



# The Journal of the Police History Society

Number 26—2011/12

**IN THIS EDITION:**

**THE FORGOTTEN HERO**

Peter Farmery

**ONE FROM THE NET**

**THE UNFAITHFUL FOOT-  
MAN**

Roy Ingleton

**POLICE FAMILY HISTORY**

Derek Roper

**HOWARD VINCENT CID**

Adrian James

**A VICTIM OF CRIME**

Kemi Rotimi

**WILLIAM BIDDLECOMBE**

Bob Bartlett





**COVER PICTURE**  
**Unknown PC No 177**  
**Does anyone recognise the badge?**

# The Journal of the Police History Society

Number 26

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## EDITORIAL

Please note that I have now changed both my address and Email, details are below.

I would again request any written offerings the membership may have for our Journal.

Whilst we have a good selection of articles in this issue I would welcome more .

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The Police History Society publishes the Journal of the Police History Society annually. Contributions are welcome from both members and non members It is acceptable to send material with a maximum limit of around 2500 words plus illustrations double spaced. It would be preferable to receive contributions Emailed or copied onto disc in Microsoft Word to save re-typing.

The editor produces the Journal on Microsoft Publisher in Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007.



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### THE FORGOTTEN HERO

By J Peter Farmery JP

Ex-PS 146964 (CD2,LP,MM,ZD,SPG 6unit,ZW and TS)

*“The Minister of Munitions regrets to announce that an explosion occurred this evening at a munitions factory in the neighbourhood of London. It is feared that the explosion was attended by considerable loss of life and damage to property”.*

This announcement was made by the Metropolitan Police Press Bureau on Friday 19th January 1917, at 11.10pm and reported exactly as shown above in the national papers throughout England on Saturday 20th January. There was a complete black-out on news for the next 36 hours and as a result rumours were rife of the extent of the explosions, with suggestions that there were up to 4,000 deaths.

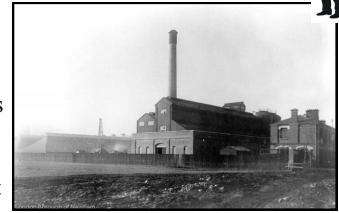
It was not until the following Monday that further news was published to give a more accurate account of the incident. However, it was only in 1974, that the Public Records Office (the National Archives) opened their files to reveal the full details of the incident.

The Great War of 1914 to 1918, was dragging on into its fourth year and the production of high explosives was a major concern, especially as there were insufficient factories in Britain engaged in the processing of TNT. One of the factories involved was Brunner Mond and Company at Crescent Wharf, North Woolwich Road, Silvertown, East London, part of which was formerly used for the production of caustic soda, this section of the factory had been closed for several years, and was now re-opened for the War effort.

This factory was chosen for its ability to be quickly converted to the production and purifying process of TNT rather than its location. There were many objections raised by the company to this, not least that it was surrounded by a plywood packing case factory, an oil depot, a school and thousands of residents living in narrow streets. However, the Government pressed ahead, and production began in 1915. The purification process involved melting crude TNT in a large melting pot, then adding alcohol which attracted the impurities. These were then separated and the pure TNT was dried and packed into 50lb bags for transport to munitions factories actually making shells for guns. At the time in question there were some 63 people regularly employed in this section of the factory in three shifts of 21, and stored on the premises were over 80 tons of TNT in various

stages of purification.

The fact that so much highly volatile material was kept there was not likely to be generally known, not even to some of the work-



Brunner Mond Factory

ers, and especially not to the thousands of residents in the adjacent streets. It was only known by a few that if a fire or explosion were to take place then the results would be catastrophic. Of those people who knew the dangers were Dr Andrea ANGELL, the chief Chemist at the factory and his assistant Frederick Blevins, also the local fire chief, and some of his officers and the local police, including the officer on duty on that fateful day, PC 389'K'Edward George Brown GREENOFF.

There were many theories as to how the explosion was caused, and one which has never been thoroughly discounted was that of sabotage. However, the explosion took the lives of 73 persons with some 578 people injured, 125 seriously, most of them living in close proximity to the factory, and totally unaware of the highly dangerous activity taking place. The factory was completely destroyed as were the plywood factory, the fire station, and part of the oil refinery and there was damage and destruction scattered over a very large area. It was estimated that between 60 to 70,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed. The explosion was heard in central London, with windows being blown out in the Savoy Hotel. The fact that so few people (under the circumstances) were killed in this incident may be attributed to two men, but more of them in a moment.

The fire broke out on the top floor of the works where the crude TNT was being poured out of the bags into a hopper, leading to the melting pot. No-one to this day is absolutely sure how the fire started which culminated in the massive explosion. As I have stated, one theory which has never been totally discounted was sabotage. During the war years, it had been discovered that there had been many instances of German agents infiltrating into Britain. Although the likelihood of anyone of them being on the premises that day is highly improbable, the possibility of the materials being interfered with on routes from the North of England has always been a possibility. TNT in its crude form was transported by rail and road from the north and then purified at the Brunner Mond factory, for



use in munitions production. It was said that barrels of material often arrived damaged with the lids broken open. It would not have been impossible for someone on route to have tampered with the contents, for example, by placing some caustic soda into the crude TNT. It must also be taken into consideration that Brunner Mond factory had manufactured caustic soda in that section of the factory as well. This would, when the material was later placed into the melting pot, have the effect of instant combustion, even at a low temperature. Half way through the late shift on that Friday everything was apparently normal and two of the employees, Hetty Sands and Ada Randall were going to tea. The time was 4.45pm. Just two minutes later these two women heard a dull bang, and looking outside saw the melting room ablaze. As far as can be determined it was 6.52pm when the place shook with a tremendous explosion and turned Brunner Mond into a giant bomb. All buildings within 400 yards, were completely demolished, with severe damage being caused to thousands of other buildings and dwellings over an extended area. The local fire station at Silver-



The destroyed Fire Station

town together with rows of houses and two oil tanks at the nearby oil storage plant were blasted, the oil being ignited to add to the difficulties. The firemen had not long been out of the station.

Dr Andrea ANGELL, the Chief Chemist of the factory was immediately made aware of the fire and went to the plant to tell everyone to evacuate, and assisted in guiding several people to exit doors. he went upstairs to check if there was anyone left, after making sure the fire brigade had been informed. This courageous act ensured that several people escaped, who might not otherwise have got out. As the fire brigade arrived and commenced to spray their hoses on the fire, a massive explosion occurred and Dr ANGELL was never seen again.

Another selfless individual, who could so easily have run for his life and saved himself, was PC 389'K' GREENOFF. He was on duty outside the factory having started that tour of duty at 2pm and was posted to the beat which included the Brunner Mond works. This factory, because of its importance in the war effort, was an obvious security risk and merited the attendance of a police patrol 24 hours per day. As soon as he heard of the fire, PC

GREENOFF began to assist in the evacuation of the employees. He guided many people to safety and also tried to warn some of the people gathering outside of the imminent danger, when the explosion occurred. He was badly burned on his hands and a large piece of metal hit him in the head. He was found, crawling among the ruins of the factory on his hands and knees. He was taken to hospital where he later died on the 28th January as a result of the terrible injuries. Constable GREENOFF had given his life in the preservation of others, the highest tributes were given and even King George V sent the following message to the Commissioner of Police, Sir Edward HENRY:-

*"I am grieved to hear that Police Constable George GREENOFF through whose self-sacrificing efforts, many lives were saved on the occasion of the recent explosion at a munitions factory in the vicinity of London, has succumbed to the injuries he then received. I ask you to convey to his widow and family my sincere sympathy and at the same time, to assure you of my sense of admiration that the best traditions of the police have been so nobly maintained in this signal act of courage and of devotion to duty".*

Edward George Brown GREENOFF was born in Kentish Town in 1886, and as the son of a plumber, at 14 began his apprenticeship with his father. In 1908 he married Ada, and in the same year joined the Metropolitan Police. PC 389'K'/wt no 96389 was posted to K division on 7th December of that year. He found the police force a more rewarding job despite the varied hours he was required to work. By 1917 they had three children, Edwin George age 7½, Elsie age 4, and George age 2 and lived at 13 Rhea Street, North Woolwich, not far from the Brunner Mond factory.

Mrs GREENOFF used to take the children to see their father on duty occasionally and to give him some sandwiches to eat whilst on patrol. On the evening of the explosion the children were at home with their mother. The blast from the explosion blew the blind from the window striking young Edwin on the head and shoulder. Mrs GREENOFF realising instinctively where the explosion was, cried "My poor George!". When she eventually saw him, he was in a terrible state and never recovered. He died on the 28th after considerable efforts to save him, despite his extreme pain, he remained courageous to the end.

His eldest son Edwin, went with Mrs GREENOFF to Buckingham Palace later that year to receive the King's Police Medal for Gallantry. In addition to this immediate



award he was also honoured by the erection of a plaque in Postman's Park, Aldersgate Street, London EC1, and a memorial certificate from the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust. In the confusion of the subsequent Government inquiry into the fire, the deeds of Constable GREENOFF were overlooked by the police, and it was not until 1978 that his name was added to the Official Police Roll of Honour, recorded at Scotland Yard over 60 years after his death. Young Edwin GREENOFF, no doubt inspired by his father's deeds related above, joined the Metropolitan Police in 1929 and after serving at Commercial Road and Islington Police stations retired on pension in 1955.

It must be noted here that among the toll of those killed, were two of the firemen attached to the West Ham Fire Brigade who attended the scene. On their arrival, the officer in charge, Samuel Betts, was told that there was nothing they could do, because of the intense fire and immediate danger of the factory being destroyed in a massive explosion. However, in the highest tradition of the fire brigade, they immediately began to run out hoses, and fix up the fire hydrant. Before they could get the hoses in operation, the massive explosion occurred and the fire engine was blown away, two of the firemen were killed instantly, Frederick Charles SELL, and Henry VICKERS, and the rest of the team were seriously injured.

London Gazette entry of 22 June 1917 shows the following citation :-

*His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award... "The Edward medal of the First class to the representatives of Dr Andrea Angel, and Mr George Wimbourne, who lost their lives In endeavouring to save the lives of others on the occasion of a Fire which broke out at the Silvertown Chemical works on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1917, and his Majesty has been graciously pleased To award the King's Police medal to the representative of Police Constable Edward George Brown Greenoff, who lost his life on The same occasion"*

Although these were immediate awards the following members of the West Ham Fire Brigade who were killed and injured in these extremely dangerous circumstances were also each awarded the King's Police Medal for Gallantry in the New

Years Honours List for 1918.:-

*Station Officer Samuel Scott Betts*

*Sub Officer Henry Vickers (posthumous)*

*Fireman James Joseph Betts*

*Fireman Henry Chapple*

*Fireman Frederick Charles Sell (posthumous)*

*Fireman James Henry Rich Yabsley*

The recommendation for their awards reads in part:-

*"The above named officers answered a call to the Brunner Mond factory in Silvertown, East London on the occasion of a fire and explosion on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1917. They were all well aware of the risks, knowing the nature of the explosives stored at the factory. According to evidence at the inquest, when they reached the premises they were told to run, as they could do no good, but nevertheless they set to, to fix a hydrant.. Before it could be got to work, there was a massive explosion, and the engine was blown away."*

In addition to the above, there were a large number of Medals of the Order of the British Empire awarded vide the Supplement to the London Gazette on 7 July 1920, to members of the West Ham Fire Brigade, the East Ham Fire Brigade, and Romford and Barking Fire Brigades, for "conspicuous courage and devotion to duty on the occasion of fires at chemical and Munitions factories". Although there is no specific connection to the above incident, it may be assumed that at least many of them do refer.

There are some whose self sacrifice should never be forgotten, and whose memory we must never allow to fade, as they show the standards that we all must try to attain and maintain.

Ref: HO45/10832/326629

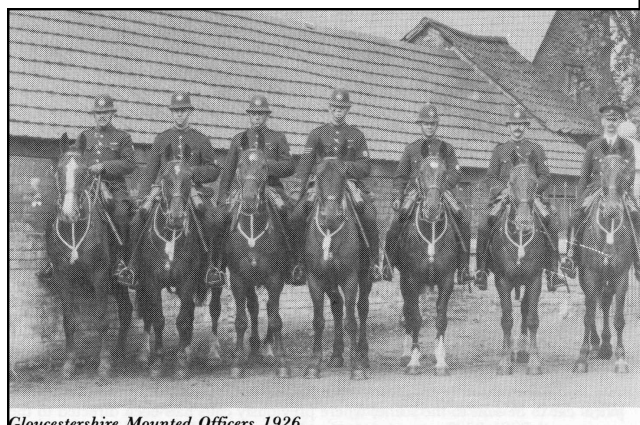
L.G. 22.6.1917 Page 6181

LG 1.1.1918 Page 85

Supplement to the LG 7 July 1920 Page 7301 et seq

## UNKNOWN MOUNTED BRANCHES

### GLOUCESTER SHIRE 1926



*Gloucestershire Mounted Officers 1926.*



### ONE FROM THE NET

Here is one that would have sent the investigating officers around the bend!

#### Suicide or Murder

Do you like to read a good murder mystery? Not even Law and Order would attempt to capture this mess. This is an unbelievable twist of fate!!!!

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS President Dr. Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story:

On March 23, 1994..... The medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus, and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr. Opus had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide..

He left a note to the effect indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the deceased was aware that a safety net had been installed just below the eighth floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned. "Ordinarily," Dr Mills continued, "Someone who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended, is still defined as committing suicide." That Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death, but probably would not have been successful because of the safety net, caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor, where the shotgun blast emanated, was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously, and he was threatening her with a shotgun! The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife, and the pellets went through the window, striking Mr. Opus. When one intends to kill subject "A" but kills subject "B" in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject "B." When confronted with the murder charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant, and both said that they thought the shotgun was not loaded. The old man said it was a long-standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun.

He had no intention to murder her.

Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident; that is, assuming the gun had been accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident.. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. Since the loader of the gun was aware of this, he was guilty of the murder even though he didn't actually pull the trigger. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. Now comes the exquisite twist... Further investigation revealed that the son was, in fact, Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on March 23rd, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth story window.

The son, Ronald Opus, had actually murdered himself. So the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

A true story from Associated Press, (Reported by Kurt Westervelt)



### THE UNFAITHFUL FOOTMAN

In 1813, Camden Place was the private home of the wealthy Mr Bonar and his wife who had lived there some eight or nine years. One Sunday evening in the early summer of 1813, Mr Bonar retired to bed at his usual time. His wife did not follow him until two o'clock in the morning, after ordering her servant to call her at seven. True to her instructions, the servant went to the master bedroom sharp at seven to wake her mistress. To her horror, she found the mangled body of Mr Bonar lying on the floor and her mistress, unconscious and dying, still in her bed.

Mr Bonar's head and hands were covered with blood, his skull literally broken into fragments in several places. There was a great laceration across his face and nose as if caused by a heavy rod or bar. His hands were mangled and there was a severe wound to the right knee. From the injuries it was clear that Mr Bonar had put up a great struggle. Despite being in his seventies, he was a strong and fit man and sold his life dearly. His nightcap, lying a few feet from his head, was drenched in blood, with a lock of grey hair still adhering to it. His pillow, which had fallen from the bed, was lying at his feet; this too was drenched in blood.

His wife had had her head broken in the same manner but she seemed to have been knocked unconscious without a struggle, as her face displayed a calm softness, more as if she were asleep rather than dead or dying. Her bed linen was soaked in blood, as was that on Mr Bonar's bed. Although the couple slept in separate small beds, these were placed so close together that there was scarcely room for anyone to walk between them.

A bent poker lying on the floor matched closely the injuries and wounds on the two bodies and was clearly the murder weapon. As there were still some signs of life in Mrs Bonar, Philip Nicholson, the footman, rode into London to fetch a surgeon, taking one of the best horses in the stables to ensure his speedy arrival. It is a measure of the Bonars' wealth and importance that they could afford the services of Mr Astley Cooper, who was the surgeon at Guy's Hospital, Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons and probably the most celebrated and important surgeon of his day. Mr Cooper attended without delay but it was too late: the injuries were too severe and the soul of Mrs Bonar joined that of her late husband at eleven minutes past one, her only utterance being a soft 'Oh dear!'

That evening Mr Bonar junior arrived from Faversham, where he was stationed as a colonel in the Kent Militia and, despite the efforts of friends and others to restrain him, rushed upstairs crying, 'Let me see my father. Indeed, I must see him!' He burst into the bedroom, locking the door behind him. Amid fears for his safety, the door was forced open and Colonel Bonar was found kneeling with clasped hands over the body of his father, apparently in prayer. His friends dragged him away, in a state of near collapse, into an adjoining room.

There appeared to be no explanation for this horrid and violent affair; there had been no attempt at robbery and it was hard to imagine anyone who would wish to commit such a bloody deed on two persons who were universally liked and respected for their inoffensiveness and benevolence. There were no signs of a break-in, although it was reported that the front door was found open in the morning. Only two hours after Mrs Bonar had retired to bed, a washerwoman let herself in to start work. None of the servants appeared to have been disturbed by any noise or cries during the night but their quarters were some distance from the master bedroom.

It was later revealed that once the footman had summoned the surgeon, he rode to the Red Lion, near Bedlam, where he saw a man named Dale, who had recently been discharged from the service of Mr Bonar, to whom it was later alleged he said, 'The deed is done and you are suspected. But you are not in it.'

Nicholson, the footman, then went on to Bow Street to inform the Bow Street Runners about the murders and he related what had passed at the Red Lion between him and Dale. This prompted two officers to go in search of Dale. Nicholson appeared to be slightly tipsy and it is true he had been seen to down three glasses of rum at the public house. The officers told him to follow them but they lost sight of him in the city's streets.

The officers found Dale and brought him before the magistrates at Bow Street for examination. It transpired that Dale had been employed by the Bonars as a butler but was discharged about a fortnight previously on suspicion of 'ill conduct'. It was said that Mrs Bonar wanted him to be prosecuted but her husband was content to dismiss him without references. The magistrates examined him closely but were content with the alibi he put forward, claiming to have been in the Red Lion from eleven on the Sunday evening until six o'clock the following morning, with several witnesses to support his claim (there were no 'licensing hours' in those days). Dale was therefore told to go home to his wife in Chislehurst.

The funeral of the Bonars took place at Chislehurst church and was attended by a large congregation. A mournful cavalcade, including the undertakers, pages, mutes, and so on, moved slowly around the heath to the church, where the coffins were carried side by side to the grave.

With Dale being cleared of any involvement in the dreadful deed, suspicion fell on the footman, Philip Nicholson, and a warrant was issued by the Lord Mayor for his arrest. One of the Bow Street Runners immediately went in search of him and, on that same Monday, after a diligent search, the officer traced Nicholson to Whitechapel and found him, on horseback, drinking at the door of the Three Nuns alehouse. The officer grabbed the horse's bridle and, after a short scuffle, pulled the wanted man from his horse and took him off to the debtors' prison near Newgate.

The prisoner was drunk and his demeanour was so bizarre that Mr Astley Cooper was called in to examine him. The surgeon was accompanied by Sir Charles Flower, the Lord Mayor of London, and together they asked the footman a number of



questions but could not extract anything like a confession or admission of guilt. In view of his drunken state, Nicholson was remanded until the following day.

The next day, Tuesday, he was taken to the Mansion House, where he was again questioned. From the answers given to the questions put to him, his interrogators gained the impression that he had behaved in a most imprudent and unfeeling manner, which raised more suspicion than any other evidence available.

Nicholson said that, on the night in question, he went to bed about midnight and knew nothing until called by the housemaid about eight o'clock the next morning. He was the only male servant who slept in the house and he had fastened some of the windows himself at the usual time, the remainder being secured by the maid. With the discovery of the murders, all the servants gathered together and he, with others, went to the bedroom where he saw the two bodies, the floor being covered in blood and other matter. He took the bloody sheets off his master's bed and used them to mop up some of the mess on the floor and then took the soiled linen to his own bedroom, where the groom helped him to wrap it in the top sheet from his own bed. He then placed the bundle under his bed. He was questioned closely as to why he had used the sheets to absorb the blood and then fold them inside his own linen when he should have known that the proper thing to do was to leave everything undisturbed.

Nicholson said he was unaware of this and had thought it his duty to tidy the scene as much as possible, as the sight would have been distressing to anyone entering the room. He was then asked about a bloody footprint found on the stairs leading from his room to that in which the murders were committed. He suggested that such a mark might have been made by him when he took the soiled sheets up to his room, but it was pointed out that the footprint was discovered before he first left his room.

In view of the struggle which Mr Bonar had obviously put up, Nicholson was stripped and examined in private but any bruises which were revealed could easily have been suffered in the scuffle with the arresting officer when he fell from his horse.

Nicholson was then asked about his ride to town to seek the surgeon and admitted that he had left the house in Chislehurst shortly after eight o'clock and had stopped for refreshment for himself and the horse three times on the road. He had drunk three glasses of rum and the horse three pints of porter. Despite these stops, the surgeon confirmed that Nicholson had covered the whole distance in around forty minutes.

After notifying Mr Astley Cooper that his services were required at Camden Place to attend to the still-living Mrs Bonar, Nicholson said that he went on to the Red Lion, where he saw Dale and told him that he (Dale) was a suspect. He then continued to Bow Street to ask that an officer be sent down to Chislehurst. Nicholson was reprimanded at this point for having gone to find Dale who, had he been the culprit, would have been forewarned and could have absconded. He was also criticized for not having returned immediately to Camden Place but instead having gone carousing with friends, with whom he was still drinking when he was arrested. The interrogation complete, Nicholson was sent, in the charge of two officers, to Chislehurst

to attend the inquest to be held there that evening.

The inquest opened promptly at six o'clock, the first witness being Mary Clarke, Mrs Bonar's maid. She told the jury that Mrs Bonar was in the habit of retiring late, usually around one or two o'clock in the morning, some two hours after her husband. She last saw Mr Bonar about ten o'clock that Sunday evening when he was reading prayers to his staff in the sitting room:

'About twenty past midnight, I was summoned to Mrs Bonar's dressing room adjacent to the bedroom and I went there in my dressing gown. Mrs Bonar said she had ordered Nicholson, the footman, to secure the lawn door but he had failed to do so. I offered to go and do it but Mrs Bonar said that would not be necessary as she had locked the other door herself. I presumed she was referring to the folding door between the lawn door and the hall. I then undressed Mrs Bonar and warmed her bed, at which time I saw Mr Bonar asleep in his own bed nearby.'

Mary returned to her own room to await the next summons and about twenty minutes past one the bell rang again and Mary went to her mistress's dressing room and folded up her clothes, Mrs Bonar then having retired to the bedroom.

'About fifteen minutes later, the bell rang again. Mrs Bonar was then in bed and I handed her the string which was attached to the door to enable it to be opened more or less.'

Having been instructed to call her mistress at seven-thirty that morning, Mary lit the rush light in the ante-room and went to bed, leaving the doors of the bedroom and the ante-room both wide open, as was the custom.

'At seven-thirty I was awakened by the Susannah the housemaid as I had asked. The housemaid told me there was a bad smell in the ante-room, coming from the bedroom and asked whether I had lit the rush light as this was missing, and whether I had locked the door to the ante room from the outside. She also said there were foot marks in the ante-room. I was much alarmed as these unusual circumstances led me to believe something dreadful had happened.'

The pair went up to the ante-room to examine the marks, which they thought could be blood. Mary then went to fetch the laundry maid (who started her work at four o'clock) and they went together to the bedroom. The laundry maid went to the window and opened the shutters to let some light into the room. When she turned round her eyes fell on the terrible scene and she screamed. Mary fled the room and ran downstairs in a state of shock.

'The coachman made me sit down as I was near to fainting and, whilst I was recovering, I saw the footman come into the servants' hall with a bundle of bloodied sheets. Philip Nicholson said to me, "Mrs Clarke, go to your mistress, she is still alive and perhaps may be recovered."'

Susannah Curnick was the next witness. She had been the housemaid for only three weeks and said that, on the night in question, she had put the rush light in its usual place in the ante-room around ten o'clock and then went to bed.

'I remember Mrs Clarke coming to bed and asking to be called at half-past seven. I myself rose at six-thirty and, on going through the hall, noticed that the house door was half open – something I had never seen before. I closed the door and went

into the drawing room where all the windows were closed apart from the one in the centre which was wide open. On going upstairs I was surprised to find the door to the ante-room locked, with the key outside. I opened the door and noticed foot marks on the floor and that the rush light was missing from its stand.'

Much perturbed by what she had seen, Susannah went back to the room she shared with Mary Clarke and told her what had occurred and together they went back to the ante-room. The rest of her story tallied with that told by Mary Clarke. On being questioned, Susannah said she had never heard the footman express any anger or disappointment towards her master. She had never noticed anything particular about his conduct.

Penelope Folds, the laundry maid, was the next to take the stand::

'I rose a little after four o'clock and was soon joined by Williams, the washerwoman, who let herself in by the laundry door. About seven-thirty, Mary Clarke approached me and asked me to accompany her upstairs as she was afraid something was amiss. I did so and went into the bedroom and opened part of one of the shutters. When I turned round I saw the master's body lying on the floor and blood on the mistress's pillow.'

Penelope went downstairs but returned later and saw the footman covering Mr Bonar's body with a blanket and then meddling with the clothes on his bed and afterwards she saw the footman taking a bundle of soiled sheets downstairs. She found her mistress was still breathing and remarked that the footman was the first to say that Mrs Bonar was still alive. He said he must go to town for help although she asked him not to leave the house without a man in it.

William Evans, the groom, said::

'I was in the house till after twelve o'clock on Sunday evening, sitting with the footman and I never saw him in a better humour. I never heard him say anything disrespectful of his master or mistress, except now and then an angry expression at being overworked, such as 'the old woman, she wears me out!'

He added that he saw the footman dabbing the sheets in the blood at the foot of the bed. On being pressed on this point, he said that the housemaid, who was in the room at the time, could tell more about it.

Susannah Curnick was recalled and testified that she was never in the room at the same time as the footman, contrary to what the groom had deposed. She also said that the groom had exclaimed, at the foot of his mistress's bed, with a dreadful expression, 'This is what comes of keeping company with the Jews.'

William Randall the coachman slept over the stables:

'I came to the house about half-past seven and went to call Nicholson and found him sitting on his bed-side. Almost immediately I heard the cry of murder from the female servants. Not long afterwards I saw Nicholson come downstairs with bloody linen and wrap it up in a sheet in the servants' hall. The footman was a very quiet, good fellow-servant but, when he had money, he used to get drunk. The rest of the servants observed that they could not have handled the sheets as Nicholson did. He was very anxious to go to London and would have a horse. I thought Nicholson was wild looking when he went away and it appeared as if he could not ride, although he had been in the dragoons.'

Next came Charles King who had worked for the family as a labourer for seven years and lived in Green Lane, Chislehurst:

'I came to work at between five and six on Monday morning. I came to the house about twenty minutes after six. The washerwomen were up and so I got into the house by the laundry and went into the hall and found the front door open. Philip was then in bed and I said to him, "How is it you sleep with the door and window shutters open?" He answered, "I did not know that they were open." I am sure he was in bed with his shirt on.'

Mrs Williams, a washerwoman, testified that when she came to the house about four in the morning she noted that the hall windows were all open. Philip Shillington, the gardener, got up between three and four o'clock and he too noticed the middle drawing room window open.

It was then Philip Nicholson's turn to take the stand. When asked what he had to state he replied, 'Nothing other than what I told the Lord Mayor. The windows of my bedroom were shut when I went to bed.' No further questions were put to him and he was released into the custody of a Bow Street officer called Lavender.

A Mr Smith stated that he came over on the morning of the murder and saw the bodies and the bent poker [modern police officers would be horrified at the failure to make any efforts to secure the crime scene]:

'I then went into the servants' hall and found a bundle which I opened. It consisted of two bloody sheets, one fine and the other coarse – which was the most bloody of the two. They were wrapped in a third. I gave the two bloody sheets to a servant to take to Mr Bonar's room. A candlestick in Mr B's room was bent and broken. There was a small spot of white paint on the poker.'

Lavender, the Bow Street officer, stated that he arrived on the Monday about one o'clock:

'I found a pair of shoes by the side of the footman's bed which I compared with the traces in the ante-room. As I thought, the impressions corresponded with the shoes which are not fellows. I found a night cap on the footman's bed, apparently bloody.'

Another witness, by the name of Foy, compared the shoes which he had found on Tuesday morning in a closet in the servants' hall with the footprints and found that they tallied:

'The shoes were odd; one common heeled and worn at the toe, the other with a spring heel, as was the case with the shoes which Lavender found. There was blood on both the soles and on the uppers. I showed them to Nicholson who agreed that they were his. He said he believed one of them had slipped off in the room from which he fetched the sheets, but I found them together in the cupboard. Nicholson also told me that the stains on his night cap probably came from the blood on the sheets.'

The poker was then produced. It was a common kitchen poker, bent in the upper part.

The inquest closed at one o'clock the next morning, with the jury returning a verdict of wilful murder against Philip Nicholson, the footman. It seemed clear, from the blood on it, that he had disguised himself in one of the sheets from his own bed when he went to murder his employers but, fortunately for the prosecution, he left the sheet in the room, which accounted for his anxiety to get the bloody sheets out of his master's room – one (the fine one) from the victim's bed and the other (the coarse one) the one he used to cover himself when he went to perform the terrible deed.

The accused was confined to the butler's pantry, in the care of two Bow Street officers, awaiting escort to London but, at noon that day, the court was informed that the assassin had cut his own throat with a razor he had concealed about his person. He had been permitted to use the lavatory in the passage leading to the servants' hall, where he had used the implement to try to take his own life. However, although the wound was deep and bled profusely, there happened to be two surgeons nearby who had attended the inquest, and one of them, Mr Holt, immediately rushed forward and seized the gushing arteries with both hands and contrived to stop the flow with manual pressure until more regular means could be applied and the wound sewn up. By that evening Nicholson was out of immediate danger and was able to speak but he said very little and made no confession or explanation, merely protesting his innocence. To prevent any further attempts to take his own life, Nicholson was put in a straitjacket and his arms were held by two persons, one on each side of him. His head was also held steady to prevent him from opening up the wound. A Bow Street officer and servants were always in the room to watch him.

On 7 June 1813 he received numerous visitors, mostly highly placed friends of the murdered couple, including Lord Castlereagh the foreign secretary, Lord Camden and Lord Robert Seymour, and was showing repeated signs of annoyance and agitation. Eventually, that evening, the wound opened up again and Nicholson bled profusely. All this time he had persisted in asserting his innocence, but early the following morning he asked that Mr Bonar junior be brought to his bedside. When the heir to the Bonar fortune arrived, Nicholson broke down and confessed to the crime and made a full signed confession to a local magistrate. At last the true story came out.

On that fateful Sunday night, after the groom had left him, Nicholson fell asleep on a bench in the servants' hall. Around three o'clock, he fell off the bench and awoke and was instantly seized with the idea of murdering his employers. He was already half-undressed and so he wrapped himself in a sheet from his bed and took the poker from the grate in the servants' hall and a lighted candle and made his way upstairs.

'I went directly to my mistress's bed and struck her two blows on the head. She neither spoke nor moved. I then went round to my master and struck him once across the face. Mr Bonar was roused and, from the confusion produced by the violence of the blow, imagined that Mrs Bonar was then coming to bed and said, "Come to bed, my love." I immediately repeated the blows and he sprang out of bed and grappled with me for fifteen minutes and at one time nearly got the better of me but,

being exhausted by the loss of blood, I at length overpowered him.'

Nicholson then left his victim groaning on the floor and went downstairs, where he stripped naked and washed himself all over in the butler's pantry. He then opened the drawing room windows to make it look as if there had been an intruder. He disposed of his bloodied shirt and stockings in a bush outside the front door, covering them with leaves. He then returned, leaving the front door open and went back to bed. He did not sleep but pretended to be asleep when King came to wake him at six-thirty.

Nicholson completed his deposition by emphasizing that he was alone in this deed and had no associates. 'How could I, when never in my life, before the moment of jumping up from the bench, had I entertained the thought of murder?'

A search by the police officer, Lavender, quickly revealed the soiled garments Nicholson had concealed and he was sent for trial at the Maidstone Assizes before Mr Justice Heath on a charge of petty treason. This indictment differed from a common indictment for murder in that the victim was the offender's master and he therefore traitorously as well as feloniously murdered his master. [This distinction was removed in 1861]. Nicholson pleaded not guilty to the charge. His confession was read out and, when asked what his motive was, he replied,

'I had no bad intention. I did not know what provoked me to do it, more than you do.'

'You were heard to complain about going so much behind the carriage.'

'Yes, but I never thought of doing it from that.'

'Had you thought or talked of this murder when you were drinking with the groom the night before in the hall?'

'No. I never thought of it myself, or had any idea of it myself.'

'How long was it after you awoke that you went upstairs?'

'I jumped up. I was half undressed when sleeping on the form. I undressed and put the sheet about me.'

'Why did you put the sheet about you?'

'That they might not know me.'

'When did you drop the sheet?'

'In the struggle. I had it on when I gave the first blow.'

'Did Dale the butler or any of the maid servants know anything about it?'

'Not a word.'

'What was your intention?'

'Nothing particular, but when I went into the room I saw my master and mistress asleep and I gave her two blows.'

'Were you drunk when you went to bed?'

'No Sir. I had drunk nothing but beer. I had not had a

drop of spirits all day.’

After examination and the evidence provided by witnesses for the prosecution, a Mr Frederick Tyrrell appeared as a character witness. He told the court that Nicholson had been employed by his father but had been ultimately dismissed for drunkenness, although the witness said he was never violent.

The judge summed up the evidence, saying he had never known a case more clearly proved. The jury immediately returned a verdict of guilty and the judge, after a protracted homily, continued,

‘I shall therefore proceed to discharge my duty in passing upon you the sentence of the law, which is that you be taken hence to a place from whence you came, and on Monday next be drawn on a sledge to the place of execution, and there hanged till you are dead, and then your body shall be given to be dissected and anatomized.’

Nicholson was therefore taken to the condemned cell at the old Maidstone Gaol (this was well before the present prison was erected) which was underground and approached by a dark and dreary staircase.

Around midday the following Monday, the hurdle or sledge, in the shape of a shallow box about 6 feet by 3 feet, drew up at the door to the gaol. It had a seat at each end, just capable of holding two persons and Nicholson was placed in it with his back to the horses with the executioner seated beside him. Facing them were the priest and a gaoler with a loaded blunderbuss on his lap.

The contraption made its way slowly the mile and a half to Penenden Heath, on the outskirts of Maidstone, where a platform about 7 feet high had been erected with the gallows on top. Mr Bonar junior was already there in a post-chaise, facing the place of execution, determined to witness the dispatch of his parents’ murderer. He did not have long to wait, for very soon the trap was sprung and Nicholson was launched into eternity. As was not uncommon in those days, the execution was carried out without any semblance of scientific or biological finesse and, according to contemporary records, ‘he died unusually hard, being greatly convulsed’.

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This article is an edited version of a chapter in Roy Ingleton’s book: “Kent Murders & Mayhem



*PICTURES FROM THE PAST*



*FARNBOROUGH HAMPSHIRE*



*UNKNOWN POSSIBLY METS AT THE EPSOM DERBY MEETING*



*HUDDERSFIELD POLICE*

**POLICE FAMILY HISTORY AND DNA**

Old English saying: **Trust not the roper to craft his own noose.**

It may be considered that due to having my DNA tested that I joined the Police History Society. For several years, especially since retiring my wife and I have been researching our family history. In earlier days before the



widespread use of computers and on line facilities it was necessary to visit local county and city record offices to obtain the information of our ancestors. My particular interest was of course the Roper family and due to what has often been described as the Ropers being a Police family there was a great deal of scope.

Compiling a list of names with dates of birth, marriage and death is all that some people seem to do. I find it fascinating to link in the social history of the time as well as some of the events that these ancestors were involved with. We shall see that my immediate family's involvement in Policing was dramatically extended when the DNA test results came through. I am mindful that one of the objectives of the Police History Society is not that of family history.

However in my case Police and family History are inexorably linked as we shall see later. Records show that my Roper family originated from the County of Suffolk in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and were there for generations prior to then. My branch of the family moved to London when the Railways arrived in Suffolk in the mid 1800's and were there for one generation and my grandfather and family moved to Plymouth around 1914 and have *been there ever since.*

***Ephraim John ROPER was the eldest of 9 children 8 boys and 1 girl. 5 of which joined the Police Force but only 3 served until pensionable age.***

*Ephraim ROPER joined the Devon Constabulary, on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1926 served throughout Devon and retired with the rank of Superintendent on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1961.*

***Albert Henry ROPER joined the Devon Constabulary on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1928 and retired with the rank of Superintendent on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1959. He took part in Policing Dartmoor prison following the riot in 1932. He served at Torquay, Okehampton and Plympton. In March 1945 he attended a Home Office Course for Police Instructors, at Peel House. Later he was an instructor at Falfield Police Training Centre. He attended the Police Staff Colleges Course B in 1954.***

***George Frederick ROPER joined the Devon Constabulary on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1931 and was pensioned from the force on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1956 as Detective Sergeant. He died in June, 2008 at the age of ninety nine and a half.***

Where possible it is useful for Police and Family History researchers to record the verbal recollections of those that are still with us. This is a short item of verbal comments made to me by George Frederick ROPER. His first station was Newton Abbot and whilst there was posted to Exeter for special duty. He was part of the escort taking Dartmoor prisoners to Princetown for their trial. The prisoners had rioted at Dartmoor in 1932 and the ring leaders were held on remand at Exeter Prison. Speaking to him on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1994, he recounted some of his memories of that time. His landlady gave him breakfast at 6 a.m. and this consisted of fried mackerel. The vehicle for transporting the prisoners and the escort was a lorry that was normally used by the force for moving the furni-

ture of Police Officers. It had solid tyres and the journey to

Princetown took sometime

through Dunsford, Morten-

hampstead and Postbridge.

His breakfast did not always

last the journey.



There was some fear that an attempt would be made to free the prisoners and George was given a revolver for protection. He had never handled a firearm prior to this

time. He was in civilian clothes dressed in an overcoat and

a peaked cap. On reaching Princetown the prisoners

were put in a special dock. This had been made locally of

wrought iron and the prisoners were handcuffed to it. He

recalls that the son of George Robey was Kings Council

together with a Mr Palin. The prisoners started stamping

their feet and disrupting proceedings.

The magistrates then dealt with them one at a time

thereby prolonging the hearing. He retired in 1956 and

died 6 months short of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2008.

**Alec ROPER** joined the same force on 1<sup>st</sup> October

1933 but only served for 7 years and 28 days. He

left and joined the Cunard Shipping line as a

purser.

**Beatrice ROPER** the only woman in this generation

joined the Devon Constabulary on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1949.

She resigned on 29<sup>th</sup> February 1952 on the occa-

sion of her marriage. This was a time when mar-

ried policewomen were not accepted within the

Police Force. She served at Torquay and Barn-

staple. She attended Eynsham hall in 1949

Course 34 Class 2.

**David ROPER**, son of Ephraim served with the Devon

Constabulary from 28<sup>th</sup> December, 1951 until

retiring as an Inspector 6<sup>th</sup> February 1977. He

was seconded to Cyprus during the troubles on

that island.

**Timothy ROPER** son of David joined the Wiltshire

Constabulary in 1981 and left in 1984 to join the

Bermuda Police. Resigned in 1991.

**Michael ROPER**, son of Albert Roper joined the

Devon Constabulary on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1955 and retired

on pension after 30 years service with the rank of

Inspector.

**Derek John ROPER** joined the Devon Constabulary

on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1959 and retired in March 1991 with

the rank of Superintendent. He served through-

out Devon.

Perhaps moving to Princetown in 1966 brought recollec-

tions back the facts that both Uncles Albert and George

Roper had been involved in policing the prison riot of

1932. Little did I know at this time I arrived as the sole

Police Representative in this isolated area that until the

end of 1966 there were to be 23 prisoners that escaped

from the prison. Prisons nationwide were experiencing a

similar problem with escapes. In 1967 the government set

up the Mountbatten enquiry with Sir Robert Mark, former

Metropolitan Commissioner having a leading role.

**Paul ROPER** served throughout Devon and Cornwall.

He joined that force on 4th September 1971 and

retired on 31st October 2001.

**Elaine Mary Roper** joined the Dorset Constabulary in

1972 and served until 1977 when she left to get

married. Sister to Derek and Paul.

**John Peter Henry ROPER** was born on 25<sup>th</sup> Decem-

ber, 1950. He joined The Devon and Cornwall

Constabulary 1969. He died on the 10<sup>th</sup>

June, 1974 as a result of a Road Traffic Accident.

**Paul Stuart ROPER** son of George was born on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1967. He joined the Avon and Somerset Constabulary on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1986 and left because of back injury in 2000.

**Hugh ROPER** was born 1 Jun 1970 He joined the Hertfordshire Constabulary in 1997 and is still a serving officer. He is the great, great, great, great grandson of Thomas Theopolis ROPER.

**Peter YATES**, nephew of Derek and Paul Roper.

Joined the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2000 and is still serving.

**Thomas Theopolis ROPER** was born at Tannington; Suffolk circa 1821. He was an Inspector in the East Suffolk County Constabulary in 1840. We do not know his length of service but it must have been in excess of 20 years.

Deoxyribonucleic acid - DNA has evolved since those early discoveries at the Old Cavendish Laboratories in Cambridge. The use in criminal investigations, paternity, family history and archaeology are a few disciplines that are well known. Some years ago I wrote an article for Suffolk Family History Society which was included in their quarterly magazine. A short time later I received an e mail from L.Dave Roper, Professor Emeritus of Physics, College of Arts and Sciences Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Whilst there were around ten different unrelated Roper families listed he asked if I was prepared to have my DNA tested in order to establish to which group if any my family belonged.

I duly sent for a test kit which came from Houston, Texas.

Their web site <http://www.familyreedna.com>

12 markers were initially tested but later I had this upgraded to 36. The current results can be seen at <http://www.roperld.com/RoperGenetics.htm>

This opened the field of family research to 'cousins' that had the same common ancestor as my Roper family. Not only was this of great interest from a family tree perspective it also added to the Police History that I was collating. In October 2006 an international union of Ropers was held

in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Ropers from America, Canada and the UK attended and I met with some of those to which we were related. There were some nine different Roper families some connected by close relationships and

other by D.N.A. The others whilst having the name Roper had no ancestral connection whatsoever. One person I met was Ian ROPER and his wife whose son was serving in the Hertfordshire Police. My next task was to try to link

the families that had been connected by DNA to records held in record offices and other depositories. In 2009 I visited the Suffolk Record Office and looked at records for the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. One that was of interest was a marriage.

*1848 MAR 26<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER AT St Mary's Woodbridge.  
Thomas Theopolis Roper, Bachelor, Inspector of Police  
Lowestoft Married Lavinia Gross Spinster.*

Asking the archivist if there was any other record of Thomas Roper she produced The Police and Constabulary List 1844 issued by The Police History Society. Much to my regret this was the first time that I was aware of the existence of the Police History Society. An entry under East Suffolk County Constabulary Force showed that on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1840 Thomas Theopolis Roper was appointed Police Inspector in the village of Botesdale with the Police Station being in Botesdale Street. This gave a Police con-

nection from 1840 to the present day.

In the 1851 Census, Thomas Theophilus Roper was an inspector of police, aged 31. Ten years (1861) later he was master of Barham Workhouse. Lavinia was the matron. It was there that they had their children. 1891 census showed that they were residing at "Indiana Villa", Felixstowe Road, Ipswich. He would have been using the Vagrancy Act 1824 which the modern Police would have been well aware of.

After his Police service Thomas he became the Master of the workhouse at Barham in Suffolk.



Many ex military and Police were engaged as Masters of Workhouses at this time. The Poor Law of 1834 had laid the foundations for workhouses throughout the country.

We often think that modern Governments have the welfare of the poor, ill and elderly at heart but many things do not change. Parishes had aided the poor and paupers in their

area. Costs on householders had become more than house owners were willing to pay. They were keen to help those in greatest need but the poor who could work and help themselves should not be subsidised by they fellow residents. The Poor Law stated that 'whosoever will not work ought not to live'. Even in living memory the Workhouse had a stigma attached to it. Male and female were kept separated as were children and the elderly. It would

appear that these Ropers have a common ancestor a James Roper born Suffolk circa 1700. In 1740 one of his descendants emigrated to Virginia working for Lord Fair-

fax. In 2007 we visited Maryland and Virginia meeting other Ropers to whom we were connected. One was Anthony Roper, Sherriff of Clark County, Virginia. His son is a trooper in the local Police Department. At the time we met he was offering himself forward for another term as Sherriff having to be elected to the post. How long before we have something similar? Not only did the DNA test give an insight into other living Ropers and those that can be traced from records it was showed that we were included in Haplogroup G. My current DNA shows me in Halologue group G and further code as G2a3b1a2 -- predicted L497+ As I understand it our ancestors were from a pocket of humanity that survived one of the world's upheavals. This group originated thousands of years ago in area north of present day India and Pakistan and migrated north and west to Europe and eventually into East Anglia.

So how can DNA aid Police History and family research?

It is only in recent years that family surnames have been prominent. Unless you were a member of the ruling

classes or of a tilted family little may have been recorded. Police History can be confidently traced back over the last

two hundred years with records being kept as well as photographic records from the mid 1800's. In early history

when the people of mid Asia commenced their migration eastwards and northwards there were no written records.

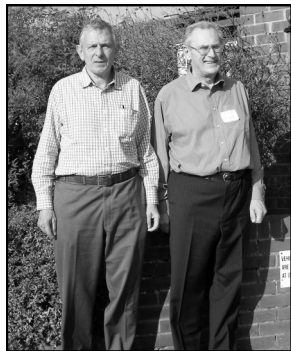
We can go back to Roman times to find some records but the Roman Army became the power that kept law an order after having conquered the majority of present day Europe including most of Britain. They had a civilian administration that ruled the provinces that they occupied often using local heads of indigenous communities to keep the peace.

Recent reports suggest that more than half of our population are descended from Northern Europe. After the de-



cline of the Roman Empire Britain was left to its own resources until the last invasion of these shores by the Normans in 1066. The office of Constable is ancient but over the centuries has had different connotations. Throughout the country there is evidence of Police History covering many centuries. An example of the Policing history over a long period can be seen at Lincoln Castle. It was one of the first Norman Castles built in 1068 on the site of an old Roman Fort. The Normans were a minority in this country but built their castle to subdue the population that they had conquered. The Castle at Lincoln stands in a prominent position near the Cathedral. The Castle contained soldiers commanded by a Constable and was used by the Sherriff to dispense justice at the Shire Court. Within the Castle the Georgian and Victorian prisons can be visited together with the condemned cell. Currently the Crown court for the area is situated within the Castle walls. The link with law and order stretches from 1199 and during the period 1608 to 1878 was used as a prison with a courthouse.

Those interested in Police history will find that throughout the Country there are often links to law and order stretching back many centuries.



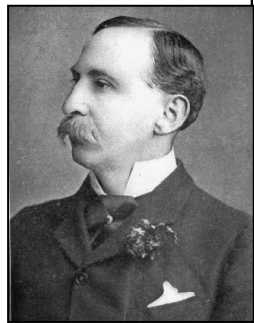
Overall DNA and researching Police and family History has resulted in the Roper family involved in Policing from Suffolk, Devon, Hertfordshire, and Virginia in America. This covers a period from the 1840 to the present day.

Service in total is in excess of 240 years.

DEREK ROPER

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**Howard Vincent and the birth of the Criminal Investigation Department**  
 By Adrian James



The uncovering of police corruption has often been a driver of great organisational change. In 1877, concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Metropolitan Police detective force were greatly amplified by the very public proceedings that have come to be known as the 'Turf Fraud' trials or the 'Trial of the Detectives'. The trial followed the discovery of a network of fraudsters into which senior detective officers: Chief Inspectors Nathaniel Druscovich; George Clarke; William Palmer, and Inspector John Meiklejohn had been drawn (see Wade, 2007 for more details of this case). The trial precipitated a swift reaction from the state. In 1878, within days of Druscovich, Palmer and Meiklejohn's conviction (and Clarke's acquittal), the Home Office convened a 'Departmental Commission' on the 'State, Discipline and Organisation of the Detective Force of the Metropolitan Police' (otherwise known as the Ibbetson Commission). The Commission concluded that the arrangements for the oversight of the detective police were inadequate and that a new detective department should be established. The Commission was firmly of the view that only an 'outsider' (who was untarnished by any link to police corruption) could be trusted to deliver that change and it strongly recommended that an Assistant Commissioner, preferably a lawyer having magisterial experience, should be appointed at the head of the detective branch (cited in Jeyes, 1912).

The decision to appoint a legal professional to the post was of course entirely consistent with the approach that had been taken in setting up the Metropolitan Police. On appointment, the first Joint Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, Richard Mayne and Charles Rowan had been sworn in as Justices of the Peace rather than as police officers. Moreover, Mayne, a qualified barrister (who had died in post only ten years before these events), had become the more significant figure not least because of the length of time he had held the post and the number of changes in the force that he singly and successfully had overseen.

The individual selected for the new post of Director of the 'Criminal Investigation Department' was Lt. Colonel Charles Howard Vincent (later Colonel Sir, Charles Howard Vincent KCMG, CB, and DL - usually known as Howard Vincent). His appointment to the Metropolitan Police was followed by the wholesale reform of the detective department and, amongst other things, the introduction of a police code which became the guiding text for police forces, and the first incarnation of the specialist detective squad. However, considered in the round his relatively short stay at Scotland Yard was just one interlude in a notable and exceptional life as a barrister, soldier, newspaper correspondent, administrator, and politician (see Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004 for greater detail).

Howard Vincent took up his post at Scotland Yard on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1878. It is not now known who coined the term that defines the detective force to this day but Vincent's biographer Jeyes (1912: 60) argued that he was afforded the title 'Director' to remove any "uncanny associations" with the word detective that had so recently been discredited. Prior to his appointment, Vincent had established a reputation as an innovative and determined administrator (Wade, 2007). However, opinion on his appointment was divided. To some his "indefatigable" writing and publishing skills and his ability as a linguist made him a strong candidate for such an important post (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). However, some thought him to be too inexperienced and a novice (see Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, 2006: 23) whilst others, rather uncharitably, saw him as a "briefless barrister with... little or no knowledge or experience in police matters" (*Reynolds' newspaper*, 1880, 15<sup>th</sup> August).

Vincent's nomination for the post of Director was the product of careful calculation and assiduous planning on his part. Jeyes, (1912: 57) recorded that "it was not purely with the object of assisting the (Ibbetson) committee in their labour that Vincent put himself to all this trouble. He had anticipated that an important new post would be created and he was determined to get it". That determination extended to enrolling in the Paris Faculty of Law to carry out his own investigation of the French detective police, the Sûreté. He presented to the Commission, a thorough critique of the French system (redrafted 18 times

with the help of his brother) (Jeyes, 1912). The report and a reference from the Attorney-General recommended him to Home Secretary R.A. Cross (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). Sir John Holker the Attorney-General's reference read:

You have an intimate acquaintance with the European systems of police, and you have the great advantage which is afforded by the command of several languages, viz. French, German, Russian, and Italian. To these qualities I have enumerated I may add others of great importance. They are these: you are a man of great energy and determination of character and, I need hardly add, of the highest honour... (cited in Jeyes, 1912: 58).

Vincent also benefited from the abandonment of the principle that police recruits should be drawn only from the working class communities they served. That principle originally was established by Peel. His stated aim was to avoid a caste system in the police so that even though the armed forces were rich sources of recruits, ex-warrant officers and non-commissioned officers were favoured over 'gentlemen' officers (Wall, 1998). Wall (1998: 21) has argued that rather than representing 'policing of the people by the people' as Peel publicly claimed, this was an attempt to "ensure that the relationship between the police and the public remained close and that control over... the 'dangerous classes' was maximised while the potential for disorder was minimised" in a cost-effective way. However, as the force developed and grew larger, it was clear both to the police elite and the Home Office that better-educated recruits were needed. Therefore recruitment was opened up to commissioned officers (Wall, 1998). Vincent was one of the first to benefit from that change.

Unusually, though perhaps confirming the Home Secretary's control over the London police, Commissioner Henderson announced Vincent's engagement but he played no meaningful part either in his selection or in his appointment. Those responsibilities instead falling to Home Secretary Cross who of course had initially commissioned the Ibbetson inquiry (Roach, 2004: 164). Like Rowan and Mayne before him, Vincent was not a police officer and just like Rowan and Mayne, he reported di-

rectly to the Home Secretary. That meant that Commissioner Henderson was by-passed and on occasions sidelined (Fido and Skinner, 1999). Though those arrangements must have led to some interesting debates within Scotland Yard, there can be no doubt that it was the Home Secretary rather than the Commissioner who controlled the CID in that period.

Vincent's new department attracted comment and amusement. Mr. Bridge, the Hammersmith Police Magistrate "chafed unmercifully" a detective who appeared before him as a "crime investigator" rather than as a detective (*The Era*, 1878, April 14<sup>th</sup>). Another, who styled himself a 'criminal investigator' was told by a second Magistrate to "Call yourself a constable, I suppose you are one" (*The Graphic*, 1880, September 4<sup>th</sup>). There certainly was enough work for the new department. For example in 1879, its detectives made 4,862 arrests, 65 percent of which resulted in convictions. In that year, officers conducted 2,066 inquiries that did not require any arrest and travelled throughout the United Kingdom and to Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and Spain in pursuing their investigations (Vincent cited in *The Graphic*, 1880, 4<sup>th</sup> September).

Despite having no disciplinary power over his staff and being "short-handed" due to the "disappearance in disgrace" of many senior members of the detective force (Jeyes, 1912: 62), Vincent reformed and reorganized his department (a task made especially challenging by the 'Fenian' outrages in London in the early 1880s). He introduced a shift system and supervision through the ranks; appointing 60 divisional detectives and 20 special patrols and formalising the distinction between Scotland Yard detectives and their divisional colleagues. Vincent established the tradition that CID officers remained in that department throughout their police careers. During his directorship, Vincent maintained the links with the Parisian police that he had established prior to his appointment. For example, in March 1881 en route to London from a visit to the south of France, he visited several branches of the Paris Prefecture of Police (*The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 1881, 19<sup>th</sup> March).

Vincent published widely on legal and police matters. Notably in the context of his role as 'chief of detectives', he published in 1882 *A Police Code and Manual of*

*Criminal Law* which became the "basic textbook" for police forces both in Britain and throughout the British Empire for many years after his death in 1908 (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). In the modern era, the investigative environment has come to be dominated by 'doctrine'; the codification of instructions and guidance. Vincent's *Code* was exactly that, which of course provides even more evidence of his foresight and creativity. Mr Justice Hawkins wrote the foreword to its fifth edition. His words provide a fascinating insight into the culture of police work in that era. He exhorted constables to:

Obey every order given to you by your superior officer without for a moment considering the propriety of it. You are not responsible for the order, but for obedience. In yielding obedience let the humblest member of the force feel that by good conduct and cheerful submission he may himself rise to be placed in authority to give the orders that he is now called upon to obey (cited in Vincent, 1886: 5).

Vincent's advice to detectives was rather more practical. He argued that "the detection of criminals... can only be attained by cordial cooperation, the absence of craving for individual credit, free interchange of information, great activity, and the constant adoption of fresh and unexpected measures" (1886: 53). The ability of detectives to unravel crime depended upon "the energy, the ability, the judgement, the zeal, and the integrity of the detective force" (1886: 109). Vincent felt that detective work was "more varied and interesting than the ordinary street duty". However, prospective detectives needed to demonstrate "voluntary inclination" for the work and to have "given proof of skill" while on beat duty (Vincent, 1886: 109).

From 1883 to 1884, Vincent edited the *Police Gazette*; the first police intelligence circular to transmit descriptions of wanted offenders, details of stolen property and other useful information (Lucas revised by Emsley, 2004). The *Gazette* has gone through many reviews and revisions but is still in use today. Vincent was an innovator and unlike his predecessors was influenced by continental methods. He favoured using police informers and undercover operatives as *agents provocateurs* (Wade, 2007),

though he was rightly wary of encouraging improper relationships between detectives and those from whom they sought information. Vincent was “always unconventional in his methods” (Wade, 2007: 32). On one occasion he used the advertisement section of a daily newspaper to offer a £200 reward for the arrest of a ‘dynamiter’ (Jeyes, 1912: 75). He was a true innovator. Against the convention of the time, he would proactively launch an investigation without waiting for a criminal complaint (Morris, 2007: 22).

In 1883, he established the Special Irish Branch, which later (as Special Branch) became the first of the specialised squads and units ‘spun off’ from the CID. Wade (2007: 87) argued that the establishment of this unit was a “development of the tendency to assemble men of special expertise to tackle specific threats or new crimes”. This established a template for detective work that has continued into the modern era. In this particular case, the event was the failure of the police to prevent an attack on Clerkenwell Prison by a group of Irish nationalists, despite having received accurate intelligence from the Irish Police warning of the attack (Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, 2006: 83).

The new unit brought “added kudos and consolidated [the] CID’s monopoly over investigative techniques” (Matassa and Newburn, 2007: 44). It also signalled a significant split between the ‘ordinary’ detective and those tasked with responding to events on the world stage (Wade, 2007). The work of the unit meant that some detectives “found themselves acting in quasi-espionage situations and as time went on, in real espionage” (Wade, 2007: 88). Clutterbuck (2002: 351) argued that the establishment of the squad represented a “quantum leap” in the operational methodology of the detective force as for the first time it signalled a new, longer-term approach to intelligence work of the kind that has come to be associated with specialist detective units in the modern era.

Clutterbuck’s fascinating account of the emergence of the Special Branch at the end of the nineteenth century suggests that the tools and techniques now associated with ‘high policing’ (Brodeur, 1983), have their roots in the nineteenth century (2002). However, in that period they were used exclusively to counter ‘political’ crime. Clutterbuck (2002: 244) has argued that there was

“scarcely no aspect” of the covert investigative work he described, that has not continued to play a part in police counter-terrorism operations.

Vincent acknowledged that the establishment of the CID had erected a barrier between police in uniform and police in plain clothes that operated “with much detriment to the public service” (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 1880). Vincent made a real attempt to ameliorate cultural differences between detectives and uniformed officers which existed since the first plain clothes officers had been employed in 1842. For example, he cautioned detective officers to be “watchful” about taking cases away from uniform constables and to be:

Especially guarded against the arrogation of individual credit, and if they have any information which may secure the arrest of a criminal, they should communicate it to the officer who is placed in a position to work it out, instead of reserving it for themselves.

Vincent’s identification of the potentially corrosive effect of that cultural divide demonstrated his insight and management skills. History does not record the immediate effect of his words but this research suggests that their impact was limited. Arguably, that divide exists in policing even today.

In a memorandum addressed to Commissioner Henderson, which gives a fascinating insight into Vincent’s opinion of detectives’ abilities in the earliest days of the CID, he continued that detectives’ dealings with other constabularies often indicated incompetence in even the simplest of tasks (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 1880). The fact that in this case he was writing to the Commissioner rather than his ‘line manager’ the Home Secretary may have been significant but it is difficult, at this distance from the event, to interpret the full meaning of Vincent’s words.

Given the detectives’ opinion of themselves, it is perhaps surprising that Vincent believed that their personal inadequacies were at the heart of the problems in the detective department. However he also blamed the force’s superintendents for selecting CID men who were “far removed from the best quality” and leaving those men to their own devices to investigate cases so that “there was neither control nor cooperation, neither intelligence

nor thoroughness as a general rule” in their investigations. This perhaps explains Vincent’s enthusiasm for the professionalisation of the CID through the recruitment of detectives by ‘direct entry’. However, his initial recruitment by ‘direct entry’ of six detectives from the ‘professional’ classes was not a success and he quickly abandoned the scheme.

Unfortunately, there is no record of a response to Vincent’s proposal that CID superintendents should all be trained “in the same school of the Criminal Law” to improve a department that “never had any stability” and which was “defective in the time of Sir Richard Mayne” and “defective during the period of the divisional detectives” or alternatively that they be replaced by existing chief inspectors or by local inspectors eligible for promotion who were of “suitable calibre” (MEPO 2/134d: memo dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1880). However, it would be another half a century before that “school of criminal law”, the detective training school, was established in Hendon, North London.

Jeyes recorded that at first, as an amateur, Vincent made many enemies at Scotland Yard. However he claimed that Vincent’s willingness to give credit where it was due, to deal frankly and honestly with his staff, his good humour and “social popularity” earned him a measure of respect from his subordinates in the CID (Jeyes, 1912: 104). Vincent remained in post until 1884, when he left to stand for Parliament and soon was elected to the constituency of Sheffield Central. It has been argued that in the six years as Director, Vincent’s influence on detective work in London was immense (Lucas, revised by Emsley, 2004). Reflecting on his short but immensely significant career as director of detectives, Stead, (1888: 1) felt that Vincent had “succeeded in establishing cosmos out of chaos”. Certainly, he left the CID far better equipped to meet the challenges it would face at the turn of the nineteenth century than it had been when he had assumed command only six years earlier.

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**WHEN A VICTIM OF CRIME REFUSED POLICE ASSISTANCE: THE CASE OF A NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT IN LONDON, 1937-38**

By

Kemi Rotimi, PhD

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This is the story of a Nigerian immigrant who fell victim of confidence tricksters in London in 1937 but when the police waded into the case, the victim bluntly refused to cooperate with the investigation and thereby allowed the criminals to evade justice. The financial losses suffered by the victim led to loss of schooling by the three children he brought into the country; depression, indebtedness, and gambles with weird business proposals in a determined bid to rebuild his fortunes. He never made it and when a bid was made to rescue him from Nigeria, he snubbed it and literally disappeared.

Stephen Norapalmer Arthur-Worrey was a Nigerian businessman who had made some fortune from tin and gold mining in Jos, Nigeria before the mid-1930s. He had only elementary schooling and had been a petty trader in his home region in one of the Southern Provinces. In 1930, he went to the Northern Provinces and took up mining. He was the registered lessee of 'a certain amount of tin and gold mining land.' In April 1937, at the age of 44, he decided to emigrate to the United Kingdom amid reservations by his family members and friends in Nigeria apparently because he was 'a man of rather weak intellect who [was] liable to be duped.'

He had high hopes on the good life in England both for himself and his three sons that he took along. The eldest among the sons was only aged 9. He was also accompanied by a Mr E.S. Wilkey, described as 'a gentleman of colour' who was his employee. Before he left Nigeria, he had reportedly 'expressed his intention of being presented to Their Majesties.' This unreasonable quest for social relevance turned out to be the beginning of his ordeal and ruin.

Upon arrival in London, he took up residence at 62 Camden Road, Camden Town, N.W.1. He moved fast on his agenda for his children by enrolling them in an elite school, King's College, St. Leonard's-on-Sea. In a letter to his relations in Nigeria, dated 10 June 1937, Arthur-

Worrey gleefully reported that the school was exclusive to children of 'the Nobles of this city'; it had no other black children except his own! The education of his children in the school would lead to the betterment of the 'Black race'. But dreams die first. By the end of that year, the children were out of that school for inability to pay. How did Arthur-Worrey come by impecuniosity and grief?

On 12 June 1937, Detective Inspector John Junkin of the CID, New Scotland Yard interviewed Mr E. S. Wilkey [Arthur-Worrey's employee] on the instruction of Chief Inspector Rees following a report Wilkey had lodged about two men, officially described as 'confidence tricksters' who were alleged to have defrauded Mr Arthur-Worrey. Mr Arthur-Worrey had met one of the suspects, Anthony Bushell, a 'motor driver' about five weeks before. Aged 39, Bushell lived at 384A Camden Road. Bushell later introduced Arthur-Worrey to his brother-in-law, Otto Arthur Dumas, a clerk, aged 36 and who lived at 2 Pownall Gardens, Hounslow. Both men had promised to introduce Arthur-Worrey to members of the Royal Family and had skimmed £400 off him. Bushell and Dumas had also prevailed upon Arthur-Worrey to 'enter the Imperial Nursing Home at 64 Holland Park W. and have a facial operation to remove his tribal scars'. This was to make him 'more presentable for introduction to Royalty'.

Mr Wilkey was apparently motivated to report to the police because the fears of Arthur-Worrey's relations in Nigeria about his emigration were not only being borne out but he was also losing his mind. What with the hostile posture he had assumed towards Wilkey since the two tricksters had taken hold of him. And what was worse, the two men were planning to remove Arthur-Worrey from the Nursing Home 'to an unknown destination'.

DI John Junkin, accompanied by PC Crerar went to the Nursing Home where they, fortuitously met Bushell and Dumas pleading with the surgeon, Viscount de la Vatine, to discharge Arthur-Worrey as 'they had a place out of London where he could peacefully recover from the operation.' The surgeon, yet unaware of the identity of the police officers, disobliged them because 'he did not like the look of the two men'.

As Bushell and Dumas were about to leave the Nursing Home the police officers apprehended them, querying them about their business with Arthur-Worrey. The ac-

cused 'took up a haughty injured air' and retorted that it was no business of the police officers'. They were further asked to 'explain the constant recent drain on Mr Arthur-Worrey's banking account'. They were subsequently taken to the Notting Hill Police Station by PC Crerar. DI Junkin returned to Arthur-Worrey on his sick bed for interactions. To the officer's shock, Arthur-Worrey refused to discuss Bushell and Dumas because 'he had the utmost faith in them and in addition to assisting him in meeting influential people they were also helping him in negotiating for the disposal of his mines in Nigeria'. Not even the entreaties of the medical staff that Arthur-Worrey should cooperate with the police could make him budge. He had become obsessed with his desire 'to meet His Majesty the King.' And only Bushell and Dumas were capable of bringing about the introduction. For proof, Arthur-Worrey handed the police officer a copy of a letter purportedly written and sent to HM's Secretary by the two men.

The debt of gratitude that Arthur-Worrey owed to these mind-bending confidence tricksters is amply reflected in his letter of 10 June 1937 to his Nigerian relations referred to earlier. The surgery and post-operative nursing which had cost him £72.10.0d were money well spent because he was now wearing a new look without tribal marks, indeed his face had become 'young nice smooth shining'. He was overwhelmed by the fact that the surgery had been performed by Viscount de la Vatine, 'the expert Doctor in the world I ever seen'. He was mystified at the fact of the local anaesthesia that had made him feel no pain, and remain conscious, while the operation lasted. He requested that portions of his letter relating to the surgery and his new looks be publicised 'as a sort of circular to all individual friends...brethren both south and northern Nigeria to enable them to know me when they shall see me.' He pleaded for understanding on his long silence in communicating with people at home which he attributed to 'too many appointments and invitation card from The High Noble in the city and Country.' The convalescence in the Nursing Home had therefore afforded him the opportunity to write. In signing off, he wrote thus: 'I remain, Yours brethren, Friend, wife, and sisters, S.N. Arthurworrey'.

Back to DI Junkin. Frustrated by Arthur-Worrey, Junkins sought information from Bushell and Dumas who had

been detained. They declined to make statements but informed Junkin that their intentions were perfectly honest; that they had indeed sent the letter requesting meeting with HRM to HM's Secretary and that 'they had a relation in the employ of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester who was prompting them on the best methods of approaching members of the Royal Family.' They also asserted that they were in touch with 'reliable firms' in the city with a view to negotiating for the sale of the property in Nigeria. When pressed for details they declined to give them and when questioned as to motive prompting their efforts, they stated that they hoped to gain a commission in the event of the property being sold.

Bushell and Dumas were eventually released from police custody because a search at the Criminal Record Office proved negative while the police hoped that Arthur-Worrey might change his mind and cooperate with police investigation. In a note to the Superintendent, dated 14 June 1937, Chief Inspector J. Sharpe remarked that the case appeared 'to have all the elements of fraud' but regretted that the victim was adamant and had refused 'point blank to acquaint police with anything which may assist us in assisting himself'.

#### SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

It would appear that apart from the police, Mr E. S. Wilkey, Arthur-Worrey's employee had also lodged a report with the Colonial Office about his plight. The Colonial Office referred the petition to the police for investigation. In a letter dated 22 June 1937, the office of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis sent the report of DI Junkin to the Colonial Office. In a bid to probe Arthur-Worrey's antecedents in Nigeria, the Colonial Office interacted with the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Bernard H. Bourdillon. In a letter dated 19 February 1938, Governor Bourdillon conveyed the anxieties of the relations of Arthur-Worrey about his whereabouts and welfare because they had lost contact with him since they got his letter of 10 June 1937. He traced Arthur-Worrey's roots in Nigeria, his education and business endeavours before his ill-fated adventure in the United Kingdom. He ended by importuning the Colonial Office to intensify efforts at tracing Arthur-Worrey.

The renewed search for Arthur-Worrey warranted the writing of a second report by DI Junkin dated 26 March 1938. It would appear that upon his discharge from the hospital

in 1937 he could no longer afford the rent for his accommodation in Camden Town. He began to squat with a Mr G. C. Johnson of 55 Talma Road, Brixton. Johnson had later accompanied him to the police to lodge a complaint against Wilkey, his former employee whom he accused of 'wrongfully detaining his motor car.' But when again the 'police offered to assist Mr Arthur-Worrey in making application for process against Wilkey he did not avail himself of [their] services.'

On 17 March 1938, DI Junkin 'located Arthur-Worrey in Bed No. 8, C.2 Ward, Dulwich Hospital' where he had been admitted since the 15<sup>th</sup>, 'suffering from bronchial pneumonia.' If Arthur-Worrey was physically sick, his children were emotionally disturbed. DI Junkin learnt that the boys had been removed from King's College; two of them were resettled in the 'Sussex Road, L.C.C. School, Brixton whilst the third was attending Barnwell Road, L.C.C. School, Brixton.' Arthur-Worrey disclosed that the cost of sending the boys to the elite King's College was 'too much for him', so they had not returned there since the Christmas vacation in 1937.

Aside the demotion in status, the children's daily living conditions were appalling. They too were squatters with G.C. Johnson but were living 'without supervision' while their father was in hospital because Johnson was 'absent all day'. They obtained meals from a Mrs Coles of 59 Talma Road, wife of a railwayman who their father had paid 'about £5 since 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1937' which the police considered 'a totally inadequate sum'.

DI Junkin had also interacted with Arthur-Worrey's bankers, the British Bank of West Africa located at 37 Gracechurch Street E.C.3 and had learnt from the manager, Grahame Child, that he had 'only £20' in his account. The manager had implored the police officer 'to obtain Mr Arthur-Worrey's permission to cable to Nigeria and have sufficient funds deposited in the bank's branch in Warri [his home town], to defray cost of his and his boys return passage.'

Arthur-Worrey's dream of greatness had not all evaporated. So, returning to Nigeria was not on the cards for him. Even on his sick bed, he told the police officer that he was in 'possession of certain papers relating to the formation of a company to deal with his property in Nigeria' which was 'the subject of a dispute between him and

Wilkey' but he was 'more convinced than ever, despite advice and warnings from his bank manager, that his negotiations would be completed in the City.' It was from the proceeds from the disposal of his Nigerian assets that Arthur-Worrey hoped to settle his mounting indebtedness to G.C. Johnson for accommodation; Mrs Coles for the upkeep of his children and to travel to Germany for medical attention from 'specialists in chest ailments.' Whereas he told DI Junkin that he would return to Nigeria after he had been cured of his chest ailment, the officer noted that Arthur-Worrey had 'confidentially told other persons that he [had] not the slightest intention of ever returning home.' Junkin's report was forwarded to the office of the Secretary of State by the office of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on 31 March 1938.

Arthur-Worrey's illusion of grandeur did not abate even amidst observable misery afflicting him and his children. All this is reflected in a third report on his saga written by DI Junkin on 31 May 1938. Junkin visited him in his squatter residence on Talma Road, Brixton after he had been discharged from his second hospitalisation. Junkin found the children in threadbare clothes but their father claimed that he had enough funds for their needs. It would appear Mrs Coles had disengaged from feeding the children on credit because their father reported that he had taken over cooking for them. They were still attending the local schools.

Arthur-Worrey intimated to Junkin that negotiations to form a new company to deal with his property in Nigeria were nearing completion, 'but when asked for details he became evasive.' Junkin had to resort to further interactions with his bankers. The manager, Grahame Child, raised new worries about Arthur-Worrey's financial health. From a lowly credit base of £20 in March, the man had sunk to the depth of an overdraft of £3 which the manager hoped would be redeemed from the sale of 'a recent consignment of tin which had arrived at Liverpool from his mines in Nigeria' and which would fetch about £15 or £16.

Arthur-Worrey had also attempted to mesmerise his bankers with a draft prospectus of a company to be formed, 'styled "The Minna Gold and Tin Mining Company Limited"'. Grahame Child gave DI Junkin the names and addresses of three persons named as co-promoters of the said company apparently just so that Junkin could help



with background checks on them. The men were H. Warwick Edwards, Solicitor of 76 Cheapside, E.C.; Thaddeus E. Walker, [described as 'man of colour'], of 25 Lime Street, E.C.; and John George Barker, City Accountant, of 4 Greenhill Road, Harrow. There was nothing recorded in 'C.2. Registry' in respect of the three men, nor at City Police Headquarters, in respect of Edwards and Barker. But Walker had been 'the subject of City Police correspondence from 1914 to 1923' and was 'looked upon with suspicion.'

Thaddeus Emmanuel Walker was born in Jamaica in 1876 but emigrated to England in 1902 and had been involved with the 'promotion of companies.' But police records showed 'several complaints of unsatisfactory transactions... but in each case the officer reporting states there was no evidence to justify proceedings by police.' But he was not all-time lucky. On 1 February 1932, the Bow Street Police Court fined him '10/- or one day on each of three summonses for wilfully permitting default to be made in forwarding to the Registrar of Companies a copy of the annual returns for 1930, of the following companies of which he was a director: The Hildredth Gold Mines, Ltd; The Cuyuni River (British Guiana) Diamond and Gold Co., Ltd; and The West Indies and South American Finance Co., Ltd.' The three companies were consequently struck off the register and dissolved in January 1934 'for failing to submit annual returns.'

DI Junkin reported that enquiries were continuing in respect of the unregistered 'Minna' company and the promoters.

In August 1938, a fourth report on the Arthur-Worrey saga was written, this time by Detective Sub-Inspector Charles Marjoram of the City of London Police. He had taken the investigation into the floating of the 'Minna' company an extra mile with the introduction of a fourth associate, Edmund David Button, 'an Estate Agent and Business Negotiator' of 60 Queen Victoria Street, E.C. who had been mentioned to him by the solicitor, H. Warwick Edwards.

Button claimed that he had been introduced to Arthur-Worrey by Thaddeus Emmanuel Walker. He had apparently been impressed by the documents that Arthur-Worrey had to show for his claims about being a mining businessman who had been producing gold and tin which

had been exported in fair quantities to England 'since 1921, and in addition that he also had considerable interests in other metalliferous mines and in rubber plantations, which he was desirous to exploit to his advantage.' But Button was worried that imports from Arthur-Worrey's leases had been reduced apparently because his relations in Nigeria 'who [were] aware of his financial losses after his arrival here refusing to send any more supplies than is sufficient to realise enough money for his immediate necessities.'

Button provisionally agreed with Arthur-Worrey to form a 'private British company with a nominal capital of £75,000' to acquire the leases and provide working capital to install machinery and other equipment to develop the mines and his other interests 'under modern methods.' Button admitted he had had 'extreme difficulty in interesting any person or concern who would invest in the project'. But he was optimistic that a syndicate he had been negotiating with would advance the required capital. He would not however disclose the identities of the syndicate members. The proposed directors would be himself, Arthur-Worrey and one or more persons to be appointed by the syndicate. He assured DSI Marjoram that 'on no account [would] Thaddeus Emmanuel Walker, respecting whom he [had] received adverse reports as to his integrity, have any connection or interest in the company, should these negotiations materialise.' Arthur-Worrey's consideration for his leases would be 'an allotment of shares and possibly cash, the number and amount to be decided.'

DSI Marjoram would appear to have been taken in by the rosy picture painted by Button (against whom the City Police had no adverse reports) that he neglected to cross-reference with earlier police reports on the Arthur-Worrey saga the later submissions by Arthur-Worrey. One of them was that his three sons were attending King's College where they would 'remain and complete their education.' Button noted that the man 'impressed [him] as being very intelligent, astute and secretive...and whilst anxious to return to his native country, appeared determined to combine his Nigerian interests in this proposed company, thereby providing all the capital necessary to develop his properties and interests...and dispose of his produce at the most advantageous prices, which in the past he [had] been unable to obtain.' As usual, Marjoram's report was

sent through his superiors to H.M Secretary of State for the Colonies.

A second report, but the fifth on the saga, was prepared by the same DSI Marjoram on 30 December 1938. This was a more sober, truer reflection of the dire circumstances of the misadventurer Arthur-Worrey. Edmund Button had not only failed in his bid to mobilise capital for the proposed company, he had decided to 'have nothing further to do with the proposition'.

Following Button's new posture, Marjoram interacted with Arthur-Worrey at his Talma Road, Brixton residence where he saw that he and his sons resided 'under obviously straitened circumstances in this squalid house.' And the man seemed to have finally reconciled himself to the collapse of his dream of reactivating his business interests because 'no person or concern will advance capital for the acquisition of his leases.

Contrary to what Arthur-Worrey had said about returning home a few months before, Marjoram was surprised that he 'expressed no intention of returning to his native country'. Indeed, he was annoyed that his bankers 'had some time ago arranged for his passage home when he refused to go.' That was in September 1938 when the bank linked up with a foremost Nigerian traditional ruler, HRM Sir Ladapo Ademola II, the Alake of Abeokuta, who was a distant cousin of Arthur-Worrey's and a customer of the bank. On the monarch's instructions, a passage was booked for him and he was given a ticket and £10 pocket money. The bank later learnt that Arthur-Worrey had "cashed' the ticket and spent the proceeds."

Finally, the true status of Arthur-Worrey's business ventures in Nigeria was disclosed to the investigating police officer by Mr Child, the bank manager. He was the holder of 'certain leases on small scattered primitively worked tin mines in Nigeria...[and] other small trading interests' which in his absence had been managed by an agent. The fear was that the leases were likely to be surrendered because his 'embarrassed financial position' would make it difficult for him to continue to pay the rents. It was actually the bank that dissuaded Edmund Button from endeavouring to mobilise capital for the formation of a company that would have managed Arthur-Worrey's assets. This report was, like the others, passed up to the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

#### Further Research Questions

1. What eventually happened to Arthur-Worrey and his three sons?
2. Was Arthur-Worrey an innocent victim of crime? Or was he a misguided accomplice in his own ordeal?

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#### William Biddlecombe, Surrey's first detective

Robert Bartlett MA

William Henry Biddlecombe the Head Constable of Godalming Borough Police and on the 1 January 1851 became Number 1 on the roll for the newly formed Surrey Constabulary with the position of superintendent. Aged 36, 5ft 10 tall Biddlecombe hailed from the Isle of Wight having served in the Hampshire Constabulary before moving to Godalming. He was to serve in the Surrey Constabulary until 1 May 1858 when he resigned to become the licensee of the Swan Inn at Chertsey, setting a trend followed by many an ex-police officer. There is no reference in the County Police Committee minutes for 1858 to Biddlecombe and why he left. It is not a surprise that this is the case as then, as now, police authorities were more concerned with finance, capital projects and the maintenance of the estate including sinking a well at Guildford police station. In addition to being a licensee who rented out horses and carriages, Biddlecombe became the clerk of the course at Chertsey race course and was to become a private detective again establishing a future trend being the first generation of ex-police officers to move into the security industry. Biddlecombe worked on some influential cases including being retained by Titchborne family to find the true identity of the claimant (Orton). Biddlecombe identified the true identity of the false claimant but was unable to convince Lord Onslow. (See below)

William Biddlecombe was a parish constable in Godalming, a very small borough police force where crime reports were reduced to nil and his expertise sought across Sussex and into Hampshire where he had previously served in the county constabulary. Biddlecombe's reputation ensured he was brought by the Frimley magistrates to the scene of the murder of the Reverent Hollest. There was no local police and the parish officials were in this case out of their depth and recognised that fact, not too proud to seek help. Working alongside Biddlecombe was a sergeant from the Metropolitan Police and an inspector from the Guildford Borough – in fact he was also the head constable. Godalming Borough Police were responsible for an area larger than the town and included villages as distant as Shere. Parish constables sometimes undertook duties for long periods for example James Sted-

man at Pirbright from 1812-1837. There were paid constables at Shere, Thomas Williams, with Peter Pearce at Shamley Green both supervised by Superintendent Biddlecombe of Godalming. There were also constables stationed at Farnham, Dorking, Chertsey, Chobham, Thorpe, Windlesham and Nutfield who in time joined the Surrey Constabulary not that many survived very long within a disciplined service. Inspector Donaldson who was murdered in Haslemere in 1854 served as superintendent of police in Dorking. He had seen service in the Metropolitan Police before coming into the new police force at the rank of Inspector. The first murder so far traced in the records involving Biddlecombe occurred on the 28 March 1844 involved the murder of a gamekeeper at Wonersh. At the Surrey Spring Assizes in Kingston on the 27 March James Elsley was charged with the wilful murder of James Edwards a gamekeeper, in Wonersh by the Wey and Arun Canal. The body was discovered in the canal the following morning and the alarm was raised. Good local information was soon uncovered leading to Charles Jenkins, described as an Inspector of Police stationed at Shere accompanied by Chief Constable of Godalming William Biddlecombe and most likely Jenkins senior officer, went to the home of the suspect. He was detained and taken to the Jolly Farmer at Bramley. The officers returned to the house and searched it recovering a newly washed smock with what appeared to be blood on it and other clothing. Both the officers undertook a detailed examination of the prisoner and could find no evidence of him having been involved in a fight. Elsley was arrested and taken to Guildford where he was detained on the Saturday night by Inspector Charles Hollington who was the officer in charge of the Guildford Borough Police. Hollington left an unemployed labourer to watch over the prisoner who on the Sunday confessed to him the killing of James Edwards – he had hit the gamekeeper with his rifle but and kicked him into the river. The labourer did not tell anyone of the confession and when on Monday Hollington saw the prisoner, he again confessed. The inspector then went to Elsey's home and recovered two pheasants from where the prisoner had said they were. The jury took twenty minutes to find the prisoner not guilty of murder but manslaughter and this married man, father of five or six children was transported for life. Burglary was not too rare but when large houses or prominent people were involved the press wrote in great detail about the crime and the resulting enquiry. In 1845 such a burglary occurred in Lewes: The hunt for the so called Sussex burglars caused considerable excitement in Lewes particularly when news broke on the 12 March of their arrest in Hampshire by Biddlecombe the chief officer of Godalming police. This active (over the years a term frequently used to describe him) officer's exertions led to the arrests. The prisoners were conveyed in handcuffs from Godalming by cart to Guildford, coach to Redhill before taking the train to Brighton followed by

transfer to a fly for the final part of the journey to Lewes. On March the 19<sup>th</sup> 1845 the men were found guilty of burglary and transported for ten years. The two women accomplices received prison sentences with hard labour. Biddlecombe was commended by the judge for showing great zeal and activity in the case and was rewarded twenty shillings in addition to his expenses and the two constables who assisted him in the pursuit of the prisoners should each receive five shillings. On the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1850 the Reverend George Hollest was murdered in his bedroom. Burglars entered the house at night in Frimley and shot the vicar who later died. George Hollest fired at the fleeing burglars with a loaded pistol he always kept close at night as there was fear of burglars. As there was no local police force Inspector Biddlecombe was brought in from Godalming Borough Police to help the local magistrates. Men were arrested and two of the four were acquitted and two men hung in Southwark. This is an important crime and event as the outcry that followed led to the formation of the Surrey Constabulary. In more detail this case gives an indication of policing in the county pre- Surrey Constabulary and does indicate that there was a level of co-operation and from the response that such events were rare. However rare murder may have been this one impacted on the higher social levels of the county and sent shivers down the spines of the establishment. On the **9 October 1850: The Times** reported the inquest where Sergeant Kendall of the London detective police said he was involved in the case but had arrived after Inspector (sic) Biddlecombe of the Godalming Police. Superintendent (sic) Biddlecombe gave evidence which included details of the crime and suspects. Inspector Charles Hollingworth (sic – should be Hollington) of the Guildford Borough police arrested the suspects and it was reported that Inspector Kendall had noted bloodstained footprints in the doorway of the vicarage and, when searching the suspect's premises bloodstained stockings were recovered. (Rank seems to be arbitrary!) William Henry Biddlecombe Superintendent of the Godalming Borough Police said that he had been directed by the magistrates to go to Frimley where he arrived at about 5pm on the Saturday evening. He examined the Hollest house and found an entrance had been effected by breaking a pane of glass in the scullery window and afterwards cutting away an iron bar. He found two holes that had been cut with a centre-bit in the scullery door immediately opposite directly opposite a bolt which had been forced back with a crooked instrument and an entrance thus gained into the kitchen. In the kitchen he found two cupboards had been broken into. He compared a screw driver which he received from the deceased's man servant Richard Gyles with those marks found on the cupboard and had no doubt they were caused by this instrument. He found one of the double doors from the kitchen to the dining room had been forced as had a door from the dining room to the front passage. There were marks of

the same screwdriver on these doors. Biddlecombe found two right shoeless footmarks in the gravel drive and found traces of someone having been standing under a tree in the drive from where he recovered a piece of blue worsted. There were also marks in the gravel thought to be from an arm where someone had fallen. **Rev. George Hollest and wife Caroline 27 September 1850 0300** Mrs Hollest "I noticed an increase of light in the room but could not perceive how it was occasioned". There were curtains around the bed but they were open at the foot. Reaching from her bed to ring for the servant she was grabbed by a masked man. As she tried to scream a second man grabbed the Rev and the men were warned by the armed men to be silent or they would have their brains blown out. However both continued to struggle. Mrs Hollest was forced to the floor in the narrow space between bed and wall. Unable to see her attacker she was struck by his distinctive squeaky voice. She then heard a pistol fired and she struggled to reach her husband whilst one of the burglars hung onto her around the waist pushing a pistol into her side. The burglar caught his foot on the wash stand and tripped and Mrs Hollest was able to ring the bell and raise the alarm and the intruders began to flee. Rev Hollest went to his dressing room to fetch his handgun which he always kept loaded there and pursued the intruders out through the front of the house. Mrs Hollest watched from an open window as the three men ran out to join a fourth – one turned and looked directly at her and she took fright and withdrew slamming shut the window. A few minutes later her husband returned and calmly informed her "The fellow has shot me" Mrs Hollest saw that he was bleeding from the stomach and her servant Giles was dispatched to fetch both the local surgeon and constable. Dr Davies found the Reverent in bed, in good spirits not fearing he would die. He discovered a gunshot wound about an inch below the navel and realised the injury was very serious indeed and the doctor stayed with him until he died at 1pm the following day. Dr Davies undertook the PM and recovered a marble from the abdomen. An insight to the protocol of using officers from other parts of the county is usefully revealed in a newspaper report of October 18th 1850: "In Surrey which is a county only partially protected by police a county magistrate Mr Austin was at Frimley soon after the murder and there saw superintendent of the Godalming police and he asked him if he was making any enquiries into the matter. His reply was that he was a private officer paid by a committee from a private fund and that he had no authority or jurisdiction. Mr Austen being on the committee immediately gave him instructions to act in the matter and he then took the necessary steps; but the want of proper authority on the spot was that 16 hours elapsed before any policeman was engaged in endeavouring to detect the guilty parties." With good and persistent detective work no doubt helped by the £150 reward four men were arrested in Guildford. The two Harwood brothers Levi and Samuel 25 years and 29, James Jones and Richard

Fowler also known as Hiram Smith. Smith turned Queen's evidence and so much was learnt. The men were to go to a prize fight at Frimley and decided to call at the vicarage Grove House, on the way there on the pretext of selling plates. The housemaid bought nothing and refused them food when asked at which point the men became angry. Later that week the four men met in Guildford and travelled independently to Frimley about ten miles away. The Harwood brothers brought the pistols and close to the house loaded them with a stone marble, and the men all put on masks. The house was entered via small scullery window squeezing the smallest though bars and that man then drilled out the central bar. The house was searched for desirable property, took food from the pantry, a gold watch, several silver items, coins, clothing and anything else they thought would receive a reasonable price. They drank wine and even filled a decanter and took it outside to one of the gang who was on watch. The men then moved upstairs where the Hollests were attacked. As the men ran off they dropped much of the stolen property but managed to keep hold of a bag of coins. The coins were from a collection for the local school and contained some recognisable tokens. The arrests were made by Inspector Charles Hollington of the Guildford Borough Police on the Sunday after the burglary. Insp Kendall also from the Borough had been to the scene and noted bloodstained footprints on the doorstep of the vicarage. On searching the prisoner Levi Harwood's lodgings a bloodstained stocking was found and his right foot had several small cuts. It was confirmed by Smith that they had taken their shoes off before entering the house. The men pleaded not guilty at the assizes but two were found guilty and hung at Horsemonger Lane in The Borough just south of The Thames which remained Surrey's principal prison and place of execution up to its closure in 1878. It was a common gaol, housing both debtors and criminals, with a capacity of around 300 inmates. In total, 131 men and four women were executed there between 1800 and 1877, the gallows being erected on the flat roof of the prison's gatehouse. Just before he was executed Levi Harwood confessed to pulling the trigger. Such was the outcry just a few weeks following this horrendous crime that on the 25 October 1850 the Rural Police Committee met at Reigate taking evidence from Superintendent Biddlecombe and the chief constable of Hampshire. Biddlecombe covered an area of 28,940 acres with a population of ten thousand one hundred and twenty six with only one felony in his district over the last twelve months, stealing faggots to the value of sixpence. However he had been sent for to deal with twelve burglaries in surrounding districts in the last six months. There had been no cases of felony in Godalming itself during the last five years. Considering how long it would take to establish it is worthy to note at this date he put in a bid for plain clothes officers as detectives, but that is a long story and will be told in the future. Acting at high speed the new Surrey Constabulary was estab-

lished on the 1 January 1851 and incorporated the smaller forces within the county and covered all parts of Surrey not within the Metropolitan Police District. William Henry Biddlecombe was appointed to the new force as one of five superintendents. The Surrey Constabulary incorporated the Guildford Borough but old enmities come to the surface as the aggrieved former chief officer of the Borough takes exception to Biddlecombe receiving credit where he thought it was not due. Interestingly, Hollington refers to Biddlecombe as "detective". **1851 26 April Letter to The Times** from Superintendent Charles Hollington Superintendent of the Guildford Borough Police – letter dated 24 April. Mr Hollington felt aggrieved that "that the whole credit of breaking up the "Frimley Gang" was due to Mr Biddlecombe." Hollington asserted he arrested six of the men. "*Levi Harwood. James Jones alias Burbage (hung for the murder of Mr Hollest) Samuel Harwood, Hiram Smith alias Trowler (the approver in the Frimley case) Thomas Toots alia Morgan and John Hillyer – the two latter were transported for life for the Uckfield burglary. These men I arrested entirely on my own suspicions. "How is it the whole credit is due to Mr Biddlecombe that he did not apprehend some of them as it was well known that one of the rendezvous of the Uckfield gang was Hindhead a little below Godalming where Biddlecombe was located? The man Levi Harwood I had convicted nine years ago; he then had one year's hard labour; since which time I have had several summary convictions against him for assaulting the police etc. I also apprehended Jones on March the 13<sup>th</sup> 1850 on suspicion of a burglary at Mr Horne's linen draper Guildford (whose house was broken into on the 14<sup>th</sup> February in the same year) and found property belonging to Mr Horn's housekeeper upon him. He was committed to the Guildford borough sessions, but owing to a month having elapsed between the burglary and apprehension, and the prisoner stating he had bought the property, the jury ignored the bill. At the same time I apprehended a man named George Brisk, a companion of both Levi Harwood and Jones, and found property in his house the produce of several burglaries in the county. He was committed to the assizes at Kingston, where he was tried and sentenced to seven years transportation. I beg further to state that I have on several occasions named these men to Biddlecombe, detective, and other officers, as the ones I had suspected to have committed burglaries in Surrey and elsewhere.* Most police officers attend some horrendous crimes during their service but few can match the horror that awaited Biddlecombe at Esher on the 10 June 1854 the first multiple murder enquiry undertaken by the Surrey Constabulary when six children were murdered by their mother. George Brough announced to Mary Ann his wife and mother of his children that he was leaving her because he suspected she had been cheating on him. He also said he intended to take their children away from her, setting into motion a series of terrible events. On June 10, the day after Mary Ann was confronted by her husband, a man walking by their

home spotted a bloody pillow in the window. He raised an alarm and neighbours found Mary Ann inside, still alive, but with her throat slit. Bodies of six of her children lay scattered throughout the house their throats cut open. Mary Ann survived and was charged with six counts of murder. She confessed, telling investigators that she had used a razor on each child, one at a time. One child had protested and another had struggled, but she killed them all before attempting suicide.

**On the 13 June 1854** before a coroner and jury at The Chequers Tavern, West End an inquest was held to enquire into the deaths of the **six Brough children**. Mr. **Biddlecombe**, chief superintendent of the Surrey Constabulary said following information from Inspector Martell he went to the house of Mrs Brough. On entering the back door and going into a room he found under the table a pair of woman's boots and bloody stockings. He went to the door and found that the bolt on the inside was all over blood as if handled with a bloody hand. He went upstairs and found a boy aged seven years on the bed with his face covered with blood. He was dead and his throat was cut. The wound was extensive and incised. There were lying at the foot of the bed Harriet and George both dead each with incised wounds to the throat. He passed to another room and found three more dead children with extensive wounds to the throat. In a third bedroom he saw Mrs Brough in bed and attended by a medical man. He could not speak with her but a few days later he was called back by Mrs. Brough and he took her statement.

#### CONFESSION OF THE MURDERESS

*The following confession was made by the murderess, to Mr. Biddlecombe, chief superintendent of the Surrey Constabulary: "On Friday last, I was bad all day; I wanted to see Mr. Izod, and waited all day. I wanted him to give me some medicine. In the evening I walked about, and afterwards put the children to bed, and wanted to go to sleep in a chair. About nine o'clock, Georgy (meaning Georgiana) kept calling me to bed. I came up to bed, and they kept calling me to bring them some barley water, and they kept calling me till nearly 12 o'clock. I had one candle lit on the chair. I went and got another, but could not see, there was something like a cloud, and I thought I would go down and get a knife and cut my throat, but could not see. I groped about in master's room for a razor. I could not find one; at last I found his keys, and then found his razor. I went up to Georgy, and cut her first; I did not look at her. I then came to Carry, and cut her. Then to Harry, he said, 'don't mother.' I said, 'I must' and did cut him. Then I went to Bill. He was fast asleep. I turned him over. He never awoke, and I served him the same. I nearly tumbled into his room. The two children here, Harriet and George were awake. They made no resistance at all. I then lay down myself."* Mary Ann Brough was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Biddlecombe was fast becoming an expert in the murder of chil-

dren which must be a sign of hard times and attitudes around agricultural shortages and illegitimacy. His next case again in 1854 on the 8 August, Biddlecombe dealt with the concealment of the birth of an illegitimate child. Juries were however reluctant to convict the women of murder. Ann Berryman a well dressed genteel looking young woman lived with her father near Chertsey where she earned a living as a dressmaker. In May it was thought by neighbours that she was in the family way and then she was back to normal. Superintendent Biddlecombe the superintendent of police at Chertsey became aware and spoke with the woman who admitted having a child prematurely and she did not murder the child but had burnt the body. Biddlecombe made a search of the garden where he found the partly burned body of the child which were examined by Mr Sherlock a surgeon who thought the baby to have arrived at maturity. There was discussion as to whether the child was born alive and this led to a not guilty verdict by the jury after a short discussion. Then Biddlecombe resigned the resignation recorded 1858 5 May GO 140. It is not known why this should be. No local papers are available in the archives, no mention is made in the national media archives and nothing is said in the police committee minutes. It is unlikely that he fell out with the Chief Constable as he was in his new career as a publican to provide horse and fly for the HMI during his visits to the county and there was contact with the force through his work as clerk of the course at Egham races. It may be and is probably likely that the Chief Constable felt he had been at Chertsey long enough and tried to move him but he did not want to move. Possibly the owners of The Swan made him an offer he could not refuse given the growing family responsibilities; it may have been he liked his horses and the opportunity to be a clerk of the course was too good to pass over. Having resigned, crime did not disappear from his life.

The Morning Post of the **4 Aug 1858** reports that at Guildford Assizes, Edward Morton was charged with **obtaining money by false pretences**, a sovereign, from Mr Biddlecombe of the Swan Inn formerly a very active police superintendent of the Surrey Constabulary. Simply, the man came to the inn pretending to be a vicar, said he was short of cash and Biddlecombe lent him the money. After his trial the con man was found guilty immediately by the jury and he was sentenced to 12 months hard labour. 1858 November 13<sup>th</sup> on this date a court report appears where his ostler at The Swan was a witness in a case of dog stealing. The Surrey Advertiser reports on 16 July 1864 that readers will remember the capture by the late superintendent of police Mr Biddlecombe of a clever burglar living quietly in Bristol under the name Captain Smith who made a desperate escape at Chertsey shortly before his capture. At Winchester Crown Court John Goodenough alias Smith alias Williams was charged with five burglaries in Hampshire and being at large before his fifteen years sentence to transportation had expired. The Judge said he would deal with the

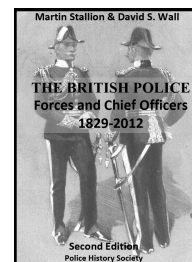
matter himself at the Central Criminal Court. What was Biddlecombe up to? Was this a throw back from his time in the Force or was he working as a private detective for the wealthy and investigating a burglary? On the 19 September 1864 Biddlecombe is reported at the Chertsey Autumn steeplechase and in 1865 still licensee of the Swan Inn Chertsey and Clerk of the Course at the races in Chertsey. The arrangements for policing at the Chertsey race course were to lead to a falling out with the chief constable. Biddlecombe sought twelve men to keep the course clear and the chief constable agreed they could attend. The note responding to the request was sent the by route passed hand to hand by constables on the beat when they met an officer from an adjoining beat or station at a conference point; it arrived too late! Biddlecombe alleged he had suffered a loss because of this and took action against the chief constable to recover £19.19s but bigger questions were at stake i.e. could police be held responsible for non-attendance at an event etc. The case disappeared from the records and seems as if the chief constable made his point and the matter was dropped. Billeting soldiers in Chertsey was causing concerns to licensees including Biddlecombe reported in 1865 on 2 September in the Surrey Advertiser. Biddlecombe: who applied to the bench in hopes that the Quarter Sessions would offer some relief. No matter how busy their public houses and stables were, whenever soldiers were in the district the publicans had to provide billets and the allowances led to the making of a loss. Biddlecombe could not avoid crime but what he was doing working with the superintendent of the Windsor Borough Police in 1866 on the 21 September investigating a fraud it is difficult to fathom unless he was being paid for his skills. Now retired Biddlecombe, reported as of the Swan Hotel and former superintendent of the Surrey Constabulary along with the chief superintendent of the Windsor Borough police were on the track of a fraudster who they found fishing in the middle of the Thames between Chertsey and Weybridge and took him into custody at Windsor. The fraudster was an ex army officer cashiered in 1865 moving to a hotel in Paris where he adopted a new name and the rank of captain. After cashing false cheques he decamped back to England where after a number of adventures and frauds he ended up before the bench in Windsor. Quite what the responsibility of Biddlecombe was is hard to judge. In Durrant's small book of 1951 on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Surrey Constabulary there is mention that Biddlecombe from The Swan would hire carriages to carry the chief constable with the HMI from Weybridge to Chertsey. The book also comments that Biddlecombe was linked to the Tichborne case being employed by the family to find the true identity of the claimant. This he did but was unable to persuade Lord Onslow who was supporting the claimant of that fact. The story concerns Roger Tichborne, disappointed in love who is then lost at sea, and a man who, more than a decade later, appears from the Australian outback claiming to be the missing heir

. The civil and criminal trials which followed held the record as the longest court case in British legal history until the mid 1990s. Biddlecombe began to advertise in The Standard during 1873 and 1874 when he joined forces with retired Chief Inspector Charles Field late of the Metropolitan Police and one of the most famous detectives of his day. In 1855 Charles Dickens visited a group of detectives at Scotland Yard long before they became a part of the new CID. He was very impressed and wrote about the officers including Field who he referred to as Inspector Wield: " --a middle aged man of a portly presence with a large moist, knowing eye, a husky voice, and a habit of emphasising his conversation by the air of a corpulent fore-finger which is constantly in juxta-position with his eyes or nose." Dickens was to use Field as his model for Inspector Bucket in his novel Hard Times and was well placed to establish himself as a private enquiry agent it being probably very beneficial for both Field and Biddlecombe to come together. On 20<sup>th</sup> April 1883 Biddlecombe died at Barnet and his death certificate stated: **Barnet 20 April 1883, 1 Victoria Villa, Victoria Road, East Barnet. Daughter Alice present at death which was caused by cancer of the pharynx at the back of the mouth aged 68. Occupation given as freeholder.**

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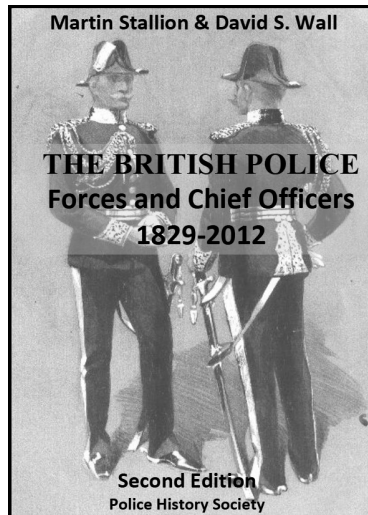
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