

SIR ARTHUR YOUNG K.B.E., C.M.G., C.V.O., K.P.M.

Commissioner of Police for the City of London 1950-1971

Peter Rowe

Arthur Young was born 100 years ago making 2007 an appropriate occasion to review his unique career. Born at Eastleigh in Hampshire on 15th February 1907, he attended Portsmouth Grammar School and left to join the Portsmouth City Police as a Cadet at the age of 16. He was appointed as a constable in 1925 and became a detective constable five years later. In 1932 he was promoted to detective sergeant and in 1937 to detective inspector. Although the speed of his promotions thus far was moderately fast, the last promotion heralded the start of a meteoric rise. The following year, at the age of 31, he was appointed to the chief constablenesship of Leamington Spa, then the youngest chief officer.



The war years were to have the greatest effect on his career. Following the severe damage inflicted on Coventry in the Blitz, he took charge of its police for six months, their chief officer having been designated as the Regional Civil Defence Controller. Later the same year he became senior assistant chief constable of Birmingham.

During 1940, with others, he applied for the post of Chief Constable of Oxfordshire. The successful candidate was Eric St. Johnston, a Metropolitan officer some four years younger than Arthur Young and a graduate of Corpus Christi College Cambridge and Hendon Police College.

Three years later Eric St. Johnston was seconded to the War Office to plan for the problems expected to affect the civilian population in Germany and Italy in the event of an Allied invasion. It was envisaged that a considerable number of British police officers would need to be involved and about 20 chief and assistant chief officers were initially selected to attend a course at the Civil Affairs Staff College at Wimbledon.

To deal with the larger number of lower ranking officers required, Peel House, the Metropolitan Police Training School, then lying empty, was used. In 1943 Arthur Young was appointed, in the rank of lieutenant-colonel, to be commandant in charge of the special Civil Affairs course.

The two months, course was provided, mainly for police volunteers, for specific Civil Affairs posts. Their brief, under the umbrella term 'The Control Commission', was to oversee former enemy civil populations as and when Allied Armies entered Italy and Germany. It was anticipated that normal life would have broken down, food shortages would be acute, transport

non-existent and there would be hundreds of thousands of homeless. With the successful invasion of Italy, Colonel Young was appointed to take charge of all the Italian police forces, then numbering some 120,000 officers, representing organizations ranging from the Carabinieri to town constables.

In 1944 the chief constablenesships of Durham and Hertfordshire became vacant. Colonel St. Johnston and Colonel Young were invited by the Home Office to apply for both posts. Colonel St. Johnston, was appointed to the Oxfordshire post and Colonel Young to Hertfordshire, although he was not officially released from the army

until the following year. Two years later he was appointed as an assistant commissioner in the Metropolitan Police, at the age of 39 the youngest to be so appointed. There his responsibilities included force organization with particular responsibility for matters affecting recruiting, training and communications. So, in the eight years since he was promoted detective inspector, his rise through the ranks had been meteoric by any standard.

In 1950, when Sir Hugh Turnbull indicated his intention to retire, Colonel Young applied for the post of Commissioner of Police for the City of London. The Common Council minutes for 1950 indicate that, initially, three candidates were short-listed. In addition to Colonel Young, there were two other applicants. Major Philip Margetson, an experienced assistant commissioner in the Metropolitan force, some 13 years older than Colonel Young, and Colonel James Douglas Stewart, two years his junior at 41. The latter had previously been Chief Constable of Inverness and commanded a special corps operating in Germany during the war. A fourth candidate later appeared on the short-list when the name of Captain Hubert Penry Griffiths, the City's assistant commissioner was added. Captain Griffiths, then 55, had initially been involved in colonial policing from 1927, particularly in Nigeria. He was appointed to a Home Office post in 1937 before joining the City Police in 1940 as its Assistant Commissioner.

The minutes of the Police Committee for 16th March 1950 record that Colonel Young was selected and had signed the acceptance document. The minutes of a later meeting record that,

'A letter had been received from the Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Home Office indicating

that His Majesty the King had been graciously pleased to signify his approval of the appointment of Colonel Arthur Edwin Young to be Commissioner of Police for the City of London.'

On his arrival in the City, Colonel Young adopted a far-sighted approach to a number of aspects of the force's organisation and management and, in particular, to matters of welfare. In the course of his first decade in office, despite periods of absence on secondment overseas, he brought about a significant number of changes.

The estimates for the year 1950/1951, prepared by his predecessor, show that he inherited a situation in which the total force expenditure amounted to £762,093 of which £406,013 was for salaries, pay and allowances. The estimated income was put at £284,338 of which the central government grant accounted for £255,819, about one third of authorised expenditure as opposed to the one half received by forces outside London.

Within months of his appointment he was asked to report on the organisation of the Gold Coast Police and to make recommendations. The following year, for a 12 months period, he acted as Commissioner of Police for Malaya and in 1954 was seconded to Kenya.

Amongst his early City Police changes was a seven shift system introduced to ensure that the most appropriate number of officers were on duty at particular times of the day, night and weekends. Previously there had been a three shift system which had not fully achieved this. Next he urged the Police Committee to extend the powers of City officers which, up to 1952, were confined to the Square Mile, to include the Metropolitan District.

The following year Section 6 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1952 contained the necessary provision and the territorial powers of City police officers, which had remained unchanged from time immemorial, were drastically extended. That remained the state of affairs for a further 12 years until the Police Act of 1964 extended the powers of all police officers to cover the whole of England and Wales.

Prior to Colonel Young's arrival the force had no photographic department as such and little equipment. Photographic work had, for over a decade, been carried out on a part-time basis by two uniformed constables using their own equipment and operating from a room in the basement of Bishopsgate police station. Even that state of affairs had arisen only because of the impending second world war when it was decided to photograph every member of the force. They worked on an ad hoc basis being allowed four hours for each assignment after which they returned to normal duties. Colonel Young ensured that a purpose-built studio was constructed at headquarters with a budget of £1,000 per annum available to finance it.

The same year saw the introduction of City's first radio system. Previously there had been a reliance on the

police box system which was quite effective since there was invariably a police officer in sight of a box. One of the problems of radio communication in the City was that of 'black spots', due to high buildings, which made reception and transmission problematic. To an extent this was alleviated by having additional masts situated on two commercial buildings. While an improvement resulted, the state of radio telephony was still such that its use on certain beats, and in places such as subways and the Underground, was often impossible. But, importantly, a start had been made. City Police radio control 'M2 OJ' operated on its own frequency from the main control in the communications room at headquarters. A secondary control unit was housed in the top floor office of the inspector responsible for pioneering the project. Mobile radios were fitted to the cars and a van initially. Within a short while the first 'portable' sets came into being. About the size of a shoe box, and with an aerial that was never quite robust enough to emerge from even short periods of duty unscathed, they served a useful purpose.

At the same time radios were fitted to motor cycles and so things remained for a decade with continual experimentation until pocket-sized personal radios were issued on an experimental basis, in 1963.

Prior to the arrival of Colonel Young the City had no police cadet system. The advantage of such a system in other forces had been that young men who joined as cadets usually returned, on completion of their National Service, to the same force. The City was thus losing out on a potentially important source of recruitment at a time when forces generally, but especially in London, could neither recruit, nor retain, sufficient manpower. Colonel Young was quick to recognize this and the first male cadets began duty in April 1951.

During April 1952 the Commissioner authorized the setting up of a Crime Prevention squad to operate under the supervision of the Detective Chief Superintendent assisted by a Detective Chief Inspector at headquarters. At divisional level an Inspector assisted by a sergeant and constable were in close contact with both police and public, especially those with responsibility for security in buildings. This was one of the first serious attempts at crime prevention on a formal basis in the country and produced immediate results in the City. Its success led to the setting up of similar schemes in other forces and eventually a National Crime Prevention School.

Significant welfare advances came when the Commissioner relaxed the rule that officers must live within a four mile radius of the City and later persuaded the Corporation to sponsor a programme of assisted house purchase.

The changes outlined above, and many others, occurred during Arthur Young's early stewardship. He readily accepted that some of the innovations introduced owed a lot to the initiative, planning and organizational skills of others. But in all cases these needed his support,

not least in using his powers of persuasion with the Police Committee, to ensure the necessary funds became available. He fostered a very close relationship with members of the Police Committee, in particular with its long-serving Chairman.

During the early 1960s Colonel Young, now Sir Arthur, was asked to set up a national system for selecting young officers for accelerated promotion leading ultimately to the formation of the Special Course and subsequently the Command Courses. He became chairman of the national selection board working with a team of senior officers and others who submitted candidates to a battery of tests and interview situations. The first Special Course began at Bramshill in the late summer of 1962.

During the 1960s Home Office inspections of the City Police were undertaken by the newly appointed Chief Inspector of Constabulary in person, Sir Eric St. Johnston. In his autobiography, *One Policeman's Story*, Sir Eric, writing about earlier inspections of the City Police, observed,

'and this had in the past been a very perfunctory affair - a talk with the Commissioner, a visit to one or two of the police stations and then lunch with the Chairman of the Police Committee.'

He went on to say he did not pretend that even he himself went into matters as fully as HMIs did when inspecting a provincial force. The reason for this 'perfunctory approach' was probably twofold. Firstly the City performed well and wanted for very little through its supportive police committee. Secondly, the Home Office grant paid to the City still remained far less in percentage terms than that paid to provincial forces, leaving the Corporation of London as an important provider of resources.

The Commissioner had never been impressed with the accommodation at Cloak Lane station. The exterior was attractive enough but, beyond the station office, the building had an appearance reminiscent of its Victorian pedigree. Coal still found its way to the upper floors by means of a bucket, rope and pulley! The upper floors had once provided living accommodation for senior officers. They were in much the same state as they had been in the early hours of 29th September 1888 during the 'Jack the Ripper' era. Then Acting Commissioner Henry Smith had been wakened by the speaking tube bell to be told of the Catherine Eddowes murder in Mitre Square!

Suitable accommodation for the divisional headquarters was not the only problem. The Force and its departments were steadily growing and Sir Arthur wanted a purpose-built building which could also accommodate other departments now outgrowing their existing premises. So it was that Wood Street police station came into being in 1965.

In the meantime advances in radio telephony and the

gradual equipping of all patrolling officers with radios meant that the familiar green City Police call boxes were now outdated. The latter were removed (some finding their way to police museums far and wide) to make way for the blue boxes which had the advantage of providing members of the public with immediate access to the City Police. This system lasted, despite frequent vandalism, until 1988.

From the 1960s onwards the Northern Ireland 'troubles' became particularly difficult. If subsequent history is any guide it was a problem which would take another four decades to resolve. In the meantime it led to serious destruction of property and loss of life both in Ulster and on the mainland including the City. While Britain had always avoided creating a para-military force on the mainland, the armed Royal Ulster Constabulary was perceived by some to be effectively just that. Sir Arthur Young was seconded to take over as Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Part of his remit was to implement the recommendations of the Hunt Report and create a British style civil force. However, his task was made difficult by certain Northern Ireland politicians and he came to feel he had been forced upon both Stormont and the RUC without the support of either. One of the things that concerned him was the fact that many in Ulster wanted a form of policing based on the force of arms while his approach was one of 'softly, softly' because of the complex sectarian and political issues involved. He regularly appeared in public in uniform, a prospect which caused concern to his bodyguards. In Protestant areas stones were thrown at him and he was burnt in effigy. He was in a difficult situation but was able to set in motion a series of events on which his successors in office could build. At the end of his secondment he returned to the City.

Unlike Sir Eric St. Johnston, Sir Arthur did not write an autobiography nor does he appear to have written any articles on his time as Commissioner of the City Police. Others, whose paths had crossed with his, mentioned aspects of his career in their own memoirs. However, he did commit his thoughts to paper concerning the overseas secondments. He instructed that these remain unpublished until the deaths of those mentioned within the document and they were consigned for safe keeping, mainly to the Bodleian Archives. It was clear his overseas secondments had been challenging projects with the potential for political opposition once in post. He felt that his periods in the Gold Coast and Malaya were particularly successful ventures, a point on which commentators on those periods agree. However, he was adamant that his presence in Kenya was resented by those in power in Nairobi and he found a great deal of executive interference in what were purely policing matters. Seeing progress to be almost impossible he resigned but his resignation letter, intended to bring the situation to the attention of the Cabinet, did not get the

publicity he hoped. But having made his point he maintained a dignified silence on the matter thereafter.

By 1971 he was approaching his 65th birthday and indicated to the Police Committee that he wished to retire. Appointed CMG in 1953, CVO in 1962, knight bachelor in 1965 and KBE in 1971, he had pursued a remarkable career which led him from Portsmouth, through a war-torn Europe to London, the Middle and Far East, Africa and back home to The City.

Sir Arthur Young died in retirement on 20th January 1979 at the age of 71 and his ashes were scattered at Beachy Head. What he would make of the present world of 'mission statements', centrally imposed 'targets' and the amount of paperwork necessary to dispose of relatively minor matters, one can only speculate. But, having laid the foundation for a modern City of London Police over half a century ago, he would be well pleased with the way his force has adapted to the changing world of policing in the three decades since his passing.

Sources

- BARBER N, *The war of the running dog: the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960*. 1971.
 CALLAGHAN J, *A House Divided: the dilemma of Northern Ireland* (1973).
 RUMBELOW D, *City of London Police: 150 years of Service, 1839-1989*.
 A commemorative booklet.
 St. JOHNSTON, Sir Eric: *One Policeman's Story*, 1978.
 CLOAKE J, *Templar, tiger of Malaya: the life of Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templar* 1985.
 RYDER C, *RUC: a force under fire* 1989.
 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.
 Minutes of the Police Committee of the Corporation of London 1950-1956.
 Bodleian Archives MS Brit.Emp.s 486.
 Personal Knowledge (1960-1971).

Peter Rowe was formerly a Superintendent in the City of London Police. He is the author of a website on the History of the City of London Police:
www.cityoflondonpolicehistory.info

THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT

Tony Dodson

It was the height of the cold war, spy planes were taking daily excursions over eastern Europe and many were being flown from USAF Alconbury in Cambridgeshire together with fighter bombers that were being made ready for combat. Nuclear weapons were the norm, and it was anticipated that many military locations would be targeted so it was decided that nuclear weapons in the form of Cruise Missiles should be moved around the country so they could not be targeted. These Cruise Missiles needed to be stored and maintained somewhere, regardless of being conveyed around the Country. There were two locations in England where the stores were to be based. One was Greenham Common, and the other was RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire-both seemed ideal locations as a storage area for Cruise Missiles. Everyone knows about what went on at Greenham Common but very few people know about the activities at RAF Molesworth which is close to USAF Alconbury, but not close enough if Alconbury was put out of action. Yet it could be supplied and supported from Alconbury. It was also close to many road links, North, South, East and West.

The Campaign begins

Word got out what was being planned and there was a determined campaign to stop Cruise Missiles being installed at either locations. An anti-nuclear campaign was organised at Greenham Common and Molesworth took a back seat. The missiles were due to be installed in concrete underground bunkers at both Molesworth and

Greenham Common.

In the early days the campaign at Molesworth received a lot of public support and finance but later this all dried up when things got more violent. The media covered the activities that surrounded Greenham Common but very few media people covered the activities that surrounded Molesworth.

Molesworth, near to the border of Northamptonshire but firmly in Cambridgeshire, was originally a RAF bomber base in use in the Second World War. At that time and prior to reorganised county boundaries it was located in Huntingdonshire. After the war it was designated an auxiliary airbase to be used if ever the runways were out of commission at nearby USAF Alconbury, a location where thousands of US Air Force personnel lived and worked. It was therefore necessary to maintain a skeleton staff of rescue and fire service with other aircraft maintenance personnel at Molesworth. The airfield was at that time an unfenced semi-derelict grassy area with one large concrete runway surrounded by abandoned hangars with several access points.

It was also used by the general public for off-road activities. As can be imagined, planning permission would be necessary to turn this base into a suitable area to house Cruise Missiles.

The Anti-Nuclear movement initially decided to stop any building taking place by a maintaining a presence on the airfield. The plan was good but it became impractical when it was undertaken. New Age Gypsies (The Peace