

**POLICING
THE
GOVERNMENT ARMS FACTORIES**

In Enfield and Waltham Abbey

1840-1990

£2.50



The Long Walk

*The text reproduced below is an extract from an unpublished manuscript "Peelers Progress"
by Bryn Elliott*

*The content of the main body of the story relates the history of police and crime in Waltham
Abbey town since Victorian times. This section recounts the tale of policing in the Royal
Gunpowder factory and the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock.*



1898

POLICING THE GOVERNMENT ARMS FACTORIES

The powder mill factory was an important source of explosive from the early widespread use of firearms until the latter stages of the Second World War when it became a research centre. It was from this source that the powder that the plotter Guy Fawkes reputedly collected together came. The Government owned Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) at Enfield Lock, with which the former was linked for police purposes, was until recent years the production site of British military firearms bearing the name Enfield as part of their name.

The Powdermill, which then comprised only one site situated to the north of the town, passed from private ownership and into the control of the Government late in the 18th century. The Royal Gunpowder Factory (RGPF), as it became, undertook its own security patrols by using process worker employees on overtime. The daytime workers were paid one shilling extra each day they stayed behind to patrol the factory overnight.

The patrols undertaken comprised four hours active duty within a twelve-hour presence in the factory. The volunteers assembled at the Grand Watch House, next to the storekeeper's office in Powdermill Lane, where they were assigned their beats, or Watches, by supervisors termed "Rounders" who earned two shillings each night. Set in groups of three, it was intended that as one of the trio worked on his four hours of patrol the other two rested or slept. Set hours of patrol, for which they were issued a heavy coat and a rattle for calling assistance, were from the close of the factory until 10pm, from 10pm until 2am and finally from 2am until the opening of the factory for the usual day's process work. The duty patrol was tasked with the ringing of bell's in certain parts of their beats each hour and making meets with the "Rounders". The latter task by the "Rounders" required them to visit each post at least twice each night, in addition to visits to check upon the Steam Stove and Incorporating Mills. The beats were No.1 Watch, a patrol from Payne's (or Paine's) Island to the Long Walk Gate. No.2 covered the area from the Long Walk Gate to the end of

Powdermill Lane and No.3 patrolled the Refinery, Town Mead, Storehouse Yard and Lower Island to the end of Powdermill Lane.

Until the police arrived in 1840, extra patrols were set by the factory on the nights the town was hosting the May and September Fairs. Two men were placed outside the factory walls in Highbridge Street; one on the corner of Powdermill Lane and the second outside the 'Cock' coaching inn near the church.

In 1846 a single special constable was taken on at the powder factory following a request from the Ordnance Board. He, unlike the patrols, was not a process worker at the factory. In line with their Government ownership, the British Army, primarily the Essex Yeomanry, throughout the Victorian era, provided additional security for the factories. The mid nineteenth century was a time of unrest throughout the United Kingdom. On a number of occasions the security of the RGPF and RSAF was considerably increased in response to real or supposed threats made by political movements. In March 1848 the Metropolitan Police temporarily drafted in two sergeants and twelve constables to the RSAF, and half that number to the RGPF. They acted as added protection for the arms and powder held there after riots by Chartists - a national group agitating for extended voting rights - in various parts of the country. Although the numbers were quickly reduced, some of their number remained for a matter of days until the danger receded.

In 1851 there was a theft of money from the RGPF. The cash, comprising the wage roll and £12 belonging to the deputy store-keeper, amounted to £500 in all.

The suspects were quickly apprehended and tried for robbery. Four men stood trial, two were outsiders. One of these was G Rowe, who was the inn keeper at the 'Three Compasses' in Sewardstone Street the other was Jesse Griffiths a fish dealer. Central to the initial, and illusory, success were the 'insider' pair. J Cornish and C Eves who were in the service of the RGPF as mill men, and on Sundays and holiday's, as watchmen. Eves' brother, who knew who was involved, was accused of being mixed up in the robbery and was paid off by Rowe with brandy. Unfortunately for the four robbers the reward of £50 offered by the Board of Ordnance was far better value than the brandy had been.

Three of the arrested men managed to get off at Chelmsford Crown Court, leaving poor old Rowe, the inn keeper, to carry the can all the way to Botany Bay. This is the only specific instance coming to light of Waltham Abbey folk being sentenced to "Transportation to the Colonies".

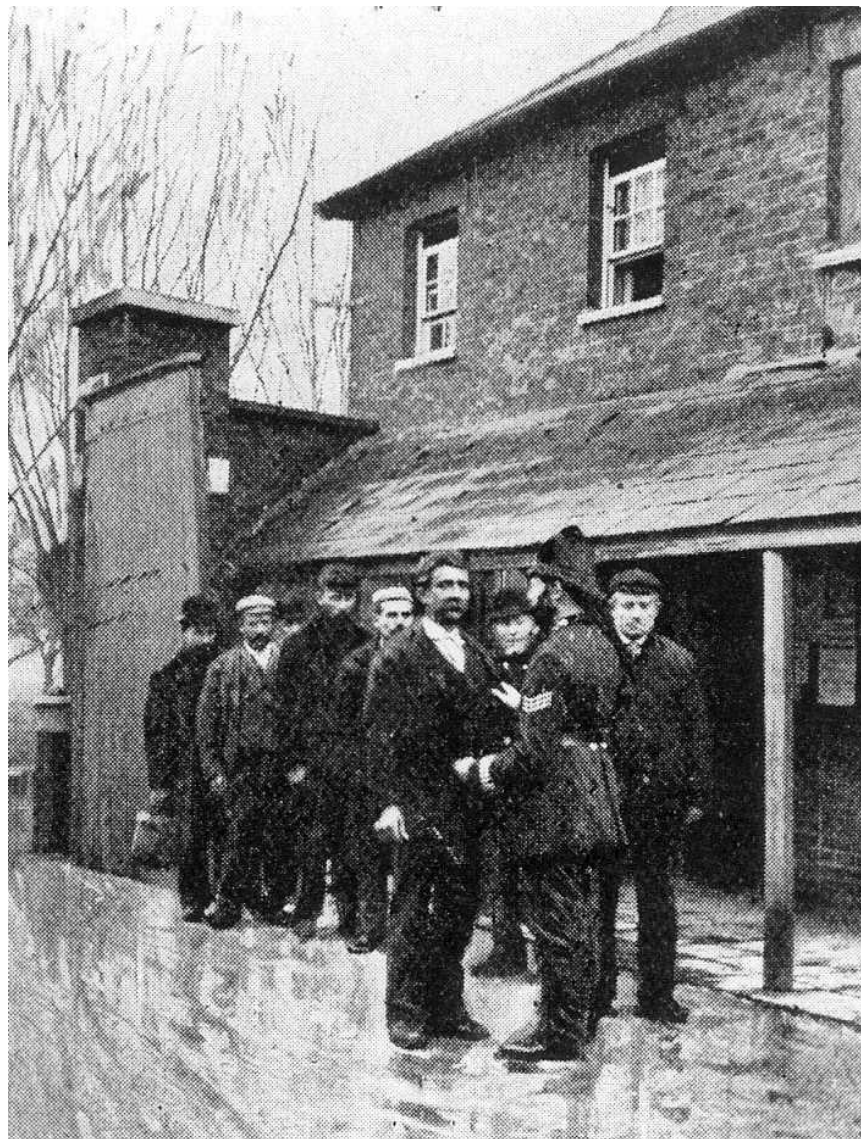
Eventually it was deemed wise to employ the Metropolitan Police within the two arms factories on a permanent basis from April 1860, rather than call upon them in times of dire need, or after the cupboard had been stripped bare. This decision to bring in the police in place of factory and process workers was not an isolated instance. Faced with similar problems in the provision of a worthwhile level of security in the docks, from December 1860 the Government called in the Metropolitan Police to serve them also. Whereas many of the London docks retained their own dedicated police, those situated in various distant ports came under the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Police. Until the mid- 1930's single men joining the police in London were quite likely to find themselves serving in the Dockyard Division in a variety of locations including Rosyth, Scotland, Portsmouth on the south coast or merely quite close to home at Chatham, Kent.

The costs involved in providing police for these locations were shared between the police and War Office budgets. The buildings' used by the police belonged to the War Office and provided much of their accommodation, but other costs, including pay and a proportion of pensions, was all split between the police and the War Office. All officers in the arms factories were able to claim "Danger money" of 1/- (5p) daily, or 7/6d (37½p) weekly.

The duties of the police entailed the manning of the Grand Watch House in Powdermill Lane, the permanent post situated at the Grand Magazine in the north of the site. Enfield Lock police station and a number of, usually wooden, gate houses around both sites.

Officers were tasked with ensuring that no worker attended the factory in possession of any smoking items. Pipes, tobacco and matches were each, individually and together, banned from the sites. To be found with any prohibited item brought about instant dismissal or, if an outside contractor's employee, withdrawal from the site. This often meant that the contractor had no work for the withdrawn man in any case, resulting in the same ending. Parts of the Ordnance sites retained this strict ruling right up until closure in 1991.

To ensure that each worker was comprehensively searched, special searching booths, usually small sheds, were sited close to each entrance as an addition to the police post. Although searches were often depicted as taking place in the open for ease of the photographer, they were actually supposed to take place inside and out of view.



The police station in Powdermill Lane - Strand Magazine 1898

In spite of the elaborate precautions to stop accidents, there were quite a few during the years that the Metropolitan Police were present. With so many different volatile chemicals spread around, and tales of some amazing handling techniques, accidents tended to result at the very least in severe structural damage, also often in fatalities. In one case the authorities believed that one of the dead had taken his own, and his colleagues, lives in a fit of depression. Without taking suicide in to account more than thirty men died in major incidents during the period 1840-1923.



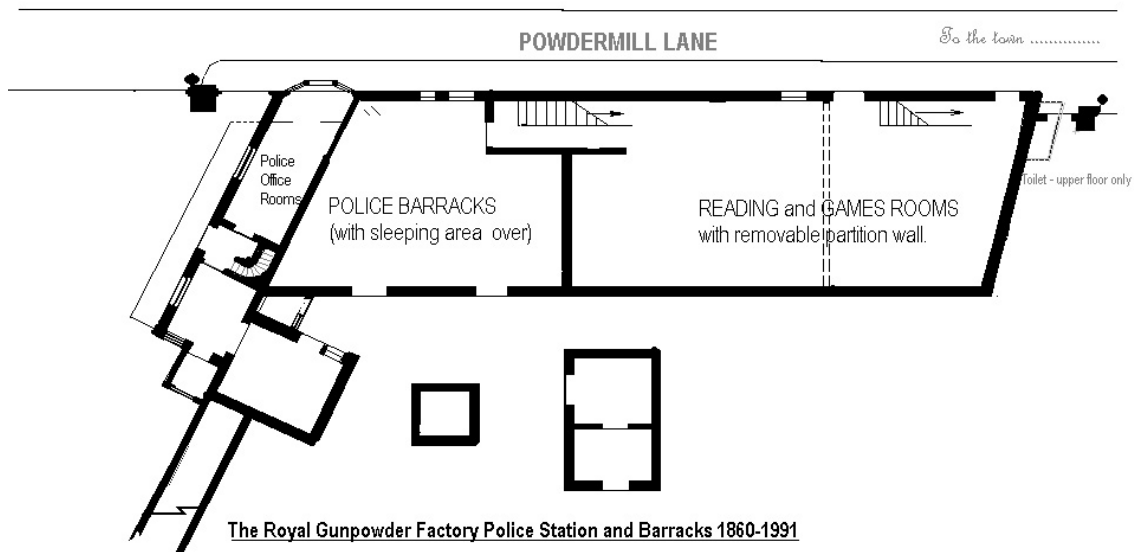
1843

Ten men died on April 13 1843, five men on June 16 180 and two in August 1890. Although well spaced out, as production stepped up for the South African wars at the turn of the century incidents multiplied. Within the factory nine died at 2.30am on December 13 1893, and three at noon on December 15 1902, as well as two men in the Joyce & Co. commercial ammunition factory in Farm Hill during December 1893. Police reporting of these incidents, and the more numerous lesser accidents, were the only interesting aspects of a fairly lack lustre duty schedule.

The police of N Division took over the available security and search buildings for their own use in a manner similar to that occurring in the town in 1840. The early 19th century Grand Watch House in Powdermill Lane became the police station, the attached accommodation block becoming known in time as the 'Police Barracks'. The smaller, police station, section of this pair of buildings remained in use as a police/security post for the Ministry of Defence Police until 1991.



Metropolitan Police Station and Barracks 1860-1923 in 1986 - by which time only the police station was used.



The RGPF police station in Powdermill Lane was not large, merely a two up, two down brick built structure that was to see a limited degree of extending in its lifetime and then only growing to around twelve feet wide and thirty feet deep. The larger adjoining barrack block in its heyday held a ground floor library and reading room in addition to providing communal space and sleeping accommodation on the upper floor. In 1881 thirteen single men were resident, a figure reduced in 1883 by an official policy change relating to individual space allowances. The single men were allowed few home comforts, being stringently regulated to possession of only a single storage box of stated dimensions in addition to bed and bedding in the communal dormitory. The open display of private items and pictures was prohibited by the police regulations. All the rents paid by the residents were passed on to the landlords - the War Department. The inspector was accommodated in a separate War Department cottage situated further down Powdermill Lane.



RSAF Enfield Lock police station c1910

The RSAF Enfield Lock police station, a lodge building at the Middlesex side of the Government owned factory, served as police station and section house for half a dozen single men. Unlike the Powdermill Lane building, this station had cells of its own. Further accommodation was available for married and single men in substantial canal side dwellings on "Government Row" and in strictly vetted lodgings arranged with local families.



Government Row, Enfield Lock c1900 where some RSAF officers lived.

Most of the other buildings taken over by the police were small, temporary structures acting as gate houses. One exception to this was a solidly built post shared with the "Water Wardens" at the northern extremity of the original site. Grandly termed the "Grand Magazine Police Station", its title was not matched by its description, merely fifteen feet by eleven it was at least substantially built of brick. The Grand Magazine Police Station was however a very important building in the running of the factory.

The Grand Magazine, a large, separate and substantial structure, was the point at which all the finished products of the original factory site came to be transhipped from the small unpowered barges into large river going sailing barges able to travel to the Woolwich Arsenal along the Lea Navigation canal. Once loaded up the barges were cleared by the police who contacted other police covering all sections of the canal about the dangerous load expected to be passing through their area - along with approximate travelling times.

It was to assist in the warning duty that the main RGPf police stations were equipped with one of the earliest telephone systems, albeit internal only, in 1888. Oddly enough it seems that the powder factory police stations did not receive the efficient but rudimentary ABC telegraph equipment when the Sun Street station did in 1883. It may be that the internal telephone system was also connected to Enfield Highway, the RSAF station, which did have an ABC and was sufficient for contacting the next in line down the affected canal route.



PC Cole and a factory worker carrying the red 'Danger' flag at the Quinton Hill Gate c1899

Upon the sailing of each barge, the main factory police station was informed. It was the duty of the officers at the station to facilitate the safe transit of the horse drawn vessel southwards. Every time a loaded barge passed, almost invariably unseen, below the road bridge (usually that known as Refinery Bridge) the local police closed the roadway above. A telegraph, or telephone, message was sent to the next police station downstream in order that they could undertake similar duties on an over canal bridge until the dangerous load had completed its journey to the relative safety of the River Thames.

This duty had its lighter side, a side not readily apparent to the officers or the casual onlooker. For years many outsiders would wonder why it was that until the Second World War from time to time a policeman would walk out into the centre of Highbridge Street in a most nonchalant manner and stop the traffic. After five minutes, sometimes more, the traffic would be backing up in chaos. as the policeman would, without appearing to have achieved anything constructive, just wave the traffic on and return to his post inside the factory gates. Such was the aura of secrecy that enveloped the armaments sites, that no one dare ask what was going on, and they would have inevitably suffered silence if they were to ask. It was only a few outsiders, the odd ones who happened to look over the parapet of the bridge while this was going on that were in the know. Even they rarely told the tale.

The numbers of police allotted to the factory varied with the years. It was largely dependent upon the size of the site and the number of factory workers; each of these being ultimately dependant on the requirements of the army and navy for explosives and firearms.

In 1881 the police manpower in the gun-powder works was expected to provide eight men on each of noon to 8pm and 4pm to mid-night shifts and two men on 8am to 4pm as well as a night security shift. At least three sergeants were needed to man the main police station or, if the inspector was present, patrol the site. The occasional availability of a fourth sergeant led to a 10 am to 6pm shift. From available figures the manpower requirement at this time was around thirty men. This was well in excess of the numbers available to the town station that had a greater area to look after as well as to provide spare men for any shortfall in numbers for duty in the factory. As almost all of the cost of the manpower fell upon the Ordnance Board, the police manned up the factories to the detriment of the town strength.

The first inkling that another site was to be added to the RGPF site came with land acquisition from Quinton Hill Farm of fields to the south of the town in around 1870. The eventual building of the site some years later cut Sewardstone Street from its primary function of being the route to Sewardstone and the south. The parallel Sewardstone Road that took a line around the east of the factory extension replaced it.

The South Site as it became known (the older area becoming North Site as a result) grew out of changes in process and product as well as the needs of the wars in Africa. Linked by a narrow strip of land adjoining the Lea Navigation on the west side of town, there was no necessity for anyone to leave the site to pass between the two sections. As the south of the new site area purchased joined up with RSAF it was now also possible to travel to that area without recourse to public roads. Ultimately, the Great War narrow gauge railway of the RGPF was able to link up with the standard gauge public rail system through the RSAF.



Sergeants from the town and Government Factory behind the Sun Street Police Station c1905

The leadership of the arms factory police contingent was based at the RGPF, originally intended to be an inspector who resided in Government supplied quarters in Powdermill Lane. The intention of there being an inspector in charge only lasted until 1874. Inspector Lewis Clements, much respected in the, mainly military, hierarchy of the RGPF was promoted 'in situ' to Chief Inspector on their specific request following his creditable actions at the scene of a factory incident.

This promotion, whilst agreeable to the RGPF, was a great nuisance to the police outside. In theory the inspector in charge of the Sun Street station, which was after all the charging station for the area, was intended to be equal if not indeed superior in ranking. To make matters worse, when Clements retired in 1879 the RGPF decided that it liked having a Chief Inspector in charge and in spite of police protests the new incumbent, Charles Goble, was equally raised in rank! Learning from past mistakes, when it came to the retirement of Goble in 1891, a previous holder of the Chief Inspector rank, Henry Craggs, was sent in. The post was successfully lowered to inspector rank at the turn of the century when Walter James took over.

Whereas the repairs and alterations to the Sun Street police station were the direct responsibility of the police, almost everything to do with the factory contingents was the realm of the Board of Royal Ordnance. In 1871 the inspector, Lewis Clements, submitted a report to the RGPF. Superintendent pointing out that some aspects of the police living accommodations required attention. He stated that his men had to wash in the kitchen area, to the detriment of cooking hygiene. With thirteen men then resident in Powdermill Lane, and others making use of the facilities in duty time, it was indeed a problem. A decade later the same problem was noted at the Enfield Lock site, although there was a separate "ablution" building at the RGPF.

On October 1st 1871, PC Stilwell hauled eleven-year-old Alfred Godfrey of Holyfield up to the Sun Street station from the factory. Lewis Clements went down to the station to deal with the matter. The young lad had been found collecting walnuts from the plentiful plantation of these trees (the wood being a part of the early powder process) and was accused of stealing thirty-four of them.

He was not charged with the theft, although he might easily have been, but the officer could never have let him slip away unnoticed from the secret establishment for fear of his own job security. Details of the incident were recorded in the station "Refused charges book".

On Friday, January 16th 1880, a local newspaper carried a lengthy report about two errant constables attached to the powder mills police. The pair had found themselves facing the Justices from the dock of the Petty Sessions.

Archibald Coltman, PC 263N, an officer with seven years police service, and John O'Neil, PC 533N, with under three, had left the town on New Year's Day 1880 and failed to report for duty since.

When they were missed enquiries were started to ensure that they had not come to harm. Asking around their friends and colleagues led to it being suspected that the pair had joined the army. Sergeant 16N Butler (not a local officer) was dispatched to St. George's Barracks, an army enlistment depot, where the list of recent joiners was checked.

No one with the name of Coltman or O'Neil appeared, but the astute sergeant noticed that two men who had apparently joined together were shown to have similar heights to the missing men. Enquiries were made at an army depot in Sheerness, which led to the pair being found and arrested.

After an absence of less than two weeks the missing officers were brought back to Waltham Abbey on Tuesday, 13th to answer a charge of:-

"Unlawful withdrawal from the Metropolitan Police on 1st January 1880"

Coltman and O'Neil pleaded guilty to the charge, in their defence they claimed that their actions were directed by an over enthusiastic consumption of alcoholic drink.

Both of the men had previous good conduct so the Bench only fined them £2.10s.0d (£2.50p) plus costs. Sergeant Butler pointed out that he expected the costs to be very high due to the amount of time and trouble incurred looking for them. It was decided to set a limit of ten shillings each to the costs. The pair paid up their £3 before they left the court. The treatment of Coltman and O'Neil was very lenient and based upon the expectation that they would be sacked by the police without any back pay, a matter made official in Police Orders dated January 14th. As the case was drawing to its conclusion one of the Justices enquired of Chief Inspector Goble who was standing at the back of the court, whether such a thing as 'unlawful withdrawal' from the force had occurred locally before. The Chief Inspector replied that this was the first occasion in his service. but that he believed there had been other instances of withdrawal from the factories in the seventeen previous years.

In 1883, during a period of intense controversy over the provision of firearms for police, a bomb exploded beside a Government building in Whitehall, and a further unexploded, device was detected close to the offices of 'The Times' newspaper. The effect upon the Gladstone Government and the police hierarchy was dramatic. Officers who had not previously been armed were posted to guard a number of buildings with government or establishment connections; one of these was the RGPF.

The factory security had possessed some weapons, principally carbines, when the police moved in over twenty years earlier, but these were of little use by this time. As the police owned very few weapons for themselves at this time resort had to be made to loaning some of the weapons held at the RSAF. The resultant loan did not result in any of the weapons leaving the twin sites. Although bomb attacks by Fenians continued for two years no attempts were made on the arms factories.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge made his first visit to the two arms factories on June 29th 1886. Accompanied by an inevitable entourage of aides and secretaries, the Royal Party arrived at Waltham Cross railway station to be met and transported in carriages to Powdermill Lane. At the gates the Duke was met by the most celebrated of the factory Superintendents, Colonel Noble RA, and his staff. A "Grand Tour" of the factory site and processes then followed, leading the party to meet up with the State Barge which had been brought up the Lea Navigation for the occasion. A trip in this vessel took in the sights of Mill Head Stream in the upper section of the site before they all returned to take a short ride to inspect the Abbey Church. The party then moved on to the Eleanor Cross at Waltham Cross, before going on to inspect the manufacture of firearms at the RSAF.

South Site construction started in the 1890s. Most of North Site had related to production of gunpowder in its oldest form, cordite and highly volatile nitro-glycerine (which was supposedly carried around the site by process workers in hand held buckets). The new "green field" site was intended to produce nitro-glycerine, cordite and guncotton.

In a rare public release of such information, in 1887 the strength allotted to the powder mill police station alone was said to be one inspector, four sergeants and twenty constables.

A further illustration of the petty nature of police work in the factory was an incident in June 1904 that led to Constable Plumridge arresting a process worker called Alfred Lock within the factory.

The officer saw Lock late at night (10.35 pm) in amongst the trees of "The Plantation" area in the heart of North Site, bending down to pick something up. Readily identifiable as a factory worker in his "Danger Building" garb, the officer arrested the man for picking flowers. In the eyes of the civil employer the officers zeal was not misplaced either, a very stem view was taken about the whole affair when the matter, complete with the enclosure of some, fast wilting, evidence provided by a few small white blooms was committed to an official report. Alfred Lock, number 1481, cordite section, was suspended for one week without pay for his errors

The police also had their moments of inattention, on January 9th 1905, one constable, posted to the wooden Refinery Gate police post off Highbridge Street, was caught out reading a newspaper when Captain Hope of the Royal Artillery loomed out of the darkness, inexcusably unseen by the gate guard. The military man reported the matter and the officer was hauled up in front of Superintendent Robinson at Islington three days later facing a loss of a few days pay.

There is no record of any death or injury related to the dangerous processes undertaken befalling any policeman working within the arms factory, and therefore falling within the realms of the 'Danger Money' allowance. There were two factory related deaths involving the extensive areas of water during the Metropolitan Police presence.

Early in 1886 a young constable usually attached to the Sun Street station, PC Harold Richardson, had drowned whilst walking to temporary duty in the RSAF, and in 1911 a similar fate befell Constable Frederick William Free.

On October 30th 1911, PC 390N Free was among the officers parading for night duty on North Site. Sergeant 33N Church posted him to the Refinery Beat, an area mainly situated around the gate of that name which was closed for the night. Although he had only arrived at the factory quite recently, Free had undertaken similar duties at that gate on twelve occasions previously. The most onerous task was the closure of the security boom on the canal exit in the shadow of the Refinery Bridge.

Sergeant Church met up with the constable on Lower Island at about 10.35pm and last saw him setting off back towards the gate. At 10.55pm Edward Charlick of Woollard Street was walking down Highbridge Street and heard a crash, like the sound of a breaking plank of wood, followed by a splash and moans coming from within the factory. Looking over the parapet of Refinery Bridge he saw what he thought was a police helmet floating by. He went up to the gate and rang the bell connected to Sandhurst, the factory hospital. The hospital sister answered the gate and took Charlick into the building before telephoning the factory police station. The pair was later criticised for ignoring the police inspector and another man nearby as they walked the considerable distance to the hospital building.

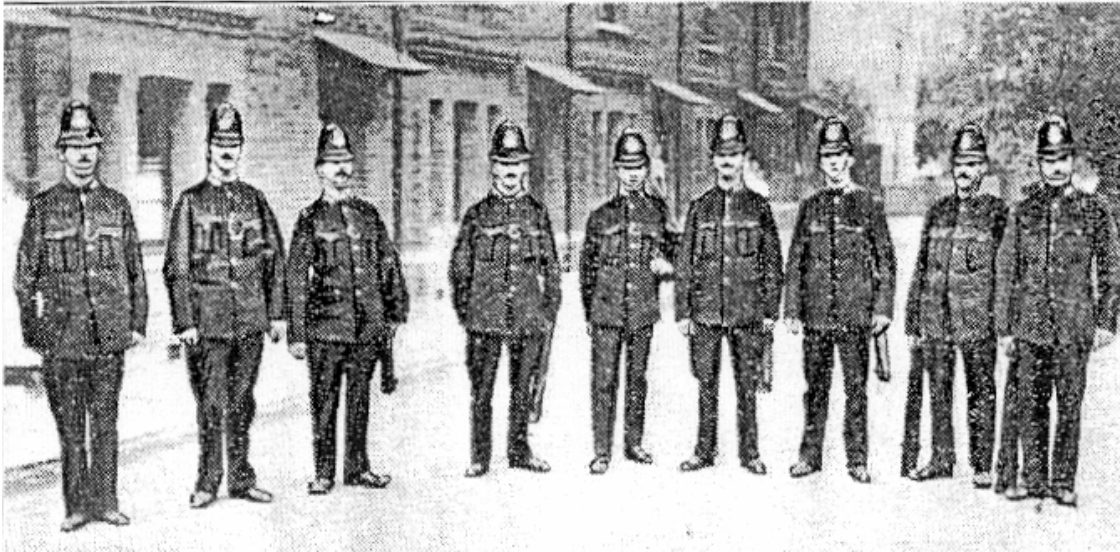
It was gone 1130pm by the time Sergeant Church had brought the drags to the canal side at Hoppitt Pool, it was then only a short while before the drags had brought Free's body to the surface. He was found to have some injuries, bruises to the head and arm, but death was due to drowning.

It was concluded that the constable had been operating the antiquated boom apparatus and had been knocked *off* balance by the operation of it and thrown into the water. As in the case of Richardson twenty-five years earlier the weight of clothing, and in particular the cape, had overcome his attempts to swim. Although the cape had been ripped off during his struggles, without prompt outside assistance he drowned very quickly.

The Coroners jury was critical of the rescuers and the poor design of the security boom, but they still returned a verdict of 'Accidental Death' on the demise of the constable. Frederick was buried in his hometown of High Wycombe on Saturday November 4th. Officers attended the service from Enfield, Waltham Abbey and his previous station at Great Marlborough Street. Apparently as a result of the criticisms voiced by the jury, the security barriers were changed. Plans have been found for later canal security gates, designed in the period 1911-2, but none for the earlier type that appears to have caused the death.

Natural causes took 40-year-old PC Samuel Bryan. On September 13th 1912, this officer, posted to oversee the security of the Quinton Hill gate on South Site of the factory, was seized by an epileptic fit. The officer was quickly taken by ambulance to the factory hospital, Sandhurst on North Site. In spite of prompt attention the officer, serving in the factory since 1905, continued to suffer a series of further fits, finally succumbing to a brain haemorrhage. Samuel Bryan was a single man usually resident in the Powdermill Lane barracks. In spite of this instance of a failure to save life, Sandhurst was a boon to all classes of factory workers, saving, as it did, the lengthy trip to the nearest hospital in Tottenham.

The Great War, which commenced in August 1914, resulted in the massive expansion in the numbers of process workers and police. A further major change was the employment of women. At least nine Women Patrols of the Special Constabulary Reserve, in themselves a rarity, were attached to the RGPF in the war years. A result of the increase in women was the erection of an annexe to the substantial brick built Sandhurst Hospital. The new building - which survived until after the site closed in 1991 - was constructed close to the original in an Essex Clapboard style.



'Massive expansion in numbers...'Powdermill Lane August 1914

Over one thousand armed men of the Lancashire Regiment moved into the Waltham Abbey area upon the declaration of war. An additional hundred men of the Garrison Artillery brought their pom-pom guns. Soldiers of the King's Royal Rifles stayed only one week before being replaced by soldiers of the Territorial Army. Living under canvas, the troops were mainly sited at Monkham's and High Beech. With the onset of the war an extra one hundred and fifty armed policemen were quickly drafted in to defend the RSAF and RGPF. Constables and special constables, all men, were to be employed in riding the powder barges down the canals to Woolwich Arsenal.

The most marked aspect of the first few years of the war from the police viewpoint was the sudden surge in arrests that were not proceeded with. Anyone passing within the close proximity of the factory, or asking questions about the workings of it, especially those with an unfortunately gruff or foreign sounding voice, were summarily arrested and taken in as spies. A large number of people thought to have deviated from normal practices were hauled up in front of the station sergeant in Sun Street, each case being dealt with as "suspected espionage", investigated and the unfortunates released. The entries provide an amusing insight to the nervousness that the war had brought about, but there is no record of anyone ever having been charged and taken to court with espionage or a similar offence.

The previously mentioned, 1886, visit appears to have been the only highly publicised official Royal visit to the factories in the Metropolitan Police period. A visit by King George V to both the RSAF and the RGPF in May 1915 whilst official in nature, was a secretive affair undertaken beneath the shrouds of secrecy prevalent in wartime. The Chief of Staff, the Lord Kitchener, met the Royal Party at the gates to the Enfield Lock site on the morning of Friday 1st. May and conducted him around both sites over the following two hours. Although an undoubted morale booster to the workers directly involved, only a small group of fortunate townspeople were able to see the Royal Party as the motorcade swept into Powdermill Lane.

Weekly Report of Cases at Waltham Abbey Station,

Date and Hour when brought in.	Name and Address of Complainant.	Name and Address of Person accused.	Nature of Charge or Complaint.	P. C.
8 ¹ / ₁₅ 10.20pm	P.B. 314 N Caff	George Holmberg N.1 Marsh Lane Cheshunt Nursery Harist Dartmouth Subject	Suspected Espionage	191 P.B. 317 Caff
22 ⁵ / ₁₅	James Blake 27 Greenfield Street Waltham Abbey	Vernon Foster "Tom & Men's Christian Assoc Tottenham Court Road	Suspected Espionage	
25 ⁵ / ₁₅ 5.10pm	Eugene Barrow 146 Lower Gardens Road Tottenham Rd 48 th Hirooka	Eugene Barrow 165 Lower Gardens Road Tottenham	Suspected Espionage	
26 ⁵ / ₁₅ 5pm	Carl Louis Tuellman Lieut Garrard R & A Montkams Camp Waltham Abbey	Carl Louis Tuellman 1 st Station Parade Palace Common Ditchfield Subject Torman Stevenson Montgomery 55 Clarendon Rd Holland Park	Suspected Espionage	
25 ⁵ / ₁₅ 11.50 pm	John Naylor The Inn 10 th St Captain Gilechrist 2 nd 6 th Erase Royal Gunpowder Factory Waltham Abbey	John Naylor The Inn "Coconut" Caledonian Road Saltcoats Ayrshire N.B.	Suspected Espionage	

Division.

in which the Charge was not taken.

Name of the Officer on Duty at the Station, and the reason of the Charge not being taken.

5. _____

Enquiry satisfactory liberated at 10.40pm
Holmberg spoke to Corporal Pentall National Reserve who mist.
for a German and called P.O. Cuff W.B. Brooker who
who brought him to the Station

Enquiry satisfactory. Foster liberated at 12.30pm
22/95. O.B. John 254.
Kearney P.O.

Enquiries satisfactory Barrows liberated at 4.45pm
O.B. John 262. 25/10/00
Simmons P.O.

Enquiries Satisfactory Both Liberated at 8.40pm
O.B. John 259. 25/10/00
Simmons P.O.

Enquiry Satisfactory and Mc Inroy released at
12.30am 26/10/00
O.B. John 263
W.B. Brooker P.O.

Exact figures of the numbers of police employed in the two arms factories in the years of the Great War have yet to come to light. The large increase in police manpower demanded by the temporary wartime expansion of the factory appears to have been met by young new recruits, many only biding their time until called up into the army for service in the carnage at the front. The townspeople took to this large increase in full time police manpower by offering rooms up for accommodation and holding occasional entertainments within venues such as the Parish Hall. Variations on these amateur efforts included a number of farewell parties for police called to the war front. One of these was held for fourteen constables in the Recreation Room at the Sun Street police station in January 1917. All of the policemen had joined the force in between late 1914 and late 1915, and were leaving the arms factories to join the army. Obviously to withstand the loss of a group of this size, the total manpower was very large.

The group reflected the state the war had brought the country to by this stage. Of the fourteen constables, three died in war operations and of those that subsequently returned to the police, five ended up in being sacked as strikers in 1919.

In the face of pressure from the man hungry war fronts, in December 1916 women police patrols were introduced to the Government arms factories, including those in the Lee Valley. Initially under Sub-Inspector Buckpitt, and later under Inspector D Meeson Coates, there were at least four sergeants, one corporal and nineteen constables of the Women's Police Service (WPS). although accorded full access to police premises for duty purposes, these women, generally drawn from the middle classes of society, were not employed by the Metropolitan Police. Sir Edward Henry, the austere Commissioner of the time, upon receipt of a request for women police from the Department of Explosives Supply of the Ministry of Munitions, put them in touch with two Chief Officers of the fledgling WPS. a move resulting in this section of the WPS being formed under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Munitions.



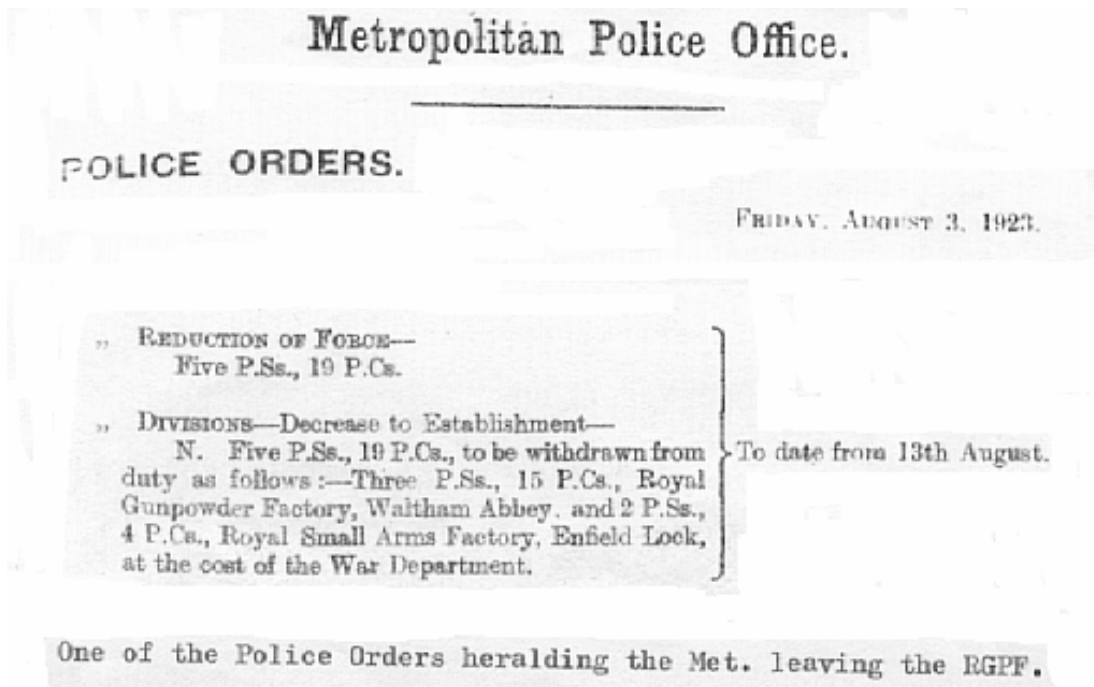
The Women Patrols were roughly equivalent in status to the male Special Constabulary, receiving pay at a rate of £2 per week. Unlike the Special Constabulary, they were not to feature as a permanent part of policing after the war. After they were disbanded, although a small band of police patrols was set up by the Metropolitan police in the 1920s, women police were not to return to Waltham Abbey for over forty years.

No one serving at the RGPF or RSAF became involved in the 1919 strike, but at least one factory constable, William 'George' Allerton had no sooner left the town to return to the E division that he had worked prior to the war than he joined in, and ended up also being sacked and having to take up new employment in the hotel trade. In spite of decades of trying, not one of the 1919 strikers ever regained their police jobs.

With the end of the war the police forces of the country, and particularly the Metropolitan Police, were finding it increasingly difficult to meet their commitments in a variety of government establishments. In addition to the RGPF and RSAF on N Division the police in London were sending men to Woolwich Arsenal and a variety of dockyard's from Chatham to Rosyth.

The solution to the problem faced by the police was almost provided by the War Office themselves in 1920. As part of the inevitable wind down in war effort after the war it was proposed that all manufacturing activities would be transferred to a plant at Gretna, Scotland. This proposal was successfully thwarted and the areas prime employer stayed for a further few decades.

Eventually in the early 1920s the government acceded to the police requests to be relieved of the task, and brought about the formation of their own security system based upon the police. Quite a number of former Metropolitan policemen decided that they would prefer to stay with the new forces rather than return to the uncertain conditions on the 'outside', but others were transferred where possible to local police stations. In a phased transfer of power the RGPF was taken over by the War Office security in August 1923 and the RSAF in 1926.



The replacing force evolved into the modern Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) which until 1991 retained responsibility for the sites. They also continued to provide a visible boost to the apparent numbers of police in the locality, although their power outside the boundary fence of the armament sites was limited to those of the special constabulary.

To maintain a level of continuity of knowledge a number of former Metropolitan Police officers transferred to take up duties with the new organisation. Individually this provided them with an opportunity to remain in familiar surroundings rather than face a transfer of themselves and their families to some new station area. Only a few years passed before all contact with the former police force was lost and a yawning gap in the day-to-day interaction

between the two set in. In later years Metropolitan Police officers entering the site were treated as virtual strangers.



An unidentified War Department officer guards the Powdermill Lane gate circa 1940.

The manufacture of explosives in the RGPF gave way to research in 1943 when the process work was sent north to Scotland and hopefully out of harms way. This development led to a change of name for the site to Explosives Research and Development Establishment (ERDE), this evolving via PERME into RARDE by the 1990s. The Enfield site remained as the Royal Small Arms Factory, a separate working entity but enjoying the same overall security provisions.

Whilst security was still under the control of the MDP it had become a nightly ritual for the internal security force to telephone the night duty officers with the local police hourly to confirm that they were safe and secure. Over the years the recipient station altered from Waltham Abbey to Chingford and Walthamstow as the opening times of the Waltham Abbey station varied from daytime only to 24-hour. Under the code-name "Operation Cyclone", any tardiness in the hourly call would result in all the local Metropolitan Police resources being alerted to surround the site and secure all of the main roads. The arrangement was treated as something of a 'joke' by the outside police but they nonetheless undertook the occasional security lapse with good humour and a full reaction when needed.

As the mobile police manpower in the immediate locality was by the 1980s wholly insufficient for the task vehicles assigned to secure the site included units from Chingford, Walthamstow, Cheshunt and Enfield, these being supplemented by the Lippitts Hill based police helicopter from 1980. At times resources were deficient or simply tied up elsewhere and as a result the reaction resulted in a less than complete securing of the perimeter.

The Conservative government privatised the one time RGPF in the 1980s, the Sewardstone Road and Small Arms sites became parts of Royal Ordnance whilst the North Site remained under government control. Royal Ordnance was duly snapped up by British Aerospace and the writing was clearly on the wall for the continued employment of the expensive MDP on duty within the RSAF and the two former RGPF areas. In a controversial move, South Site

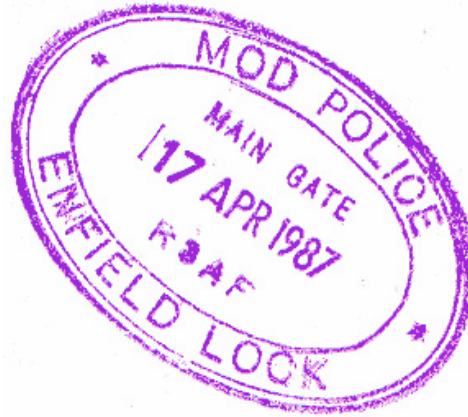
was sold off as development land and the future of the MDP in Waltham Abbey looked increasingly bleak.



A small, almost insignificant, incident which underlined the tenuous nature of the continuation of police employment occurred when large amounts of equipment were put up for sale by auction. On the morning of the first day set aside for viewing the lots the police came out of their office to find that their police marked Land-Rover had been defaced by the addition of a large lot number sticker across the windscreen. No amount of protest by the inspector in charge of the MDP contingent managed to sway the Royal Ordnance insistence that the vehicle became their property as soon as the government had privatised them! In the end the long familiar Land-Rover went in the sale and was replaced by a Ford Transit van.

The Enfield Lock site continued to use police for a further six decades beyond the withdrawal of the Metropolitan Police. There was a period in 1984 where proposals to replace the '240 strong MoD Police force' with an unarmed private security force under factory wide privatisation plans were initiated. The plan to scale security down met with criticism from an All-Party House of Commons Defence Committee. They paid a night-time visit to the site and found a single unarmed security guard answering the telephone and watching the premises. The MDP returned to duty and to taking over a new £500,000 police station situated on the south side of the RSAF. The structure of the original police station remained on the west side of the factory but was refurbished as offices.





The RSAF had produced its famous 'Enfield' small arms from the early part of the 19th Century into the late 1980s, finally facing vacation and dereliction as the privatised production facilities were moved north to Nottingham. As the manufacturing process dwindled security again returned to that of a single person. The difference – if it can be credited is that the singleton was an MoD police officer who could be armed – but was not! In fairness he could call upon weapons from colleagues in the adjoining RGPF site.

The RSAF site closed in the late 1980s, with production machinery being sold off at an auction in 1988. Even closed and stripped of most valuables the site remained under the security of the MDP until they vacated the site three years later. Private security replaced them on both sites.



The Metropolitan Police undertaking firearms training on the site in the 1990s [Guardian Group News]

Even after closure the South Site of the RGPF and large tracts of the RSAF were regularly taken over by the firearm branch of the Metropolitan Police for training purposes. During this period armed policemen and women were to be seen using the, largely abandoned, permanent structures as cover in serious manoeuvres akin to grown up variations on youthful "cowboys and Indian's".

As a further aid to these games with a serious purpose temporary wooden structures were built at their base at nearby Lippitts Hill camp to represent streets lined only by the fascias of buildings. Known as "Tilley-town" after its prime architect within the police firearm branch, PC David Tilley, examples of these were also to be found erected at the RGPF and RSAF.

At one period in 1993 the Metropolitan Police, finding themselves extremely cramped at Lippitts Hill, and receiving a growing level of complaints from the neighbours as the noise level rose with the workload, were seriously contemplating the purchase of the RSAF site for a sum quotes as £5M. It was expected that firearms training would be allied to a new police helicopter base. Eventually the high costs resulted in this intention being thwarted.



South Site police station looking towards the Sewardstone Road gate.



Left: The gateway off Highbridge Street that led to the kennels of the MDP [right].



The old police station in the final days of the MDP circa 1990.

It is interesting to note that when the RGPF sites were closed, and decontamination started, a large number of discarded smoking implements came to light within the areas in which

they were still supposedly banned. Although much of this material could be attributed to the period after the Metropolitan Police vacated the site, much of it post Second World War, the discovery of dozens of broken clay pipes within the factory were certainly contraband of an earlier era. Even though a number were the result of waterway dredging, it would appear that at least some of the diligent hours of searching were largely to no avail!



2005: The house and flats that evolved from the Police Station and Barracks

When they finally left the site the MDP contingent continued to represent a far larger group than the Metropolitan Police assigned as responsible for the whole of the Waltham Abbey and district.

