



## Ian 'Robbo' Robertson



I was musing the other day, and thinking about the past; the old Surrey Constabulary we knew and comparing it with the modern police officers wondering if they would accept what we put up with when new to the Job.

I was 27 years of age when I joined. I had had a tough upbringing as a youngster growing up in Aberdeen during the War years. (Born 1938) At the age of 12, my father moved the family out to what was then Rhodesia. (Zimbabwe). During my teenage years, I did three years National Service with the Rhodesian Army. In 1959, we were sent with the Army up to Nyasaland (Malawi) to deal with the break down of law and order, during the rise to power of Dr Hastings Banda.



**Royal Rhodesia Regiment around May 1957, Llewellyn Barracks, Bulawayo; Ian is second from the left**



**Smoke break out in the bush on an anti-terrorist exercise - Ian on the left. Kit changed dramatically when the bush war broke out in the 60s and 70s**

When I was 22, I travelled on my own back to UK, as I wanted to see a bit of the world with the Merchant Navy. I signed on to the old Queen Mary as a Fireman/Trimmer and off I went on the first of my travels. Over the next four years I sailed on a number of different sized cargo boats, and went to the four corners of the world. I left the sea eventually, as I intended to get married, and because of political problems in Rhodesia I decided to stay in UK. At the age of 27 in 1966 I applied for, and was accepted into Surrey Constabulary.

I tell my story to set out that I saw myself at that stage as a fairly mature person, with a bit of experience under his belt.

The first thing I learnt, from day one in the police was the force was armed forces orientated. You would never call a sergeant by his first name. You saluted inspectors and above. You automatically stood to attention when a senior officer, appeared, or entered a room.

The training school was at Nutfield. Just opened, and originally an old manor house, and was in the process of conversion into a new Police Training Centre.

There were eight of us in a room with just enough room for the eight beds. There was just one hand-sink in the room for all of us. No space for our personal lockers, which had to be left outside in the passageway.

In the course of a week, we were only allowed out on a Wednesday evening with strict instruction to be back in the Centre by 23.59hrs



**Nutfield**

There were only two showers in the building, for the use of the two courses there at the time. After something like a cross-country run we would all strip off and form a queue for the showers. A sergeant stood to one side with a whistle. Two men into the showers; after two minutes he blew his whistle and two men out. Two men in; two minutes later, whistle blown, and operation repeated until all were showered.

The dining room had obviously in its day been a small theatre with a raised stage at one end. On the stage, were tables set out for the, meals of the Commandant and the directing, or training staff.

Recruits sat at long tables with trestle type benches. A lot of people packed into a small area, and you literally sat shoulder to shoulder. Like all these occasions, the chatter at the tables would get louder and louder. When it reached a certain peak, one of the sergeants, seated on the top tables, would ring a hand bell. This was the signal for the chatter to stop. The noise would die away for a spell, and then gradually build up, till the bell was rung again. All accepted as perfectly normal.

At the end of the Course I was posted to Guildford. The old Police Station in Woodbridge Road. I learnt very quickly that things had not changed much. Never call a sergeant by his first name and salute inspectors and above. The majority of the Sergeants were all ex-Second World War men as were a lot of the older PC's. The police station was run just like an armed forces unit!



Men paraded at the start of each shift in front of the sergeants desk in the Parade Room. Uniforms, and turn out inspected. Was your uniform pressed? Were your boots polished? Was your hair cut to the accepted length? Officers were told the beat you were to work and the time their meal-break. A meal break was a concession, and not a right. If something cropped out during your break, stop eating, and get out and deal with it. Constables were not allowed back into the police station, until 10 minutes before the end of the duty. Produce your Pocket Book, and get it signed by the duty sergeant before you could leave. Again all accepted as the done thing.

The Section House was an old three-storey building at the back of the Police Station yard. The “rooms” for the PC's were on the top floor. The whole of the floor area had been converted into cubicles. Rows along the walls, and rows back to back, down the centre and full length of the floor. Each man has his own 'cubicle' or 'room', if you wanted to call it that. Partitions dividing each were made of a hard board type of material that did not stretch the ceiling being only seven foot high. Stand on your bed; look over and there was your neighbour. Each cubicle had a bed and a wardrobe.



**The Carpenters Arms; the section house can be seen joined to the right of the building. More noise when getting to bed for earlies!**

There was just enough room, between the bed and the wardrobe for the door to be opened. That was it. That is what you had. Outside on the landing there were a couple of toilets and a couple of showers. There was an ironing board and iron but washing was done in a large bucket on the gas stove in the kitchen. No washing machine or drier. The floor was crammed full of PCs all working different shifts rotas, early turn, late, and nights with others on day off. Movement was constant with people coming and going, laughing and joking; radios playing.

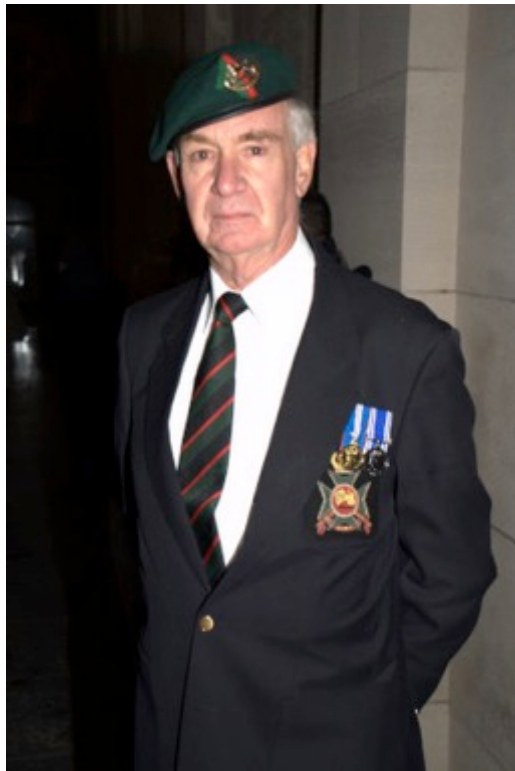
With just a seven foot partition/ between you and the rest, trying to sleep after coming of nights, was almost impossible. But again, it as accepted as normal, and the lads, just shrugged it off, and got on with it an example of the way of thinking in that era.

I was sent on patrol with one of the older established PCs, experienced and long in tooth. A former Welsh Guardsman. He was a regular on what was known as the Worplesdon beat. As he was due to move on, I was being shown the beat, prior to replacing him on the biggest cycling beat on Guildford Division. Starting at the police station, and taking in the areas of Jacobs Well, Worplesdon, Fairlands Estate, and Wood Street Village. A lot of cycling, and it had to be covered. No radios, and points had to be made at the appropriate telephone box. We had made the Point at Fairlands, and were now cycling to the next Point at Worplesdon. Going up Holly Lane towards it, the lane is steep at the top and I stood up on the pedals to make it easier. On reaching the Point and getting off our bikes, I am

told in no uncertain terms to remember, "That police officers do not stand up on the pedals of their bikes. If unable to do it sitting down, a police officer stops, gets off his bike, and walks, pushing the cycle as he goes. Image is important." Again this was accepted, without any rancour, as being the accepted, and the done thing.

Like I said at the beginning different days, a different way of thinking. It never did me, or any of the others any harm. It was an era where discipline was the norm and I was proud to be part of it. I served with good men and was led and guided by superb senior officers. Loyalty was a major factor, and officers looked out for, and looked after each other. I would not have had it any other way.

I wonder about the modern police. But I never lose hope. I always try and remember, that no matter what happens a Police Officer will still turn up and try and sort it out.



The following pieces were taken from [www.surrey-constabulary.com](http://www.surrey-constabulary.com) and add to Robbo's tale

**Ken Hewitt**

### **The First Course No. 6 District DPTC Nutfield**

I joined the Surrey Constabulary in late 1965. I had seen an advert in the Surrey Herald to join the police, which included that 'Free housing would be provided'. Although happily living with my in-laws at the time and on the council waiting list, this was a very attractive offer, along with the desire to change my career; so I

applied. Part of the recruiting process was an entrance exam that I took at Egham Police Station one evening, English, arithmetic and general knowledge. I must have passed as I moved onto the next stage. I then had to attend an interview at Mount Browne. I drove there one morning in my old Standard 8 and parked in front of the main building in a space that is now reserved for the Chief Constable. I must have passed that also as the next stage was to speak to a recruiting sergeant, I believe he was called George Ball. He was mainly interested in which sports I played, not what other qualifications I had. In the afternoon the new recruits had to go into Guildford to a doctor's surgery for a physical examination. We had been instructed to take a specimen with us. One of the recruits had forgotten his specimen and was panicking. I suggested he pop into a chemist and buy a bottle of aspirin and use that bottle. When he subsequently produced his specimen at the doctors he had not rinsed the bottle out and it had thick aspirin sediment in it. He was still accepted and served out his thirty years!

I was finally notified I had been accepted and told to attend the old police station in Woodbridge Road, Guildford where the clothing stores were located. We were the first intake that was being issued with the new tunics that had an integral belt. We had to provide a pair of boots. I obtained mine from an army surplus store. I was the only one in my class who had boots with toecaps, (no one specified no toe caps in the joining instructions), but mine polished up really well. I was sent to Nutfield DPTC. We were the first intake at this converted country house. 'Holmesdale' had originally been the family home of the Maws family (chemists) it had also been a nurse's training school and during that time an accommodation block was built at the rear. I was lucky to be posted to one of those rooms, rather than the barracks rooms, where only two shared the room. Here I met my roommate and friend, Mick Brimblecombe who had to put up with me sharing the room for the thirteen-week course we endured. Many of the recruits had to live in the large rooms turned into dormitories with very few amenities; twelve to fifteen to a room. Luckily there were a large number of ex-service chaps who were used to barracks living but for the others it was quite a culture shock.



*PC Ken Hewitt (left), PC Fred Luton (centre) and Sergeant John Morris discuss a problem in the Station Office. Ken Hewitt is on Area car duties with Reg Fox. He has been stationed at Egham and Guildford during his service. He is married with two sons. As a hobby he collects British Stamps.*

Surrey recruits were not allowed to use their own cars for the initial journey to the DPTC. We had to travel by train from Guildford, arriving on a dank Sunday winter evening at Redhill railway station. We were taken by coach to the centre and provided with an evening meal. I was walking from the dining hall back along the corridor with Mick when he asked one of the sergeants what we should do next. "Do, Do, I don't care what you do. You can swing from the rafters if you like." I will never forget Mick's hurt expression to what was a genuine question. This was our first introduction to Surrey's contribution to the school, Sergeant Owen Allard. It was all part of Owen's plan to toughen us all up to take on the role of PC. He came across as hard and horrible but actually his intention was always to help us all get through the training and make us ready for the job. He said if we could get through the tough training the job itself was a doddle! Owen would shout and rant in class but when he met you one-to-one he was great. He would ask if you were doing OK, how was the family? Have you got any worries? He was a real father figure. Next time you met him in the class he would be back to his act of shouting and threatening. I don't suppose this would be accepted these days but it certainly paid off for all of us in his class.



*The Chief Constable, Mr. Peter Matthews, Q.P.M., presents Sergeant Owen Allard with his retirement certificate.*

*Photo: Sgt. Dobinson.*

### **One of the Force's most popular men retires— Sergeant Owen Allard**

The 29th July saw the retirement of Sergeant Owen Allard—Headquarters Training Department. He could be described as one of the Force's most popular men. His colleagues held a retirement "do" for him at Godalming Social Club. During the function various presentations were made and the start of such was made by Acting Superintendent Alan Longhurst—who presented Owen with a large quantity of pens and pencils—saying "I wish to return these on behalf of all the lads in HAT who have been accused of swiping them over the years"—amid roars of laughter. Some of the presents included a heavy

electric drill stand from his colleagues, a table lighter from the members of a force training instructors course which Sergeant Allard organised. The first of its type.

The force has not lost the services of Owen Allard as he now becomes responsible for "Visual Aids" at HAT.

This retirement brought to notice the talents of Sergeant Ken Langridge who baked and decorated an excellent cake for the retirement. (See photograph and article in this issue). There is no truth in the rumour that Ken Langridge is on secondment to the Headquarters Restaurant.

The food was excellent, (for the first few weeks), it was then discovered that the cook had spent all the food allocation in the first month, leaving next to nothing for the next two months. We then lived on very poor rations, mainly it seemed sausage, mash and tinned tomatoes. (We called it Train Smash) When we did get home at weekends we stocked up with additional food to see us through the following week without starving. We were allowed home each weekend if you were not on Duty Squad. The weekend started at 1300 on the Saturday afternoon as we were on a forty-four hour week. You had to be back in the Centre by 2200 on the Sunday so it was only a very short time at home. If things had gone badly in the class during the week, Owen would keep us right up to the deadline of 1300, and sometimes beyond. The other class sergeants seemed to let their classes leave about mid-day. We resented it at the time but again it was Owen's way of showing us how 'unfair' the real world could be.

The other two sergeant instructors were 'Knocker' White from Berkshire and Richard Ford from Hampshire who subsequently transferred to Surrey as an inspector. These three had virtually set up the centre from scratch; they moved in the equipment, assembled the beds, sorted the accommodation and generally made the place a reality

The centre being a new one and pressed into service quickly to accommodate a large intake nationally in the mid 1960s had very few amenities and it did not have a parade ground. There was the main drive up to a small parking area in front of the main entrance and another drive going out to the A25. We paraded on the parking area; seventy five new recruits in three classes (actually we ended up as seventy four as a chap from Gloucester was so home sick that on the second day he left, using as an excuse his child at home was unwell, he never returned). Surprisingly homesickness was very common in the first few days and had not Owen 'forced' us to stick it out, many others might have left and not continued with their new career. The drill sergeant was a nice Irishman from Kent. He did not realise what was required for the passing out parade and his drill lessons consisted of a march up and down the drive with a few about turns and salutes and then into the bushes along the drive for a quick smoke. Owen was horrified when he learned of this about a month from the end of the course. He tried to reclaim the situation but we ended up doing a minimum of marching on the passing out parade. He set up a drill squad of ex-service men to do a little drill on the small area. All the rest of us did was march on, be presented to the Chief Constable of Surrey who was the saluting officer, and march off.

During the time at the centre we had a fall of snow. This did not stop the drill lessons but as the drill sergeant used to stand on the front entrance steps and shout drill instruction in his Irish accent things did not work well. We were marching down a snow-covered drive when he commanded 'About Turn'. Half heard him and half didn't which resulted in twenty-four policemen crashing into each other and rolling about in the snow with helmets going all over the place. The practical exercises also provided some light relief. A PC rode down the drive on a cycle and a nominated recruit had to step out, stop him and report him for an offence. A lovely chap, Joe Pannet an ex-railwayman from Sussex stepped out and raised his arm. Unfortunately the bike which had been lying about at the centre had no brakes and when the rider, Dave Hedges also from Sussex, pulled the brakes the cycle carried straight on with Joe on the handlebars, crashing into the bushes.

The Irish drill sergeant was a really impressive at acting as a drunk and gave all of us a lesson in how awkward drunks could be to deal with. The PE instructor was from Sussex. Over a third of our class could not swim and were ignored by the PE sergeant. He concentrated on getting the others through their life saving exam. Chief Inspector Ken Mutch from Reading Borough joined halfway through the course and joined in with swimming. When he learned what was happening to the non swimmers he took it on himself to teach all of us to swim except one chap who had an almost pathological fear of water but at least Ken got him in the water trying to swim.

The last week of the thirteen was concerned with Civil Defence and other matters, some light relief after the concentrated learning we had undergone in the previous weeks. We had a class-leaving do in the Queens Arms just outside the main gate so those who overindulged could easily stagger back. Owen was there again leading the drinking but was also there at the end to ensure we all got back safely. I look back on the time in training through rose coloured glasses, but Owen was right, we stuck it out and everything afterwards was a doddle, well almost.

### **Colin Campbell**

#### **Guildford Police Station and Section House**

**1965:** I went to No 6 District Police Training Centre, Sandgate in December 1964 and after thirteen weeks of initial training was posted to Guildford police station which was in Woodbridge Road. Accommodation was provided in the Guildford section house, which, although part of the police station building, had its entrance from the back yard of the police station off Leapale Road. The section house was on three floors; the ground floor housed the kitchen and dining room, and also the police social club. On the first floor were individual bedrooms, bathroom and lounge, and on the second floor a large room divided by wooden panels to make a number of individual bed spaces. These were known as the 'horseboxes'. As a new recruit I was allocated one of the horseboxes and was there for a number of months until it was my turn to be allocated an individual room on the first floor. The section house was quite noisy as it was adjacent to Leapale Road, which was a busy one-way street. We were also above a pub called the Carpenters Arms so getting a good night of sleep on a Friday or Saturday before an early shift was not always easy.

The section house cook was Mrs Hart, affectionately known as 'Auntie', and she cooked breakfasts and lunches from Monday to Friday, and then food was left in the fridge for residents to self cater at other times. Having been in the section house for about a year, two properties on the opposite side of Leapale Road were purchased and were altered to separately house male and female officers. These were a great improvement and well liked. Eventually the female section house moved to Nightingale Road and therefore more accommodation became available for male officers. Section house life was good, sociable and enjoyable. Sometimes after a late shift a number of us would go for a meal in the local Indian restaurant in North Street, or perhaps a trip to Brighton just for a change. However, these excursions would only happen near to pay-day as money was tight. Other residents in the section house included Colin Benham, Brian Rogers, David Lines, Pete Older, Dave Bristow, Kevin Marwick, Pete Thompson, Roger Martin and Phil Morgan. During probation there would be a training day at headquarters once a month, and usually the night before we would get our heads together in the section house to complete our DPA's (discussion on prepared agendas) ready for taking to training. The training sergeants were Jack Packham and Richard Smith.

Guildford was a busy town and a good place to start a career. The basic shifts were either nights (10pm to 6am), late (2pm to 10pm), or early (6am to 2pm) and we had to report for duty 15 minutes prior to the shift for the section briefing, which was carried out in the parade room where the duty sergeant would stand behind a desk and the constables in front of it. The sergeant gave out the instructions for the shift; the instructions would include names of currently 'wanted' locals, any specific areas needing attention, information of any incidents in the previous shift, summonses for serving, warrants for execution, and any other duties to be performed during the shift. Close attention had to be paid because there were occasions when the noise levels were high, usually caused by a drunk in the adjacent cell! Meal breaks were for forty-five minutes with times allocated by the sergeant. At the briefing parade 'appointments' had to be produced (handcuffs, truncheon) and the sergeant signed pocket books. There were ten beat areas with usually eight covered by the town constables, the other two were in outlying areas (one of which was Wood Street) and had their own resident constables.

Number One beat was Guildford High Street and the only time a probationer constable had the privilege of patrolling that area was to cover the meal break of a senior and more experienced constable. The outlying beats such as Merrow and Burpham, Park Barn, Onslow village, were cycle beats and a small cycle allowance was paid for using your cycle. The sergeants in my early days were Wilf Sivill, George Cooper or Eric Washington. They were always addressed as 'Sergeant'. During my first two weeks as a probationer Jack Richards, an experienced PC and gentleman tutored me. The first week was nights and I recall checking the security of a pub off Quarry Street, then taking a moment to sit on a chair on their patio and promptly falling asleep. Jack told me having a nap was all right but I must know when to wake up – point taken! I don't think I did it again. Sometimes on a Friday or Saturday we would work a shift from 6pm to 2am to cover the busy pub turn out times. There were two or three pubs in Guildford, which regularly had fights on Friday and Saturday nights, and often the cells became full on these occasions. There were also the regular alcoholics/tramps/roadies in Guildford and in cold weather not unknown for one to break a shop window just in order to get arrested and a bed for the night. Guildford was also a town where soldiers from Aldershot would come to drink, but very often found themselves in the cells for assault or being drunk and disorderly. The MPs from Aldershot would collect them and no doubt they were charged back at camp.

In 1965 there were no personal radios and patrolling officers on foot or cycle had to make points at a different allocated telephone box. Once an hour and remain there for fifteen minutes to receive a telephone call to get instructions, or to be met by the duty sergeant or inspector. If you upset the sergeant at a briefing you could find your points being very far apart! The station office was open to the public twenty four hours a day, and was manned on the three shift system by permanent station officers,

two of which were ex Guildford Borough men – ‘Digger’ Field and Ernie Kleisure. These people knew all there was to know about Guildford, its people and its surrounds and were very helpful on local knowledge. The superintendent was Sellwood, Chief Inspector Friedersdorf and Sergeant Bert Field in the divisional office. Bert Field could be seen every morning, as regular as clockwork, walking to work from his home in Merrow.

After a year of walking the beat I was crewed on the ‘Tilly’ vehicle (call sign J35) with John Coles, another experienced officer. I was fortunate to get this posting as I had received a five-day driving course towards the end of service as a cadet so was already authorised to drive. Working on the car was always busy and a good learning ground. I recall one morning soon after I had started on the car with John we saw a youth driving a Riley motorcar along the A3 at Ladymead, towards London. He didn’t look right so we decided to stop him. The procedure was to pull alongside the vehicle then the observer would signal the driver to stop. We did this on London Road at Burpham, John signalled the driver to stop and as he slowed to a walking pace I pulled in front to complete the stop. When the Riley was almost stationary the driver leapt out of the vehicle leaving it in gear and it ran into the back of us. John got out of our car and chased the youth across the road whilst I ensured the Riley’s engine had stalled. I then turned our car round and stopped outside the Burpham filling station where I saw the youth. As John and I went towards him he picked up an iron bar from the garage forecourt and started wielding it at us. Fortunately, an off duty traffic warden walked out of the garage premises at that moment, and seeing what was happening he went up behind the youth and grabbed him; then between us we restrained, handcuffed, and took him to the police station. It transpired that earlier that day he had been released from borstal in Hampshire and stole the Riley to get back to London. The following day, after the hearing at Guildford Magistrates court I was handcuffed to the youth taking him down the stairs to the cells when he tried to leap down the bottom four or five steps taking me with him. There were other officers in the vicinity so he was restrained. A few lessons learned on those two days.

After another few months I applied for a vacancy as reserve divisional motorcyclist; I did an authorisation test with Bomber Brown – this lasted about three quarters of an hour, riding a Triumph 500cc Speed Twin around the town area and out on the open road to Ripley and Send. I passed this and subsequently got the posting. The full time motorcyclists were Fred Smith, Ken Tizzard and Robin Young and as the reserve I did the duties when one of them was not available, covering annual leave and other of their commitments. Being a divisional motorcyclist was a big learning curve. Most of the sudden deaths, serving summonses, domestics, road traffic accidents, delivering death messages, enquiries on behalf of other forces and so on, fell to the motorcyclist. After almost two years of enjoyable service at Guildford I moved on to Farnham traffic centre.



**PC Colin Campbell on the right wearing a cap**

**Bob Bartlett**

### **Guildford Police Station**

**1963:** The superintendent based at Woodbridge Road was Eric Sellwood a former war time RAF Dakota pilot in the Far East, assisted by Chief Inspector Friedersdorf and three inspectors all called, I am sure not by fate, Smith so known as HJ, DJ and AN. HJ was also known a Ya Ya because of his loudness. (He retired as a chief inspector at Camberley). There was a Detective Inspector John Grant (To retire as detective chief superintendent in Bedfordshire) who with the CID worked out of a large room at the top of a flight of stairs immediately inside the main door. Also at the top of these stairs was where the divisional motorcyclists sat, Fred Smith, Ken Tizzard and Mervyn Saunders. They had a very busy life. (Fred retired as a sergeant on Operations in the early 1990s where he was responsible for War Duties and Mervyn became a police officer in Canada then in the USA). It was possible to continue along the corridor into the section house.



**Superintendent Eric Sellwood**



**Chief Inspector Friedersdorf in retirement**

There were a number of bulky former Guildford Borough sergeants included Bill Leahy, Wilf Sivill, Mick Feeham along with some ex-Borough constables including Charlie Barham, Drobney Oliver (so named as he was a good tennis player in his

youth) John Pearce, Digger Field, Jack Woodford. Both Jack Woodford and Bill Leahy lived to be well into their 90s and stalwart members of the Old Comrades Association. There was county men George Cooper, tall and slim who fell of his bike whilst trying to get home from the County show having inspected one too many stands! Dave Harding (retired as chief superintendent) Eric Washington, Eric Spurgeon, Dougie Hayball who became a vicar upon retirement and John Boxall are remembered.

Sergeant "banana-feet" Feehan was a very large and tough Irishman who had lost nothing of his accent and was softly spoken, making him sometimes difficult to understand. It was said that one day he was sent from the police station in Woodbridge Road, to peddle fast on his bike up the top of the hill in North Street to where it met the High Street. He was sent to try and intercept a man on a cycle that had stolen a radio and made off at high speed towards the town centre down the Epsom Road.

On coming to the junction with the High Street Sergeant Feehan saw coming down the High Street from the left, a man on a cycle with a radio. That will do. That was good enough. It is said or rumoured. On being commanded in a very loud voice by Sergeant Feehan to stop he did not, and so Feehan, or so the story went, lifted his bike like a toy and threw it at the suspect who was still cycling furiously towards the town centre. The bike hit the suspect who with a yelp and cry was sent crashing into a shop window. It was of course the wrong person.

This story has a number of variations! Sergeant Feehan had been given the nickname because his feet were so large they drooped over his bike pedals like a banana! Others, including PC "Tiny" Oliver (he was huge of course) it was said had in his younger days in the Borough a favourite method of dealing with the rowdy youngsters, particularly the large numbers of military personnel who descended on the town. The policeman would stand behind the shop blinds that hung down onto the pavement and thump the unsuspecting rowdy through the blind with his stick. They never knew what hit them.

It is also rumoured that in Borough days, many a soldier or sailor found being a nuisance at the bus station at the bottom of the High Street ended up in the river. It was rumoured that Borough constables carried their truncheon hidden up their sleeve to give a "tap" to the rowdy youths or military men to encourage them on their way.



**Fred Smith**



**Ken Tizzard**



**Mervyn Saunders when serving on Traffic at Burpham**

Two of the station officers



Len Vear



**Charley Barham 1970**

There was no such thing as a typical policeman. They were all different. Some were personable and bright, others more sullen and there was the odd one who was just so thick that they could not survive in the job and were soon weeded out. Others left unable or unwilling to put up with the poor pay and conditions, the often unpleasantness of the job and the violence of which there was a great deal.

Given the design of the building and the number of stairs it is likely that the police station once had two flats probably for the inspectors. Miss Mackenzie and her ladies had their offices up a flight of stairs close to the entrance to the senior officers offices. They could be found from the intense cigarette fag generated by Miss Mackenzie and probably the sergeants. Smoking was of course sophisticated! Up another flight of stairs there was divisional office with a PC and a couple of ladies where one of the cadets had a desk with routine admin tasks such as accident recording, lost and found property, aliens registration. Next-door was Bert Field the divisional office sergeant, a larger than life character whose admin efficiency was paramount. He was responsible for the cadets amongst a wide brief of responsibilities that one-day would become the role of chief inspector admin. He had on his desk an internal phone system connecting offices by pressing a button. The superintendent frequently pressed his button.

Next-door was the Process Office where a chain-smoking sergeant Ron Pullen and PC with a couple of ladies managed all the court papers helped by I think two or three typists in a room next door. This was a time when the superintendent and inspectors prosecuted in the court.



**Ron Pullen**

The charge room on the ground floor could be accessed from the main entrance to the police station or from the yard off Leapale Road. Off the yard was a large heavy and very solid door through which prisoners were brought. Some who struggled found how heavy the door was! Inside the charge room there was a high desk at which the sergeant would stand to brief the shift as they began. There were off the charge room a number of cells. The floor was covered in shiny brown linoleum. Nothing much had changed since 1850s when the HQ was built. (It was in 1949 that Mount Browne became the new county HQ). When charging prisoners the sergeant would stand at the high desk and read out the charges. Food was brought to the prisoners from the smart Angel Hotel in the High Street another luckless task for the cadet if one could be found. One good point was the kitchen staff were “groomed” and therefore made an excellent tea stop!

The sergeant gave instructions for the shift including names of currently “wanted” criminals or suspect or stolen vehicles, specific areas requiring attention, information of any incidents in the previous shift, summonses for serving, warrants for execution, and any other duties to be performed during the shift. Close attention had to be paid because there were occasions when the noise levels were high, usually caused by a drunk in the adjacent cell!

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Number One beat was Guildford High Street and the only time a probationer constable had the privilege of patrolling that area was to cover the meal break of a senior and more experienced constable. The outlying beats such as Merrow and Burpham, Park Barn, Onslow village, were cycle beats and a small cycle allowance was paid for using your cycle.

During the probationary period of two years there would be a training day at headquarters once a month, and usually the night before officers got their heads together to complete our DPAs (discussion on prepared agendas) ready for taking to training. The training sergeants were Jack Packham, (retired as a superintendent) Derek Tunn-Clarke retired as a chief superintendent and later Richard Smith (retired as a superintendent)

Probationers had a senior constable as a tutor one of whom was Jack Richards, an experienced PC and gentleman. PC Colin Campbell, “The first week was nights and I recall checking the security of a pub off Quarry Street, then taking a moment to sit on a chair on their patio and promptly falling asleep. Jack told me having a nap was all right but I must know when to wake up – point taken! I don't think I did it again.”

Sometimes on a Friday or Saturday officers would work a shift from 6 pm to 2 am to cover the busy pub turn out times. The late turn was also kept on working overtime. There were pubs, which regularly had fights on Friday and Saturday nights and often the cells became full on these occasions. There were also the regular alcoholics/tramps/roadies in Guildford and in cold weather not unknown for one to break a shop window just in order to get arrested and a bed for the night.

Guildford was also a town where soldiers from Aldershot, Pirbright and further afield with sailors from Portsmouth would come for their night out. The Powder Puff barracks of the WRAC at Stoughton's occupants were a considerable attraction for the servicemen. Men would come to drink, but very often found themselves in the

cells for assault or being drunk and disorderly. The MPs from Aldershot would collect them and no doubt they were charged back at camp.

In 1965 there were no personal radios and patrolling officers on foot or cycle had to make points at a different allocated telephone box. Once an hour and remain there for fifteen minutes to receive a telephone call to get instructions, or to be met by the duty sergeant or inspector. If you upset the sergeant at a briefing you could find your points being very far apart!

**Dave Vigar**

### **Probationer Training**

When I joined the regular force in 1966, probationer training consisted of three residential courses – a ten-week initial course, followed at roughly nine-month intervals by two separate continuation courses. I was fortunate to be sent to the ‘overflow’ District Training Centre at Nutfield for my initial training for two reasons – firstly, this was only about two miles from my home and, secondly, that amazing 1966 World Cup was on the television and we were allowed to watch the key games.

Continuation training took place at Shorncliffe Barracks in Kent, near Folkestone and not far from where the Eurotunnel terminal stands today. I think the site has been levelled now and a trading estate has been built in its place. Officers from all over the south east of England shared courses then, so we attended with such exotic forces as Brighton, Hastings, Bournemouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, Berkshire and Reading. Shorncliffe Barracks was, as the name suggests, an old army camp – the military had long since moved on to more salubrious premises. Travel for most officers in those days was by train, then a ride in the green Home Office Bedford coach to the camp, which was sited on the rising ground behind Shorncliffe and the sea. That is to say that most went by train – a notable exception was Ginger, one of our Surrey men, who rejoiced in the ownership of a gorgeous, new red 2.4 Jaguar. I don’t remember Ginger’s real name, but his car instantly became an object of envy for all of us – and a very effective tool in persuading young ladies that their immediate future lay in testing out those comfy leather seats. More on Ginger later...

The camp buildings were an assortment of wooden barrack huts around a small parade square. At the entrance to each hut was an ablutions area with, as I recall, only cold water in the taps – very character-forming. Once inside the hut proper, there were two rows of iron bedsteads facing one another, about a dozen each side. Each bed space had a metal locker and chair and that was about it. Two coke-fired heating stoves stood in the centre of the hut, but we were forbidden to light more than one, so the other had the fire bars removed from the grate. Coke was shovelled from a big heap outside and carried into the hut. One stove, however, was totally inadequate to heat the hut in winter, so we quickly ‘obtained’ another set of fire bars from an empty

hut and stoked up both stoves until they glowed white-hot – too hot, in fact, for anyone to get near enough to take back the extra fire bars. By this means, we kept the hut tolerably warm throughout the icy depths of winter – I remember that there was snow lying on the ground both times I was there. Trouble was the beds in the centre of the room almost melted with the heat!

The whole Shorncliffe experience was identical to Army National Service, I would guess. We were roused early by the duty Sergeant and first had to make a ‘blanket box’ of our bedding. One blue bedspread, two pillows and two sheets had to be crisply folded and made into a neat pack for inspection – woe betides you if the sheets were crinkled or the whole thing not precisely folded and totally symmetrical. The thinkers amongst us took a sleeping bag from home on our second visit – jump out of bed, stow the sleeping bag in the locker and carefully lift the unused and immaculate blanket box onto the bed! Then it was invariably on with the ‘bulled’ boots (also a spare pair kept only for parades, if possible) and outside for a drill parade on the square, snow or no snow; physical training sessions also took place outdoors. There were no sports facilities as such, so PE or cross-country running were the norm, unless a visit to the Folkestone open air, seawater swimming pool was arranged. The water here was usually so perishing that a run along the shingle beach and up into the steep hills behind the town became suddenly attractive, even if you loathed running. Caesar’s Hill, the highest one, figured in all Shorncliffe and Sandgate runs, so many of you will remember it with affection!

Unlike initial training, where to leave the Centre in the evenings was almost a capital offence, Shorncliffe was more relaxed and we were allowed to go out and explore the fleshpots of the district a couple of nights a week, subject to a strict 10pm curfew. The staff could afford to adopt this liberal approach for the simple reason that there weren’t any fleshpots within sensible walking distance! The Centre bar and TV lounge thus became the sole focus of enjoyment for nearly all students. You will remember, however, that Ginger had that lovely red Jaguar.

Off we all went in the Jag, down the hill to Hythe at the earliest opportunity, where Ginger said he knew a Bad Woman. Sure enough, after a few beers somewhere, we all had to wait in the car whilst he said his fond farewells on her doorstep, before racing back to beat the curfew. The car, by the way, wasn’t actually allowed into the camp and had to be tucked away out of sight, just down the road.

The Ginger/Bad Woman scenario quickly developed and on subsequent evenings they became harder and harder to separate on that doorstep, to the extent that he hatched a plan to stay down in Hythe overnight. We would all go back to the camp for the 10pm curfew and be innocently tucked up in bed when the duty sergeant checked each room for absentees and gave the order for ‘lights out’. As soon as the coast was clear, Ginger and I would pull on a coat over our pyjamas and creep out of the hut. I would then drive him down to Hythe and bring his car back. Very early in the

morning I would go back and collect him, so we were back in bed by the time the sergeant came round to rouse us all. Perfect!

Perfect, that is, until the day I was stopped by a Kent traffic patrol, driving the Jaguar along the sea front to our early morning rendezvous. You try explaining what you are doing, with no ID whatsoever; driving someone else's posh Jaguar at dawn and dressed just in pyjamas and a coat! Luckily, I was (almost) believed and allowed to collect Ginger and drive back to the camp, whilst being closely shadowed by the patrol car. We made it back just before reveille, being too scared to try this again.

Even staying in camp sometimes had its drawbacks. After lights out, if you had to go to the bathroom, you found your bed again in the pitch dark by feeling along until you found yours. One night, I thought I had miscalculated, as there was a drunken shape in the bed. Back I went to the door and felt the beds again – one, two, three etc. – this was definitely my bed, so I roused the sleeping figure. “I'm going to be sick in a minute, and I'm not being sick in my own bed” was the explanation!

Lessons at the school were intended to build on what we had learnt in the previous months back at our forces and to try and cram into us some of the more esoteric subjects we might need. Needless to say, I remember very little of this aspect of the place! Within a few years, continuation training was completely revamped and moved, firstly to Nutfield. Then to vastly superior premises at Grosvenor Hall, Ashford and then Shotley in Essex – somehow it wouldn't be the same.