

History Matters

The Devon & Cornwall Police History Magazine

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The Cornwall Constabulary 1856-1967 Part Two – The WW2 Years

Chittlehampton Police 1842-1857

Traffic Ephemera

Excerpts from a Cornish Constable's Casebook

The Long Paw of the Law

Welcome to the thirty-second issue of 'History Matters: The Devon & Cornwall Police History Magazine'. This month we have a continuation of the potted history of the Cornwall Constabulary (1856-1967) which started in the previous issue, covering the tumultuous years of the Second World War. We also have an article on the little-known Chittlehampton Police which existed from 1842 to 1857.

This month's issue also introduces 'OffBeat', an infrequent series which looks at crime and policing stories from across the world.

If you have an idea for an article for a future issue of History Matters, please get in touch.

56658 Mark Rothwell

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...and more...

"The man who protests the loudest against the supplying of funds for police affairs is usually the man who spends the most for locks."

- **Colonel Joseph A. Gerk, Chief of Police, St Louis, USA (1930)**

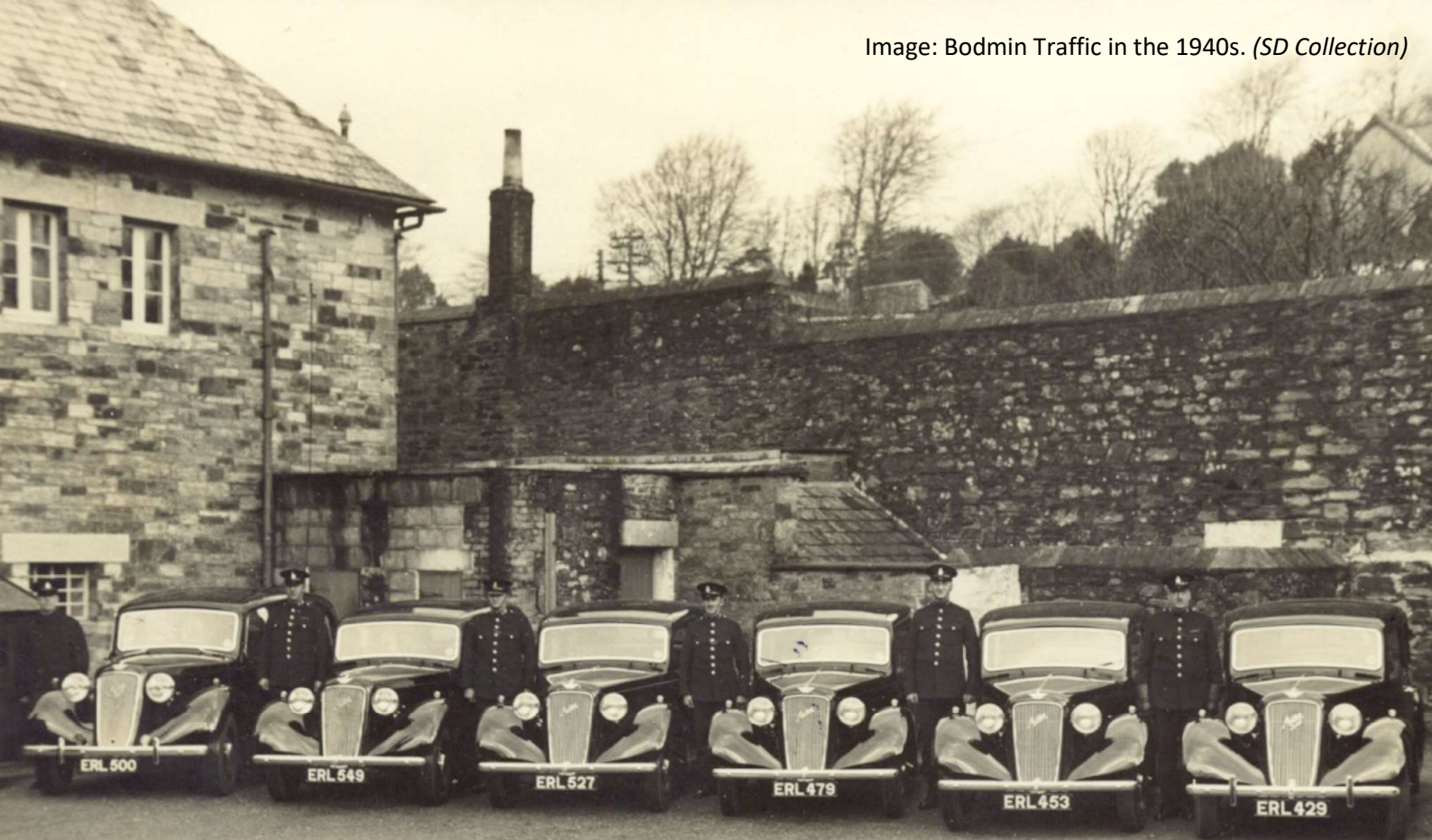
Front cover image: PC 469 John Harris, 1982. Harris and his dog 'Bud' were commended by the chief constable for their part in the arrest of two men in Totnes. The offenders were later convicted of 23 burglaries. (SD)

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Email: mark.rothwell3@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Tel: 07305545399

Social media: @TheRothOfKhan (Twitter)



CORNWALL CONSTABULARY 1856-1967

PART TWO | THE WW2 YEARS

The Second World War led to many alterations within the Cornwall Constabulary. The Isles of Scilly Police and Penzance Borough Police were merged with the force according to emergency defence regulations, and for the first time in history, the whole county was policed by a single constabulary. The wartime merger led to a temporary change of name, and until 1947 the force was known as 'Cornwall Joint Police'.

The war necessitated the emergency enrolment of auxiliary constables in every police force, and in Cornwall over 1,000 special constables and 129 war reserve constables stepped up to assist the regulars. Although enemy air raids largely affected the major cities, Cornwall did not escape Hitler's bombs, and much damage was caused to Penzance, Saltash, and Torpoint.

Additional duties placed upon the police included responsibility for co-ordinating Air Raid Precautions (ARP), appointing air raid wardens, and overseeing registration for the Home Guard.

A 'War Department' was established at Bodmin Police Station, in charge of which was placed ACC Ernest Hosking who acted as the liaison between the Chief Constable and the Civil Defence authorities. When the Americans joined the war and began landing troops in Britain in readiness for the liberation of Europe, Superintendent Reginald Rowland was designated as the police liaison between the British and American armies at Ponsanooth.

British policemen were largely protected from call-up, as the office of constable was a reserved occupation during

the Second World War. However, in 1943 the rules were relaxed, and 86 Cornish policemen joined the colours.

The Christmas Eve Murder

Under the clouds of war, a dreadful murder occurred in Falmouth on Christmas Eve 1942. The victim, Albert James Bateman, owned a tobacco shop on Arwenack Street. He was found dead behind the shop counter with horrific head injuries, apparently caused by repeated blows from the butt of a revolver. The following day, his killer, Horace Gordon Trenoweth, a Falmouth Docks worker, was arrested on suspicion of murder. In his pocket a torn £1 banknote was found for which he could not provide a satisfactory explanation.

A search of the crime scene by officers revealed the other half of the torn bill in a wastepaper basket. Following an appeal, a witness revealed that they had seen the victim repairing the bill on the day of his murder. The two halves were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory in Bristol. Not only could the perforations be matched, the lab was also able to match the gum Bateman used to repair the note analytically with a substance found in Bateman's shop. Trenoweth's conviction was based on the strength of the forensic evidence, and he was sentenced to death by hanging. Neither Bateman nor Trenoweth knew one another prior to the incident.

The crime is notable for two reasons; it was the first crime in the southwest to be detected using forensic science and resulted in the final time that a convicted murderer was hanged at Exeter Prison. Trenoweth's execution took place on 6th April 1943. The executioner was the infamous hangman, Albert Pierrepoint.



Googh Wholesale Tobacconist's, Arwenack Street, Falmouth. (Simon Dell Collection)



The interior of Bateman's shop, where Trenoweth murdered him. (Simon Dell Collection)

The Battle of Launceston

African American soldiers billeted in the UK during the war were, according to US military policy at the time, segregated from their white colleagues. There was much resentment amongst the young black men who enlisted on promises of fighting on the frontlines yet found themselves consigned to unexciting quartermaster roles. Emotions were acutely heightened by the recent American race riots and this enmity travelled with them across the Atlantic. The problem was exacerbated by the American military's decision to allocate the white soldiers to more comfortable billets, and

their preference for preventing white and black soldiers from socialising in the Cornish towns when off duty. In the cities, each were strictly segregated to certain parts of the city. In the countryside, the soldiers were allowed into town on alternate days.

It was the policy of the British police not to interfere in matters relating to the enforcement of racial segregation. Simply, if a British constable found an American soldier contravening a foreign military regulation, he was to do nothing about it. The Americans policed their own in this respect, and it was common in Cornwall during the war to see armed American military policemen (MPs) with their white helmets looking out for the indiscretions of their own. Moreover, under the *Visiting Forces Act 1942*, the Americans reserved the right to hold their own courts martial. Many American soldiers who committed crimes on British soil were imprisoned, some of them subject to the death penalty for the most serious crimes.

Tensions between the segregated American troops came to a head in Launceston on 26th September 1943. The date in question was a “white day” as far as the military was concerned, and the black troops were required to stay on base whilst their white colleagues enjoyed the tastes of the town and fraternised with the locals. Deeply unhappy at the situation, a group of forty to fifty black soldiers armed with machine guns left camp and opened fire on a group of MPs in the middle of Launceston town. Two sergeants were struck in the legs, windows were smashed, and masonry flew in all directions. Remarkably, nobody was killed, however the reputation of the US military had been dented and punitive measures followed.

The accused, a technical sergeant, a sergeant, and twelve privates, were

arrested by the military police and charged with attempted murder. The Americans preferred to court martial the men as a group rather than individually, and as no court room in Cornwall was big enough to hold a trial of this size, the accused were conveyed to Paignton and tried in the police court room.

All of the men were convicted, dishonourably discharged, and subject to forfeiture following a three-day hearing. The privates were each sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment with hard labour, and the sergeants were sentenced to 20 years each with hard labour. The incident became known as ‘The Battle of Launceston’.

Murder of an American Soldier at Camborne

Another, lesser-known, violent incident between racially segregated troops occurred in Camborne in 1944. A large contingent of African American troops was billeted in tents in the woods at Illogan and it was common to see the black soldiers travelling around Camborne by vehicle and on foot. One day, as a troop carrier travelled along Wesley Street, a white American soldier threw a knife which pierced the rear of the vehicle and almost struck a black soldier who was looking out over the tailgate.

Two black soldiers on foot saw the incident and approached the assailant from behind, one of whom punched him to the back of the head which killed him instantly. The incident was witnessed by PC (later Deputy Chief Constable) Arthur Pill. The investigation was handled by the American Special Investigations Branch under the command of Captain Pratt who was granted access to Camborne Police Station to interview witnesses and deal with the suspect. An identity parade was carried out

at Illogan Woods, and the suspect was accordingly identified from the line up by PC Pill.

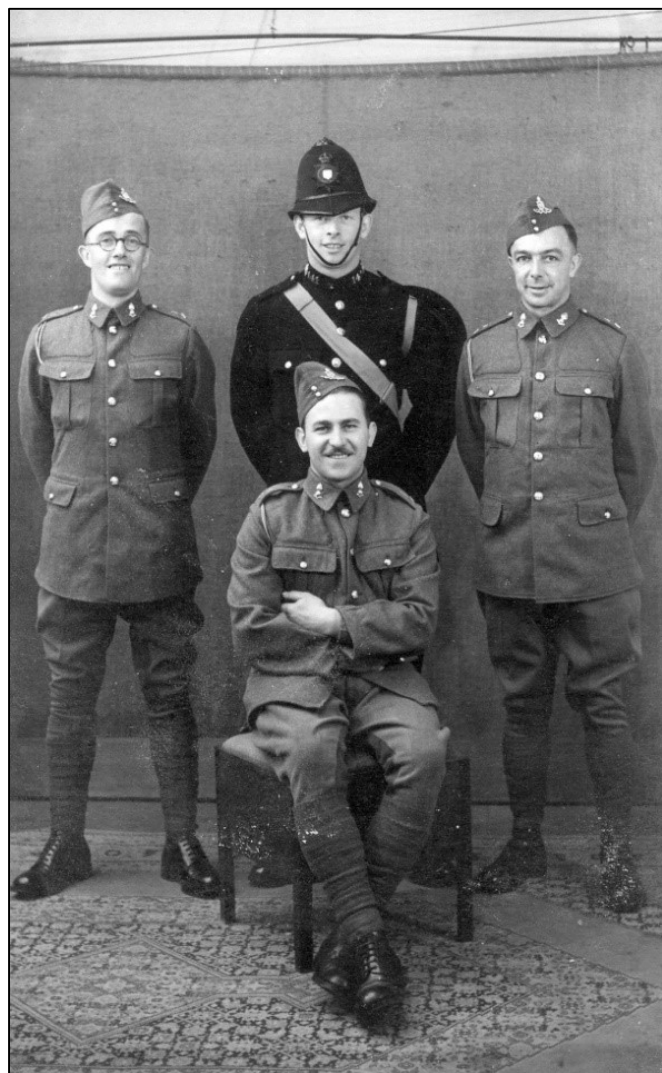
It was during the detention of the suspect at Camborne Police Station that PC Pill observed the extreme measures the Americans were prepared to take to obtain a confession. Seeing that two American agents were readying themselves to strike the suspect with a truncheon, Pill warned the officers that such conduct would not be tolerated by the Cornwall Constabulary, and the agents duly backed down and left the room. With the American agents out of sight, the suspect confessed to PC Pill to striking the officer, and on the strength of Pill's witness statement, the soldier was court martialled.

Mutual Aid from Lancashire

The number of foreign troops stationed in Cornwall peaked in the Spring of 1944, although there were no further incidents of serious violence as had been seen in Launceston and Camborne. The force decided to take no risks however, and mutual aid was called for. Help arrived in the form of a contingent of the Lancashire Constabulary on 29th May. Appropriately, the Lancashire officers were placed under the command of Cornwall's Inspector Lancaster. Their duty done, the Lancastrians departed Cornwall on 9th June, each in possession of an oversized Cornish pasty courtesy of the chief constable.

Women Constables

On 10th May 1944, the Cornwall Standing Joint Committee proposed a policewomen's department numbering twenty officers, however only four women applied (two of them were members of the WAAF). The difficulties experienced recruiting women into the force meant that a substantial intake did not take place until 1947.



PC Matthew Trelease with three soldiers in St Ives. Note the straps across the constable's chest and around the shoulder, to which were attached a gas mask and steel helmet. (Frank Grigg Collection)



Cornwall Constabulary group, 1939. Officers wear the standard decontamination equipment thought to offer the best protection against gas attacks. (Simon Dell Collection)



Inspector J.H. Tucker, Wadebridge, June 1944. Here the inspector is escorting evacuees from Epsom and Ewell, Surrey. Many Cornish households opened their doors to evacuees. Over 1.4 million were evacuated from urban areas to rural locations during the Second World War. (Editor's Collection)



A Cornwall Constabulary constable on duty in Penzance in the aftermath of an air raid. The constable was stationed at Chyandour, but his proximity to the borough of Penzance, which was policed independently until 1943, meant he often found himself providing mutual aid. (George Brown Collection)

Cornwall Constabulary Casualties of War

Of the 86 constables who joined the colours towards the end of the Second World War, three lost their lives. PC 183 Thomas Collins was reported missing in action on 24th August 1943, PC 158 Austin Kinver Ware was killed in action in Europe on 10th June 1944, and PC 125 Daniel Edwards was killed in action in Italy on 8th October 1944. Their names were added to the plinth of the Cornwall Constabulary war memorial in Bodmin.

Those who remained on home soil emerged from the war weary and fatigued. Great strains had been placed on the force's members for many years, and the constabulary as a whole was in much need of TLC. Certain extraneous duties which had fallen by the wayside, such as the upkeep and deep cleaning of police stations, recommenced as soon as possible.



Major Edgar Hare MC was chief constable of Cornwall during the Second World War. He was briefly recalled to active military service from 28th January to 4th May 1940. (Simon Dell Collection)

TO BE CONTINUED...

CHITTLEHAMPTON POLICE

1842-1857



In 1842, the parish vestry in the North Devon village of Chittlehampton, near South Molton, ordered the establishment of a police force of ten parish constables to be appointed annually. The laws around the remuneration of parish constables at the time meant that these officers would likely have received small payments for serving court papers, making arrests, and compensation for miles travelled on foot.¹

In 1848, the police in Chittlehampton consisted of seven yeomen, two village smiths, a butcher, and a mason; a sizeable portion of the village's working men. In this year, it was decided that a paid police constable should be appointed on a salary of £60 per annum to take charge of the parish constables, and Earl Fortescue (then Deputy Lieutenant of Devon) was asked to nominate a 'fit and proper person'. William Ballard was the successful candidate, and he was provided with a cutlass at the expense of the parish. Ballard's suitability for the role can only be speculated on. He was born in Cambridge

in 1810, and in 1851 whilst serving as the paid constable of Chittlehampton, he lodged in the home of James Griffin, a Chittlehampton Cooper.² Ballard was married, but Mrs Ballard did not join him in Chittlehampton. In 1861, Ballard lived in the Lambeth area of London with his family and served as a beadle. It is therefore possible that Ballard was originally plucked from the Metropolitan Police, as was common when the home counties started forming their own police forces.

During a meeting of the Chittlehampton parish vestry in 1849, a motion was made to reduce Ballard's salary by £10 per year. At the same meeting, a motion to dismiss the services of the paid constable altogether was defeated by 35 votes to 33.³ The White's Devonshire Directory of 1850, which paints Chittlehampton as a small community of beer houses, farms, and workshops, describes Ballard as the 'police superintendent'.⁴ Constable Ballard served for almost a decade as the Chittlehampton policeman, and his activities are well-documented in the newspapers of the time.

In November 1848, Ballard charged Sarah Nicholls with the theft of a goose, the property of a Mr Richard Crocker. Ballard could only find circumstantial evidence of the stolen bird at Nicholls' house – the head, entrails, and feathers. Whilst conveying her to South Molton under arrest, Ballard noticed that Nicholls looked a bit 'bulky' and on arrival in the town asked Mrs Fisher, the wife of the chief constable of South Molton Borough Police, to search her, where she was found to have secreted the remains of the bird underneath her clothing. The case was heard before the Rev. W.H. Karlake in the Chittlehampton parish vestry and was referred to the Devon

¹ Parish Constables Act 1842

² 1851 Census

³ 'Parish Once Had Ten Constables' North Devon Journal 16 March 1950, p4, col.4

⁴ White's Directory of Devon 1850

General Sessions where Nicholls was sentenced to three months with hard labour.⁵

In July 1850 during a night patrol, Ballard saw two men passing over Umberleigh Bridge each in possession of a bag. He approached the men and asked, "What are you carrying there?" One of the men replied, "Nothing in particular". "Then I will see," Ballard said. Both men then bolted and dropped the bags, resulting in a short pursuit which Ballard eventually abandoned in favour of returning to the spot where the bags fell to recover them as evidence. Inside each was one half of the carcass of a sheep. One the men had also dropped his walking stick, which was also recovered. Enquiries carried out across Chittlehampton, South Molton, and parts of Exmoor in conjunction with Superintendent Fisher and PC Huxtable of the South Molton Borough Police force established that the animals belonged to Robert Elworthy of Kingsland Farm. The sheep stealers, Richard Lewis and John Bennett, were later arrested and charged with theft.⁶

The sentence was particularly harsh compared to the crime – Bennett was sentenced to ten years' transportation and Lewis to nine months' hard labour.⁷ On 22nd May 1854, Constable Ballard appeared at the county magistrates in South Molton, however this time on the other side of the fence. It was alleged by Thomas Stone that Ballard had assaulted him on Fast-Day. The charge was upheld, and Ballard was fined £2 plus costs.⁸ In 1856, he arrested Henry Crocker and James Smalldon for illegally fishing for salmon from the River Taw at Umberleigh Bridge. The men were charged to court and Crocker was

sentenced to one month's labour. Smalldon was fined 8 shillings.⁹

Upon the establishment of the Devon Constabulary in 1857, men like Ballard, who had served as senior police officers in the small Devonshire towns, found themselves ineligible to transfer to the county police for various reasons. In Ballard's case, he was too old to transfer to the Devon Constabulary, and on 12th February 1857, he resigned.¹⁰

A story, based on rumour and embellished by the press, tells of a humorous encounter one of the new county constables stationed at Chittlehampton had with a 'poor rustic'* one day. Seeing the man walking with a bag over his shoulder, the constable asked the man what was inside. After some resistance from the man and some remonstrations with the constable, the man opened up the bag and allowed the constable to reach inside. No sooner had he placed his hand inside had he pulled it out again, for inside the bag was a live badger which bit down on three of the constable's fingers.¹¹

**rustic is a derogatory, antiquated word for an unsophisticated country person.*

My thanks to the webmaster of www.british-police-history.uk for assistance compiling this article. The British Police History website is a mammoth effort to document every British police force ever to have existed. If you think you can help, please visit the website. You can also sign up to the website for free and access a quarterly police history newsletter. Previous issues of this magazine can also be found on there.

⁵ Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 30 November 1848 and 7 December 1848

⁶ 'South Molton' North Devon Journal 18 July 1850, p9, col.2

⁷ 'South Molton' Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 27 July 1850, p8, col.2

⁸ 'South Molton' North Devon Journal 25 May 1854, p5, col.6

⁹ 'Poaching in the Taw' Exeter Flying Post 24 January 1856, p7, col.6

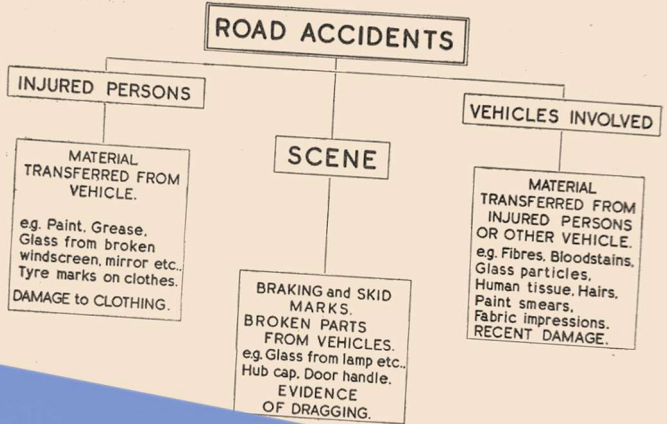
¹⁰ 'Chittlehampton' North Devon Journal 19 February 1857, p5, col.4

¹¹ 'Trapping a Constable' Weston-super-Mare Gazette and General Advertiser, 1 August 1857, p3, col.5

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Excerpts from a Cornish Constable's Casebook

According to regulations laid down by Cornwall's Chief Constable Walter Raleigh Gilbert, every member of the force was required to keep a journal which he was expected to produce to a senior officer on request for inspection. The following excerpts are from the journal of PC 45 William John DYER who served 1887-1917 at Bodmin, Falmouth, The Lizard, St Buryan, St Just, Redruth, Antony, Saltash, and Mawgan.

Date, description of occurrence, and outcome.
Feb 22 nd , 1888. ¹² Apprehended Wm. ¹³ Wright, seaman, drunk and incapable at Bar, Falmouth. Fined 5/- and 2/6 costs.
June 2 nd , 1887. Apprehended George and Annie McDonald, two tramps, for sleeping in an outhouse at Priory Lane, Bodmin. Dismissed.
November 4 th , 1887. Apprehended Bob May, a tramp who I found drunk in the Church Yard, Bodmin. Dismissed.
March 10 th , 1888. Reported Michael Drew of Falmouth for being drunk and disorderly at the Quay, Falmouth. Fined 5/- and 9/6 costs.
February 25 th , 1888. Reported Thomas Johns of Falmouth for being drunk and disorderly at the Quay, Falmouth. Fined 5/- plus costs.
April 2 nd , 1888. Reported Mary Ann Eva of Falmouth for being drunk and disorderly at the Moor, Falmouth. Fined 5/- plus costs.
April 15 th , 1888. Assisted Insp. Rosevear in apprehended (sic) James McDonald, R.A.M., for assaulting Insp. Rosevear. 14 days H.L. ¹⁴
(No date given) Apprehended Daniel Sullivan, a sailor, for being drunk and disorderly near the Railway & Dock Hotel, Falmouth. Fined 2/6 plus costs.
(No date given) Apprehended George Jameson, a tramp, for acting as a pedlar without a certificate at Park Cottages, Falmouth. Fined 1/- plus costs.
July 11 th , 1888. Apprehended John Bennetts, a tramp, for begging at Erisey Terrace, Falmouth. Committed 7 days H.L.
November 7 th , 1889. Reported William Williams of Ruan Minor for carrying and using a gun without a license at Ruan Minor. Compromised, received 10/-
December 26 th , 1889. Reported George Curnow of Ruan Major for carrying and using a gun without a license at Ruan Major. Fined £1 including costs.
February 6 th , 1890. Apprehended Edwin Hocking, fish dealer for Porthleven, for being drunk and disorderly whilst being in charge of a horse and cart at The Lizard (and whilst) out on bail to Petty Sessions. Fined £1.10.0 plus costs.

¹² Entry was made in the diary retrospectively

¹³ 'William' abbreviated

¹⁴ H.L. = Hard Labour

Date, description of occurrence, and outcome.
July 24 th , 1890. Reported Joseph Lugg, Hotel Keeper of The Lizard, for being drunk on his licensed premises. Dismissed.
January 9 th , 1892. Reported Herbert Spratt of Porthcurno for carrying a spring gun without a license at St Levan Cross. Not summoned.
January 11 th , 1892. Reported William Penrose of Lamorna, St Buryan, for carrying a gun without a license at Rose Moddres, St Buryan. Case compromised. Received 10/-
October 29 th , 1892. Reported Richard J. Olds of Penberth, St Levan, for carrying a gun without a license at St Buryan. Fined 7/6 plus costs.
November 15 th , 1892. Reported John Gwennap Rodda of Alsia, St Buryan, for carrying a gun without a license at St Buryan. Case dismissed, received 5/- reward.
December 26 th , 1892. Reported Hugh Wilcock of Penberth, St Buryan, for carrying a gun without a license at Tresidder, St Buryan. Fined 10/- plus costs.
March 19 th , 1893. Reported John Hosking, of Carneforth, St Just, for being drunk and incapable at Churchtown, St Just. Fined £1 plus costs.
June 22 nd , 1893. Reported Albert Hollow of North Place, St Just, for being drunk and disorderly at North Place, St Just. Fined 7/6 plus costs.
October 31 st , 1893. Reported Martha Paul of Roskenna Place, Penzance, for being drunk and incapable at Market Square, St Just. Fined 5/- plus costs.
December 7 th , 1893. Reported Thomas Lutey of Helynack, St Just, for carrying a gun without a license at Helynack Moor, St Just. Case compromised. Received 10/-
January 21 st , 1894. Reported Elizabeth Carthen of St Just for selling intoxicating liquor at the Commercial Hotel, St Just, without having renewed her license. Not summoned.
April 4 th , 1894. Apprehended Richard and Ann Dale, two tramps, for sleeping in an outhouse at New Downs, St Just. Richard Dale, 14 days H.L., Ann Dale, 14 days imprisonment.
May 29 th , 1894. Reported Annie Hocking, landlady of the Wellington Hotel, St Just, for having her house open during prohibited hours, to John Legge and Edward Codyre. Both had glasses of whiskey in front of them, at 12.50am. Not summoned.
January 12 th , 1894. Apprehended Henry Edwards of Penzance, a chimney sweep, for being drunk and incapable at Market Square, St Just. Fined 5/- plus 2/6 costs.
July 4 th , 1894. Apprehended Richard Dale, a tramp, for sleeping in the open air on the highway at Chyoon, St Just. 7 days H.L.
August 4 th , 1894. In company with Sergeant Hodge, saw William Lawry of Newbridge, Sancreed, carrying a gun without a license at Newbridge. Fined 10/- plus costs.

My thanks to Simon Dell MBE for providing a copy of PC Dyer's journal.



THE LONG PAW OF THE LAW

The Development of Police Dog Units in Devon & Cornwall

From tracking ‘runners’, locating ‘mispers’, and sniffing out drugs and contraband, police dogs are a vital tool of the modern constabulary. But where did it all begin?

From the inception of the British police (1829 in London, 1836 in the home counties), it was common for constables to take their pet dogs on patrol, both for companionship as well as a means to frighten felons into an acceptable state of

submission. Dogs were also useful around police stations for keeping vermin under control. The first documented use of a dog for a policing purpose in the southwest of England was in Launceston in the 1860s. Superintendent Edward

Barrett, the chief constable of Launceston Borough Police, took his ferocious pet dog on patrol and would set it upon any unfortunate miscreant he happened upon. It was perhaps owing to Barrett occupying the unenviable responsibility of being Launceston's *only* paid constable that he enjoyed the security afforded by his loyal mongrel. In 1932, George Orchard, an old Launcestonian wrote of Barrett and his dog:

*"He rarely put on a uniform, but he always had his stick and dog. We were afraid of the dog more than we were afraid of Barrett."*¹⁵



Superintendent Edward Barrett, Launceston Borough Police. The wielder of Cornwall's first police dog. (*Simon Dell Collection*)

Another Cornish officer who went about his beat with four-legged companionship was Superintendent Edward Marshall who was in command of the Truro Division of the Cornwall Constabulary. On 10th January 1883, Marshall was travelling from Bodmin to Truro by horse

and cart, with his dog on board, when the cart ran up a bank and overturned. The dog survived, but Marshall was crushed to death. He was found by a farmer, who was unable to get close to the superintendent owing to the dog's fierce defence of his master's body. It was apparent the dog was less guarded around men in uniform, and it was said that it only stopped baring its teeth when a member of the Truro City Police force arrived.

On 6th February 1897, Plymouth Borough Police took ownership of a St Bernard named 'Colonel', courtesy of Mr Alfred Maitland, a resident of Plymouth.¹⁶ The dog, which was owned by Maitland, became inexplicably attached to certain members of the force, so much so that Maitland saw very little of him. Such was Colonel's infatuation with the constabulary, Maitland decided to donate him to the chief constable. Colonel was ceremoniously welcomed into the force by Chief Constable Sowerby, who acknowledged his recruitment in a letter to Mr Maitland:

*"Dear Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for your kind offer to increase the strength of the police force by one more member. Your powerful dog 'Colonel' is practically a policeman's dog already – I may almost say a special constable. On behalf of the force, I accept your offer, at the same time assuring you that 'Colonel' will not suffer from any want of attention from his comrades"*¹⁷

In 1902 in Devonport, the dockyard arm of the Metropolitan Police acquired a dog for general patrol work. 'Jack' (whose breed is not a matter of record) was the constant companion of the constable on duty in the north yard for nine years.¹⁸ He was said to have made a good job of keeping out stray dogs, sometimes sustaining serious injury in doing so. He was well-cared for

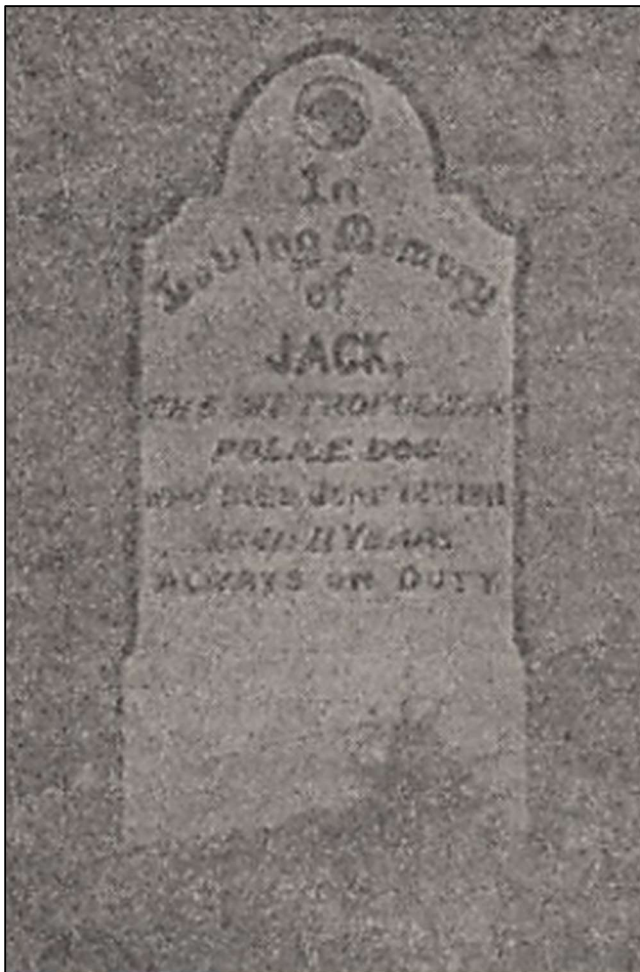
¹⁵ Launceston Police and Crime, www.launcestonthen.co.uk

¹⁶ 'The Plymouth Police Dog' Western Morning News 15 February 1897, page 8

¹⁷ 'Colonel Joins the Plymouth Police Force' Western Evening Herald 15 February 1897, page 2

¹⁸ 'Epitaph on the Metropolitan Police Dog' Western Daily Mercury 2 January 1912, page 7

by the dockyard officers, and in his later years was placed on the police 'reserve' list after he went blind. Jack died on 12th June 1911. A small epitaph was erected in the dockyards at the sight of his last relief and was inscribed 'Always on Duty'.¹⁹ Whether or not Jack, or the aforementioned Colonel, should be considered true police dogs is debatable, however they are worthy of mention for the high regard in which they were held by their police masters.



The gravestone of police dog 'Jack'. Erected in 1911 in Devonport dockyard at the site of his last relief. (BNA)

In 1914, Chief Constable Arthur F. Nicholson (Exeter City Police) donated his pet Airedale Terrier to the force for general patrol work with PC Bullen. Airedales had a proven track record as thief catchers, having been well-utilised by the

North Eastern Railway Police at Hull Docks since 1908.



Exeter's PC Bullen and the force's Airedale Terrier in 1914. The dog paraded with the force during a HMIC inspection on 26th August 1915 and was quite the talking point. (SWPHCT)

The Devon Constabulary used borrowed bloodhounds in the 1930s to track escapers from Dartmoor Prison. The mobilisation of these dogs formed part of a well-rehearsed 'escape plan', which included over 99 police officers, vehicles, and roadblocks, whenever an inmate made a dash for freedom.

On 15th December 1933, the Devon Constabulary Standing Joint Committee (a predecessor body of the modern Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner) met to discuss the establishment of a police dog unit in the county.²⁰ Despite a productive debate, none of those present came to

¹⁹ 'No Longer On Duty' Western Daily Mercury 2 January 1912, page 8

²⁰ 'First Mention of Police Dogs' Out of the Blue: Devon Constabulary Centenary, page 135

an agreement, and it took another 22 years before the matter was raised again.²¹



Devon Constabulary officer with a bloodhound on the hunt for an escaped prisoner near Plymouth in the 1930s. (*South West Police Heritage Collections Trust*)

In 1955, Police Sergeant Gater was selected to head up the new Devon Constabulary Dog Section. He acquired two dogs from Surrey Constabulary; a Doberman Pinscher named 'Feral', and a German Shepherd named 'Astor'. It was said that Feral was very good at giving chase, but hesitant when it came to using his teeth!

The first recorded arrest in Devon with the assistance of a police dog took place in Torquay on 21st June 1957. The accolade goes to Police Dog Astor who apprehended a man and woman who had robbed a taxi driver. Astor tracked them

to a goods shed at Torre Railway Station where they were promptly arrested.²²



Devon's first police dogs. Feral, left, and Astor. (*SWPHCT*)

"As a crime deterrent, the value of a police dog is unquestionable. His peculiar faculties of scent and trained inquisitiveness cause him to be regarded by the would-be wrongdoer as a possessor of powers which he did not understand and was most anxious to avoid".²³

- **Inspector Walter J. Hutchings, Devon
Constabulary, 1957**

In December 1960, Astor and Feral were at the forefront of a search for three escaped inmates from Dartmoor Prison. They sniffed out items of property dropped by the prisoners which confirmed the area for cordon and the subsequent apprehension of the men.²⁴ In the same year, two Alsatian pups were acquired – 'Bowesmoor Waldo' and 'Bowesmoor Yola'.²⁵ In September 1962, Devon's dogs were deployed to a bank robbery in Plymouth. The offenders made off in a car which was later found abandoned in Plymstock. The dogs managed to track from the car to a piece of waste ground which was later established to have been the place where the offenders were picked up by a second car. The

²¹ 'Police Dogs for Devon' Western Morning News 4 December 1933, page 4

²² Out of the Blue II, item 4140, page 6

²³ Out of the Blue: History of the Devon Constabulary 1857-1957

²⁴ Out of the Blue II, item 4205, page 6

²⁵ Out of the Blue II, item 4170, page 6

handler's evidence of continuity was accepted at the trial.²⁶

By 1965, the Devon Constabulary Dog Section had expanded to nine dog handlers and six dogs.

In Cornwall, a dog section was proposed on 13th July 1959 at the insistence of Chief Constable Kenneth M. Wherly, however no action was taken.²⁷ Even though Sergeant A.E. Hobbs from Bodmin attended a dog handler's course at Dorset Constabulary headquarters in 1961²⁸, the Cornwall Constabulary Dog Section was not formed until 1964. The first Cornish dog handler was PC 90 David John Clifford Doyle, who had to relocate from St Just to Falmouth to fulfil the role. He attended a dog handling course with Staffordshire Constabulary from 8th January to 15th April 1965, at a cost of £200 to the Cornwall Constabulary.²⁹ Three further handlers were appointed between 1965 and 1967, the last being PC 33 Ronald Bray on 18th May 1967. His dog was called Seamus.³⁰

On 1st June 1967, the police forces of Devon, Cornwall, and Plymouth amalgamated into the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, necessitating the union of the dog units from the constituent forces. The merger created a dog section of fifteen dog handlers situated at Plymouth, Tavistock, Barnstaple, Honiton, Camborne, Falmouth, Newquay, and St Austell. Following the Mountbatten Report on Prison Security, the section undertook patrols at Dartmoor Prison from 2nd January to 29th August 1967, the latter date being the moment specially trained prison dog handlers took over from their police colleagues.³¹ A police sergeant handler visited the

prison fortnightly until 1st November 1968 to assist in the continuation of training of the prison dogs.³²

It was common for police dog handlers to participate in national police dog trials in order to maintain good standards of trust and teamwork between dogs and their handlers. The events also permitted handlers from different forces to meet and discuss a common interest, and for one another to discuss unique specialisms, such as the 'cadaver' dogs trained by West Mercia Constabulary. The first trial Devon & Cornwall Constabulary participated in was in Staffordshire in 1967; two handlers and their dogs qualified as 'Excellent', and one as 'Very Good'. No trials took place in 1968 due to police resources being committed with the foot and mouth disease outbreak of that year. Public engagement with schools, as well as training with handlers for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, increased the profile of the dog section. Talks and training was also offered to the public, and 116 dogs and their owners took advantage of the Road Safety Dog Training School at Torquay.³³ The scheme was concluded in 1968, with 1008 owners and their dogs benefiting from it. In 1969, the dog section performed specialised patrols for several Royal Visits, as well as for rugby matches between the South African Touring XV and a South Western Counties XV at Exeter.³⁴

In 1970, the section carried out extraordinary training with the '666' Army Aviation Squadron based at Coypool in Plymouth. This consisted of familiarisation with 'Sioux' type helicopters and each dog and its handler took turns going up in

²⁶ Out of the Blue 2, Ch.6

²⁷ Cornwall Combined Police Authority Minutes 13 July 1959, item 27

²⁸ Cornwall Police General Order No.12 of 1961 30 September 1961

²⁹ Cornwall Police General Order No.11 of 1964 9 October 1964, item 125

³⁰ Cornwall Police General Order No.8 of 1967 18 May 1967, item 69

³¹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1967, page 31

³² Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1968, page 22

³³ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1967, page 32

³⁴ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1969, page 25

the helicopter for fifteen minute periods, ground exercises, and boarding and alighting. The dogs took to the scheme with zeal, the idea behind it being that dogs could be deployed very quickly to the scene of an incident, particularly prison escapes.³⁵



Heli-dogs. A collaboration between the force and the military to test the feasibility of deploying dogs to scenes quickly by air. (*Editor's Collection*)

In 1971, the size of the dog section increased to twenty for the whole force area and the effectiveness of the unit, at least in Cornwall's case, was enhanced with the advent of wireless-equipped patrol cars.³⁶

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary played host to the regional (No.6 and No.7) Police Dog Trials in April 1972, and as was custom, local handlers did not compete. However, at other competitions, the west country dog handlers took first place at British Alsatian Association Open Working Dog Trials (in the working dog and utility dog stakes), and first place at the Associated Sheep, Police and Army Dog Society Open Working Trials in the working dog stake.³⁷

Despite the high regard the dog section was held, no formal inspection of the unit was held until May 1975 when Chief Constable John C. Alderson gathered all of the force's handlers and dogs on Dartmoor. Amongst other benefits, the occasion gave the section the opportunity to meet colleagues from opposite ends of the force area, something they would rarely be able to do operationally.³⁸

The first commendation awarded to a dog handler in Devon and Cornwall took place in 1976; to PC Piper for consistent good work which resulted in many arrests.³⁹ In the same year, Police Dog Tosca, who was handled by PC Pomery, was the first police dog in the force to be trained to detect cannabis. This new skill was successfully put to the test on 21st April 1976 when the dog section was called out by the Drug Squad to search a cottage. The dog found a small amount of cannabis secreted inside a hollowed-out book on a bookshelf.⁴⁰ Additional training in drugs detection was provided to police dogs Sampson (Exeter) and Rex (Torquay) in 1977.⁴¹ In line with national standards, dogs were selected to undertake drugs detection training at around

³⁵ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1970, pages 25-26

³⁶ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1971, page 23

³⁷ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1972, page 21

³⁸ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1975, page 38

³⁹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1976, page 53

⁴⁰ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1976, page 54

⁴¹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1977, page 57

three years of age, and only then if the dog was temperamentally suitable.

In 1977, an inter-force dog trial was held at Middlemoor, with representation from all of the unit's geographical areas. The Barnstaple team won the day with a fine turnout from PC Shears and Police Dog Kurt, who were awarded the Chief Constable's Cup and the 'Jason Shield' for best nose work. Barnstaple won again in 1978, this time with PC Northwood and Police Dog Monty.⁴²

Dogs were deployed in the search for missing schoolgirl Genette Tate, who disappeared from Aylesbeare in 1978. The force was assisted by West Mercia Constabulary, which supplied dogs specially trained to detect human remains.

In 1980, the force was quite preoccupied with developing an air support unit and undertook a helicopter evaluation exercise during which dogs were conveyed from A to B to test the effectiveness of quickly dispatching handlers and dogs to incidents.⁴³ Like the experiment with the Sioux helicopters a decade earlier, the dogs took to it with gusto. In the same year, an extraordinary live operation saw PCs Harris and Fitzgerald, and their dogs Rex and King, taken aboard the American freighter 'Sealand Resource' off Brixham to search for two stowaways hidden in the vessel's enormous cargo hold. The men were, unsurprisingly, unable to evade the noses of the dogs. The dog section yet again demonstrated its vital role in dealing with prison escapes in 1980. Three men made dash for freedom from HMP Channings Wood, near Newton Abbot, and all were apprehended by PC John Shorter and Police Dog Sam within 25 minutes. The quick

apprehension of the trio earned Sam and his handler a Chief Constable's Commendation.⁴⁴



PC Shorter and Police Dog Sam. (*Editor's Collection*)

1980 was also the year that dogs and their handlers were trained in-house for the first time. Historically, training was undertaken at Home Office centres in locations such as Staffordshire and Dorset, and the ability to train locally was a major step forward for the unit. The first qualified instructor in the force was PC Graham Mabbutt from Plymouth who provided a high standard of training at a fraction of the cost. The milestone coincided with a scheme to allow school children to 'adopt' two police dogs, Arak and Ross, in a bid to maintain community relations and enable the children to follow the dogs' careers.

In 1981, the force acquired a twelve-month old Springer Spaniel bitch named Tavy who was specially trained to sniff out explosives. She was trained by the aforementioned PC Mabbutt and formally commenced her duties in November.⁴⁵ In the same year, the dog section allied itself with the Drug Squad resulting in the permanent attachment of Police Dog Rusty, then the force's longest-serving drugs dog, to the squad under the control of DC Smaldon.⁴⁶

⁴² Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1978, page 58

⁴³ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1980, page 49

⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1980, page 50

⁴⁵ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1981, page 69

⁴⁶ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1981, page 70

Rajah, a German Shepherd, commenced duty in October 1982 and became the force's second explosives search dog under the supervision of Sergeant Broad at Plymouth.⁴⁷ Flick, a Springer Spaniel, became the third in 1983.⁴⁸



Unknown Devon & Cornwall Police dog handler, c1980s. Does anybody know who he is? (*Editor's Collection*)

By 1983, the unit consisted of thirty-one dogs, four sergeant handlers and twenty-seven constable handlers. From this year on, dogs were no longer specially trained as drugs dogs, rather they were 'dual-purpose' drugs sniffers and general patrol workers. Twelve German Shepherds fulfilled this role, whilst six were trained as dual-purpose explosives sniffers: two Springer Spaniels and four German Shepherds.

At the request of the States of Jersey Police force, one explosives dog and his handler were loaned to the island force in 1984.⁴⁹ Devon & Cornwall Constabulary acquired almost all of its dogs, aged at around twelve to fourteen months minimum, as 'gifts' from members of the public, many of which failed to complete their training for a variety of reasons. The general-purpose police dog must possess the discipline and fortitude to complete an intensive thirteen-week initial course, and also possess the intelligence to obey commands.

Police Dog Sam, ever the efficient sniffer-outer of the devil's lettuce, excelled himself during a search for drugs at a house in Torquay when he dug an eighteen-inch-deep hole in the garden and pulled out a large polythene bag containing half a pound of cannabis. In another incident in Cornwall, Police Dog Ross sniffed out a stash of cannabis and dug it out from under the waste pipe of an outhouse.⁵⁰

It was necessary to curtail public dog displays in 1984 owing to the usual events, such as the county shows, falling on busy weekends and peak periods. Moreover, the Miners' Dispute of that year led to a postponement of the national dogs trials in which the west country dogs often excelled. The arrival of new drugs on the streets of Great Britain necessitated the training of drugs dogs to detect heroin, cocaine, and amphetamine, and by the end of 1985, twelve dogs were trained to detect these substances⁵¹ and sixteen by the end of 1986.⁵² The indomitable explosives dogs were tested to their limits in long and laborious searches related to IRA threats to VIPs, including incidents at hotels in Torquay during political party conferences.

⁴⁷ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1982, page 67

⁴⁸ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1982, page 68

⁴⁹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1984, page 74

⁵⁰ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1983, pages 76-77

⁵¹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1985, page 76

⁵² Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1986, page 69



Another unidentified Devon & Cornwall Police dog handler. Photo possibly taken in Exeter. Can anybody identify the handler? (*Editor's Collection*)

In 1986, the force was reorganised geographically and departmentally, meaning that the dog section thereafter came under 'A' Department. The threat from Irish terrorism resulted in the recruitment of two extra explosives sniffer dogs. Traditionally, the Springer Spaniel had been the first choice for the specialism, however the force also evaluated a Labrador which commenced duty in 1987 and proved himself just as capable as his springer colleagues⁵³. Threats to passenger ferries resulted in the deployment of explosives sniffer dogs to Millbay Docks as part of a national operation, and in October 1986, mutual aid was provided to Dorset Police in connection with the Conservative Party Conference.⁵⁴ They were also

heavily utilised in the run up to the 1987 General Election.

Proof that everyone makes mistakes, an embarrassing moment for Police Dog Bryn took place in 1987 at Torquay United Football Ground. Whilst deployed on public order duties during a relegation decider between Torquay and Crewe Alexandra, Bryn mistook Torquay footballer Jim McNichol for a charging hooligan and bit him on the leg. McNichol was thankfully bemused by the incident and posed for a photo with Bryn for the press after the game. The mishap provided a break in play and the extra time added to the game due to the incident allowed Torquay to score the equaliser and avoid relegation.



Torquay United's Jim McNichol and Police Dog Bryn, pictured in 1987 after Bryn accidentally bit McNichol on the pitch. (*D&C Annual Report 1987*)

Since the inception of the dog sections of the antecedent forces, all dog handlers in Devon and Cornwall had been male. In 1988, WPC 2797 Natalie Cole, based at Camborne, was appointed as the force's first female dog handler and commenced her training in January 1989.⁵⁵ She

⁵³ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1987, page 46

⁵⁴ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1986, page 69

⁵⁵ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1988, page 41

was followed by WPC Mary Simpson, based at Bodmin, in July 1989.⁵⁶



WPC Natalie Bulley, one of the force's first female dog handlers. (*SWPHCT*)

In 1988, a police dog which had been retired for around eighteen months was being walked by his handler in a wooded area when the handler saw someone acting suspiciously. The dog, which served as a dual-purpose drugs sniffer, had evidently not forgotten an iota of his police training, and sniffed out £2,750 worth of cannabis resin which was concealed in the suspect's vehicle.⁵⁷

In 1989, a working party report on the dog section, chaired by Superintendent B.N. Coombe, recommended an increase in the establishment of the dog section to be achieved by the end of 1992 to the effect three sergeants and ten constables.

The uplift of explosives dogs was recommended owing to the political situation at the time.

In 1990, PC Andy Parke and his dog 'Kye' won the PRO-DOG Gold Medal for lifesaving following an incident in Camborne. Following a report of a local man who had been missing for three days, Parke and Kye search perilous terrain at Tin Croft which is well-known for its many disused mines. After a hasty search in conjunction with the force helicopter, Kye found the man who had fallen 30 feet down a mine shaft. The man was pulled from the depths alive by the fire brigade. Had it not been for Kye's impeccable senses, the man may not have been found in time, if at all.⁵⁸ The award was presented in December 1990 by Leslie Scott-Ordish, the founder of the PRO-DOG National Charity, at their annual dinner held at the Wembley Hilton.

Throughout 1990, thirteen new police dogs were trained at Middlemoor, however the force found it increasingly difficult to obtain suitable candidates. With such high standards expected of the dogs, many of them fell short and had to be returned to the breeders. Additional explosives detection dogs were trained – seven in total by 1991 – in line with national recommendations. Usually Springer Spaniels or Labradors, they were loaned on several occasions, notably to Dorset Police and the States of Jersey Police during emergency mutual aid. The acquisition of dogs of the right stamp continued to be problematic over the course of 1991 and 1992, however there was no shortage of success stories amongst the existing contingent, with many lives saved, criminals arrested, and drugs and contraband detected.

On 5th and 6th March 1991, the No.6 and No.7 Regional Police Dog Trials were hosted by

⁵⁶ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1989, page 30

⁵⁷ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1988, page 41

⁵⁸ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1990, p35

Gloucestershire Constabulary at South Cerney. The Devon & Cornwall team, represented by PC Tim Theobald and Jet, PC John Harris and Bryn, and PC Dave Bulley and Rhum, placed 2nd, 4th, and 14th positions respectively.⁵⁹ The National Police Dog Trials were hosted by South Wales Constabulary from 29th April to 3rd May 1991. The force was represented by PC Theobald and Jet from Barnstaple who came in at a respectable 16th place.

Tragic circumstances befell one of the force's most beloved police dogs on 13th October 1993. Police Dog Kain was killed by gunman Ian Fitzgerald-Hay, who had fired shots at a public house in Moreleigh, South Devon, before barricading himself into his home at Crabdon Manor near Totnes with an array of modern and antique weapons. After mortally wounding Kain, Fitzgerald-Hay turned his gun on armed response officers and was subsequently shot dead himself.



Police Dog Kain. Pictured here at the Valley of the Rocks, North Devon, in 1991. (Bob Smith Collection)

In 1997, the careers of three professional burglars were brought to an end thanks in part to our four-legged friends. Following a robbery in Totnes in which over £85,000 worth of computer equipment was stolen, a police dog tracked one of the offenders who had decamped from a getaway car. The three men were later arrested under an operation named 'Jankers' and were linked forensically to over 50 burglaries in 17 different police force areas.⁶⁰

The modern Devon and Cornwall Police Dog Section is a valuable part of the daily life of the constabulary and consists of both adopted and force-bred animals. Ever the pioneer, the force became the first in the UK to train 'Digital Storage Detection Dogs' in 2016. In other words, dogs trained specifically to sniff out computer hard drives, USB sticks, and other digital media devices. The scheme was a collaboration between Devon & Cornwall Police and Dorset Police (aligned by virtue of the 'strategic alliance' between the two forces) and American law enforcement, which saw 'Rob', a 20-month-old black Labrador, and 'Tweed', a 19-month-old Springer Spaniel, put to work in the war against fraud, money laundering, and child exploitation. The pair generated significant interest amongst other UK constabularies, and within a year had been deployed nationally to over 50 jobs. The project was overseen by PC Graham Attwood.⁶¹

The information in this article was largely sourced from the old force annual reports. The last report to describe the dog section in detail was the 1992 edition, after which the nature of the reports tended to become more corporate and statistics focused. I would love to fill in the blanks in terms of the size and activities of the dog section from 1992 onwards, so please get in touch if you have any information.

⁵⁹ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1991, p29

⁶⁰ Annual Report of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary 1997/1998

⁶¹ [UK police are using detection dogs that can sniff out USB drives | Engadget](#)

OffBeat

Murder in Ladonia

WARNING: This article contains themes of murder and violence.

This infrequent series looks at police and crime stories beyond Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly. The first of this series takes in violence and adversity in the American Deep South, and the fatal consequences of a woman scorned in 1890s Texas. Credit to Suzie Henderson and E.J. Sachse for their help with the research for this piece.



Ill-tempered **T.E. 'Ed' Kilgore** was a man about 6ft3, 14 stone, high blue or grey eyes, with a sharp nose, red hair, and a moustache. He was born in Texas in 1866 to parents from Georgia. His father, **Sandy Kilgore**, was a brick merchant. Ed inherited his father's business and in 1887 set up a brickyard in Ladonia, in Fannin County, Texas.

Ladonia was a small community of around 700 people, built upon fertile land that was ripe for farming. It was founded in around 1840 and was originally called McCownville after an early settler named **Frank McCown**. The town name was changed to *Ladonia* in 1857 in honour of **Ladonna Millsay**, a Tennessee-born traveller who entertained the residents with her singing. It is not known why the powers that be chose the spelling *Ladonia* when they renamed the town. At the time of Kilgore's arrival, the region was experiencing a renaissance in construction thanks to the arrival of the *Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railway* and men like Kilgore made a lot of money supplying materials to build schools, churches, and mills. Brick making was arduous work and involved long hours in the heat ploughing up mud and clay to make them, and there was often a reliance on foreign labour to perform the work. One such man was **Steven Sanders**, a Kentish lad who was the son of **Thomas O. Sanders**, the esteemed chief constable of Dover Borough Police.



Ladonia Market Square on Market Day. Featuring buildings likely erected thanks to Ed Kilgore. (Texas History Archives)

Steven found employment in Kilgore's brick mill and was put to work ploughing up mud for the bricks in Kilgore's yard. It was a gruelling task which Sanders evidently did not enjoy, and it was not long before his enthusiasm dwindled and he began paying lip service to his employer. It was Sanders' idleness that became a source of irritation for Kilgore, who one day decided to 'correct' the young Englishman with shocking violence.

On 23rd July 1888, Kilgore became enraged at the slowness of Sanders' work, and the men scuffled. Kilgore, being of rude health and superior stature, overpowered Sanders and struck him about the head two or three times with a plank of wood in front of several horrified witnesses. Sanders' injuries were severe, and he languished in agony for almost a day in the care of the town surgeon before he succumbed to his wounds. The cruel extinguishing of the young man's life over such a trivial issue generated significant sensation in Ladonia, and it was not long before he was hauled before a judge.

Kilgore was far from cash-strapped and was able to afford the best legal talent in the state. Despite the testimony of a venire of credible witnesses to the crime, Kilgore avoided a murder conviction and was instead sentenced to two years in the state penitentiary for the

manslaughter of Steven Sanders. Kilgore's time behind bars did little to set him back, and he was soon back at work in Ladonia building two brick business houses at the side of Tom Reed's livery stable.

Kilgore had a penchant for sticking his nose in other people's business, and it was quite within his insidious remit to spread slanderous remarks about all and sundry. On 25th October 1894, Kilgore's acid tongue brought him into a confrontation with Ladonia resident **Tom Arnold**. On the date in question, Arnold met Kilgore in the street and they started fighting. Arnold drew his pistol and shot wildly at Kilgore. Remarkably, the only damage caused was to Kilgore's hat.

Fannie Jackson, a milliner and resident of nearby McKinney, possessed a particular hatred towards Kilgore after he spread malicious rumours about Fannie's deaf mute sister Kate. On 17th June 1897, Fannie Jackson arrived in Ladonia intending to visit her father, Elliott. She used her spare time there to seek out Kilgore but after several days' searching failed to find him and decided to return to McKinney by train. Whilst waiting on the railway station platform, Jackson encountered Kilgore by chance and, without a word uttered, pulled a pistol from her handbag, and started shooting.

Kilgore somehow managed to run about one hundred yards before he stopped, fell, and expired on the ground. A coroner's examination of the body identified ten bullet wounds, and it was presumed that others had a hand in the shooting. **Bud Jackson**, one of Fannie's brothers, was nearby and was accidentally struck in the head during incident. Remarkably, he survived his injury and was declared fit to attend court. Fannie's father and two other Jackson siblings, listed in court records by their initials – J.E., J.A., and C.T. – were also suspiciously present at the time of Kilgore's slaying.

A telegram was sent to **Sherriff Ridling** who repaired to the scene several hours later by horse and carriage and placed the Jacksons under house arrest. Such was the public interest in the shooting, that Ridling had to place the Jackson household under heavy guard.

On 18th June, the five accused appeared before **Justice Brane** at the Fannin County Court House. The court room was crowded, and bail was set at \$3,500 the following day. It appears there was great local sympathy for the Jacksons, as the list of names of sureties on the bail bond consisted of several notable and well-respected citizens.



Fannin County Court House, Bonham, Texas. Where the Jacksons stood trial for the killing of Ed Kilgore. (Public Domain Image)

During the trial, which commenced on 7th September 1897, it was heard that Fannie fully intended to kill Ed Kilgore in retribution for the slurs he had made against her sister, and moments before she fired, people were heard shouting, “don’t shoot him!”

Fannie’s father and siblings, who were at a nearby depot having just seen her to the station platform, heard gunshots and ran to the scene with their pistols drawn and began firing at the

fleeing Kilgore. He fell and died either behind a tin shop or behind a house (witness testimony differed on this aspect) and the Jacksons kept shooting while he lay on the ground.

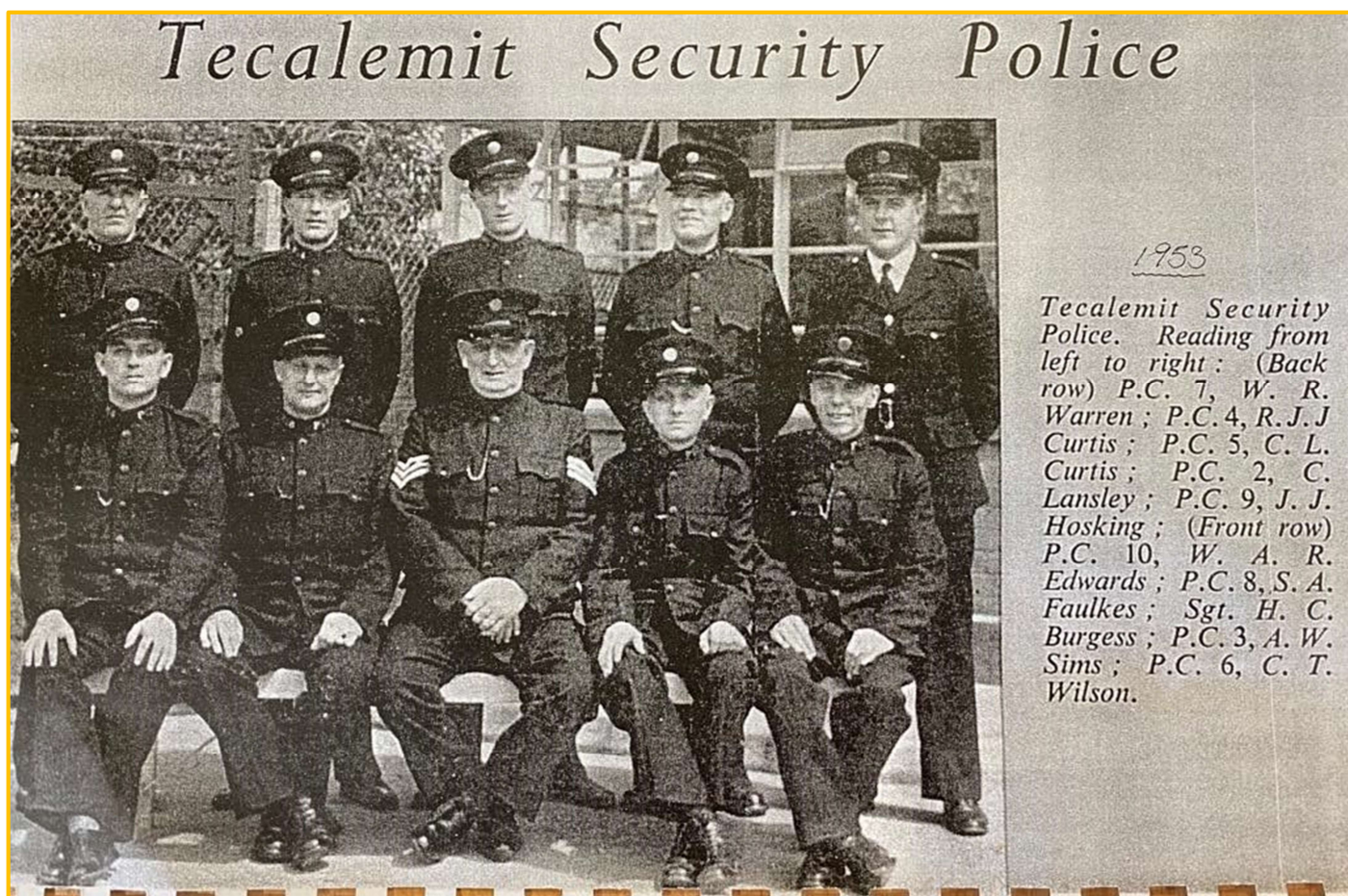
Justice in the Old West was distinctly ‘wild’, and at the time it was perfectly within an American citizen’s right to respond to immediate and threatening insults and words by producing a weapon and pulling the trigger. The problem with this case, was that the insults were far from immediate, having been uttered some time before and not directly to Fannie Jackson. The Jacksons’ defence attorney petitioned the court to reduce the charge from homicide to manslaughter. He was not successful.

The jury returned on 25th September having failed to agree on a verdict. They stood ten for, two against, convicting Fannie Jackson and sending her to the penitentiary for two years. All were in favour of discharging her father and brothers. The District Attorney decided to dismiss the cause from the docket because the jury was hung and there was insufficient evidence upon which to secure a conviction. All of them walked free, and no appeal was ever made.

Were other factors at play in the decision to quash a murder charge? Was Kilgore hated so much that his killing was seen as a blessed relief? Had Fannie Jackson been convicted, the authorities would have had a difficult time deciding what to do with her anyway, as there were no women’s prisons in the region at the time. Whatever the truth, the jury had spoken.

The funeral of Ed Kilgore took place at 2pm on 19th June 1897 at Ladonia Cemetery. It was poorly attended, with only his mother, father, and a handful of relatives and family friends present. The local newspapers declared that there was “very little excitement.”

Miscellaneous items



Your help is sought in respect of the above photo of the 'Tecalemit Security Police'. Tecalemit was a major employer in Plymouth (the company still exists as Tecalemit Garage Equipment Ltd.) and during WW2 built parts for the Admiralty and the Ministry of Aircraft Production. The working assumption is that these officers were special constables in the employ of the Ministry of Supply, a situation permitted by Section 1(1) of the *Emergency Laws (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1947*. An appeal via the Police History Society has established that some form of police force existed at Tecalemit as recently as the 1980s, albeit likely by then a civilian security force which retained its appearance and rank structure out of a sense of tradition. If anybody has any information about the Tecalemit Security Police, please get in touch.

ERRATA

In the January 2022 issue's article on the history of the Cornwall Constabulary, the paragraph which mentioned the transition from top hats to police helmets incorrectly described the new headwear as the 'custodian'. The design was in fact known as the 'Home Service Pattern'.

The word 'custodian' came into general use in the 1970s to describe the plastic reinforced helmets now in common use in the UK constabularies. Thank you to Gregory Richards for providing the information.

OBITUARY



Retired PC 51 David MITCHELL (Exeter City Police) passed away on 3rd February 2022 at the age of 94.

David had been suffering from COVID-19.

(Image credit: David Maxwell)