of the technical problems.

The 1965 system of Home Beat constables, itself to be copied in later years under another title, was merely a renewal of a system that the police had operated as a necessity from 1840 and then quietly abandoned a century later. In the new scheme it was intended to centre operations around an officer living on the beat he served in the same manner as hundreds of Victorian policemen had done before.

Unfortunately, progress in the personal aspirations and transportation of police and their families had dented this ideal to such a degree that few policemen aspired to actually living in high crime rate areas under the new system as a matter of choice.

Fortunately, in remaining a relatively low crime area, Waltham Abbey lent itself to the new scheme.

In another life saving effort, on Saturday March 29th 1969 Constable Stewart Will saved a man from drowning in the worst of imaginable liquids. It had not been Stewart's day for dogs, already bitten by one dog earlier in the day, he was to take the resultant sticking plaster on his leg to a place he would not have chosen as a result of the action of another canine.

Arthur Wiggins, 56, was walking his dog at Rammey Marsh to the west of the River Lea Navigation, and actually just in the neighbouring borough. At the site of an abandoned sewage farm, Mr. Wiggins' dog unfortunately strayed into one of the sludge pits and got stuck. In his successful efforts to free the animal, Wiggins fell down the 45-degree sloping sides into the slime and also became trapped.

The unfortunate dog owner, having reduced his finger tips to shreds on the concrete of the sloping sides, spent the rest of his time 'floating' in the foul smelling slime calling for help and hoping that someone would pass by the deserted spot. After two hours, fortune was on his side and someone, hearing his cries, called the police to the spot.

It was dark when the police arrived and searched for the source of the cries. Stewart Will found the exhausted man first. Calling for his colleagues he straightaway waded into the 12-foot deep slime pit to support the figure he could only see as the whites of two eyes. Three officers from Cheshunt and others from Waltham Abbey joined him, and, with the aid of a rope, assisted in pulling Arthur Wiggins and the constable free of the pit.

Neither suffered severe injury. Aside from Arthur's shredded fingertips, all either required was a good bath and a renewal of that plaster! All the clothing was burned as beyond cleaning. The cause of all the trouble was never seen again, all that could be surmised is that the daft dog had jumped back into the mire of the same, or an adjoining, pit in the excitement and drowned.

This officer received a well-deserved scroll from the Royal Humane Society in recognition of his brave deed. By the time his award came to be presented, Stewart had gained promotion to the rank of sergeant and was no longer serving locally, having a new post at Holloway. On October 8th at the Sun Street police station, in the company of a number of his ex-colleagues, he was formally presented with his scroll by Chief Inspector Markham in a quiet ceremony, with the rescued Arthur Wiggins and his own proud wife and four children present.

A sad post-script to this story came a few years later. Stewart, still a sergeant, was on holiday in Scotland with his family when three youngsters were swept out to sea.

After saving two of the three, the holidaying policeman re-entered the sea for the third. Both failed to return to the safety of the shore, and were later found drowned. He is commemorated on the National Police Memorial in Staffordshire.

MURDEVILLE

Another murder victim was discovered in the local part of Epping Forest at lunchtime on Wednesday May 21st 1969. Molly Searle, returning from exercising her dog down Church Road, High Beach, noticed what appeared to be a tailors dummy close to her home at "Suntrap Cottage". The "dummy" was quickly discovered to be the body of a tattooed man clad in a pair of black swimming trunks.

The first police to arrive were the crew of the local area car, now shared with Chingford and known by the call sign "Juliet 7", with Waltham Abbey PCs Derek Cook and Dave Harknett as crew. Having confirmed the existence of the victim the CID were called out. The local police chief, Superintendent Philip Leith, and his entourage went quickly to the scene of the crime from a party. The initial crime investigations were undertaken by Detective Superintendent "Bert" Wickstead, from his temporary base in the London Borough of Waltham Forest educational field study centre, the "Suntrap".

The body, later identified as 29 year-old Gerald Hawley, was covered in numerous stab wounds. After an initial pathological examination undertaken beneath a temporary plastic tent, the body was taken to the mortuary at St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping. A total of 89 puncture wounds were found on the body.

The murder enquiry moved from its temporary accommodation in Church Road to set up in Loughton police station. Intensive investigations revealed that the victim had been a one time "star" of a number of blue movies made by a pornography ring.

Hawley's attempts to extort further fees for his sordid acting from the leaders of the ring resulted in him being silenced in an East End flat and then subsequently being dumped from the boot of a car. In less than one month, three persons were in the dock and accused of being involved in the death of Hawley, although only one of them was charged with murder. Just prior to Christmas 1969, a photographer, Michael John Muldoon, aged 28 and from Brixton, was found guilty of murdering Hawley in a trial at the Old Bailey and jailed for life. Muldoon's wife, a 22 year-old mother of two children, and another man, Kenneth Eighteen, were also found guilty of assisting in the cover-up of the crime. Mrs Muldoon was put on probation; Eighteen went to prison for three years.

Apart from their connections with the murdered man, the factor that clinched the case for the police was that the gang had thoughtfully left the murder weapon, a sword, hanging in full view on the wall of their home when the CID men arrived.

Forensic tests showed that there was still blood from the victim on the blade.

Tons of pornographic material was seized as a result of the enquiries into this case.

So many books, films and other items fell into police hands that there was insufficient space at any one station to store it all together. A number of East London stations held portions of the haul for months as it was slowly vetted and disposed of by the enquiry team.

In the same year, 1969, police officers from a number of UK police forces were seconded to the small Caribbean island of Anguilla for voluntary periods of three months each when fears of an uprising by the local population presented themselves. Only one Waltham Abbey officer volunteered for the potentially risky task.

Constable Derek Boom, a 31-year-old local beat officer and former Royal Marine living with his family in Upshire set off for the sun on October 6th. Flown out by the RAF in a group that included local Superintendent Leith, he found the experience was well worth hardship that did not in any way approach the rigour of his military training regime. For the normal officer unused to military training it was something they had not faced before and were unlikely to face again.

Comfortable jet aircraft were introduced later but for the first few groups of officers they were obliged to withstand a flight across the Atlantic Ocean to Antigua in a painfully slow propeller Lockheed Hercules

transport provided by the RAF. Even the seats were basic and did not alleviate the bone shaking vibrations of flight undertaken at relatively low level. That flight was followed by a shorter flight to Anguilla in a smaller aircraft also equipped with minimalist troop seats.

Once on the ground in Anguilla the living conditions the group met were far from the standard of those they were used to at home, it was camping in basic buildings and sleeping on camp beds. For many though the Caribbean attachment turned out to be a glorious paid holiday for all the men involved. Once the word got around, there were so many volunteers amongst the previously faint hearted that no one stood a chance of repeat trips. Although none have been directly attributed to Waltham Abbey policemen, there were numerous tales of unfaithful police husbands undertaking phantom trips to the West Indies to enable them to spend three months or so of off duty time with their latest lady friend. On occasion, this subterfuge came to light when the wife, faced with some major family crisis or a lack of suitable postal contact, attended the head station to demand that the bemused station sergeant bring her husband back immediately. If the officer approached kept his wits about him and did not let the cat out of the bag, after a couple of days a 'message' was sent to the errant officer and this normally impossible task of 'flying' him home was achieved to the satisfaction of the family.

In the wake of the abolition of the death penalty, the rate of sudden death being discovered in the Waltham Abbey area was accelerating.

On March 31st 1970, two Enfield children, 12 year old Gary Hanlon and 11 year Susan Blatchford, went missing from their Enfield Highway homes. A massive hunt was launched in an effort to ascertain their whereabouts. The hunt extended into the Waltham Abbey police area when police dogs and officers combed the area of Sewardstone between King George V reservoir and the base of Lippitts Hill. A hired helicopter was called in to over-fly the waters of the reservoir and land between Chingford and the most southerly section of Harlow, Essex. The combined efforts of all these forces failed to find any trace of the pair.

Ten weeks later, on Wednesday June 17th, 20 year old Leonard Cook from Butlers Drive in Sewardstone was walking his Labrador dog across fields behind "Netherhouse Farm" about half a mile from his home when he stumbled upon two badly decomposed bodies in a small copse. Police were called. The area, very close to the "Royal Oak" where the 1926 Cordell murder had taken place, was cordoned off for investigations to commence. As it was soon clear that the two bodies were likely to be the missing youngsters from Enfield, the detectives from that investigation, "Nipper" Read and "Bert" Wickstead, both of whom were well known at that time, joined the squad at Sewardstone.

In the weeks since the pair had gone missing there had been a number of very hot spells, a fact that resulted in the bodies being very badly decomposed and presenting the pathologists with a very difficult task. Before long searching questions were being asked about the police searches at the time Hanlon and Blatchford went missing. The copse, small but thickly wooded, had been in the dog search area but nothing had come to light. As it was vehemently claimed by each dog handler involved that the copse had been thoroughly searched at the time, this aspect tended to suggest, either that the bodies had been moved to the copse later, or that the search was not as thorough as claimed. It is possible that on occasions the conditions are such that dogs cannot easily detect bodies.

The new search was taken to the fullest extremes, leading to the small vegetation being completely stripped out. In spite of this extreme action, no extra clues were found.

The state of decomposition foiled the conclusive scientific study of the remains. In spite of evident injuries of the girl's chest, potentially caused by foxes after death, no sign of violence of cause of death was found. Susan's underwear was never found.

Without evidence of a violent end, the Home Office would not provide the necessary murder squad funding. In September of the same year an inquest which returned an "open" verdict effectively closed the investigations, amid widespread criticism.

Although not actively worked upon, the police file was re-opened on a number of future occasions where some possible connection was evident. Each of the local child murders, particularly those of Marie Payne and Barry Lewis, resulted in further investigation of the case. The final re-opening of the case was in 1997. A whisper had reached ears of detectives that a child sex offender inmate of a prison had boasted of get-

ting away with killing a boy and a girl in 1970.

In the wake of this tenuous information Susan's body was exhumed from its grave in 1999 to enable further tests to be made to draw upon the numerous advances made in science since 1970. Gary's remains had been cremated but both families, and a number of other people, had been made well aware that there were developments in the case.

It was thirty years after the deaths that the case was finally solved. Barely an officer involved in the original case remained in the service. In a period when the Metropolitan Police had faced severe criticism for failing to solve murders quickly enough to suit one bereaved family it was a triumph. In this case the police were able to show the long-suffering relatives of Hanlon and Blatchford that in some cases the drawn out methodical approach can make the wait worthwhile.

In March 2000, a few days under 30 years after the children went missing, sixty-one year old Ronald Jebson stood in the dock facing charges that he murdered Gary and Susan. When he finally appeared at Old Bailey to face the same charges the self confessed paedophile pleaded "Guilty" to the charges and it therefore never went to a full hearing. He never explained himself and went to prison keeping the details of the killings to himself. One element not satisfactorily made clear was whether the bodies had been in the copse at the time of the police dog search.

Nonetheless it appears that they were. Although no one knew it at the time, this case was one of the first of the modern paedophile child murders to occur in the locality. However, it was to be another 15 years before that term became common currency amongst the public.

In the early hours of July 31st 1971, remembered as being a very hot and sticky night, Constable Ronald Penney had just relieved the night duty station officer for his meal break when a caller at the station told him of screams being heard coming from a flat in Highbridge Street. Unable to raise anyone on the radio, Ron set off on foot to investigate.

Highbridge Court stands out from the rest of the street in that it is a vestige of the bad planning decisions of the 1960's. The concrete and glass block of a shop with six flats above, set back to allow for the intended, but cancelled, road widening in front of the Abbey Church, had become an architectural "black sheep" of the street.

When officer Penney arrived, it was soon clear that the trouble spot was within one of the two top floor flats. The only obvious access to the flat fronted building was by way of the front door, which was itself off a communal stairwell to the rear. Vigorous hammering and kicking upon the sturdy and secure door to the flat failed to get an answer. Although there was no ledge on the rear face of the building, there was a small balcony off the stairwell, but even this required resort to a perilous route over the external plumbing from the bathroom, leaving the policeman standing over a drop of over 20 feet.

He broke the smallest window, (strangely conscious of repair cost even under those circumstances), to open the larger casement to gain entry to the bathroom. In spite of the considerable noise made in gaining entry, he was not challenged.

As he walked into the front room the 28-year old woman occupant lay limply on the floor covered in blood. The attacker, the victim's estranged husband, stood menacingly over her with a large knife poised for further blows. The man turned and saw the unarmed constable for the first time, lowered the knife and allowed himself to be disarmed and arrested.

The earlier, unanswered, radio call had in fact been heard by the crew of the area car, the crew eventually arriving to renew urgent thumping on the front door as the action within ceased. Let in by Ron Penney, the crew was given the task of securing the scene and attempting to stave off the victim's slide towards being yet another murder victim, as the attacker was escorted on foot the short distance to the police station.

The radio operator on the area car was John Chilcott, still notorious amongst his colleagues for his part in the debacle at the Fishers Green flood. Presented with such an apparently impossible task of life saving, he openly admitted later that he gave up all hope of saving her life, and resorted to cosmetic action. Bleeding profusely from a neck wound and gasping for air through a severed airway, the woman plainly stood no chance at all of survival.

The simple placing of a handy tea towel over the gaping gap - more to hide the ghastly sight from view than anything surgical - succeeded in both stemming the flow of blood and sealing the airway. Upon such simple actions are awards made.

Meanwhile, Ron was back at the station with his bloodstained companion and placing him in the cell minus much of his outer clothing, items obviously going to be required for the murder enquiry evidence later. Sergeant Ernie Mellor ambled down the stairs from the canteen still casually chomping through the remains of his meal and greeting the constable with an automatic "Alright Ron?" A broad smile and mock laughter greeted the less than usual reply of "Oh Yes, just one in the cell for murder sarge", levity which quickly faded when presented with the sight of a pile of discarded and blood-soaked clothing.

Thanks to the rescue mission and subsequent first aid by default, the victim survived. Her estranged husband eventually only faced a charge of grievous bodily harm (GBH) in a, then rare, 'plea bargaining' arrangement. The two officers were commended for their actions, and John Chilcott received a scroll from the Royal Humane Society - an event which tended to go some way towards cancelling out the debacle at Fishers Green a few years earlier.

While death was stalking the Waltham Abbey police area so regularly, it is hardly surprising that a death also occurred in the station itself. The last of the line of people, mainly residents, to die in the police station passed away on Monday March 27th 1972.

At noon on that day a man named Barnard was arrested on a minor drink charge in the Abbey Gardens area of the town and after searching was placed in the sole remaining cell to sleep of his excess in safety. Visited regularly to ensure he remained safe, he was found to show no signs of illness, just a little understandable clumsiness. His last visitor was Inspector Neville Stevenson, an officer in overall command of the unit at the time, to see whether Barnard was fit to be released home after five hours in custody. Although not quite fit to leave the station, Barnard declined a meal, accepting a cup of tea as an alternative. When the cup of tea arrived, Barnard seemed unable or unwilling to drink it. It was then that a trace of vomit was noticed on his chin, and a previously unnoticed difficulty in sitting properly.

The police surgeon, Dr Curley, was called at 5.25pm to inspect the sick man, it not being considered a matter urgent enough to call an ambulance for straight away.

The doctor arrived at 6pm, but Barnard was already dead. Swiftly, the acting head of the Walthamstow sub-division, Superintendent Holdcroft, the relatives and the coroner were informed of the development, as the deceased was taken off for examination by the pathologist at St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping.

It was a full day's wait before the post-mortem confirmed that no fault lay with the police, and a sigh of relief swept through the station. The cause of death was found to be an gastro-intestinal haemorrhage due to a chronic ulcer of the oesophagus. He could have died anywhere, at any time. It just happened to be in the police station cell.

Fortunately, police work in the town had not totally evolved into constant death and destruction, there were other notable incidents without a speck of blood to be seen.

Mind you, one incident in October 1974 was not exactly danger free.

In the early hours of the morning, quite unknown to each other, the two mobile units working the night duty hours at Waltham Abbey were traversing the dark and forbidding forest, their headlights failing to penetrate through much of the enveloping blackness. The Rover area patrol car, "Juliet 7", crewed by PCs Derek Cook and John Hamer, and the beat patrol, or "Panda", car, driven by PC Colin Densham, were by chance circulating in the same general area around the Epping New Road, Earl's Path and Fairmead Road (a route since blocked by closure of the latter).

The Rover crew was the first to see the old Morris Oxford parked in an unusual spot in Earl's Path, beside the traffic direction sign near the Epping New Road. Rather than rush in, the police car crew decided to dash around the block and see what, if anything, developed.

By the time they had returned Colin Densham's car was already parking behind the Morris. After Derek Cook, the driver, had completed his ritualistic rolling and lighting of a hand-made cigarette, all three officers set up an impromptu conference by the suspect vehicle. With that, a 38-year-old woman appeared out of the bushes, her hands covered in mud. She quickly explained that she had been attending to a pressing natural function, the product of which she had just buried among the trees.

Disbelieving the story to a man, Colin Densham inspected the disturbed earth at the base of a large tree and set about uncovering the 'evidence' with his bare hands - a risky proposition in view of the claimed contents. Fortunately, whatever had been buried was clearly not the result of someone being 'caught short', it being neatly wrapped in brown paper and plastic. Removed, this outer wrapping revealed a biscuit tin that was duly, and triumphantly, prised open to reveal its content to all three officers and a very nervous woman. Blocks of a glistening, putty like, material lay in serried ranks across the tin.

Triumph gave way to disbelief, a stuttered oath and the prompt - but gentle - placing of the tin on the ground, prior to a mass desertion of the immediate vicinity. Although none of them was an explosives expert, each officer knew just enough from sight, smell and the woman's nervousness, to tell them that the contents of that tin was no child's modelling clay!

The content of the tin was thirty, unstable, sweating, sticks of gelignite explosive.

Already these might have reacted in an unfortunate manner to the multitude of radio transmissions which the police presence brought. They were fortunate. The area was blocked off and the bomb squad called in to deal with what was then thought to be an IRA cache.

The truth, when it emerged, provided far less drama than any IRA connection might have provided. The boyfriend of the woman turned out to be a "peterman" (safe blower) who had unfortunately fallen foul of the forces of law and order in the form of a stiff, and unexpected, gaol sentence. The detained man had no immediate use for the explosive that he had acquired from a Welsh quarry. The woman was merely removing the dangerous substance from her own vicinity. Unable exactly to hand it in at the nearest police station, she sought the next best option. After three months confirming the source of the explosive, it was decided that no further action would be taken against her, a bit of good news eventually passed to her by the Bench of Justices at Epping Court.

A few months later, another woman caused some anxious moments for the night duty station officer at 3am on May 17th 1975. In those days Sun Street remained a through route for 'one way' traffic, so the sound of vehicles passing was of no consequence. However, when a car drove up and drew up outside the station with its engine running for some time, with no one attempting to come into the station, the curiosity of PC Clive Huckstep was pricked into action. Clive ambled outside to see the car drawn up to the kerb, still with its engine ticking over.

The sole occupant was a woman who was slumped in the driving seat beside a shattered side window. She was immobile, but clearly still alive. It didn't take long to find a .22 rifle in the car, look for, and find a bullet hole in her breast. This small entry hole was bleeding little and was not matched by the usual, larger, exit hole expected in such an incident.

She was rushed off to the hospital in Epping, where it was found that the woman's attempted death by suicide was only thwarted by the fact that she was wearing a, then highly fashionable, tight 'roll-on' undergarment. Fortunately no over enthusiastic qualified first-aider had managed to treat her for the first thing they may have done would be to remove the 'roll-on'. As soon as the doctors cut away the undergarment, the site of the exit wound became apparent. The spent bullet dropped free and blood flowed in torrents. If she had been anywhere but hospital when that had happened her original aim to end it all would have been met in spite of her subsequent change of heart! As it was, even the hospital staff was struggling, and her life hung by a thread for some time.

This incident illustrates the fine line between action and relative inaction that policemen draw every day. There is little doubt that a keen qualified first aider would have taken action that might ultimately have led to this woman's death. Most policemen are somewhat reticent 'medics', and generally undertake the minimum treatment necessary prior to the arrival of a better-equipped emergency ambulance crew. This is not always the case however. The tale is often related about a certain Waltham Abbey officer who served the town in the 1960s and 1970s. This policeman was relatively highly placed in the hierarchy of the St. Johns Ambulance through his numerous successes in first aid competitions, events that often kept him from the

streets for months on end. On one memorable occasion he was available for duty and attended to a road accident victim. The unfortunate injured party was suffering from a broken leg, an affliction temporarily eased by the splinting of the injured leg to a chromed metal bar. Unfortunately - for both the victim and the first aid expert - when the ambulance crew attempted to transfer the injured party to a stretcher it was found that the chrome bumper bar used as a splint was still firmly fixed to the damaged car!

In 1975 the station received new guns for its front office safe store in replacement of the now elderly Webley .38 revolvers. Two modern American-made Smith & Wesson Model 10 revolvers each with its own stout leather holster and belt arrived for an unexpectedly short stay.

The 1965 autonomy bestowed upon Waltham Abbey and other stations in the Metropolis was being eroded by subtle changes in legislation, changes that often required some form of centralisation of resources to meet. It was the rebuilding of the police station at Chingford that finally set the die against the continuation of the 1960s ideals and led to a reduction in manpower.

The sub-divisional station at Forest Road, Walthamstow, which Chingford and Waltham Abbey had teamed up with in the 1933 boundary and divisional changes, was the third of its ilk since 1840. The third building dated from 1892 and had been much extended on the same site from 1939. Even with this relatively recent extension, the building was declared far too small to undertake its projected late 20th Century administrative role efficiently. As the Walthamstow site could no longer be extended, it was decided to demolish the small 1888 Chingford police station and build upon a site extended by recent acquisitions.

Building works for the large brick and concrete built structure were largely completed in 1976 and opened to the public on January 10th 1977. The new sub-divisional station was officially opened on Friday 23rd September 1977 by Lord Harris of Greenwich, Minister of State at the Home Office.

From that point onward, centralisation was the 'buzz-word' as the majority of police tasks were focussed upon the new Chingford premises. Major crime investigation and charging by the CID transferred from Walthamstow and Waltham Abbey in January 1977. The following year, all dealings, which might possibly lead to charges being preferred, ceased at Waltham Abbey. They were never to return. This development pre-dated the inevitability of such a move brought about by a change in the law a decade later. The single CID typist, (at that time it was still Joan Andre), was also transferred to Chingford.

Added to this erosion of the administrative abilities afforded the station, the recently added guns were removed to Chingford in mid-September 1979. It was shortly after this that the abandoned charge room was switched to other uses.

Further evidence of erosion in the standing of the station area was the rapid decline in the numbers of men assigned there. Officers were retiring from the force and transferring to other areas, often without being replaced.

Night closure of the station office, or indeed the whole building, was again mooted, but finally stalled in the inevitable period of confusion created when the Commissioner changed from Sir David McNee to Sir Kenneth Newman in 1982.

LEST WE FORGET

In 1980, the entire upper floor of the station was taken over by a murder squad investigating deaths with not the slightest connection with Waltham Abbey. Moved out of the Loughton police station by someone with pressing space requirements, the team, led by Chief Superintendent Frank Cater, were busily involved in the final stages of an investigation into a series of underworld killings arising from disappearances dating back to 1974.

In the summer of 1972 a team of three small-time crooks had got together and set themselves up as a professional 'hit squad', contract killers, to the underworld. The three, Henry "Big H" McKenny, John Childs and Terence Pinfold, were not exactly a runaway success. The five jobs they undertook included only two under contract, even those are cheap deals. Childs turning Queen's Evidence against the other two and providing almost all of the basic evidence wrapped up the case. As a result of this, Big H was convicted of killing Terence Eve, as a practice and "customer demonstration", in a hall at Dagenham. Eve was followed by the first contract killing of George Brett and his ten-year-old son, Terry. The boy had insisted on coming along when his father was collected by the gang 'for a business meeting', from their Upminster farm in 1975 and, unfortunately, sealed his own fate. Robert Winston Brown was a homeless 'dosser' figure, involved with the Eve murder, whose death was to ensure that he would not spill the beans on the gang. The penultimate disposal, a deal undertaken in a hire purchase arrangement, was Frederick Sherwood, which was followed by the killing of Ronald Andrews in October 1978.

The bodies were disposed of by burning in a small council flat in the East End.

Subsequent attempts at repeating the disposal method, by burning a pig in the domestic grate at the flat, suggested that the room and chimney temperature had reached well over 100°F without causing the least concern amongst the neighbours!

During the stay of this squad at Waltham Abbey, all normal police work was confined to the ground floor, and a small new canteen brought into service for the station staff. For the first few months, all was not sweetness and light, but eventually both groups blended, as the interlopers became accepted and were in turn less suspicious of the nosy questions they were asked.

All three of the killers were kept at the station for various periods during the enquiry, a matter that raised some disquiet from Chingford in view of the supposed cessation of cell use at Waltham Abbey. In spite of the raised eyebrows caused then, the cell continued in use. McKenny was sentenced to life imprisonment for four murders, with a recommendation that he serve 25 years, the other two received life terms for the single deaths they were involved with.

While the murder squad had been moved out from Loughton to Waltham Abbey, with their 'old' stock of murders without any local connection, office space at Loughton had been taken over to investigate a new Waltham Abbey murder case!

At 10.10am on Friday May 30th 1980, Terence Maloney of Ilford was walking his dog in Epping Forest when he came across three, smelly and abandoned, black plastic rubbish sacks in a ditch at Fairmead Bottom. The spot was between Connaught Water and the Epping New Road, about half a mile from the site of the 1946 Dolden shooting. Maloney told the police in Woodford Green of his find.

The three plastic bags were opened by men from the Woodford station and found to contain parts of a female body. A police surgeon was called and formally certified life as being extinct - a largely pointless but legally required process - at 3.30pm.

The first bag contained the left leg and right thigh, the second the trunk with the head attached, and the third, both arms and the rest of the right leg. A post mortem on the body was undertaken at Ilford mortuary, the initial results serving to confuse the cause of death. Later this was settled as being asphyxia. The remains were found to be those of Patricia Marina Berkley, alias Malone, prostitute.

It was just three months later, on August 15th that the killer was brought to book.

Peter George Swindell, a 40 year-old serving police constable with the Diplomatic Protection Group in Central London, was arrested at his home address, 61 Pentire Road, Walthamstow, E17. Released five days later after questioning, he was rearrested on October 4th, and charged with the murder of Patricia, after the results of laboratory tests became known.

Swindell was in the habit of engaging the services of Kings Cross prostitutes and taking them to his Walthamstow home for a variety of sexual purposes. With these prostitutes and in one instance a woman not 'trading', he was in the habit of indulging in bondage. This quirk involved the use of masks, harnesses, hoods and other items. He often took the opportunity to photograph his willing victims trussed up and crucified.

On a date around May 9th 1980, three weeks prior to the body being found, Miss Malone or Berkley was engaged as a sexual partner by Swindell and taken to his Walthamstow home. During the ensuing bondage session, the 22-year-old lesbian prostitute woman died. It is believed that the mask she was wearing blocking her mouth and nose caused her death. The body was taken to Fairmead Road around May 26th after being dismembered some time after her death in the bath at Pentire Road.

Swindell, who had by then resigned from the police, faced three charges at the Old Bailey, none of which was murder. In addition to a charge of manslaughter, he faced separate charges stating that he had obstructed the Coroner in his duty and had prevented the burial of a dead body.

Little of the evidence was contested. The cause of death was agreed by Dr. Grant and Professor Keith Simpson (on one of his last cases). By majority verdict the jury found Swindell not guilty of manslaughter. The second count was not proceeded with and the third was the subject of a "guilty" plea.

On February 7th 1981, police were called to Heale's, a first floor hairdressing salon over a then supermarket at 23 Sun Street, close to the station, to deal with a collapse.

Constable Michael Chapman, 741J, a forty-year-old officer, rushed from the station to find himself aiding a woman with a rare heart condition. The officer needed to give her artificial resuscitation three times in order to keep her alive long enough for an ambulance to arrive and take her to hospital. In June 1982, Michael was awarded a Royal Humane Society citation for his actions. This officer died suddenly at home whilst still stationed at the Waltham Abbey police station early in 1992.

In 1980, with pedestrianisation of the town centre impending, it was realised that the vehicle entry gates on to Sun Street that had served the station for over a century would be unusable. The local authority, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), paid for a new set of gates to be installed in the rear wall of the station to provide vehicular access to a greatly extended Quaker Lane to the south of Sun Street.

Without taking into consideration the installation charges, the gates alone cost £3,000, a figure comparable with the cost of the whole of the police station building 106 years previously. Their apparently straightforward installation was not without some hiccups, however, as the station officer, John Chilcott, observed in the surveyors report book on October 8th 1981: -

"New gates at rear of station

- 1. Wicket gate has hinges wrong way around, and gate will not open.*
 - 2. Large gates will not open because of temporary post in front, and there is nothing to secure them open. Centre bolts not fitted to hold gates shut.*
- Gates incorrectly hung, too large a gap underneath.'*

Shortly after this, complaint was made about car sumps hitting a large bulge between the gates. Although the closure of Sun Street was not completed until 1983, re-paving only taking place after then, the police station rear entrance was in full use from late 1981. The original gates on to Sun Street were retained in spite of having to undergo two periods of renovation in the following decade. They tended to be opened only for public access to annual "Open Day" type events in the station yard.

Throughout November 1981, officers at the station were involved in a London-wide search of lock-up garages and outbuildings. It was suspected that the IRA had a hoard of arms and explosives in such a facility.

Officers swooped upon lock-ups, checking each one in turn for content, and signifying the completion of the task with the marking of a yellow cross on the top right hand corner of the doorway.

Even the local authority showed a great deal of interest in the contents of a number of garages ostensibly owned by them. The council's garage letting records had got into an abysmal state, and many of these contained vehicles and effects which were "squatting".

Although greatly appreciated by a public starved of close contact by an increasingly mobile local police force, in many ways the episode was denigrated as a waste of time, especially as the last few dozen garages were checked with great difficulty many weeks after the start of the task. By this time, it was said, anyone with items to hide will have moved them on to safer places. It was, of course, hoped that such a panic move would encounter an alert police patrol en-route. Although nothing positively connected to the IRA was found anywhere in London in 1981, just to show the possibilities, in 1991 a policeman in nearby Wanstead accidentally uncovered a cache of IRA arms in a lock-up garage in the course of an unconnected enquiry.

At 6.30pm, on a the dark and bitterly cold Tuesday evening, December 15th 1981, the Area Patrol car, "Juliet 7", came upon a black Austin London Taxi which appeared to have crashed into the raised roadside bank in Claypit Hill opposite Wake Road.

This spot, on the edge of Epping Forest, was a veritable honeypot for silly accidents where vehicles had 'run out of road', so the sight, which looked set to temporarily delay the crew from their tea, was nothing unusual.

The police car crewmembers, Constable Graham Upton, the driver from Waltham Abbey, and John Orgar, the radio operator went over to inspect the extent of the damage - quite clearly nothing too serious - to the vehicle. The sight they beheld inside the cab was an entirely different matter.

Frederick Miles, a 58 year-old cab driver from Goffs Oak, Hertfordshire, has always, unfortunately, been remembered locally for his occupation rather than by his name.

This was always to be remembered as "the taxi driver murder" in future references to the events of December 1981. Another unfortunate aspect of the case was that the form of his death was to be grotesquely repeated, twice over, not a quarter of a mile distant and eight years later.

Upton and Orgar of course, knew none of this. They were only conscious of a figure in the darkened interior of the rear of the taxicab that screamed in agony as they fumbled to help him, and who fought them as if they were intent on doing him ultimate harm.

Due to the darkness they were wholly unaware of the extent of his injuries, and the two policemen struggled to pacify Miles in what were his death throes. Transported to the hospital, Frederick Miles was officially declared dead, the victim of gunshot wounds to the back of the head.

Back at the scene, the investigating police had little enough to go on. The taxi had come to a rest against the banking. It had not crashed as originally assumed. The interior of the cab was like a battleground. Miles had been shot in the back of the head with a shotgun through the sliding partition glass whilst seated in the driving position. The fact that he had then been placed in the rear by his attackers, and subsequently struggled there with the policemen, had obliterated all likely helpful marks.

A further confusing aspect was that the most likely motive, that of robbery, could be discounted by the presence of a substantial cache of £46 under the drivers seat.

Before any of the investigating team had to face up to the size of the task ahead, all enquiries were re-directed by a call from a doctor in hospital, who had a patient who appeared to have first hand knowledge of the shooting in the forest.

George Lomax, 43, from Newcastle, had been taken ill and had called an ambulance on his own behalf to take him to hospital. As soon as the police faced him, he admitted his part in the death of Frederick Miles, and resurrected the largely discarded motive of robbery. It appears that a mere £1.50p change in a mon-

eybag had been found in the dark, the larger cache having lain undiscovered.

As a result of the confession by Lomax, Derek Hopkinson, 31, was traced to Newcastle and arrested. Both of the men were escaped prisoners on the run. With the pair already serving prison sentences there was little rush to start up the new case, it being September 1982 before it was listed at the Old Bailey. At the trial the sequence of events came out.

Armed with a sawn-off shotgun, acquired by theft from Hexham in Northumberland, the pair were picked up by, and subsequently hi-jacked, Miles at Paddington Railway Station in West London. At the Epping Forest scene, Hopkinson had shot Miles through the back of the head through the sliding glass panels. The mortally injured driver was placed in the back of the cab before they escaped. The major error was that Hopkinson left for the north leaving Lomax behind feeling wretched enough to spill the beans to the first listener. Although, thankfully, the need for a full investigation never arose, the chances of the dead taxi driver being connected to the pair of escapees without the confession were subsequently rated as very slender.

A sequel to this murder was that Hopkinson, using an alias of Derek Wallbanks, was released (in spite of the "life" sentence passed on him) in 1991. Apparently in possession of a gun (it was a replica) he was shot dead by police in a seven hour siege at Brunswick Grove, Brunswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne on Saturday October 12th 1991.

The very essence of police work has always suggested the support and assistance of the local community by the policemen that served it. In its long history of service to Waltham Abbey there are plenty of individuals that have served in a wide variety of ways. A number of policemen have been connected with the Abbey Church choir and bell ringing, either through their police service or in efforts undertaken in their own time.

In their times the Quaker Lane school boxing club operated by Constable Jim Tilling in the 1930s and the King Harold school Saturday youth club of the 1970s run by PCs John Coghlan and Derek Boorn each had their merits. It was not until all of these men had gone that a means of recognising such efforts became available to the EFDC.

Discussions between Councillor Ian Beattie, then Chairman of the EFDC, and William Whitelaw, the then Home Secretary led to contacts with the Police Commission and eventual approval of the Epping Forest Police Medal for outstanding service to the Epping Forest community from 1981. As two police areas were involved, Essex County and the Metropolitan, the first ever recipient turned out to be PC Colin Green stationed at Abridge with the Essex Constabulary. The following year PC Jack Fennell stationed at Loughton became the first Metropolitan recipient of the engraved solid silver medal.

Early in April 1983, the Chairman of the EFDC presented the first officer at the Sun Street station to gain the award PC David Harknett, stationed at Waltham Abbey since 1960, with a medallion the first officer at the Sun Street station to gain the award.

The medal, of a type that could not be worn as an accepted uniform decoration [effectively a medallion], the Epping Forest Police Medal for Community Service, bore the inscription: -

*'This medal was awarded to PC 535J David James Harknett on 19 April
1983 for outstanding service to the inhabitants of Epping Forest District'*

The annual award was dependent upon recommendations put forward by senior police officers. This award usually alternated between the two forces involved and tended to recognising community police officers and acts of charity. It was a means of recognising work that was not likely to set the world on fire but was otherwise important locally.

Early in the 1970s David Harknett became involved, as part of his duties, in school work that led him to identify the need for some form of child cycle proficiency training to be undertaken locally. Such training had been undertaken many years earlier under police control by Walthamstow based Sergeant Bennett and local Constable Penney. The old WH+UDC had taken that scheme over for some time as trainees vied for the "Warner Cup", a prize which had originally been given by Jack Warner who had played the BBC television figure "Dixon of Dock Green".

In 1974, as the old WH+UDC drew to the end of its days of power, David took over the scheme in his off duty time learning as he taught and co-operating with another constable, Neil McDonald. In 1973 he obtained permission from Scotland Yard to continue the scheme as it was taking over increasing amounts of his time and sometimes sending him further afield than the local schools in duty time.

With the demise of the old council, in 1974 the officer teamed up with the new EFDC Road Safety Officer, "Pop" Patterson. He arranged for David to undertake official training that resulted in him being an examiner for the Essex area and the gain of national recognition for the local scheme for the first time; they both undertook the local training. The "Warner Cup" remained in being, but was allied to a now, wider ranging, "Epping Forest Cyclist of the Year". Local training numbers grew from 50 to 100 pupils annually, each group of about 12 being given 12 hours training prior to examination.

This first award for Waltham Abbey was no easy attainment, following a request by the EFDC for submissions in 1981, Chingford's Chief Superintendent, Mr. A. Simpson, submitted an entry for the award without success. Two years later, a similar submission by the new head of the sub-division, Mr. Nairn, was successful.

Having achieved that first award for the station it was gratifying that further awards of similar medals were made, each recognising the individuals efforts in direct support of the local community. A medal next went to PC Anthony Sharples, in April 1986, recognising his work as a school governor at King Harold School and his efforts in running the Brooke Waltham youth football league. The presentation was by Ashley Bryant, of EFDC. In April 1988 Sergeant John Bensted was presented with a medal recognising his work for charity. In 1987 the officer ran the London Marathon to raise a total of £1,200 for a 17 years old Chingford spastic. At the time he was himself 56 years of age and had served over 30 years in the police. A third award went to PC Bryn Elliott in April 1992 in recognition of work in compiling the history of local police, co-operation with local neighbourhood watch and in contacts with local schools.

The impression that there was a seemingly constant flow of murder victims discovered within the Waltham Abbey police area was amply reinforced in 1983-4.

The reported abduction of young Marie Payne near her home at Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, during broad daylight, in March 1983, elicited only a passing interest in the corridors of the police station as officers noted her details, just in case she should be seen walking around Waltham Abbey.

Some months later, an Enfield couple came across some child's clothing in a hollow tree in St. Thomas' Quarters, a triangular area of forest land bounded by Epping Road, Upshire Road and Lodge Road, and not far away from the gateway into Copt Hall. This clothing, a jumper, tights and shoes, was quickly identified as being similar to those that Maria Payne had worn at the time she had disappeared. A widespread search of the surrounding areas of Epping Forest took place for a few days in early October 1983. For two days, 300 men, 120 Metropolitan police, 100 Essex police, fifty police and army cadets and twenty Forest Rangers, systematically searched without success. It was assumed that the body lay elsewhere. An incident room, set up at the sub-divisional HQ in Chingford police station, was wound down and the enquiries transferred to join the main enquiry at Barking.

Less than one month, later the hollow tree in which the items of clothing had been found was destroyed by fire. It appeared little more than the work of vandals playing with fireworks, but none the less it was a sinister development under the circumstances.

In May 1984, four months after the Waltham Abbey section of the M25 was opened, Colin Evans, a 44 year old lorry driver from 44 Russell Street, Reading, Berkshire was arrested following further attempts to steal children in Ilford, Essex.

Only after this son of a former Essex cricketer was put into custody did another search team return to St. Thomas' Quarters. Directed to the exact spot by Evans, they found the body. It was recovered on Friday May 11th. 1984, being identified through dental records. Death had been primarily due to a skull fracture.

The police search of exactly the same spot some seven months earlier had, it seems, been at fault. Although it was defensively suggested that Evans returned to dig up and sexually interfere with the body long

after her death, there seems little doubt that Marie lay there when the search was undertaken. In the light of this failed search and the similarly unproductive search for Blatchford and Hanlon in 1970, it would appear that there are conditions, possibly atmospheric, which hinder the scents that such searches rely upon. There seems little likelihood that both sets of officers, dozens of men, intentionally failed to do their duty.

As previously intimated Evans was suspected of being involved in the 1970 deaths of Blatchford and Hanlon, but it seems that his source of alibi was fairly watertight. He had been in prison at the time. Evans pleaded "Guilty" to the murder charge and three cases of child abduction, at the Old Bailey in December 1984. In sentencing him to life, the judge made a recommendation that he serve a minimum of 30 years in prison.

As the truth of the Marie Payne case was unfolding to the public eye, disturbances in the coal mining fields of the UK brought about a heavy drain on police manpower throughout the country. Strikes, led by Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, erupted into violence at a number of locations, mainly in the Midlands and North, and brought about a scheme termed Mutual Aid. Officers of all ranks were permitted to volunteer for a week's duty at a time, posted to some desolate mining community in often freezing conditions.

Although a fairly large proportion of Metropolitan Police officers were, and are, from the provinces, many of them initially found the desolation, deprivation and cold involved in this series of well paid 'jaunts' to mining districts difficult after the relatively cosy conditions in London.

Accommodation was invariably arranged through the military, with damp and draughty aircraft hangars and old barracks being pressed into service at short notice to bolster more suitable, but scarce, living areas. Although each location had its own quirks, the bad points and the luxuries, the men often slept fitfully in a communal dormitory ranging from a rare two-man bedroom to the aircraft hangar in size. As the larger unit was designed to sleep men from all shifts, there were few occasions where eight hours of silence for sleep were available.

As the spartan quarters were being allocated, inevitably by ranking provincial policemen, it was assumed that the inspectors in charge of the groups, or 'serials', of assisting police would take up the limited available luxury sleeping places. This type of accommodation was often in the Officers' or Sergeants' Mess, or even in nearby hotels. It was initially somewhat of a shock to the provincial police when the majority of Metropolitan inspectors chose to sleep in the same conditions as endured by their men.

This difference in attitude was indicative of the level of inspector rank in the two types of force. In the smaller provincial police forces, the fairly scarce rank was attached to an almost god-like figure, whereas, in comparison, in the Metropolitan, and other large forces an inspector could almost be considered as little more than a senior constable in status.

In 1984, the Metropolitan Police was the first force to issue its entire staff with white shirts, regardless of rank. Although in some ways highly impracticable, mainly the dirt aspect, the white shirt and a common uniform helped in doing away with much of the "them and us" syndrome, requiring the individual need to sight badges of rank before prematurely assessing status. The change led to a less military environment a stated aim from the inception of the police. At the mines, however white shirts were like a red rag to a bull. The Metropolitan Police stuck out like sore thumbs amongst their country (and city) cousins. It was a development that led to some of the opposition amongst the miners believing that these were the fiercest of all police (due perhaps to their greater exposure to violence in the past). Conversely it made them a readily identifiable group to complain against.

In spite of the hard nature of life at the mines, the excessive number of hours worked was amply offset by the remuneration. Men, effectively on double wages, were able to pay off their old debts and acquire new ones to replace them; proper sleep was put off for a few weeks. The draw of the money, and some aspects of the life, resulted in some officers spending successive weeks in the mining areas. For some it was easier. PC Michael Chapman, being a native of Mansfield in the Nottinghamshire coal fields, was able to provide conducted tours of the area's night spots for other officers who were absolute strangers in the area, and yet still be able to gain access to the house he owned in the town.

After many battles, sleepless nights and inflated pay slips, the Mutual Aid wound down in the early weeks

of 1985 as an uneasy peace returned to the mining communities and police officers started to reappear on the streets of London. During the dispute the available manpower on the streets of Waltham Abbey had been extremely low and some aspects of perceived public safety had consequently suffered. Overall the weeks of duty at the mines were little more than their forebears had endured [for far less remuneration] in the 19th and early 20th centuries at miners and dock strikes across the British Isles.

The police station building had undergone limited redevelopment in this period. The site to the east side of the police yard, once occupied by Bentley the builder had, for more than a decade, been occupied by semi-derelict premises which were eventually demolished to make a host of pigeons join the homeless. The site was earmarked for the erection of a new town library, an extension to the District Museum, and offices. When building started the east boundary wall of the police station and a combined cycle shed and store were demolished to make way for the builders. The earlier weathered yellow brick wall of modest dimensions gave way to a sheer expanse of uninterrupted red brick, stretching from the front of the police site to the rear, and towering above the roof line of the old building.

Another minor change in the appearance of the station building was the return of a Victorian-style lamp to the fascia of the building in January 1984. The lamp was sited above and between the main windows on the front of the building due to the decay of the original fixing point. Its long removed predecessor had not sported blue glass when fitted over the main entrance onto Sun Street. In deference to modern taste, formed in the wake of the Jack Warner film and television series about Dixon of Dock Green, the modern lamp supported "The Blue Lamp" image.

Internally, the teleprinter style telegraph, which had replaced the old ABC equipment before the war, was itself replaced, in September 1984, as part of a force-wide revitalisation of communications. The replacing equipment, known as MSS or Message Switching System, was a fast copy printer, linked to the computers in the new Central Command Complex at Scotland Yard. The station had long been denied the ability to send its own messages on the earlier teleprinter. This ban was maintained until November 1993. It was then considered that the falling status of Sun Street made it increasingly unnecessary to retain any form of 24-hour message receipt ability at the station and the MSS went.

On Thursday December 5th 1985 an expatriate farmer, Alexander Gray from Barnet, looking across one of his larger fields beside Monkham's Drive, Holyfield, noticed that foxes were paying some attention to something in the ground. As soon as he closed with the spot, causing the group of foxes to scatter, he made out the form of what appeared to be part of a small human body sticking out from the mud. He made his way to the nearest telephone and called for the police.

The spot was quickly sealed off, and the inevitable small plastic tent erected over the decomposed body, lying in the foetal position within an 18inch deep grave, as a murder team was formed under Detective Superintendent Peters. A fairly short-lived incident room was set up on the first floor of the police station in Sun Street, and new telephone lines brought into service. A mobile police station was sited in Crooked Mile, close to the end of Monkham's Lane, in an effort to attract the possible passing witness.

It was quite quickly established that the dead boy was 6 year-old Barry George Lewis. This little lad had gone missing in South London on September 15th. The two months that had passed by did little to help in terms of the decomposition of the body, or people's memories. The connection with this missing person resulted in the overall charge of the case being transferred to Detective Superintendent Hatful, who already had charge of the South London aspects of the case. The investigation team was removed to larger office space at Walthamstow Police Station.

Apparently by sheer coincidence, the body of fourteen year-old Jason Swift, missing six months but dead only about a week, had turned up at Ongar a few days earlier. A murder squad to deal with this death had been set up by the Essex Police at Brentwood. There were initially few aspects that linked the two cases. In addition to the obvious age differences, Lewis had been a quiet youngster loath to stray from home, whereas Swift had been far more outgoing and liable to disappear from home of his own free will. Inexorably, the two cases grew closer and closer as time passed by, eventually being linked in April 1986. It was found, with difficulty in the case of the remains of Barry Lewis, that both bodies had apparently been administered the same tranquillising drug and asphyxiated, as well as suffering a variety of sexual acts including anal intercourse. The two cases related to some group of paedophiles.

The twinned cases came under the umbrella of "Operation Stranger", this eventually being taken over by a wider-spread Home Counties anti-child molestation operation called "Orchid". These were the early days

of a police drive against child sex crimes that brought the term paedophile to the lips of a nation for the first time. Ultimately they led to the clearing of such as the 1970 'Babes in the Wood' crime. The case was one of the minor successes of the BBC television police-linked programme "Crimewatch UK". Ultimate success in the case was not to be given to the programme. Nonetheless, the first public airing of details in December 1985 brought in major information leads. The initial information, when combined with the feedback from a later, January 1986 dramatic re-construction, provided a strong outline of the case for the team to follow.

As witnesses came forward, the local story became ever clearer. In September, a local man had come across a hitch-hiker with a petrol can and a young dark skinned lad held in his arms as he had been driving along the B194, Crooked Mile, north from the town. He stopped and gave them both a lift. Oddly, the hitch hiker had insisted on continuing to hold the youngster tightly as he sat in the front seat for the short journey, about two miles, to the entrance of a pork farm in Waltham Road. The boy had seemed very sleepy, and possibly drugged. The driver dropped the pair off beside a red car, and the hitch hiker put the boy in the back of it and started to fill the tank from the can, as the local man carried on to his own destination.

With this strong line of enquiry, it was quickly learned that the attendant of the Abbey Filling Station, now a much plusher establishment compared with both the buildings that had been bombed in 1940 and utilitarian post war replacements, recalled serving the man with his sleepy-looking boy. The customer had shown a modicum of local knowledge in that he said his car had run out of petrol "up the Crooked Mile", an inaccuracy, but an understandable mistake, often made by long standing residents.

It was fortunate that the attendant involved had only worked certain days in the September period. By the time numerous till receipts and duty sheets had been methodically scrutinised, the murder team knew that the transaction had taken place at 5pm on Monday, September 16th 1985, the day after Barry Lewis went missing.

The team also had a red vehicle and the face of a white man to search for.

The type of the red car was unfortunately wrongly identified as being a Talbot Horizon. The shapes of many cars were getting increasingly similar, and the result was that investigating the fruits of a Swansea Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre computer print-out of all the existing Talbot Horizons took up many hours of the team's time. In retrospect, it was just one of those things, it might have paid off handsomely.

The case was presented on "Crimewatch" as a reconstruction, with a boy called Trevor Dennis playing the part of Barry Lewis. It was transmitted on January 30th 1986, along with a 'videofit' picture of the suspect, composed by the witnesses. Over 300 people rang in, responding to an appeal by the programming team and Superintendent Hatful. Two more sightings came to light.

At 7am on the Monday, a farmer had seen man and boy walking through Epping Forest, and in mid-afternoon, a woman picking sloes had seen a similar pair in another part of the forest. It all helped, but the information was to dry up in the months ahead. There was another brief glimmer of public awareness with the "Crimewatch" reconstruction of the last known movements of Jason Swift in May 1986. Then the Walthamstow incident room manpower was reduced until the various child pornography indices built up by the team were virtually put on a care and maintenance basis.

In Waltham Abbey, the case receded to the back of people's minds. The once plentiful posters had long since given way to more pressing advertisements for the latest church jumble sale, the sole exception being the faded poster fixed in the side window of Dick Chetwood's office off South Place. This barely discernible witness to the bleaching powers of the sun hung on until replaced by one for a newer case in 1990. In the police station, display mounted appeal posters relating to the case formed a small part of an embryo station museum collection, formed in the wake of a police exhibition called "Peelers Progress", in the town based EFDC museum in the final months of 1986. The videofit picture of the suspect bore the addition of a barely discernible message in ballpoint pen,

"Lest we forget".

SEEING OUT THE EIGHTIES

In the final months of the Commissionership of Sir Kenneth Newman, a number of major changes came into effect. The administrative areas known as Divisions were to undergo a major revision and become smaller units. 'J' Division, and most of the others, went in July 1986, just weeks short of the 'J' Division Centenary. Long laid plans to celebrate this event collapsed in an untidy heap in the wake of the decision, with only the Waltham Abbey police exhibition, "Peeler's Progress", [July-September 1986] surviving the death throes.

Under the new scheme, the areas previously known as sub-divisions became known as divisions. These were a part of eight far larger areas, each containing a number of the old divisions, and to be known as Area. Locally, Waltham Abbey was now a part the Chingford Division, on 1 Area (North). Just to throw an air of confusion into the proceedings, each of the stations retained its old "Telegraphic Code"; thus ensuring that J Division did not really die! Chingford Division officers wore numbers preceded by "JC" rather than the previous plain "J".

Twice in 1986 there were killings in the town. It was a rare event for Waltham Abbey to suffer two apparently "home-grown" - as opposed to the all too common "imported" - deaths. In the event it transpired that only one of the fatal attacks was a truly local affair.

The "Green Man" public house at the junction of Farmhill Road and Honey Lane, is normally one of Waltham Abbey's quieter, family, type of drinking place. At 9.25pm, or thereabouts, on the evening of July 20th 1986, a youth, 17 year old Robert Tucker from the nearby Ninefields Estate was stabbed three times in the stomach. The young assailant was seized by other customers as the victim fell to the ground, mortally wounded. He was soon taken off to hospital in Epping.

The first police officer to the scene of the stabbing was locally based constable Neil Hawes, 539J, who arrested the attacker for the most obvious offence, GBH, (grievous bodily harm) and took him away to the charging station at Chingford. It transpired that the lad, 17 year old Simon John Lundie, who lived with his parents, only about 150 yards from the incident, at 24 Rochford Avenue, made no real attempt either to hide his identity or to make an escape.

At 10am the following morning, Robert Tucker lost his fight for life. Lundie was immediately interviewed, told of the development and, inevitably, charged with the murder. Taken before the Magistrates at Epping Court on July 22nd he was detained in custody as the lengthy process was undertaken to bring him before a judge and jury at the Old Bailey.

On December 19th Lundie, who had no previous convictions of any kind, appeared at the Old Bailey and pleaded "guilty" to the lesser offence of manslaughter. In his defence Simon Lundie's barrister related a story about a lengthy period of bully tactics and robbery, at the mutually attended King Harold Secondary School, as the prime cause of the defensive attack on Tucker. Lundie had, it was claimed, merely become fed up with years of constant robbery of dinner money in the school years; a situation that had continued after both had left. In this instance the prosecution was unable to challenge any of the mitigating circumstances.

Obviously based upon the version of the story given, true or not, the trial judge sentenced Lundie to five years youth custody, of which he needed to serve a small further portion prior to release on parole and return to the family home.

In the spring of 1990, the case re-appeared briefly in the spotlight of publicity. The Thames Television investigative vehicle, "The London Programme", carried an item heavily criticising police actions in informing the bereaved of murder victims. One case highlighted in publicising the work of a new organisation calling itself Parents of Murdered Children, or POMC for short, was that of Robert Tucker. His mother, Jill Palm, still lived in the town and served the group as a co-ordinator.

The further fatal brawl in 1986 was also a stabbing incident outside a public house. At about 11pm on Friday September 26th, as the result of a fight outside the "Queens Head" public house in Paternoster Hill,

two young men were stabbed.

James Cottingham from Stepney was wounded, but sixteen years old John Dennison, also from Stepney, suffered fatal injuries and was dead before he reached hospital in Epping. The spot where the fight occurred was only about half a mile from the previous incident.

The following day, a Cheshunt man, 22 year-old Jamie Leslie from Flamstead End, was arrested and charged with the killing. He appeared at Epping Court on the Monday to begin the sad trail to facing a murder charge in a higher court.

Fortunately this series of stabbings was not to continue, they were simply a blip in the life of the town. Thirty years later they would probably not even be remarkable enough to mention. To date Waltham Abbey has its problems but repeated knife crime is not yet one of them.

On March 12th 1987, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Kenneth Newman, paid a visit to meet a selected few officers stationed at Waltham Abbey police station.

Although the event was triumphantly hailed by the local press corps as the "first ever" visit by a serving Commissioner to the station, no one really knows. It seems highly unlikely that not one incumbent managed to visit in a period of over 147 years. True, there is not a great deal to have drawn them to the station, but equally it seems that there must have been at least one of them that suddenly thought it would have been a good idea!

Sir Kenneth Newman was one such man in his high post with the good sense to pay such a visit to 'the best police station in the Metropolis'. Scheduled into a visit to the new Chingford Division, primarily requiring only a visit to the head station, was the chance to have an enlightening chat with six officers over a cup of coffee. The stated aim of the meeting was to talk over an impending move of Waltham Abbey from the Chingford 'JC' Division to the Barkingside 'JB' Division, in line with local political requirements. A small culinary concession to his status was the addition of saucers and biscuits to the cups, a very novel turn of events for the usual coffee break in the station canteen.

Although the short conversation turned out to be far less 'stuffed shirt' than expected, much of the impact of the visit by Sir Kenneth was lost due to his previously announced retirement in favour of Peter Imbert. Almost two years had passed by the time the next murder victim came to the notice of the police.

Late in April 1988, a group of curious youngsters from Enfield sought the identity of the black lump that lay just inside the tree line, only feet from the tarmac road surface of Fairmead Road and a stones throw from the spot where Kenneth Dolden met his end. With horror it was realised that the form was that of a fire-blackened human being, apparently incinerated at that spot a matter of hours beforehand. This unfortunate party was the most curious of a number of groups and individuals that had passed by the scorched roadside spot that Wednesday morning.

The murder enquiry team, under Detective Superintendent Geoff Parratt, was initially set up at Loughton, but soon moved on to the central murder squad offices for 1 Area (North), situated at Southgate police station.

The blackened body was not identified for some little while; an artist's impression having to suffice until relatives or friends came forward. Eventually the body was found to be the mortal remains of a 46 year-old Asian called Rashid Abdur, a Mullah or holy man, from Tower Hamlets in the East End. He was a man with so many professed friends that it seemed that no one could ever have killed him. He was dead though, so someone, somewhere, was lying about the extent of his popularity.

Although it was initially assumed that the burning of the body was a method of assisting the soul to heaven, after enquiry it turned out that the partial burning of the body was a shameful act within Abdur's Muslim religion. Both police and press were required to rethink the reasoning behind the initial suppositions, until they supposed that the murder was in revenge for some grave misdemeanour. Unfortunately, in this instance, in the closed Muslim community no one was telling tales and, like the Dolden case, the case remains on file.

The transfer of Waltham Abbey from the Chingford to the Barkingside Division was scheduled for November 1987. Continued technical difficulties, primarily related to the performance of personal radios, resulted in the administrative move being delayed until Monday, February 1st, 1988. The move was a police attempt to assuage some of the persistent complaints from some local Epping Forest councillors faced with a requirement to meet two police Chief Superintendents when dealing with Metropolitan Police matters, in addition to the police chief for the Essex Police section of their area. They appeared not to have considered that these three were often faced by the disparate demands of more than ten times that number of local councillors – each with their own individual agendas.

With this wholly political move, Waltham Abbey was again joined up with the stations that had once formed the Woodford sub-division; a grouping last worked with in 1886. On the down side, the station was again split from Chingford, the one station it had most in common with over the previous 148 years. In that period the stations had been joined, in some manner or another, for over 100 years, the gap being 1888 to 1931.

On Friday August 4th, 1989, a couple out walking their dog came across a discarded white, high-heeled, shoe just off the parking area at the top of Claypit Hill. The finding of the shoe was not initially given any great importance, as a diverse assortment of rubbish was a constant problem to the Keepers of Epping Forest.

A few steps further along, though, the couple were shocked to discover the half naked body of a buxom young woman, lying under a tree beside the bridleway they were following, partially hidden by bracken. Quickly making their way to the public telephone besides the King's Oak on High Beach, they alerted the police.

The first officer on scene, Constable Mark Clarkson, 228JB, cordoned off a wide area, which included his police van in which he had inadvertently strayed too close to the crime scene, cutting across some, evidentially, very important tyre tracks.

What he was unaware of was the fleeting presence of the killers, who had driven back to the scene of the crime, intent upon the hiding of some of the evidence.

Before long, further officers had arrived and cordoned off an even wider area of the forest, a spot which lay only yards from the site of the taxi driver Miles' death a few years earlier. The girl's name, Judith Knights, came to light quite quickly and enquiries were immediately put in hand down in Portsmouth where she had been a student nurse. Although the police on the murder enquiry were alerted to the fact that Judith had owned a yellow Mini SUH519H, this information was almost immediately negated when it was reported that it had been seen in Portsmouth the next morning.

That same morning, the day after the body was found, the Area Patrol car, "Juliet 6", crewed by Constables Mark Lewis and Mark New, noticed a yellow Mini with a familiar combination of registration letters travelling in the opposite direction to themselves at the Wake Arms. As the location was only about ¾ mile from the murder scene it seemed an unlikely coincidence. The police car was turned around by the driver, Lewis, and set off in pursuit of the Mini as it travelled at a steady speed along the A121 towards the M25 motorway junction and Waltham Abbey itself.

It was not difficult to catch up with and tail the Mini whilst the radio operator checked, and checked again, with the computer operator at Barkingside control room, that the registration marks "SUH519H" was the one they sought. Having satisfied themselves that this Mini was indeed the same vehicle that had been reported in Portsmouth an hour or so earlier, the police crew pounced upon the sole occupant as numerous back-up cars announced that they too were on their way to help capture the murder suspect. The startled middle aged man in the Mini suddenly found himself surrounded by a posse of policemen, which grew by the second as further cars arrived to surround his newly-acquired car.

No protestation in the world was going to stop an onward journey continuing in the back of a police car to the custody suite at Loughton police station. Some of the officers knew him from his work as a scrap metal dealer, but that was also an irrelevancy. The two constables had an arrest for murder under their belt. Although the substance of the murder arrest lasted only a very short time, the information the scrap dealer was able to give was sufficiently detailed to clear the case very quickly.

The story was that he had been in a North London scrap yard the previous day when two youngsters arrived and sold the Mini to the man in charge. Although the pair had intended that the car would be crushed into a nice unidentifiable cube, money talks. The Mini was worth a great deal more as a going concern than it was as a cube, and it left the scrap yard almost immediately under its own steam.

Further enquiries at the scrap yard confirmed the story and filled in some of the identity gaps relating to the sellers of the Mini. In a very short time two young men, nineteen year old Colin Goundry and Jason Atkins, 20, were under arrest for the murder of Judith Knights.

The case came to trial at the Old Bailey in June 1990. Part way through the hearing, and as an aid to the deliberations of the jury, the Court arrived at the scene of the killing, just after 11 am on Wednesday, June 13th. With local police securing a perimeter which was almost as large as that originally thrown around the scene some ten months earlier, and after a degree of 'inspection' by defending barristers, the Old Bailey "sat" in Epping Forest.

Some aspects had changed, the hurricane strength winds of January 1990 having destroyed a number of the trees in the area, including that one under which the body of Judith Knights was found. Bracken that had been almost fully-grown at the time as, in this earlier part of a new year, mere sprouts. The various important aspects that were to be drawn to the attention of the jury were marked with lengths of orange tape.

After the jury were allowed their tour of the area which was the subject of their booklet's of photographs, the two accused were also allowed around the scene where they denied being present at all those months earlier.

After 1½ hours, the extraordinary "sitting" of the Central Criminal Court was over and the jury returned to their coach as the police returned this small section of Epping Forest to its natural state. The accused, Goundry and Atkins, travelled in their own small personnel carrier.

On Monday July 2nd Colin Derek Goundry was found guilty of the murder of Judith Knights. Jason Atkins was found guilty of assisting him. Goundry was given a life sentence, Atkins three years.

It would appear from the evidence that Miss Knights' reported the theft of her chequebook and card from her car, and stated that Goundry and Atkins had taken them. The police arrested the pair and charged them. In spite of these events taking place on August 3rd, Miss Knights went with the two youths, in her car, to a nightclub in Wood Green the same day.

Immediately after leaving the nightclub in the early hours, the three went into Epping Forest in the Mini. Goundry took Knights for a walk in the trees and simply didn't come back with her! She was strangled using a belt from Goundry's trousers, In spite of this version of the story given by Atkins, Goundry told the jury that he had remained at the Wood Green nightclub.

It was only a matter of weeks after the opening of the Knights murder investigation that the local police started involvement with an aspect of policing that, in spite of its relatively mundane nature, was likely to be a signpost to future involvement for them.

For many years the limited number of local officers were taken away from the town each August Bank Holiday weekend to police the Notting Hill Carnival in West London or a similar event at Finsbury Park. A new event caused most of them to stay in the locality from the Bank Holiday of 1989.

Although the National Waterways Festival from August 26-28th was not immediately repeated as an annual event, any more than the 1885 and 1914 Essex Shows had been, the success of the Waltham Abbey venue, 'The Lee Valley Show Ground', tempted others to choose the site as a regular public entertainment venue. The new name for Waltham Marshes was attractive, but not all of the subsequent entertainment attracted to it was blessed with success.

The two, motor-cycle-crash-helmet-wearing, bank robbers who raided the Midland Bank in Highbridge Street, at 10.30am on September 4th evidently thought that the large amount of the money the Waterways Festival drew into the area might still be left lying around their vaults. They were disappointed. This armed

hold-up of the tellers in the bank by two young men, who made a getaway on a Honda motorcycle that they quickly abandoned in Waltham Cross, netted only £700. The pair, armed with a shotgun and a handgun, appears to have undertaken the first ever-recorded robbery of a bank in the town. With banks quickly pulling out of the town in the 21st Century it appears that was the only such robbery ever to occur in the town.

Yet another horrific murder occurred within the shrouding trees of Epping Forest immediately prior to Christmas 1989. At 4.30am on Saturday, December 23rd an Essex Constabulary patrol car patrolling the edges of the Metropolitan area came across a parked Mercedes Benz car, F173SMH, in a car parking area of Lodge Road, close to the Epping Road. Lodge Road, the short undulating stretch of forest track beside St. Thomas' Quarters, leading up to a set of gates into the Copt Hall Estate, remained unmarked except by the map-maker. Having a long history of sudden death, including two plane crashes and a murder, it is surely only visitors from afar, and the more macabre, that ensure that it remained a heavily used local 'Lovers Lane'. Now closed to traffic, its local name reflected the undulating nature of the road – the "Ippedy Dips".

For a number of times the police patrols looked and passed on, not wishing to appear to be voyeurs, before finally approaching the black car to ascertain that the occupants were indeed lovemaking.

So many times had the various car crews undertaken such a task, only to be greeted by the flash of bare flesh as the occupants re-arranged their posture and vented an oath at the "Peeping Tom" policemen, who ought to "mind their own business". On this night, the sight was to be wholly different. There were to be no complaints from the occupants of this car. As the officers approached, it was suddenly realised that the driver's window was shattered, not merely wound down.

The sight inside the front of the car was no easier to take after the initial warning provided by the sight of the glass. Both occupants were, to all intents, headless. The Mercedes had been seen parked in the same spot, facing towards the road and the log lined entrance and exit, (a matter of feet from where a Nazi bomber had crashed 49 years beforehand in December 1940), since 7pm the previous evening. Terence Gooderham, 39 years old, and Maxine Arnold, 31 years old, had been blasted in the back of their heads by a person in the back seat of the car, using a shotgun. It was considered that both had been shot twice, although there seems to have been little need for two. The blast had, amongst its human carnage, broken the driver's side window. The windows were covered in body tissue, the presence of which had given the windows the appearance of being 'steamed up', a natural effect found with most lovers' cars.

The immediate vicinity of the killing was sealed off, and a minute examination undertaken in the approach to the Christmas holiday period. This latter caused some minor problems in obtaining important services that were winding down for the long holiday break. Although vitally important, there was little learned. A mobile police station was put on site in an attempt to learn some more details. This facility produced a number of witnesses to the location of the vehicle and some friends of the dead couple. The murder enquiry room was initially set up at Waltham Abbey police station, with use being made of the ubiquitous 1914 Recreation Room, "Crooks Hall", for Press Conferences beamed nation-wide.

The Press and many in the police immediately suspected that it was a classic case of jealous lover's revenge. The suggestion that it was a suicide, put up as an instant answer by one of the early arrivals of the police, failed to explain the novel absence of the gun! The love triangle aspect was almost immediately boosted by the discovery that Terence Gooderham had indeed two "wives". Not only did he live with Maxine Arnold at a flat in Butterfields in Walthamstow, but he also lived part of the week with Carol Wheatley at a house in Priory Avenue, Chingford, not 15 minutes away. In spite of its relative novelty, that lifestyle was not given a great deal of credence for a motive.

It was the tabloid newspaper, "The Sport" that hit upon the most likely reason behind the deaths when, on Wednesday, December 27th, they carried the tasteless headline "Hitman rubbed out randy Romeo". No matter how close the headlining may have been, they did not attempt to explain who and why. That little difficult task was left to the police to solve.

In spite of a number of theories, mostly revolving around Gooderham's occupation as a licensed premises stocktaker, no clear, publicly announced, motive has emerged. Whenever the case appeared on the Crime Busting television programmes, "Crimewatch" and the (then local) rival "Crime Monthly", it was assumed that the pair were either lured from their shared flat, or indeed hi-jacked from there, taken to Lodge Road, and blasted to death. Gooderham, who was probably shot first, appears to have been the prime

target. It appears that either of his female partners could have been involved, or not, as circumstances dictated. The most durable explanation appears to be that the licensed premises stocktaker had stumbled upon some secret in his work and had been rubbed out by a known contract killer. Unfortunately, the confirming information on this theory came about when the untimely death of this killer was linked to the Epping Forest case. On that note ended the murderous 1980s. Surely the next decade could not be so bad?

THE END AND A NEW START

The year 1990 marked the 150th year of the Metropolitan Police presence in Waltham Abbey and the immediate surrounding districts. Although marked locally, in a small way, by the issue of a unique station Christmas card in December 1989, the event was ignored by the force as a whole as insignificant. In spite of the 1840 acquisitions by the Metropolitan Police being far larger, in terms of area, than those preceding, or following them, those in authority considered that the celebrations marking the formation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 were far more important.

The last major marking of this was in 1979. Just 6 months after the finding of the murdered bodies of Gooderham and Arnold Sunday lunch was slightly delayed for a number of people on June 24th 1990. Messages came out on the Scotland Yard and local, Barkingside, radio networks at 12.50pm. All available units were to proceed to Long Street, in Copthall Green, Upshire Village, near to "Carroll's Farm" - the body of a woman had been found slumped over the wheel of her car by people out for an afternoon walk.

As it had been a quiet day, a good number of police vehicles turned up, almost simultaneously at 12.58pm, at the gap in the trees near the farm. Having been well drilled in the adage that I should 'preserve the scene of a crime' ... being the first of the police to arrive I slowed to a stop on the metalled road in order not to add the Panda cars' tyre tracks to those clearly impressed in the muddy drive onto the grassland in which stood a white car. It was therefore a little galling when the Ford Area Car swept by me and straight across to the suspect car and leaving its own imprint in the mud! Still it allowed me to take photographs of the scene!

Like Gooderham and Arnold this was a forest glade that lovers favoured so most people will have avoided going close. The white convertible Volkswagen Golf GTi, C970SVV, sat with its driver's window wound down. Barely visible through the reflections on the windscreen, sat a woman with her head tilted to one side. There was dried blood, not a great deal of it, around her neck but no other clear signs of violence were evident.

She appeared to have been shot by an unknown weapon in the back of the head. Death was later found to be caused by three puncture wounds at the base of the skull. Later still, there was some doubt as to whether the cause of these was a captive-bolt humane killer or a small crossbow.

After the initial error the large number of passing walkers and policemen now gathered at the spot kept each other back from the scene near to the roadway as the detectives were called in.

Before long the 42 year-old blond woman was identified as Patricia "Lee" Parsons, who lived at Finchley but had a boyfriend in Harlow. Although there was no obvious connection between Lee Parsons and the pair of deaths in Lodge Road, both it seemed, had involved the victims being lured, or hijacked, to the scenes of their deaths.

In January 1992 the Gooderham and Arnold killings were connected to the Parsons death when it was announced that billionaire Paul Getty had put up a reward of £30,000 to catch *the hitman* who had killed all of them. The hitman theory did not drift into obscurity with ease; a further twist in this line of thought appearing in some national newspapers during the early part of June 1993. The gunning down of a gangland figure, 52 year old Jim Moody, in an East End pub was linked to the Waltham Abbey case in spite of police denials.

Another surprise announcement about a Waltham Abbey murder came in August 1990. A man was at last charged with the murder of Barry Lewis. The news caught many by surprise. Although, in May 1989, a group of men had been sent down for the murder of Jason Swift, the situation had suggested to the uninformed that there was, after all, no link between the two cases. Those sentenced were 61 year old Sidney Cooke from Hackney and Steven Barrel, aged 28, from Dagenham. The first man had been sentenced to 19 years for manslaughter and other offences and the second 13½ years for manslaughter and other offences. These sentences were to be cut, early in 1992, to 16 years and 10 years respectively. Neither served all of the reduced terms.

Leslie Patrick Bailey, 37 years, from Hackney appeared at Highbury Corner Magistrates' court charged with the murder of six year old Barry Lewis between September 15th and December 6th 1985, and was committed to the Old Bailey from the same court in the December. It was heard that Bailey was already in prison for some unspecified offence, not least, rumour had it that he was also among the group imprisoned for the Swift killing.

During the interval before the case appeared at the Old Bailey, people began to wonder if this was the man featured in the video-fit picture.

The national newspapers, on the morning of Saturday, June 15th 1991, should have provided a photograph the answer to the question that remained in the minds of many people. Unfortunately, when the "Crimewatch" video-fit was compared with the picture of Bailey few were any the wiser. Although similar, the video-fit picture failed to match the image of a staring-eyed, evil looking, man represented by the released photograph of the killer. At least, in line with the faint biro addition to the videofit at Waltham Abbey, no one forgot the case and, like the "Babes in the Wood" case, justice was eventually done.

In the autumn of 1993, shortly after Bailey was also convicted of killing another child, Mark Tilsley, he was found murdered in his cell. He was talking to the police too much and putting others in increased danger of renewed court cases. His silence was required.

A site for the erection of a new police station to serve Waltham Abbey, in place of 35 Sun Street, was identified as long ago as 1965, a period during which it was envisaged that the greater part of Sun Street would disappear in front of a fleet of bulldozers. In those days it was thought that the only town centre features worth retaining were the "Welsh Harp" in the Market Square and the Abbey Church.

Almost all else was to be replaced by concrete. The designated new police station site, Government House in Highbridge Street, had originally been the Royal Gun- Powder Factory Superintendent's residence and, later, offices. The Metropolitan Police purchased it in 1975.

Government House lay on the south side of Highbridge Street a little to the west of St.Kilda's. When purchased by the police, it stood opposite Powdermill Lane, but the building of the Abbey View by-pass round the north of the town from 1972 effectively put it on a new roundabout. This new roundabout is, by chance, almost the same size, and in almost the same position, as the crater the V2 rocket had left in the street in March 1945. The last users of the building were the telephone branch of the General Post Office. They moved out shortly after the new Lea Valley exchange at Waltham New Town came into operation, leaving the police in possession of the empty building and the attached ex-Territorial Army Nissen hut. The latter had been a replacement for the hall destroyed by the V2.

Although the intention to smash down the greater part of Sun Street had been modified by 1968, the police did not greatly change the plans that were assuming the reduction of the existing police station site down to 12,800 sq. feet. It was against policy to leave any Metropolitan Police station isolated in a pedestrian area.

In 1970 the local council (then still WH+UDC) town centre plans had gone so far as to allocate a new use for 35 Sun Street, on the understanding that it was only a matter of time before the police vacated the building. In the plans, few of which came to fruition, it was intended that the old police station structure would be retained and used to house either a new clinic or a new County Library. This area of Sun Street had now been transformed from a demolition site into a Conservation Area in a matter of months. The police station still falls within the Conservation Area, but this tends only to limit work upon the Sun Street facade.

The purchase of the 46,535-sq. ft. new site at Government House was completed on December 19th 1975, at a cost of £75,000. Police development of the site was planned for the 1977-8 financial year.

In late 1976, the police surveyors were expressing disquiet about the state of the building. A number of illegal entries had been made, and most of the lead flashing had been stolen from the roof of the main building. Rain entry had caused most of the ceilings to collapse. Demolition was blocked by the new (1975) EFDC under Conservation Area planning rules. Needless to say, the local Waltham Abbey Historical Society wished to see the old building preserved in its own right.

Unfortunately for the local wishes, the police didn't want its new police station to be housed in an old building. They had plans that called for a practical but uninteresting concrete kit of parts to be erected on the site. In January 1977 the police prevailed upon the EFDC to allow the demolition of the now troublesome building. At a cost of £1,250, plus a further £991 for fencing, the work was completed by mid-June 1977.

The area acquired by the police had included a small wedge shaped parcel of land across Powdermill Stream and lying alongside St.Kilda's. Although they were unaware of the fact, the police owned the area for which they had once paid rental to house police horses between 1853 and 1876. The police department was still unaware of the historic nature of this section of land when it was sold off.

The plans for siting a police station in Highbridge Street had included a planning requirement that entry and exit to the new site was to be undertaken beside St.Kilda's. Under no circumstances were police cars to drive straight onto the new roundabout. Faced with this particular requirement, it was therefore odd that in December 1978 the police sold off the very section that overcame a prohibition on additional vehicular access onto the roundabout!

A local businessman, Roy Ward, approached the police, intent on buying the small parcel of land. He managed to purchase it for £12,000. The deal left Ward with the only practical vehicular access to St. Kilda's. It was perhaps inevitably that his purchase of St.Kilda's itself from Jessop & Gough followed. It was Ward who changed the name of the building to "The Old Courthouse".

Over a period of 125 years three categories of law court sat in the town of Waltham Abbey. The oldest was 'The General Court Baron for the Manor of Sewardstone' which was held in the relatively palatial setting of a large house known as "St.Kilda's" in Highbridge Street. The proceedings in this building were presided over by the incumbent Lord of the Manor and served by Joseph Jessop, a local solicitor and clerk to both this court, the Petty Sessions and the County Court.

Some years later the cleared site was let to a local garage concern for staff car parking until the end of 1993. The Nissen hut was retained as a police store and fitted with a suitable alarm until the iron building itself was sold off in 1985, the resulting cleared site being used for the temporary storage of police owned "Portacabin" buildings. It always seemed doubtful that the site would ever serve its intended purpose. The impending transfer of Waltham Abbey to Essex Police sealed its fate and it was sold off to a developer in 1999.

Quite unexpectedly for the officers working there, in February 1991, the Sun Street police building started to be fitted with a very expensive, and entirely new, slate roof.

With the exception of extensive renewals caused by wear and tear and wartime damage, this was the first completely new roof the building had received since 1876.

It was perhaps a pity that the expensive new suit of clothes came, not from the plentiful slate fields of Wales that had furnished the original, but from Andorra! Almost before the roofers had finished their work rumour control said that the plumbers and the painters of walls were due next. The only slight modification of this was that the painters arrived first, only to be ejected when it was reasonably pointed out that the plumbers were about to rip to pieces the very walls they intended to paint! Would they please come back later? The return of the painters was to be far later than originally intended at the time, further works being required to the fabric of the building to improve the structures fire safety late in 1992.

The plumbers duly arrived - just as the cold weather was beginning to bite - and undertook the installation of the most complex heating system anyone had ever seen. A pleasant surprise was the finding of a number of the original Victorian fireplaces upstairs. They had been lurking behind sheets of hardboard since the closure of the married quarters in 1965. Once their modern value, aesthetic as well as monetary, had been realised, they were removed to the care of a fast-growing station museum. The renovations never seemed to cease for the following two years.

Police officers hold that the end result of extensive works undertaken to any old police building - like that in Sun Street - resulted in the building being closed down and replaced by a new structure in a short period. That probability aside, the station continued to receive a considerable number of structural modifications intended to allow it to face up to a future in police service into the 21st century. The last vestiges of the earlier accommodation works of 1932, the front doors that had finally removed the communal nature of

life there were removed after 60 years service just before Christmas 1992. The last cell was de-commissioned by removing its door and furnishings to the care of the museum early in the New Year of 1993.

Yet another new system of policing was introduced early in 1992. Part of this arrangement was to rely upon the return of night time closure of the station office, an arrangement allowing the displaced, and under used, station officer to bolster the available manpower on the street during night hours.

Coinciding with the early stages of pedestrianisation, a new external telephone "police post" metal box was installed on the Sun Street wall of the police station.

Somewhat different in design when compared with the 1960-65 police telephone post set into the window frame, this 1981 vintage box was never connected to either Chingford or Loughton. Over ten years, later the now faded blue box was removed and replaced by a modern yellow plastic telephone instrument. Finally this new telephone connected directly to the local control room, intended to service the reintroduction of overnight front office closure effective from January 20th 1992. Night closure remained a fact of life ever since.

The greatest complaint expressed by people today is that policemen and women are now entirely different to those of the past. This constant moan is probably as old as the police. Whilst it is always preferable to have a policeman stood on every corner, meeting the enhanced expectations of the modern public does not really allow such a luxury.

The injured no longer willingly allow the ambulance service to travel at a snails pace - as it had done prior to the introduction of the motor ambulance in place of its police forebear. Equally those unfortunate citizens suffering from serious fire or crime do not allow their local policeman the time to catch and saddle the horse that might allow an officer or fireman to attend. Only 50 years ago the intention was to deter crime before it happened but a swift response after the event was dependent upon the speed of the technology – be it bicycle or horse. Generally assistance turned up long after the start of the event.

Unfortunately, although the police and others have themselves been fairly slow to embrace new technology, often as a matter of cost-cutting, matters have progressed far beyond easy redemption. In line with progress in all fields of human endeavour, the public now expects the emergency services, police, fire and ambulance, to attend within minutes, and complain vehemently if this does not happen. With the manpower levels allotted to the relative levels of crime in Waltham Abbey, the police choice often lies between providing the man on the corner or the rapid arrival of the officer in the response vehicle, rarely both. In many ways it is pleasing to note that times have not changed greatly as far as the attitude of the public toward the police individual in action.

In June 1992 one of the new crop of (young) police officers serving the community from the station was fortunate enough to be able to save the life of a woman attempting to take her own life in an isolated spot off Woodredon Farm Lane. On his arrival the woman was seated in her car and gasping in the noxious fumes from her car exhaust, unconscious and apparently beyond hope, the officer revived her and sent her off to hospital to recover.

This life saving action was, unfortunately, against the lady's own wishes and she was a mite upset at this treatment. So she complained that the policeman had "stolen" the hosepipe which had re-directed the exhaust gasses into the interior when he removed it from her reach as part of his life saving efforts. It was not that he had given a seconds thought to earning a scroll from the Royal Humane Society to mark his efforts, but he thought that the resulting complaint was just a little excessive!

Much in the same vein was the incident in September the same year. Police officers at Lippitts Hill Camp were called (by the head of MI5 no less!) to a French-registered motor car in which a man was trying to kill himself in a similar manner, using exhaust gasses.

In his ignorance, this gentleman had unfortunately chosen to commit this final desperate act in the shadow of the 'Camp, arguably the best policed section of the whole Waltham Abbey police area. The irony of this fact, and his own nationality, was not lost on this 30 year old Irishman, normally a resident of France.

When, some hours later having got over his annoyance at being thwarted in his efforts, he bade farewell to the police officers from Waltham Abbey who had looked after him for some time at Lippitts Hill and Loughton, there were few of them expecting a Christmas card from him.

True to expected form, within days a message came through from the police in France confirming the demise of the Irishman in the same car by means of a further newly acquired pipe. He had kept his word and undertaken the task in his adopted homeland "... where the police are less likely to interfere with someone taking their own life..."

Each police officer knows (or very soon learns), no matter where he serves the public, that
*you can please some of the people some of the time but,
you can never please all of the people all of the time.*

Although the areas of Chigwell, Loughton and Waltham Abbey had been policed since the start of policing in the area in 1840 there were political moves to change that as the 20th Century drew to a close. All three areas, each with a police station, were located in Epping Forest District and as a result that local authority was obliged to operate with two police services.

From 1998 a great deal of detailed work was put in to 'return the areas' to Essex Police. The description was incorrect of course as none had ever been policed by Essex, indeed the reverse was true. The Home Secretary announced the change in Parliament in June 1998.

The change to the boundaries took effect on 1 April, 2000. The responsibility for policing those parts of Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey which were within the Metropolitan Police District passed from the Metropolitan Police to the respective county forces.

Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Surrey Police, their Police Authorities, and the Metropolitan Police prepared for the changeover and agreed the manning levels and offered existing officers the opportunity to remain in place at their given areas with a later option to transfer to the new police force with little discernable alteration to their pensions.

The funding for the three county Police Authorities was increased from April to reflect their enlarged areas. In addition, the Home Office made special payments out of the police grant totalling £10M to go towards costs arising out of the transfer.

The move was to ease the operation of the criminal justice system working together and reduce the need for the local authority to have to work with two different police forces. According to the architects of the change, the alterations supported democratic accountability. It gave local people a say, through their county Police Authority, in the way their area is policed. The change also allowed the Metropolitan Police to focus its efforts on the huge task of policing the nation's capital.

The fact that in a few short years the Police Authorities were swept away and replaced by Police and Crime Commissioners was yet to be addressed.

There were anomalies of course, the police helicopter base at Lippitts Hill remained a facility where London's helicopters flew and where the radio masts for the command and control of policing were located. Another establishment affected was the police sports club in Chigwell, being cut off from its area of policing it was severely disadvantaged financially.

Essex Police spent a great deal of money on the police station in Sun Street but soon tired of both spending the money and even basing police officers in the town. They ran down the services offered there and finally in 2011 closed the building for good.

Soon it was being offered for sale by Essex Police with the proviso that the new owner would need to continue to accommodate the Airwave radio system until it was withdrawn. At that time it envisioned the radio would be gone by 2017, that date was not met.

There was a sale using sealed bids but the new owner pulled out when they realised they could not access the rear of the building because the land behind the site was owned by another unsuccessful bidder— Epping Forest District Council. The 'council refused them access to the site.

THE GOVERNMENT ARMS FACTORIES

The powder mill factory was an important source of explosive from the early widespread use of firearms until the latter stages of the Second World War when it became a research centre. It was from this source that the powder that the plotter Guy Fawkes reputedly acquired came. The Government owned Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) at Enfield Lock, with which the former was linked for police purposes, was until recent years the production site of British military firearms bearing the name Enfield as part of their name.

The Powdermill, which then comprised only one site situated to the north of the town, passed from private ownership and into the control of the Government late in the 18th century. The Royal Gun-Powder Factory (RGPF), as it became, undertook its own security patrols by using process worker employees on overtime. The daytime workers were paid one shilling extra each day they stayed behind to patrol the factory overnight.

The patrols undertaken comprised four hours active duty within a twelve-hour presence in the factory. The volunteers assembled at the Grand Watch House, next to the store-keeper's office in Powdermill Lane, where they were assigned their beats, or watches, by supervisors termed "Rounders" who earned two shillings each night. Set in groups of three, it was intended that as one of the trio worked on his four hours of patrol the other two rested or slept. Set hours of patrol, for which they were issued a heavy coat and a rattle for calling assistance, were from the close of the factory until 10pm, from 10pm until 2am and finally from 2am until the opening of the factory for the usual day's process work. The duty patrol was tasked with the ringing of bell's in certain parts of their beats each hour and making meets with the "Rounders". The latter task by the "Rounders" required them to visit each post at least twice each night, in addition to visits to check upon the Steam Stove and Incorporating Mills. The beats were No.1 Watch, a patrol from Payne's (or Paine's) Island to the Long Walk Gate. No.2 covered the area from the Long Walk Gate to the end of Powdermill Lane and No.3 patrolled the Refinery, Town Mead, Storehouse Yard and Lower Island to the end of Powdermill Lane.

Until the police arrived in 1840, extra patrols were set by the factory on the nights the town was hosting the May and September Fairs. Two men were placed outside the factory walls in Highbridge Street, one on the corner of Powdermill Lane and the second outside the "Cock" coaching inn near the church. In 1846 a single special constable was taken on at the powder factory following a request from the Ordnance Board. He, unlike the patrols, was not a process worker at the factory. In line with their Government ownership, additional security for the factories was provided by the British Army, primarily the Essex Yeomanry, throughout the Victorian era. The mid nineteenth century was a time of unrest throughout the United Kingdom. On a number of occasions the security of the RGPF and RSAF was considerably increased in response to real or supposed threats made by political movements. In March 1848 the Metropolitan Police temporarily drafted in two sergeants and twelve constables to the RSAF, and half that number to the RGPF. They were added protection for the arms and powder held there after riots by Chartists - a national group agitating for extended voting rights - in various parts of the country. Although the numbers were quickly reduced, some of their number remained for a matter of days until the danger receded.

In 1851 there was a theft of money from the RGPF. The cash comprising the wage roll and £12 belonging to the deputy storekeeper, amounted to £500 in all. The suspects were quickly apprehended and tried for robbery. Four men stood trial, two were outsiders. One of these was G. Rowe, who was the innkeeper at the "Three Compasses" in Sewardstone Street, the other was Jesse Griffiths a fish dealer. Central to the initial, and illusory, success were the 'insider' pair J. Comish and C. Eves who were in the service of the RGPF as mill men, and on Sundays and holiday's, as watchmen. Eves' brother, who knew who was involved, was accused of being mixed up in the robbery and was paid off by Rowe with brandy. Unfortunately for the four robbers the reward of £50 offered by the Board of Ordnance was far better value than the brandy had been.

Three of the arrested men managed to get off at Chelmsford Crown Court, leaving poor old Rowe, the innkeeper, to carry the can all the way to Botany Bay. This is the only specific instance coming to light of Waltham Abbey folk being sentenced to "Transportation to the Colonies".

Eventually it was deemed wise to employ the Metropolitan Police within the two arms factories on a per-

manent basis from April 1860, rather than call upon them in times of dire need, or after the cupboard had been stripped bare. This decision to bring in the police in place of factory and process workers was not an isolated instance. Faced with similar problems in the provision of a worthwhile level of security in the docks, from December 1860 the Government called in the Metropolitan Police to serve them also. Whereas many of the London docks retained their own dedicated police, those situated in various distant ports came under the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Police. Until the mid- 1930's single men joining the police in London were quite likely to find themselves serving in the Dockyard Division in a variety of locations including Rosyth, Scotland, Portsmouth on the south coast or merely quite close to home at Chatham, Kent.

The costs involved in providing police for these locations were shared between the police and War Office budgets. The buildings' used by the police belonged to the War Office and provided much of their accommodation, but other costs, including pay and a proportion of pensions, was all split between the police and the War Office. All officers in the arms factories were able to claim "Danger money" of 1/- (5p) daily, or 7/6d (37½p) weekly.

The duties of the police entailed the manning of the Grand Watch House in Powdermill Lane, the permanent post situated at the Grand Magazine in the north of the site. Enfield Lock police station and a number of, usually wooden, gatehouses around both sites.

Officers were tasked with ensuring that no worker attended the factory in possession of any smoking items. Pipes, tobacco and matches were each, individually and together, banned from the sites. To be found with any prohibited item brought about instant dismissal or, if an outside contractor's employee, withdrawal from the site.

This often meant that the contractor had no work for the withdrawn man in any case, resulting in the same ending. Parts of the Ordnance sites retained this strict ruling right up until closure in 1991.

To ensure that each worker was comprehensively searched, special searching booths, usually small sheds, were sited close to each entrance as an addition to the police post. Although searches were often depicted as taking place in the open for ease of the photographer, they were actually supposed to take place inside and out of view.

In spite of the elaborate precautions to stop accidents, there were quite a few during the years that the Metropolitan Police were present. With so many different volatile chemicals spread around, and tales of some amazing handling techniques, accidents tended to result at the very least in severe structural damage, also often in fatalities. In one case it was emphatically believed by the authorities that one of the dead had taken his own, and his colleagues lives in a fit of depression. Without taking suicide in to account more than thirty men died in major incidents during the period 1840-1923.

Ten men died on April 13th 1843, five men on June 16th 1860 and two in August 1890. Although well spaced out, as production stepped up for the South African wars at the turn of the century incidents multiplied. Within the factory nine died at 2.30am on December 13th 1893, and three at noon on December 15th 1902, as well as two men in the Joyce & Co. commercial ammunition factory in Farm Hill during December 1893. Police reporting of these incidents, and the more numerous lesser accidents, were the only interesting aspects of a fairly lack lustre duty schedule.

The police of N Division took over the available security and search buildings for their own use in a manner similar to that occurring in the town in 1840. The early 19th Century Grand Watch House in Powdermill Lane became the police station, the attached accommodation block becoming known in time as the 'Police Barracks'.

The smaller, police station, section of this pair of buildings remained in use as a police/security post for the Ministry of Defence Police until 1991.

The RGPF police station was not large merely a two up, two down, brick built structure that was to see a limited degree of extending in its lifetime and then only growing to around twelve feet wide and thirty feet deep. The adjoining, larger, barrack block in its heyday held a ground floor library and reading room in addition to providing communal space and sleeping accommodation on the upper floor. In 1881 thirteen single men were resident, a figure reduced in 1883 by an official policy change relating to individual space allowances. The single men were allowed few home comforts; being stringently regulated to possession of

only a single storage box of stated dimensions in addition to bed and bedding in the communal dormitory. The open display of private items and pictures was prohibited by the police regulations. All the rents paid by the residents were passed on to the landlords - the War Department. The inspector was accommodated in a separate War Department cottage situated further down Powdermill Lane.

The RSAF Enfield Lock police station, a lodge building at the Middlesex side of the Government owned factory, served as police station and section house for half a dozen single men. Unlike the Powdermill Lane building, this station had cells of its own. Further accommodation was available for married men in substantial canal side dwellings on "Government Row".

Most of the other buildings taken over by the police were small, temporary structures acting as gate houses. One exception to this was a solidly built post shared with the "Water Wardens" at the northern extremity of the original site. Grandly termed the "Grand Magazine Police Station", its title was not matched by its description, merely fifteen feet by eleven it was at least substantially built of brick. The Grand Magazine Police Station was however a very important building in the running of the factory.

The Grand Magazine, a large, separate and substantial structure, was the point at which all the finished products of the original factory site came to be transhipped from the small dumb barges into large river going sailing barges able to travel to the Woolwich Arsenal along the Lea Navigation canal. Once loaded up, the police cleared onward passage of the barges. They contacted other police covering all sections of the canal about the dangerous load expected to be passing through their area along with approximate travelling times.

It was to assist in the warning duty that the main RGPF police stations were equipped with one of the earliest telephone systems, albeit internal only, in 1888.

Oddly enough it seems that the powder factory police station had not received the ABC telegraph system when the main Sun Street station was linked to Enfield Lock in 1883. It may be that the internal telephone system was also connected to Enfield Lock, the RSAF station, and thence by way of an extended wire system, New Scotland Yard.

Upon the sailing of each barge, the main factory police station was informed. It was the duty of the officers at the station to facilitate the safe transit of the horse drawn vessel southwards. Every time a loaded barge passed almost invariably unseen, below the road bridge (usually that known as Refinery Bridge) the local police closed the roadway above. A telegraph, or telephone, message was sent to the next police station downstream in order that they could undertake similar duties on an over canal bridge until the dangerous load had completed its journey to the relative safety of the River Thames.

This duty had its lighter side, a side not readily apparent to the officers or the casual onlooker. For years many outsiders would wonder why it was that until the Second World War from time to time a policeman would walk out into the centre of Highbridge Street in a most nonchalant manner and stop the traffic. After five minutes, sometimes more, the traffic would be backing up in chaos as the policeman, without appearing to have achieved anything constructive, just waved the traffic on and returned to his post inside the factory gates. Such was the aura of secrecy that enveloped the armaments sites, that no one dare ask what was going on, and they would have inevitably suffered silence if they were to ask. It was only a few outsiders; the odd ones who happened to look over the parapet of the bridge while this was going on that got to be in the know. Even they rarely told the tale.

The numbers of police allotted to the factory varied with the years and was largely dependent upon the size of the site and the number of factory workers. Each was ultimately dependent on the requirements of the army and navy for explosives and firearms.

In 1881 the police manpower in the gun-powder works was expected to provide eight men on each of noon to 8pm and 4pm to mid-night shifts and two men on 8am to 4pm as well as a night security shift. At least three sergeants were needed to man the main police station or, if the inspector was present, patrol the site. The occasional availability of a fourth sergeant led to a 10am to 6pm shift. It would seem from these figures that the manpower requirement at this time was around thirty men, this being well in excess of the numbers available to the town station which had a greater area to look after. The town also had to provide spare men for any shortfall in numbers for factory duty. As almost all of the cost of the manpower fell upon the Ordnance Board, the police manned up the factories to the detriment of the town strength.

The first inkling that another site was to be added to the RGPF site came with land acquisition from Quinton Hill Farm of fields to the south of the town in around 1870.

The eventual building of the site some years later cut Sewardstone Street from its primary function of being the route to Sewardstone and the south. The parallel Sewardstone Road, following a line around the east of the factory extension, replaced it.

The South Site as it became known (the older area becoming North Site as a result) grew out of changes in process and product as well as the needs of the wars in Africa. Linked by a narrow strip of land adjoining the Lea Navigation on the west side of town, there was no necessity for anyone to leave the site to pass between the two sections. As the south of the new site area purchased joined up with RSAF it was now also possible to travel to that area without recourse to public roads.

Ultimately, the Great War narrow gauge railway of the RGPF was able to link up with the standard gauge public rail system through the RSAF.

The leadership of the arms factory police contingent was originally intended to be an inspector based at the RGPF. He resided in Government supplied quarters in Powdermill Lane. The intention of there being an inspector in charge only lasted until 1874. Inspector Lewis Clements, much respected in the, mainly military, hierarchy of the RGPF was promoted 'in situ' to Chief Inspector on their specific request. This promotion followed his creditable actions at the scene of a factory incident.

The promotion, whilst agreeable to the RGPF, was a great nuisance to the police. In theory the inspector in charge of the Sun Street station, which was after all the charging station for the area, was intended to be equal if not indeed superior in ranking. To make matters worse, when Clements retired in 1879 the RGPF decided that it liked having a Chief Inspector in charge and in spite of police protests the new incumbent, Charles Goble, was equally raised in rank! Learning from past mistakes, when it came to the retirement of Goble in 1891, an existing holder of the Chief Inspector rank, Henry Craggs, was sent in. The post was successfully lowered to inspector rank at the turn of the century when Walter James took over.

Whereas the repairs and alterations to the Sun Street police station were the direct responsibility of the police, almost everything to do with the factory contingents was the realm of the Board of Royal Ordnance. In 1871 the inspector, Lewis Clements, submitted a report to the RGPF Superintendent pointing out that some aspects of the police living accommodations required attention. He stated that his men were obliged to wash in the kitchen area, to the detriment of cooking hygiene. With thirteen men then resident in Powdermill Lane, and others making use of the facilities in duty time, it was indeed a problem. A decade later the same problem was noted at the Enfield Lock site, although there was a separate 'ablution' building at the RGPF.

On October 1st 1871, PC Stilwell hauled eleven-year-old Alfred Godfrey of Holyfield up to the Sun Street station from the factory. Lewis Clements went down to the station to deal with the matter. The young lad had been found collecting walnuts from the plentiful plantation of these trees (the wood being a part of the early powder process) and was accused of stealing thirty-four of them.

He was not charged with the theft, although he might easily have been, but the officer could never have let him slip away unnoticed from the secret establishment for fear of his own job security. Details of the incident were recorded in the station "Refused charges book".

On Friday, January 16th 1880, a local newspaper carried a lengthy report about two errant constables attached to the powder mills police. The pair had found themselves facing the Justices from the dock of the Petty Sessions.

Archibald Coltman, PC 263N, an officer with seven years police service, and John O'Neil, PC 533N, with under three, had left the town on New Year's Day 1880 and failed to report for duty since.

When they were missed enquiries were started to ensure that they had not come to harm. Asking around their friends and colleagues led to it being suspected that the pair had joined the army. Sergeant 16N Butler (not a local officer) was dispatched to St. George's Barracks an army enlistment depot, where the list of recent joiners was checked.

No one with the name of Coltman or O'Neil appeared, but the astute sergeant noticed that two men who had apparently joined together were shown to have similar heights to the missing men. Enquiries were made at an army depot in Sheerness, which led to the pair being found and arrested.

After an absence of less than two weeks the missing officers were brought back to Waltham Abbey on Tuesday 13th to answer a charge of: -

"Unlawful withdrawal from the Metropolitan Police on 1st January 1880"

Coltman and O'Neil pleaded guilty to the charge, in their defence they claimed that their actions were directed by an over enthusiastic consumption of alcoholic drink. Both of the men had previous good conduct so the Bench only fined them £2.10s.0d (£2.50p) plus costs. Sergeant Butler pointed out that he expected the costs to be very high due to the amount of time and trouble incurred looking for them. It was decided to set a limit of ten shillings each to the costs. The pair paid up their £3 before they left the court. The treatment of Coltman and O'Neil was very lenient and based upon the expectation that they would be sacked by the police without any back pay, a matter made official in Police Orders dated January 14th. As the case was drawing to its conclusion one of the Justices enquired of Chief Inspector Goble who was standing at the back of the court, whether such a thing as 'unlawful withdrawal' from the force had occurred locally before. The Chief Inspector replied that this was the first occasion in his service but that he believed there had been other instances of withdrawal from the factories in the seventeen previous years.

In 1883, during a period of intense controversy over the provision of firearms for police, a bomb exploded beside a Government building in Whitehall and a further unexploded; device was detected close to the offices of "The Times" newspaper.

The effect upon the Gladstone Government and the police hierarchy was dramatic. Officers who had not previously been armed were posted to guard a number of buildings with government or establishment connections; one of these was the RGPF.

The factory security had possessed some weapons, principally carbines, when the police moved in over twenty years earlier, but these were of little use by this time. As the police owned very few weapons for themselves at this time resort had to be made to loaning some of the weapons held at the RSAF. The resultant loan did not result in any of the weapons leaving the twin sites. Although bomb attacks by Fenians continued for two years no attempts were made on the arms factories.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge made his first visit to the two arms factories on June 29th 1886. Accompanied by an inevitable entourage of aides and secretaries, the Royal Party arrived at Waltham Cross railway station to be met and transported in carriages to Powdermill Lane. At the gates the Duke was met by the most celebrated of the factory Superintendents, Colonel Noble RA, and his staff. A "Grand Tour" of the factory site and processes then followed, leading the party to meet up with the State Barge which had been brought up the Lea Navigation for the occasion. A trip in this vessel took in the sights of Mill Head Stream in the upper section of the site before they all returned to take a short ride to inspect the Abbey Church and then on to Eleanor's Cross at Waltham Cross. Finally they went on to inspect the manufacture of firearms at the RSAF.

South Site construction started in the 1890s. Most of North Site had related to production of gunpowder in its oldest form, cordite and highly volatile nitro-glycerine (which was supposedly carried around the site by process workers in hand held buckets). The new "green field" site was intended to produce nitro-glycerine, cordite and guncotton.

In a rare public release of such information, in 1887 the strength allotted to the powder mill police station alone was said to be one inspector, four sergeants and twenty constables.

A further illustration of the petty nature of police work in the factory was an incident in June 1904 that led to Constable Plumridge arresting a process worker called Alfred Lock within the factory.

The officer saw Lock late at night (10.35pm) in amongst the trees of "The Plantation" area in the heart of North Site, bending down to pick something up. Readily identifiable as a factory worker in his "Danger Building" garb, the officer arrested the man for picking flowers. In the eyes of the civil employer the officers zeal was not misplaced either, a very stem view was taken about the whole affair when the matter, com-

plete with the enclosure of some, fast wilting, evidence provided by a few small white blooms was committed to an official report. Alfred Lock, number 1481, cordite section, was suspended for one week without pay for his errors. The police also had their moments of inattention, on January 9th 1905, one constable, posted to the wooden Refinery Gate police post off Highbridge Street, was caught out reading a newspaper when Captain Hope of the Royal Artillery loomed out of the darkness, inexcusably unseen by the gate guard. The military man reported the matter and the officer was hauled up in front of Superintendent Robinson at Islington three days later facing a loss of a few days pay.

Although there is no record of any death or injury related to the dangerous processes undertaken befalling any policeman working within the arms factories, and therefore falling within the realms of the "Danger Money" allowance. Two factory related deaths involving the extensive areas of water, occurred during the Metropolitan Police presence.

Early in 1886, a young constable usually attached to the Sun Street station, PC Harold Richardson, had drowned whilst walking to temporary duty in the RSAF, and in 1911 a similar fate befell Constable Frederick William Free.

On October 30th 1911, PC 390N Free was among the officers parading for night duty on North Site. Sergeant 33N Church posted him to the Refinery Beat; an area mainly situated around the gate of that name which was closed for the night. Although he had only arrived at the factory quite recently, Free had undertaken similar duties at that gate on twelve occasions previously. The most onerous task was the closure of the security boom on the canal exit in the shadow of the Refinery Bridge.

Sergeant Church met up with the constable on Lower Island at about 10.35pm and last saw him setting off back towards the gate. At 10.55pm Edward Charlick of Woollard Street was walking down Highbridge Street and heard a crash, like the sound of a breaking plank of wood, followed by a splash and moans coming from within the factory. Looking over the parapet of Refinery Bridge he saw what he thought was a police helmet floating by. He went up to the gate and rang the bell connected to Sandhurst, the factory hospital. The hospital sister answered the gate and took Charlick into the building before telephoning the factory police station. The pair was later criticised for ignoring the police inspector and another man nearby as they walked the considerable distance to the hospital building.

It was gone 11.30pm by the time Sergeant Church had brought the drags to the canal side at Hoppitt Pool. It was then only a short while before the drags had brought Free's body to the surface. He was found to have some injuries, bruises to the head and arm, but death was due to drowning.

It was concluded that the constable had been operating the antiquated boom apparatus and had been knocked *off* balance by the operation of it and thrown into the water. As in the case of Richardson twenty-five years earlier the weight of clothing, and in particular the cape, had overcome his attempts to swim. Although the cape had been ripped off during his struggles, without prompt outside assistance he drowned very quickly.

The coroners' jury was critical of the rescuers and the poor design of the security boom, but they still returned a verdict of "Accidental Death" on the demise of the constable. Frederick was buried in his hometown of High Wycombe on Saturday November 4th. The service was attended by officers from Enfield, Waltham Abbey and his previous station at Great Marlborough Street. Apparently as a result of the criticisms voiced by the jury, the security barriers were changed. Plans have been found for later canal security gates, designed in the period 1911-22, but none for the earlier type that appears to have caused the death.

Natural causes took 40-year-old PC Samuel Bryan on September 13th, 1912. This officer, posted to oversee the security of the Quinton Hill gate on South Site of the factory, was seized by an epileptic fit. The officer was quickly taken by ambulance to the factory hospital, Sandhurst on North Site. In spite of prompt attention the officer, serving in the factory since 1905, continued to suffer a series of further fits, finally succumbing to a brain haemorrhage. Samuel Bryan was a single man usually resident in the Powdermill Lane barracks. In spite of this instance of a failure to save life, Sandhurst was a boon to all classes of factory workers, saving, as it did, the lengthy trip to the nearest hospital in Tottenham.

The Great War, which commenced in August 1914, resulted in the massive expansion in the numbers of process workers and police. A further major change was the employment of women. At least nine Women

Patrols of the Special Constabulary Reserve, in themselves a rarity, were attached to the RGPF in the war years. A result of the increase in women was the erection of an annexe to the substantial brick built Sandhurst Hospital. The new building - which survived until after the site closed in 1991 - was constructed close to the original in an Essex Clapboard style.

Over one thousand armed men of the Lancashire Regiment moved into the Waltham Abbey area upon the declaration of war. An additional hundred men of the Garrison Artillery brought their pom-pom guns. Soldiers of the King's Royal Rifles stayed only one week before being replaced by soldiers of the Territorials. Living under canvas, the troops were mainly sited at Monkham's and High Beach. With the onset of the war an extra one hundred and fifty armed policemen were quickly drafted in to defend the RSAF and RGPF. Constables and special constables, all men, were to be employed in riding the powder barges down the canals to Woolwich Arsenal.

The most marked aspect of the first few years of the war from the police viewpoint was the sudden surge in arrests that were not proceeded with. Anyone passing within the close proximity of the factory, or asking questions about the workings of it, especially those with an unfortunately gruff or foreign sounding voice, were summarily arrested and taken in as spies. A large number of people thought to have deviated from normal practices were hauled up in front of the station sergeant in Sun Street, each case being dealt with as "suspected espionage", investigated and the unfortunates released. The entries provide an amusing insight to the nervousness that the war had brought about, but there is no record of anyone ever having been charged and taken to court with espionage or a similar offence.

The previously mentioned, 1886, visit appears to have been the only highly publicised official Royal visit to the factories in the Metropolitan Police period. A visit by King George V to both the RSAF and the RGPF in May 1915 whilst official in nature, was a secretive affair undertaken beneath the shrouds of secrecy prevalent in wartime. The Chief of Staff, the Lord Kitchener, met the Royal Party at the gates to the Enfield Lock site on the morning of Friday 1st May and conducted him around both sites over the following two hours. Although an undoubted morale booster to the workers directly involved, only a small group of fortunate townspeople were able to see the Royal Party as the motorcade swept into Powdermill Lane. Exact figures of the numbers of police employed in the two arms factories in the years of the Great War have yet to come to light. The large increase in police manpower demanded by the temporary wartime expansion of the factory appears to have been met by young new recruits, many only biding their time until called up into the army for service in the carnage at the front. The townspeople took to this large increase in full time police manpower by offering rooms up for accommodation and holding occasional entertainment within venues such as the Parish Hall. Variations on these amateur efforts included a number of farewell parties for police called to the war front. One of these was held for fourteen constables in the Recreation Room at the Sun Street police station in January 1917. All of the policemen had joined the force in between late 1914 and late 1915, and were leaving the arms factories to join the army. Obviously to withstand the loss of a group of this size, the total manpower was very large.

The group reflected the state the war had brought the country to by this stage. Of the fourteen constables, three died in war operations and of those that subsequently returned to the police, five ended up in being sacked as strikers in 1919. In the face of pressure from the man hungry war fronts, in December 1916 women police patrols were introduced to the Government arms factories, including those in the Lee Valley. Initially under Sub-Inspector Buckpitt, and later under Inspector D Meeson Coates, there were at least four sergeants, one corporal and nineteen constables of the Women's Police Service (WPS). Although accorded full access to police premises for duty purposes, these women, generally drawn from the middle classes of society, were not employed by the Metropolitan Police. Sir Edward Henry, the austere Commissioner of the time, upon receipt of a request for women police from the Department of Explosives Supply of the Ministry of Munitions, put them in touch with two Chief Officers of the fledgling WPS. This move resulted in this section of the WPS being formed under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Munitions.

The Women Patrols were roughly equivalent in status to the male Special Constabulary, receiving pay at a rate of £2 per week. Unlike the Special Constabulary, they were not to feature as a permanent part of policing after the war.

After they were disbanded, although a small band of police patrols was set up by the Metropolitan police in the 1920s, women police were not to return to Waltham Abbey for over forty years.

No one serving at the RGPF or RSAF became involved in the 1919 strike. At least one factory constable, William "George" Allerton had no sooner left the town to return to the E division that he had worked prior

to the war than he joined in the strike and ended up being sacked and having to take up new employment in the hotel trade. In spite of decades of trying, not one of the 1919 strikers ever regained their police jobs. With the end of the war the police forces of the country, and particularly the Metropolitan Police, were finding it increasingly difficult to meet their commitments in a variety of government establishments. In addition to the RGPF and RSAF on N Division the police in London were sending men to Woolwich Arsenal and a variety of dockyard's from Chatham to Rosyth.

The solution to the problem faced by the police was almost provided by the War Office themselves in 1920. As part of the inevitable wind down in war effort after the war it was proposed that all manufacturing activities would be transferred to a plant at Gretna, Scotland. This proposal was successfully thwarted and the areas prime employer stayed for a further few decades.

Eventually in the early 1920s the government acceded to the police requests to be relieved of the task, and brought about the formation of their own security system based upon the police. Quite a number of former Metropolitan policemen decided that they would prefer to stay with the new forces rather than return to the uncertain conditions on the 'outside', but others were transferred where possible to local police stations. In a phased transfer of power the RGPF was taken over by the War Office security in August 1923 and the RSAF in 1926.

The replacing force evolved into the modern Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) which until 1991 retained responsibility for the sites. They also continued to provide a visible boost to the apparent numbers of police in the locality, although their power outside the boundary fence of the armament sites was limited to those of the special constabulary. No longer directly involved in security matters the Metropolitan Police took on a key role in the later years of the existence of the Waltham Abbey armament sites. The manufacture of explosives in the RGPF gave way to research in 1943. This development leading to a change of name for the site to Explosives Research and Development Establishment (ERDE), this evolving via PERME into RARDE by the 1990s.

Whilst security was still under the control of the MDP it had become a nightly ritual for the internal security force to telephone the night duty officers with the local police hourly to confirm that they were safe and secure. Under the code-name "Operation Cyclone", any tardiness in the hourly call would result in all the local Metropolitan Police resources being alerted to surround the site and secure all of the main roads. As the mobile manpower in the immediate locality was wholly insufficient for this task vehicles included assistance from Chingford, Walthamstow, Cheshunt and Enfield, these being supplemented on weekdays by the Lippitts Hill based police helicopter from 1980.

The Conservative government privatised the one time RGPF in the 1980s, the Sewardstone Road site becoming a part of Royal Ordnance whilst the North Site remained under government control. Royal Ordnance was duly snapped up by British Aerospace and the writing was clearly on the wall for the continued employment of the expensive MDP on duty within the RSAF and the two former RGPF areas. In a controversial move, South Site was sold off as development land and the future of the expensive MDP in Waltham Abbey looked increasingly bleak. A small, almost insignificant, incident which underlined the tenuous nature of the continuation of police employment occurred when large amounts of equipment were put up for sale by auction. On the morning of the first day set aside for viewing the lots the police came out of their office to find that their police marked Land-Rover had been defaced by the addition of a large lot number sticker across the windscreen. No amount of protest by the inspector in charge of the MDP contingent managed to sway the Royal Ordnance insistence that the vehicle became their property as soon as the government had privatised them! In the end the long familiar Land-Rover went in the sale and was replaced by a Ford Transit van. When they left, the MDP represented a far larger group than the Metropolitan Police contingent responsible for the whole of the Waltham Abbey.

The Enfield Lock site continued as a police station for a further six decades beyond the withdrawal of the Metropolitan Police. There was a period in 1984 where proposals to replace the '240 strong MoD Police force' with an unarmed private security force under factory wide privatisation plans were initiated. The plan to scale security down met with criticism from an All-Party House of Commons Defence Committee. They paid a night-time visit to the site and found a single unarmed security guard answering the telephone and watching the premises. The MDP returned to duty and to taking over a new £500,000 police station situated on the south side of the RSAF. The structure of the original police station remained on the west side of the factory but was refurbished as offices.

The RSAF produced its famous "Enfield" small arms from the early part of the 19th Century into the late

1980s, finally facing vacation and dereliction as the privatised production facilities were moved north to Nottingham. After vacation of the production areas security again returned to that of a single person. The difference – if it can be credited is that the singleton was an MDP officer who could be armed – but was not! In fairness he could call upon weapons from colleagues in the adjoining RGPF site.

The RSAF site closed in the late 1980s, with production machinery being sold off at an auction in 1988. Even closed and stripped of most valuables the site remained under the security of the MDP until they vacated the RGPF [by then Royal Ordnance] site three years later. Private security replaced them on both sites.

Even after closure the South Site of the RGPF and large tracts of the RSAF were regularly taken over by the firearm branch of the Metropolitan Police for training purposes. During this period armed policemen and women were to be seen using the, largely abandoned, permanent structures as cover in serious manoeuvres akin to grown up variations on youthful "cowboys and Indian's".

As a further aid to these games with a serious purpose temporary wooden structures were built at their base at nearby Lippitts Hill camp to represent streets lined only by the fascias of buildings. Known as "Tilley-town" after its prime architect within the police firearm branch, PC David Tilley, examples of these were also to be found erected at the RGPF and RSAF.

At one period in 1993 the Metropolitan Police, finding themselves extremely cramped at Lippitts Hill, and receiving a growing level of complaints from the neighbours as the noise level rose with the workload, were seriously contemplating the purchase of the RSAF site for a sum quotes as £5M. It was expected that firearms training would be allied to a new police helicopter base. Eventually the high costs resulted in this intention being thwarted.

It is interesting to note that when the RGPF sites were closed, and decontamination started, a large number of discarded smoking implements came to light within the areas in which they were still supposedly banned. Although much of this material could be attributed to the period after the Metropolitan Police vacated the site, much of it post Second World War, the discovery of dozens of broken clay pipes within the factory were certainly contraband of an earlier era. Even though a number were the result of waterway dredging, it would appear that at least some of the diligent hours of searching were largely to no avail!

COURTS IN WALTHAM ABBEY

Shortly before the Metropolitan Police took over responsibility for the extension to the Metropolitan Police District, a survey was undertaken of the existing courts in late November 1839. In the area of the Horse Patrols of "N" division Superintendent Johnstone of the division reported that five courts existed, these being at Edmonton, Enfield and Cheshunt in Middlesex and at Epping and Ongar in Essex. Three of these courts sat in public houses, a not unusual state of affairs.

The court sitting each Friday at "The Cock" Inn in Epping High Street dealt with all cases arising in the future Metropolitan Police areas of Chigwell, Chingford, Loughton and Waltham as well as extensive tracts of the area to be later taken by the Essex Constabularies. The eighteen Justices of this court included six well to do gentlemen from the Waltham Abbey sphere of influence.

Superintendent Johnstone remarked in a footnote in his report to the Commissioners (Col. Sir Charles Rowan and Sir Richard Mayne KCB) that it had come to his notice that *"a Magistrates Court has been recently built at Waltham Abby (sic). But no business has yet been done there as I am given to understand."*

In the absence of information to the contrary, it would appear that in January 1840 the Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions was in operation and taking cases each Tuesday. At this court, sitting over the police room, cases were either dealt with or sent on to the higher court at Chelmsford. Urgent cases failing on other days of the week were dealt with by special sittings or by recourse to the Epping Friday court sitting. Johnstone's remarks about the building having been "recently built" are probably an error of terminology based upon the courts recent setting up.

At this time there were two courts sitting in the town of Waltham Abbey, there soon being three. The oldest was 'The General Court Baron for the Manor of Sewardstone' which was held in the relatively, palatial setting of a large house known as "St.Kilda's" in Highbridge Street. The proceedings in this building were presided over by the incumbent Lord of the Manor and served by Joseph Jessop, a local solicitor and clerk to both this court, the Petty Sessions and the later County Court.

This court was little to do with police, although from time to time officers were called to give evidence, dealing primarily with the apportionment of intestate land through until the 20th Century. The modern name of "St.Kilda's", "The Old Courthouse", reflects the Baron Court past rather than any criminal duties.

Joseph Jessop was a man of many skills in that besides his court duties he owned "St.Kilda's", let a stable behind it to the police, and was at one period the holder of the post of High Constable to Chingford. The company of solicitors that traded under a variety of names, culminating in the final Jessop and Gough which was taken over in the early 1990's, was responsible for providing the Clerk to the Court until the court itself disappeared.

As had been the case with the court sitting in Epping, the Bench comprised of local landowners and other well to do persons from the upper echelons of Victorian society. Although a somewhat strained ideal when a number of these men changed their role during the Great War to become directly involved in the running of the Special Constabulary Reserve, the intention was that they should be aloof from both the police and the accused. The police staff of the court, usually a sergeant and a constable, was drawn from, or merely worked at, the town station in Waltham Abbey.

When, in 1848, the new County Court was built in Highbridge Street it did not immediately house the Petty Sessions, merely undertaking its scheduled civil business once each month. As late as 1864 police reports continued to report the use of the room above the old police station house. Although no date has been found, it may be a case that the move was finally undertaken at around the time the old station was vacated.

Amongst the 'famous cases' undertaken at the Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions was one well known in the folklore that surrounds the history of Epping Forest. Until Epping Forest was taken over by the City of London there were numerous instances of friction between the commoners and the land owners over the right

to take wood from the Forest, Lopping Rights. These cases related mainly to the folk of Loughton, an area within Waltham Abbey jurisdiction for many years.

Thomas Willingale, a Loughton labourer, had already been arraigned before the Waltham Bench for asserting his ancient right to lopping. Later his son Samuel, along with Alfred Willingale and William Higgins, another relative, appeared before the Waltham Abbey Bench in March 1866 charged with illegal lopping of trees in Epping Forest. In this famous case, the three were convicted and fined 2/6d (12½p) with 11/3d (56p) for damages, they faced, and took, the option of seven days imprisonment at Ilford Gaol.

The friction, fed by the Willingale and Shillibeer families, continued for many years afterwards, in fact until the enacting of the 1878 Epping Forest Act. Thomas did not live to see this event, but Alfred, the nephew died at the age of 91 years in 1934.

In March 1876 a report by the Police Commissioner, Col. Sir Edmund Henderson, attempted to enforce an order declaring that cases held by the Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions be held by Epping and Stratford courts and the Waltham Bench be dissolved. The members of the court were outraged by this "obnoxious order" and met on a number of occasions to fight it.

As a result of the police commissioner's action's for a period a number of defendants were able to suggest that the Waltham Abbey magistrates were legally unable to try cases under the Criminal Justice Act. Arranging for the cases to be heard elsewhere proved to be a very expensive procedure.

The last case affected by the meddling by Henderson was an instance of theft of "swede turnips", worth 2/- (10p), from Woodredon Farm in January 1877. Both the defendant and the witnesses, with a police escort, had to be transported from the police station in Waltham Abbey to Epping Court in a carriage hired for the occasion.

Because the case could not be dealt with immediately, the accused was remanded in custody, requiring both a police escorted trip to Ilford Gaol and the return of the witnesses to Waltham Abbey. Each of these extra arrangements was repeated on the subsequent hearing of the case.

The order was eventually cancelled in February 1877, but the original intentions were not surprising in view of the number of occasions that the Bench had no cases to hear from its extensive catchment area which stretched from Nazeing to Chingford and Woodford.

Until as late as the 1939-45 war it was the custom for persons held in custody between court appearances to be taken to and from their incarceration in prison on foot, and in full view of the public. The prisoner, with an escort, was walked in manacles from the court to the 'Waltham Cross and Abbey' railway station and then onto one of the prisons. It seems that individual prisoners were often entrusted to single officers for this journey until the turn of the century, then, following the incident where PC Dobson was overcome by the man he was taking to Holloway, two men were tasked with each prisoner. The use of dedicated prisoner transport, the original horse drawn "Black Maria" dated from the 1860's but only in central areas, was a luxury not afforded to the outer areas until much later. The modern concept of a veiled journey in police transport, possibly including the addition of a blanket over the head, was not afforded to prisoners. Any wrongdoer, having perhaps committed an offence likely to incur the wrath of the local populace (and there were a few) would only have the good will of the escort to provide protection during a public walk of almost a mile to the station.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 the County Court business was transferred, for the purposes of centralisation and economy, to Edmonton. For a period the building in Highbridge Street where police court business had been held was closed up.

The Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions was displaced to take up residence in the 1914 built Recreation Room at the rear of the police station. Conditions in this oversized tin shack were, needless to say, far from ideal. Magistrates, Court officials, police, press, witnesses and onlookers were accommodated in a hotch-potch of confusion as they vied for space with the immovable full size snooker table. When civilian witnesses had to leave the Court whilst other gave their evidence, they were required to stand outside in the cold and windswept police station yard regardless of the weather. The winter of 1939-40 was one of the worst on record.

This state of affairs continued for some time until the Home Office eventually gave permission for the Highbridge Street building to be used again for weekly sittings.

Even this concession had its drawbacks. It was stipulated that the large, bare and damp building was not to be kept heated because of national fuel shortages. The Court was often freezing cold, a cold not easily overcome within the space of the court's day by the three or four small gas fires eventually installed. It was a far cry from the relative warmth the Bench had enjoyed in the police station shack, but better overall for everyone. The conditions put everyone on the same level, everyone attending and working in the court being forced by conditions to wear as much outdoor clothing as those out in the street.

The new surroundings were in fact a mixture of the new and the old. Back again came the court proceedings to the police station Recreation Room for the old, to vie with the weather and the snooker table. The new site, which was used on a greater number of occasions, was the Community Centre sited in the Crooked Mile, Waltham Abbey. Wartime built, for Air Raid Precautions (ARP) purposes, the large single storey building was far superior to the police station shed, but not always available for a variety of reasons.

Finally, in 1965 by which time the Baron Court had faded away, Waltham Abbey Magistrates Court was abolished. The wishes of the 1876 Commissioner, were finally granted, albeit 89 years later. Cases were transferred to Epping Court, now sitting in a purpose built building behind the police station, where they had started 125 years earlier. A decade later, as well as Waltham Abbey Crown Court cases being moved to the new Snaresbrook complex, Chingford Magistrates Court was dissolved, the building to become a Crown Court for a short while, prior to demolition and rebuilding as housing. A new Waltham Forest Magistrates Court dealt with lower court cases. After a few years Crown Court cases returned to Chelmsford in line with the jurisdiction of the Crown Prosecution Service.

In spite of the long put off return to Epping, Waltham Abbey was able to show it was able to bring something new to the area. On March 5th 1979 officers were the first in the Metropolitan Police area, possibly in the country as a whole, to make an arrest under the 1973 Badgers Act when men with dogs were arrested at Woodredon Hill, Honey Lane.

The case was so unique at the time that a circuit judge went out of his way to take up the prosecution of the case in which two men were found guilty. Although such cases tend to engender ribald comment amongst inner city police, they and livestock rustling, are as much an ever present problem which is difficult to detect, as any urban incident.

A minor, and short lived, resurgence of Waltham Abbey courts activity occurred on 20th February 1990. The death of a homeless builder, described as a loner by his brother, found drowned in the River Lea with his wrist tied to the handlebar of his bicycle resulted in the setting up of a Coroners Court in the town. The death of 48 years old Brian Dunklin on Christmas Eve 1989 was dealt with, for convenience, by a sitting of Epping Coroners Court, under the jurisdiction of Dr. Charles Clark, sitting in the venue for its predecessor, the Council Chamber at Waltham Abbey Town Hall.

For the record it was decided that Dunklin took his own life.

POLICE DEATHS IN WALTHAM ABBEY

Deaths in the police station 35 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey

The seven people dying within the police station may very well only represent the total that actually died there. Only one death in the cell, and that within a short while of the station ceasing to take prisoners seemed remarkably good fortune. A more recent discovery that in late December 1908 Thomas Foster, aged 56yrs, died at the station is only mitigated by him dying of exposure – he had been found out in Honey Lane and only expired on arrival within the relative safety of the station.

The devastating deaths of the WEST children occurred at a time when a number of the towns populace were suffering from the same epidemic. Although listed as 'Croup'- a term for throat blockage, the cause might be assumed to be an outbreak of dyptheria. The police station, the first building known to have occupied the site, is supposed to be haunted. All things being equal, the source of the haunting probably comes from the list of deaths in the station. As reports, often of a timid "I didn't really hear something" nature, date from the era prior to the death of Horace Barnard, he can be excluded.

Year Name Date of Death Age Cause Remarks

1877 Ellen 21.11.1877 13 mo. Measles [12 days] Daughter of SPS George Rolfe

ROLFE Pneumonia [7 days]

1882 James 8.2.1882 4 yrs. Croup [6 days] Son of PC West

WEST

1882 Annie 5.5.1882 2 yrs. Croup [4 days] Daughter of PC West

WEST [throat blockage]

1884 Francis Emily 5.5.1884 28 yrs. Parturition [9 days] Wife of Insp. John Lutman

BROADBRIDGE Metritis [7 days] Broadbridge

Pneumonia [2 days]

Death in childbirth

1908 Fanny 20.10.1908 58 yrs. Phthisis [T.B.] Wife of PS Smith

SMITH

1916 Frederick Albert 29.2.1916 6 mo. Brocho Pneumonia Son of PS Hiscocks

HISCOCKS

1972 Horace Edward V 27.3.1972 53 yrs. Natural causes Prisoner in cell

BARNARD

Police officers buried in the Old Cemetery, Sewardstone Road.

Mainly based upon the occupational details from the burial register. This register does not state which police force the deceased served in and as a result a number of those listed have no traced place of duty. Many of the headstones have been cleared. Those graves that were marked in 1985 or later are noted*

Name	Rank	Death	Age	Grave Plot	Remarks
BAIN Roderick	PC	11/1918	38	4907	N RGPF
BARROW Clermon	PC	3/1912	61	5970*	548N
BROWN Henry J.	PC	8/1882	28	991	256N
BROWN Samuel	PC	7/1899	70	991	117N
BRYAN Samuel	PC	9/1912	41	4529	N RGPF
COLE George	PC	6/1870	23	827	All stations
COWEN Elijah	PC	3/1915	49	4204*	383N RGPF
COWLEY Charles	PC	11/1920	50	4971	285N RGPF
DICKINSON Robert	PC	5/1893	52	4317	217N/203AR
FARROW Jephthah	APS	11/1876	39	1790	84N
GEDDES Robert	PC	7/1862	39	456	No traces
GUTTERIDGE George	PC	3/1902	67	4677	108N
HAIG Henry	PS	2/1901	59	4276*	23N
HOARE Frederick	PC	11/1922	46	5000	387N
HOARE James	PC	5/1908	39	585	N
HOCKLEY Frederick	PC	1/1930	85	4557*	261N
HUGHAN Peter	PC	9/1883	59	915	35N
LAMB John R.	PC	9/1924	39	5638	779N
MORRIS William G.	PC	11/1866	64	566	N
RIDDENTON James	PC	7/1868	70	675	N
SAVIGEAR William	PC	6/1870		3019	56N
WEST Cecil	PC	11/1918	43	4912	327N
WHEATLEY Henry J.	PS	10/1916	51	4827*	59N
WHITEHOUSE Joseph	PC	3/1902	43	4424	N Mounted
WONNACOTT John	PC	2/1924	79	228	383N
WRAIGHT William	PC	8/1872	23	3165	N

Police officers buried in the new cemetery, Sewardstone Road.

Name	Rank	Death	Age	Plot	Remarks/shoulder number
AVERY Thomas B.	PS	11/1949	79	C401	42N
AVIS James R.	PC	2/1978	92	C171	354N/126JR
BROOKER John A.	PC	2/1959	89	C324	374N
CHAPMAN Michael	PC	2/1992	53	J46*	741J/141JB
CREAGH John C.	PS	2/1972	90	D145	29N
DUNHAM Thomas	PC	8/1946	72	F81	RGPF 1923+
DYDE John	PS	7/1951	74	B34	35N
DYER Richard G.		1936	81	B70	No traces
EADY Samuel	PC	4/1941	69	F16	1081N/59NR
FENNER Arthur	PS	3/1980	90	F172*	43N/43J
GIBBS Frederick T.	PC	4/1941	63	F164	600N
GOOCH Henry	PC	6/1954	83	B78	97N RGPF
HALL Frederick W.	PC	8/1968	26	D102	Bow Traffic
HASSEL John J.	PC	12/1951	80	C370	258N
HEARMAN George	PC	12/1928	78	A43	327N/12NR
JAMES Walter	Insp.	8/1935	73	G40	RGPF
KNIGHT James	APS	1/1938	74	G281	242N
MELVILLE William	PS	2/1946	70	H203	RSAF 1923+
NOBLE Wilfred E.	PC	12/1936	42	A10*	1079N/719J
PARKER George N.	PC	5/1928	45	K104	724N
PATEMAN Ernest A.	WR	6/1962		K113	898JWR
PHILLIPS Leonard	PC	11/1941	66	C34	341N
POYNTER Andrew H.		3/1935	71	G9	No traces
ROGERS Herbert	APS	8/1955	80	C86	211N
SIMPSON Mark		5/1955	77	C169	No traces
SLADE Arthur H.	PS	1/1939	64	C14	99N not local
SWIFT Thomas D.		3/1935	57	E47	No traces
THURSTON John E.		8/1965	61	H314	No traces
TUTTON William	PC	1/1975	71	J156	765N/765J
WHEELER Frederick	PC	1/1955	75	B192	297N

Police officers buried in St.Thomas Churchyard, Copt Hall Green

DAY Edward	PC	7/1982	56	Stone	333J
WISEMAN Ernest	PC	4/1976	79	Stone	1049N/196J1

CHRONOLOGY

1840

January. The Metropolitan Police take over Waltham Abbey from the "Old Watch".

The area, part of the N (Islington) Division, Outer District, Section 2, includes Upshire, Holyfield, Sewardstone, High Beach and Chingford. The inspector in charge is at Enfield Highway. Waltham Abbey has its own Petty Sessions court.

1849

A new County Court is built in Highbridge Street.

1852

A new stable is rented in Highbridge Street for the use of police.

1859

A volunteer fire-brigade station is erected beside the police station in Highbridge Street.

1860

April. The Metropolitan Police take over security of the GunPowder and Small Arms Factories. (RGPF & RSAF)

1872

March. Townspeople send a memorial to the Commissioner asking for a new police station. September. A new police station site is purchased in Sun Street.

1873

Waltham becomes part of the Woodford sub-division.

1876

January. The new police station is opened.

1882

May. Queen Victoria opens Epping Forest to the people. 1,529 police of all ranks are on duty.

1883

An "ABC" electric telegraph is connected between Sun Street and Enfield Lock (RSAF) police station.

1886

March. PC Harold Richardson is drowned in Lea Navigation. August. The station again becomes part of the Enfield Highway sub-division of N upon the formation of J Division to the east. Ties with Woodford and Loughton are severed for more than a century. A stable, for use of police, is built at Kings Head Hill, Chingford.

1888

March. A new police station is opened at Kings Head Hill, Chingford. Boundary changes take place and parts south of Mott Street are ceded to the new station. Chingford becomes part of the Walthamstow sub-division. The RGPF (and its police stations) has an internal telephone system installed.

1907

A public telephone is introduced to the Sun Street police station with a number of "Waltham Cross 200".

1911

The last police horse is withdrawn from Sun Street. October. PC Frederick Free is drowned in Lea Navigation.

1916

April. Honey Lane is extensively bombed by an airship in the biggest single raid on one roadway in the Great War. There are no casualties.

1923

The Metropolitan Police withdraw from the RGPF.

1926

The Metropolitan Police withdraw from the RSAF.

1930

A fire brigade siren is installed to replace a system of bells,

1933

August. Waltham Abbey leaves N Division and joins J Division on the Walthamstow sub-division with Chingford.

1936

The local police telephone box system becomes operational.

1939

September. The station receives its first motor vehicles, a Wolseley car and a motor cycle.

1945

March. The CourtHouse and a large section of Highbridge Street are destroyed in the first fatal war incident locally.

1952

March. Niven Craig is involved in a case of robbery at 55 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, which leads to him receiving 12 years imprisonment, and to his brother, Christopher, shooting PC Miles in Croydon whilst with Bentley who was hanged in

1954

The station is given a post war facelift and has partial central heating fitted to the downstairs areas.

1959

Lightweight motor cycles for patrolling are introduced locally.

1960

July. The station office counter service is closed at nighttime between 10pm and 6am, but officers continue to operate from the building.

1964

The living quarters are closed up for conversion into office space.

1965

April. The station is granted autonomy under a new unit system that places an inspector in control of day to day police operations. The station counter service reopens. The area of Sewardstone is returned to Waltham Abbey control.

1981

New gates are installed in the rear wall of the station yard in preparation for Sun Street pedestrianisation. (1983).

1986

June. J Division ceases to exist and Waltham Abbey becomes part of Chingford (JC) Division. Epping Forest District Museum in Sun Street displays a police related exhibition in the Small Gallery.

1988

February. Waltham Abbey is placed as part of Barkingside (JB) Division to ease police contact with the Epping Forest District Council, thereby rejoining a division with Woodford, Loughton etc on it.

1991

June to December. The Sun Street station receives extensive, and expensive, restoration including a new roof and extended central heating.

1992

January. Internal restoration of the building continues. As part of a new policing system (similar to that of 1965) the station office counter service is again closed at night between 10.00pm and 6am daily.

2000

March 31. The Metropolitan Police period ceases. April 1. Essex Police, Harlow Division, takes over policing in Waltham Abbey.

2001

January. Epping Forest District Museum draws upon the WAP Historical Collection to put on a display marking 160 years of the Metropolitan Police in the area. October. The former Recreation Room [aka 'Crooks Hall'] demolished.

2011

The police station closes and is offered for sale by Essex Police with the proviso that the new owner would need to continue to accommodate the Airwave radio system until it was withdrawn.

RESIDENTS IN THE ACCOMODATION AT 35 SUN STREET 1881 - 1965

1881 Charles TUBB Inspector Wife and family
Joseph WEST PC Wife and family
John ROHNUN PC Single
Richard KNIGHT PC Single
Walter FRANKLING PC Single
Total number of residents in the 1881 Census = 18 people.
Note that the two West children died in 1882
1885 Charles COWELL Inspector Wife and family
John BROADBRIDGE Inspector Family
Three single men; the fourth being removed in 1883
1891 Joseph EDMONDS Inspector Wife and family
Charles VAGO PC Single man
James HARMER PC Single man
Harold COLE PC Single man
William BAKER PC Single man
James LEWER PC Single man
Rueben PURSELL PC Single man
George LAMB PC Single man
James BARNES PC Single man
1901 Thomas JONES PS Wife
Unknown single men.
1909 Frederick SMITH PS Widower [1908]
Other residents unknown.

Note: After 1908 the marks 'U' and 'S' refer to the Upstairs flat at the rear and the Split flat with sleeping accommodation upstairs at the front but the living accommodation otherwise downstairs.

1914 U Albert HISCOCKS PS Wife and family
S Joseph HEDGES PS Wife and family
1921 U Albert HISCOCKS PS Wife and family
S George QUANTRELL SPS Wife and family
1927 U Arthur FENNER PS Wife and family
S George QUANTRELL PS Wife and family
1931 U Arthur FENNER PS Wife and family
S Alexander ROBERTSON Inspector Wife and family
1932 U Edward BANKS PS Wife and family
S Alexander ROBERTSON Inspector Wife and family
1938 U George WOOD PS Wife and family
S Reginald WARNER PS Wife and family
1956 U Robert KENT PC Wife and family
S Reginald WARNER PS Wife and family
1959 U Robert KENT PC Wife and family
S Colin DENSHAM PC Wife and family

Those residents whose exact dates of occupancy are known include: -

HISCOCKS PS 48N 1913-1927
QUANTRELL SPS 27N 1921-1930
FENNER SPS 43N 1927-March 1932
ROBERTSON Inspector November 1931 – March 1934
BANKS PS 92N March 1932 – 1935
WOOD PS 68J 1936 – 1956
WARNER PS 75J 1938 – 1959
KENT PC 480J 1956 – 1964
DENSHAM PC 502J 1959 – 1964

APPENDIX VI

TOWN STATION MANPOWER 1840 - 1990

Year	Inspector	SPS	PS	APS	PC	In charge	Notes and Population.
1801							[Pop: 3,040]
1821							[Pop: 3,982]
1840			4		13		Intended strength
1840			2		12		Actual [Pop: 4,177]
1844			1			Insp. Joseph Mellish	
1849						PS Edward Hutton	
1854						PS George Lock	
1863						PS Henry Whale	[Pop: 5,044]
1866						PS Henry Sturgeon	
1869						PS Isaac Peutney	
1873			2		19	PS Mee & PS Robert Hole	
1877		4			14*	SPS Charles Tubb	
1881	2		2		14*	Insp. Charles Tubb	[Pop: 5,377]
1885	2	2			14*	Insp. Charles Cowell & Insp. John Broadbridge	
1889	2	2	2		18*	Insp. Joseph Edmonds	
1893	1	3	2		16*	Insp. Joseph Edmonds	
1901	1	4	2		16*	SPS Thomas Jones	
1903	2	2	2		16*	SPS Thomas Jones & SPS Simmonds	
1904	1	6	2		17*	SPS William Brooker	
1909	6	2			17*	PS [sic] Frederick Smith	
1911	2	4	2		15	SPS Frederick Smith	
1916	4**	6**	1		17**	SPS Henry Simkin	
	[2]		[4]		[56]	Special Constabulary	
1921	2	5	1		17	SPS Henry Skeates	[Pop: 6,796]
1925	2	5	1		17	SPS George Quantrell	
1933	1	6***	2		23***	Insp. Alexander Robertson	
1939	1	7***	1		42**	PS George Wood	[Pop: 6,831]
1966	1	5			35	Insp. Dennis Maxwell	
1975	1	5			35	Insp. Neville Stevenson	
1990	1	5			24	Insp. Michael Free	

* Includes mounted officers. ** Distorted by war recalls. *** Includes court staff

These figures were taken from a variety of contemporary documents including police archives, Kelly's postal directories and county directories. They are therefore only as accurate as the source.

1913 DERBY**TRANSCRIPT OF THE REPORT OF PS 4NR FRANK BUNN RELATING THE EVENTS AT EPSOM ON DERBY DAY JUNE 4 1913.**

"I beg to report that at 3.10pm 4th inst. I was on duty at Tattenham Corner near the tan path whilst the race for the Derby Cup was being run. Several horses passed by when a woman, supposed Emily Davison, ran out from under the fence and held her hands up in front of HM King's horse, whereby she was knocked down and rendered unconscious.

Dr.Lane of Banstead attended to the woman and directed her removal to the Cottage Hospital, Epsom, where she was taken in a private motor car No. LA7959 owned by J B V Faber Esq., Manor House, Ewell, who placed same at disposal of police. Mrs Warburg of 2 Craven Hill, Paddington, W rendered great assistance to the injured woman and accompanied her in the motor car to hospital, she formerly having been a nurse. She was seen by the House Surgeon, Dr Peacock, and detained. The Doctor stated she was suffering from concussion and was unconscious. On her jacket being removed I found 2 Suffragette flags, 1½ yards long by ¾ yards wide, each consisting of green, white and purple stripes, folded up and pinned to the back of her jacket, on the inside. On person, 1 purse containing 3/8¾d., 1 return half railway ticket from Epsom Race Course to Victoria No 0315, 2 postal order counterfoils No. 790/435593 for 2/6, 'crossed' written in ink thereon, one 20H/924704 for 716 E.Gore 1/4/13 written in ink thereon, one insurance ticket dated May 10th 1913 on G.E. railway to and from New Oxford Street, 8 ½d stamps, 1 key, 1 helpers pass for Suffragette Summer Festival, Empress Rooms, High Street, Kensington for 4th June 1913, 1 small memo book, 1 race card, some envelopes and writing paper, 1 handkerchief Emily Davison Mrs. E.W. D8 88. The jockey, Herbert Jones, age 28, of Egerton House, Newmarket, was thrown from the horse and rendered unconscious. Dr.Percy John Spencer, 'Casa Pedro', Mellison Road, Tooting, attended to him and he was removed on police ambulance to Ambulance Room on course by Inspr. Whitebread and P.C. 85'NR' Johnson. Dr. Coultard, Race Course Doctor and Dr Spencer there examined him and stated he was suffering from abrasion on left of face, abrasion over left eye and shoulder, contusion of left elbow and shock. Mr. Jones recovered consciousness and was left in charge of the doctors. Mr. W. Fenn of Egerton House, Newmarket, with whom he resides took charge of him, stating he would have him removed to the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street on the evening of the 4th inst. And remove him home on the 5th inst. The horse which pitched over onto its head stopped on the course and was handed over to Mr. George Prince, Egerton House, Newmarket by PS 35'T' Lewis. It received slight cuts to the face and body and injury to its off fore hoof.

No other personal injury, No expenses incurred by police. **Witnessed by PC 59'NR' Eady stationed at Waltham Abbey** who was standing on the opposite side of the course and saw the woman, as the horses approached the spot, get under the fence and face them and extend her arms toward them. No other damage or personal injury".

Frank Bunn PS 4'NR'

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