

DEVON CONSTABULARY 1857-1966

The Select Committee on Police was established in 1853 by Lord Palmerston when he was the Home Secretary. Its Report was published in late 1854, but there were many to-ings and fro-ings, before its recommendations finally got to the statute book. But they eventually did, and the County and Borough Police Act 1856 (19 and 20 Victoria, cap 19) received Royal Assent in July of that year.

The 1853 Select Committee had found that only thirty-one of the fifty-six counties of England and Wales had formed voluntary forces under the 'permissive' 1839 County Police Act. Devon was not amongst them. And now, in the autumn of 1856, Devon was forced into action, as the 1856 Act now made full-time professional police forces compulsory for every county and borough without one.

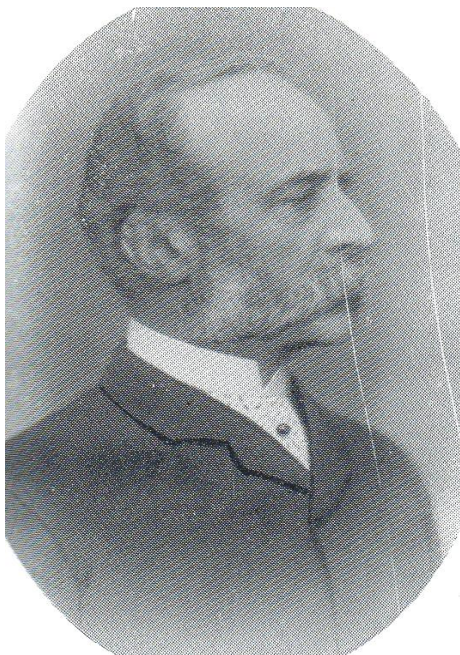
However, dues must be given, because as early as the September Quarter Sessions of 1855, the necessity for a county police force had been muted. But be that as it may, after discussions and reports, the Devon Magistrates met in November 1856 to chose their first Chief Constable, Gerald Hamilton. And on Tuesday 6 January 1857, the Quarter Sessions met and formally established the Devon Constabulary.

Along with the other county constabularies, the Devon Constabulary doggedly pursued its purpose over the years, despite being affected by the usual political interference, public indifference or animosity - but occasionally, even garnering public esteem! It had to absorb the separate borough forces within its borders, the last of which, Exeter City, in 1966 brought about by the all-powerful Police Act 1964, effectively brought the separate Devon Constabulary to its close, as it was then known as the Devon and Exeter Constabulary.

The last great amalgamation took place just one year later, as it joined forces with the Cornwall Constabulary and Plymouth City Police, to form the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary that we all know and love today.

THE CHIEF CONSTABLES

1. HAMILTON, Gerald deCourcy



[1] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1857-1891

Education

Florence, Cheltenham,
Trinity College, Cambridge (BA 1851)

Career

Gold Mounted Police, Australia 1851/1856 (Lieutenant and Adjutant 1851; OIC Ballarat District; Crimean War 1854-1856 with the 'Turkish Contingent' of the 'military' personnel of western Australia) - [1] - Retirement

b. Friday 10 October 1828, Florence, Italy

m. 1. 1859 Henrietta Buchanan née Saville (d?) 1s

2. 1908 Fanny Rusbridger

d. Thursday 20 November 1913, Chelsea

2. COLERIDGE, Francis Randolph Cyril



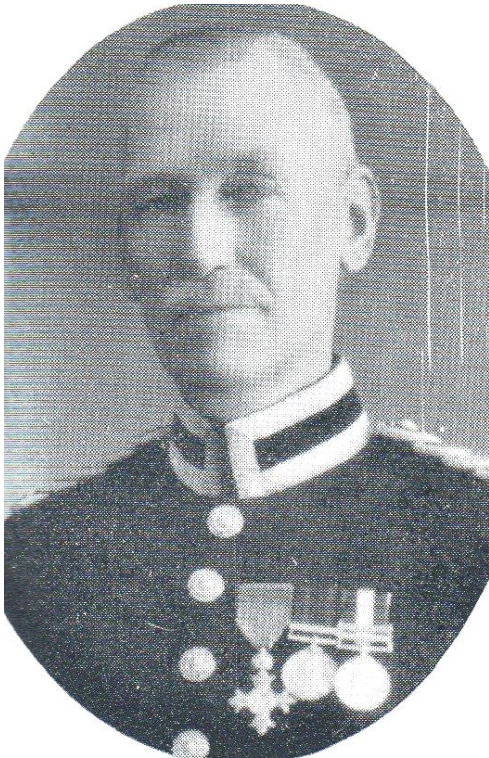
[1] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1892-1907

Education
unknown

Career
Royal Irish Constabulary 1871/1892 (Third Sub-Inspector 1871; Musketry Instructor 1887-1892) - [1] - Retirement

b. 1852, Ottery Saint Mary, Devon
m. 1903 Alice Hayhurst-france
d. Sunday 3 January 1932, Saint Mabyn, Cornwall

3. VYVYAN, Herbert Reginald



[1] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1907-1931

Awarded
OBE LG 4 June 1928 p3855

Education
unknown

Career
Army service 1882/1883 (Lt., Cornwall Rangers; 3rd Bn Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry) - In America 1883/1885 - Army service 1885/1905 (Devonshire Regt; Capt; Boer War and Reparation Committee, South Africa) - Devon Constabulary 1905/1931 (Supt 1905; [1]) - Retirement

b. 1862, Hastings
m. Caroline - (America?)
d. Monday 19 December 1949, Worthing
bur. Withiel, Cornwall

4. MORRIS, Lyndon Henry



[1] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1931-1946

Awarded

- (i) KPM LG 2 January 1939 p22
- (ii) CBE LG 8 June 1944 p2587
- (iii) OOSTJ

Education

unknown

Career

Qualified Solicitor 1913/1914 - Army service 1914/1921 (TA to Maj; LtCol; MC) - In America 1921/1923 (Farming in Florida) - HM Prison Service 1923/1932 (DepGov Brixton and Dartmoor; Govr Birmingham, Brixton, Camp Hill and Dartmoor) - [1] died whilst holding office.

b. Sunday 20 January 1889, Bakewell, Derbyshire

m. 1914 Phyllis Hawkins (Milton, Kent?)

d. Thursday 7 November 1946 whilst holding office

5. BACON, (Sir) Ranulph Robert Maunsell



[1] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1947-1961

[2] Deputy Commissioner Metropolitan Police 1966-1968

Awarded (i) KPFSM LG 1 January 1953 p34

(ii) CSTJ 1964

(iii) Knighthood LG 1 January 1966 p1

Education Tonbridge School;

Queens College, Cambridge (BA History and Law 1928)

Career Metropolitan Police 1928/1940 (PC 1928; DC 1930; Trenchard Scheme, Metropolitan Police College Baton of Honour 1935) - Army service 1940/1943 (Provost Service; Capt 1940; Maj 1941; LtCol 1941) - British Colonial Police 1943/1947 (Ceylon Police; Deputy Inspector-General 1943; Inspector-General 1944) - [1] - Metropolitan Police 1961/1968 (Assistant Commissioner 1961; [2]) - Retirement (Gaming Board 1968-1971 etc).

b. Monday 6 Aug 1906 Westgate on Sea

m. 1932 Alfreda Annett, 1d

d. Wednesday 30 Mar 1988, Hove

6. GREENWOOD, Ronald Berry



- [1] Chief Constable Dorset Constabulary 1955-1961
- [2] Chief Constable Devon Constabulary 1961-1966
- [3] Chief Constable Devon and Exeter Constabulary 1966-1967
- [4] Chief Constable Devon and Cornwall Constabulary 1967-1973

Awarded (i) KPFSM LG 1 January 1953 p34
(ii) OBE LG 1 June 1953 p2958 'for services in the recent floods in the eastern counties'
(iii) CBE LG 14 June 1969 p5969

Education Nottingham University

Career Lincolnshire Constabulary 1931/1944 (PC 1931>ChSupt) - Control Commission, Germany 1944/1946 (LtCol) - Lincolnshire Constabulary 1946/1955 (ChSupt, ACC 1948) - [1] - [2] - [3] - [4] - Retirement

b. Wednesday 30 November 1910, Nottingham
m. 1935 (Grimsby) Carrie Wilkinson 1s
d. November 1991, Honiton, Devon

HONOURS AND AWARDS OF THE DEVON CONSTABULARY

LG	Date of entry in the <i>London Gazette</i> , and page number
K/QPM	King's/Queen's Police Medal for Meritorious Service
KPFSM	King's Police and Fire Services Medal (<i>the alternative name of the King's/Queen's Police Medal between 1941 and 1954</i>)
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
BEM	British Empire Medal for Meritorious Services

BACON, Ranulph Robert Maunsell **KPFSM** LG 1 January 1953 p34 as Chief Constable
BEYNON, Benjamin Mervyn **KPFSM** LG 10 June 1948 p3395 as Superintendent
(*Mervyn Beynon had been the last Chief Constable of Tiverton Borough Police 1925-1942, and had been appointed Superintendent when Tiverton Borough was absorbed into the Devon Constabulary under war-time regulations*)
BRIDGE, Bertrand **QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT**
LG 28 September 1954 p5509 as Constable (Exmouth) *together with*
GRIFFITHS, Alfred Redvers as General Foreman Exmouth UDC
STUART, Arthur Thomas as Lorry Driver, Exmouth UDC;
'For services when a man was overcome by fumes in a sewer.'

BROWN, Charles Young KING'S POLICE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

LG 2 January 1928 p7 as Constable

'On Friday 3 June 1927 a fire broke out in a refreshment room in Queen Street Railway Station in Exeter. PC Brown was told that a man was trapped in an upstairs room. He immediately ran upstairs and searched the room, which was particularly difficult as it was divided into sleeping cubicles. Finding the room empty, he made his way out, but when he reached the top of the staircase, he collapsed because of the heat and fell down the stairs, and had to be dragged out into the street by people from below. It was later found that there *had* been a man in the room, but that he had escaped over the roof. PC Brown was severely burned and was close to death for several days.'

EARLE, James Hudson

(see HARPER, Derek Raymond Alan and PAVEY, Stanley Harold James)

FORD, William Henry BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

LG 20 June 1961 p4575 as Sergeant (Crediton)

'For courage, initiative and devotion to duty during the recent floods in Southern England. The low lying town of Crediton was severely affected by floods and many small houses were rendered uninhabitable. PS Ford was in charge of the flooded area and oversaw many rescues.'

(Included in the same citation were six non-police officers who also performed gallant rescues in other stricken areas during the same floods)

HARPER, Derek Raymond Alan THE GEORGE MEDAL

LG 30 December 1952 p6827 as Constable (Lynton) *together with*

EARLE, James Hudson **BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY** as Constable
PAVEY, Stanley Harold James **BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY** as
Constable

'For courage, leadership and devotion to duty in extremely hazardous conditions on the occasion of the floods in Devonshire and Somerset during August 1952'.
(These awards resulted from the tragic Lynmouth Flood Disaster of Friday 15 August 1952. It had rained incessantly for the previous twenty-four hours, and nine inches of water had fallen on Exmoor, causing its many streams to burst their banks. All this water cascaded down the West Lyn and East Lyn Rivers which converge in the village of Lynmouth. Because of the narrow and precipitous valley of the River Lyn, by the time the water reached Lynmouth, it had been compressed into a 'tsunami' with an estimated height of between thirty and forty feet, which tore through the centre of the village ripping down buildings as it went. Thirty-four people lost their lives that night, and fourteen rescuers were decorated for gallantry)

HARVEY, William Charles **MBE** LG 1 January 1957 p18 as Assistant Chief Constable

HUTCHINGS, Frederick Robert

(i) **KPM** LG 1 March 1929 p1445 as Superintendent/Chief Clerk

(ii) **OBE** LG 9 June 1938 p3698 as Assistant Chief Constable

LANGMAN, Henry Wonnacott **QPM** LG 12 June 1958 p3546 as Chief Superintendent

MARTIN, Arthur Edward (i) **KPM** LG 1 January 1934 p15 as Assistant Chief Constable

(ii) **MBE** LG 1 January 1947 p16 as Assistant Chief Constable

MELHUIISH, Percy **KPFSM** LG 1 January 1945 p107 as Superintendent
MORRIS, Lyndon Henry **KPM** LG 2 January 1939 p22 as Chief Constable

PAVEY, Stanley Harold James as Constable (*see also HARPER, Derek Raymond Alan*)

(i) **ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY PARCHMENT TESTIMONIAL**
together with

EARLE, James Hudson as Constable
March 1952, for the rescue of a woman from cliff tops at Countisbury.

(ii) **ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY BRONZE MEDAL**

August 1952, for the rescue of two people from cliffs at Lynton

STADDON, George **BEM** LG 9 January 1946 p334 as War Reserve Constable
'For services to Civil Defence'

STONE, Ernest James **KPFSM** LG 5 June 1952 p3041 as Superintendent

TROTT, Clarke Edmund **QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT**

LG 6 October 1953 p5308 as Sergeant (Sidmouth);

'For rescuing a youth trapped on a cliff'

UNDERWOOD, Robson **QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT**

LG 3 December 1963 p9899 as Constable (Plympton)

'For services when arresting a man armed with a shotgun'.

VYVYAN, Herbert Reginald **OBE** LG 4 June 1928 p3855 as Chief Constable

WARREN, John Samuel **KING'S POLICE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY**

LG 1 January 1935 p17 as Sergeant

'On Thursday 12 October 1934, two convicts who had escaped from an outside working party from Dartmoor Prison, stopped a motor van, attacked the driver with an iron bar, knocked him unconscious, and then stole the van, driving away towards Exeter. As PS Warren was getting into his car to join in the search for the convicts, a van drove past him, which appeared identical to that reported stolen by the convicts. The van stopped and PS Warren challenged the men, who denied they were the convicts. Entirely alone, and armed only with his truncheon, PS Warren succeeded in stopping the two men from driving away, and detained them until assistance arrived.

WEST, Archibald Eli **QPM** LG 1 January 1955 p36 as Superintendent

The 'Family Tree' of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, showing how the Torquay District Police and the Devon Constabulary have been integrated into the present day force.

(Taken from the Police History Society Monograph

Police Amalgamations : Antecedent forces of the British Police - and a suggested system of numerical Classification)

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DEVON AND CORNWALL CONSTABULARY

Historical constituent Police Forces and suggested Numerical Identification :

- 9 DEVON AND CORNWALL CONSTABULARY [1967-]
- 9/1 DEVON AND EXETER CONSTABULARY [1966-1967]
- 9/2 CORNWALL AND
ISLES OF SCILLY CONSTABULARY [1947-1967]
- 9/3 ISLES OF SCILLY POLICE [1942-1947]
- 9/4A TORRINGTON BOROUGH POLICE (1) [1836-1870]
- 9/4B TORRINGTON BOROUGH POLICE (2) [1878-1889]
- 9/5 DEVON CONSTABULARY [1857-1966]
- 9/6 CORNWALL CONSTABULARY [1856-1947]
- 9/7 TOTNES BOROUGH POLICE [1936-1884]
- 9/8 SOUTH MOLTON BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1877]
- 9/9 TAVISTOCK BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1856]
- 9/10 OKEHAMPTON BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1860]
- 9/11 BRADNINCH BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1865]
- 9/12 BIDEFORD BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1889]
- 9/13 BARNSTAPLE BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1921]
- 9/14 TIVERTON BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1943]
- 9/15 EXETER CITY POLICE [1836-1966]
- 9/16 PLYMOUTH BOROUGH POLICE (CITY 1928) [1836-1967]
- 9/17 DEVONPORT BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1914]
- 9/18 STONEHOUSE DISTRICT POLICE [1836-1914]
- 9/19 WOLBOROUGH BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1859]
- 9/20 BODMIN BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1865]
- 9/21 LISKEARD BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1877]
- 9/22 LAUNCESTON BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1883]
- 9/23 HELSTON BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1889]
- 9/24 FALMOUTH BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1889]
- 9/25 SAINT IVES BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1889]
- 9/26 PENRYN BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1889]
- 9/27 TRURO BOROUGH POLICE (CITY 1887) [1836-1921]
- 9/28 PENZANCE BOROUGH POLICE [1836-1943]
- 9/29 SAINT MARY'S PARISH POLICE [1836-1942]
- 9/30 TORQUAY DISTRICT POLICE [1835-1870]

