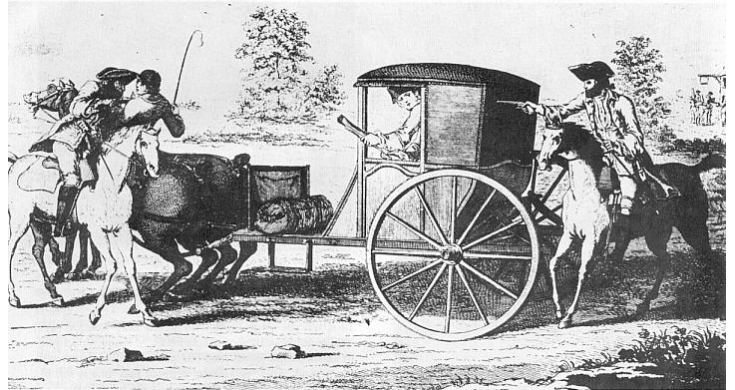


# POLICING ENFIELD HIGHWAY and PONDERERS END

Policing of the area to the west of the River Lea, south of Waltham Cross and north of Edmonton was serviced by several police station houses over 150 years although there is no station currently open. There were three primary police stations in Enfield, one was located in the town, another associated with the Royal Small Arms Factory (Enfield Lock) and the third was originally known as Enfield Highway but later became known as Ponders End.

The earliest connection that can be made with the modern day Metropolitan Police presence in the Ponders End area relates to the Bow Street Horse Patrol. At the time the area was totally rural in nature and mainly consisted of a few farms and hamlets.

The Bow Street Horse Patrol was reserved for married ex-cavalrymen aged between 30 and 65. Tasked with the patrol of main roads to London up to a distance of 20 miles from Charing Cross they were mainly tasked with ensuring the free passage of travellers to and from London – locally that was mainly the road to Hertford and beyond. They were there to deter highway robbery. Many of these areas, including Abridge, Epping and Romford, were to fall outside the Metropolitan Police District when most police forces were formed from 1840 but it was the first form of police any had.



The average daily distance covered by each of the patrols varied between 14 and 23 miles according to district. The periods of duty performed by the men were onerous. As in the case of later police foot patrols, each working day was often of 12 hours duration and there were no regular days off.



*"The Bow Street Mounted Patrol on Duty"  
An artist's interpretation specially drawn by John Bryning, 1996.*

The Metropolitan Police were formed in central areas of London in 1829, by the mid-1830s it was the task of the 308 horses in the whole of the Bow Street Horse Patrol to cover the rural outer districts and beyond. Prior to its 1837 incorporation into the divisions of the Metropolitan Police the Horse Patrol consisted of four areas, that covering the Enfield area being known as the Fourth Division.

There were fifteen Horse Patrol stations, numbered from 51 to 65, within the Fourth Division in 1836, two of these being situated in the Enfield area. The two men patrolling the locality in 1836 were the 37-year old Londoner James George at Green Lanes, Enfield, and a 44-year old Welshman, Richard Watkin from the station at Bulls Cross, Enfield. Both of these men had undertaken duty with the 'Patrol, at a variety of stations, since March 1821. Patrols were regularly rotated around the stations to ensure they did not become too familiar with local people.

In 1839 the Metropolitan Police offered areas of what we would now call the suburbs out to 12 miles from Charing Cross the opportunity to be policed by them. Most areas accepted and officers marched out to take up post in January 1840. The police station area was known as Enfield Highway and it was designated as the head station of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, or Outer, District of the N (Islington) Division. The police inspector at Enfield Highway was responsible for overseeing and patrolling not only Enfield, but also the areas of Cheshunt, Edmonton, Southgate, Tottenham, Turnford, Waltham abbey and Walthamstow, as well as areas in between. The inspector expected to have twenty sergeants and eighty-nine constables under his command. In the event it proved difficult to provide enough men from the original force strength and there was a small shortfall.



The original police station house building in the Enfield Highway area was situated on the north side of Green Street in the vicinity of Saville Row and apparently either the site of the original Horse Patrol Station or close to it. It was immediately to the west of the then Westmoor Farm on the north side of Green Street and lay about a quarter of a mile east of the Hertford Road. The later map above illustrates the area. The railway came later.

A site for a new police station house was selected in the Hertford Road, south of Green Street and opposite St. James' Church. The freehold cost of the land, purchased on 20 January 1866 amounted to £520. The building erected on the site cost a total of £2,525.10s.

The new police building was designed by the incumbent police architect and surveyor of the period, Charles Reeves (he was in post 1842 -68), being one of forty-four police stations and sixty courts attributed to him. The new building initially provided a charge room, office, waiting lobby, three cells, a two stall stable, five w.c.'s and a washhouse for police business on the ground floor and seven rooms on the first floor and one on the ground floor for accommodating three sets of married quarters.

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In use only twenty years, by the 1880s Enfield Highway the building was falling below contemporary standards expected of stations. During a survey of the structure undertaken in 1885 it was decided to improve the water supply (a constant problem in police stations often served by water drawn from often too shallow wells in those days) by sinking a new well and filling in the old. There was contamination of the water in the original well water from the cesspool and that was further improved by connecting the building to the public sewer.

# Metropolitan Police Office.

## POLICE ORDERS.

SATURDAY, 3RD MARCH, 1888.

DIVISIONS—ALTERATIONS IN THE BOUNDARIES OF SUB-DIVISIONS (*G.O. page 68.*)—

N. The Boundaries of the Enfield Highway and Walthamstow Sub-Divisions of N Division are altered, in consequence of the opening of a new Police Station at Chingford.

The following are the revised boundaries of the Sub-Divisions named, and the authorised numbers of Police to be employed on each Sub-Division of N Division :—

### *Enfield Highway Sub-Division.*

“From Hertford-road (opposite Cuckoo-hall-lane), across fields to centre of bridge over Great Eastern Railway at Bush-hill Park, thence by centre of New-road, Fifth-avenue, and Percival-road to Southbury-road, thence in a direct line to New River Pumping Station at Goat-lane, along centre of New River to Bullsmore-lane, by centre of Bullsmore-lane and Bull's-cross to Theobald's-park-ride, thence in a direct line across Theobald's Park to Burnt House Farm, thence across fields to the intersection of Cuffley-road, by Cuffley Brook, following the course of Cuffley Brook to the boundary of Metropolitan Police District at Newgate-street, by boundary to Lodge-gate at Copt Hall, thence by Woodbridge-hill to south of the 'King's Oak' public-house, High Beech, through Paul's Nursery and Epping Forest (about 100 yards north of the 'Robin Hood' public-house), across Earl's-path and Fairmead-plain to bridge, thence by ditch to Connaught Waters, along centre of river Ching to Old River Lea, along centre of Old River Lea to boundary of Edmonton and Tottenham parishes, by parish boundary to navigable River Lea, along centre of navigable River Lea to a point opposite Sewage-farm-road, across Marsh, and along centre of Sewage-farm-road, across Great Eastern Railway, and along centre of Cuckoo-hall-lane to Hertford-road.

### *Walthamstow Sub-Division.*

From Lea Bridge, along centre of River Lea to Stonebridge Lock, thence along centre of Old River Lea to River Ching, along centre of River Ching to Warren's Cottages, by centre of Sale to bottom of Oak Hill, by Oak Hill, to and along the edge of Epping Forest to Hagger-road, thence in a direct line across the Allotment Ground and Epping Forest to the Pump in the Woodford-new-road (near the 'Rising Sun' public-house). thence along the centre of Woodford and Lea-bridge roads to starting point.

### *Authorised Strength.*

		Insprs.	P.Ss.	P.Cs.
Stoke Newington	...	9	16	131
Islington	...	6	12	119
Tottenham	...	11	14	112
Enfield Highway	...	10	9	76
Walthamstow	...	4	7	63
Gunpowder Factory,	}	1	7	34
Waltham Abbey				
Total	...	41	65	535

A section of the Enfield Highway area was given up to Chingford when that area received its first police station in 1888. The Enfield Highway boundaries were altered as a result of Police Orders dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1888 when the new station [right] was opened at Kings Head Hill next to the Kings Head Public House. The land was that previously patrolled by officers from Waltham Abbey.





The police station at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock [above], was policed by the Metropolitan Police until 1926 when an Ordnance Police took over. This evolved into the Ministry of Defence Police and remained until the early 1990s when the factory closed.

In July 1935 the address of the existing Enfield Highway police station was changed from 188 Hertford Road to 120 Hertford Road.

In another revision of boundaries announced at the end of July 1933, Waltham Abbey transferred from the Enfield Highway sub-division of 'N' Division from August 1933 and joined 'J' Division. The Enfield Highway area became part of 'Y' Division.

The Metropolitan Police closed Enfield Highway police station in the 1960s and replaced it with a far larger new concrete building further south down the Hertford Road at 204-214 High Street, Ponders End, Enfield EN3 4EZ.



Although it was around 100 years old, the old building brick was sold off and for many years became a hardware store, Judge's. Although much modified, it retained clear evidence of its former purpose in the retention of the over-door engraved POLICE sign. Much later it became the business premises of a plant hire company, a task it was still undertaking in 2019.



The old building outlived the new. When built it was new and sparkling but after only 50 years it fell out of favour and looked tired. With more and more officers resorting to motor transport rather than walking the police need for numerous stations waned and the old Ponders End was relegated more to training and finally closed in 2011.

The local authority had plans for revitalising the immediate area around the police station and set about removing what they saw as a poor quality late 20th century building from the local scene. In 2013 work began on the demolition of the former police station to pave the way for a £270 million pound redevelopment of the area to bring new homes and new facilities such as a new library and small shops. It was still a demolition site six years later.



It was intended that a new police facility – perhaps a shop – would be included in the redevelopment but times had moved on and there was no requirement for it. Even a small police shop further up the Hertford Road at Freezywater turned out to have no use in the modern scene.

Local police also closed Enfield police station and now operate from the Great Cambridge Industrial Estate, Unit 17-19 Lincoln Rd, Enfield EN1 1SH

