

WOODFORD POLICE STATIONS

1805-2000



The Metropolitan Police was formed in 1829, the outer areas of the area presently policed by this force did not come under its control until January 1840. The previous arrangements for law enforcement included the use of locally recruited Parish Constables, men of uncertain ability, and the Bow Street Horse Patrol from 1805.

The Bow Street Horse Patrol was inaugurated to combat the many highway robberies taking place on the roads around London. Set up by Sir Richard Ford, Chief Magistrate of the Patrol Office in Bow Street, and Mr. Day the newly appointed Clerk to the Horse Patrol and later an inspector. From 1813 the Secretary of State took over the appointment of patrol constables from the Chief Magistrate. This patrol was not the first peace-keeping force formed in response to the attacks by highwaymen and footpads, but an earlier arrangement was halted because of high costs.

The Horse Patrol was reserved for married ex-cavalrymen aged between 30 and 65. Tasked with the patrol of main roads to London up to 20 miles from Charing Cross many of these areas, including Abridge, Epping and Romford, were to fall outside the Metropolitan Police District when the police forces were formed from 1840. The average daily distance covered by each of the patrols varied between 14 and 23 miles per district. The duties performed by the men were onerous. Each working day was often of 12 hours' duration and there were no regular days off duty. The Horse Patrol constables were each paid four shillings daily. Uniform was blue trousers with blue double-breasted greatcoats with yellow metal buttons over scarlet waistcoats, wellington boots with steel spurs and tall black leather hats. To complete the uniform leather stocks were available - this item being a leather collar designed to be worn around the neck as a guard against garroting. Not all the uniform was provided free, the spurs, greatcoat and hats had to be paid for out of the patrolmen's wages. The horse harness and loaded pistol completed the equipment. Although the pistol was supplied no officially sanctioned means of carrying spare ammunition was available until pouches were added to the saddles from December 1852.

The rider was to reside with his family at the station house, in an existence which was severely regulated. Unable to keep any animals fed on corn, be they pigs fowl or any other beast, he was not to stray more than two miles from his station unless on duty. As each of the patrols was regularly moved around from station to station to ensure that he did not become over familiar with people of the locality, with this added stipulation there was no possibility of re-visiting acquaintances outside the immediate vicinity of his current posting.

Horses suitable -for patrol work cost an average of £25 each, although Inspecting Superintendent Labal Mondiere of 1858 was allowed a mare costing £42 - his unfit previous horse being sent to

patrol work. Forage for the patrols was delivered monthly by a London merchant. For convenience, the mounts were shod by local farriers.

In 1836 there were fifteen Horse Patrol stations, numbered from 51 to 65, within the Fourth Division, these included three at Woodford, two each at Ilford and Stratford and single stations at Chigwell, Epping, Loughton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Romford.

The Woodford Patrols comprised: -

Station 54 - a brick and slate building with a two-stall stable rented on a yearly tenancy for £15 per year from Mr. Peter Mallard.

Constable John Emerson, a 46-year-old Leicestershire man, had joined the patrol in August 1823.

Station 55 also rented from Mr. Mallard was occupied by 32-year-old Constable John Marlow, who originally hailed from Sussex, and his family. This man had joined the Horse Patrol from the Metropolitan Police in September 1833.

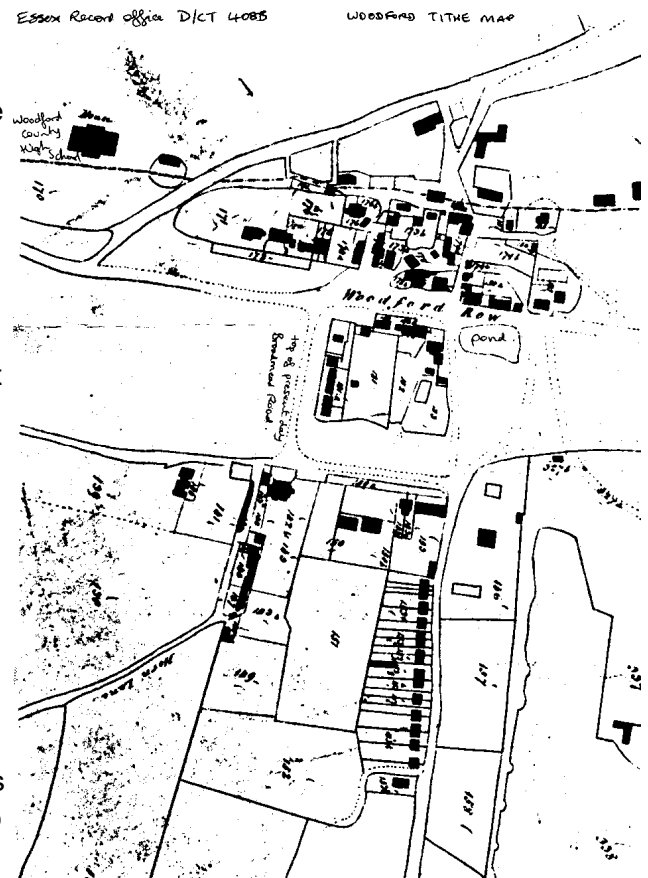
Station 56 was situated in Snakes Lane and rented from Lady Thynne for a similar sum. The Constable stationed here was one William Fair, a 35-year-old born in Jamaica who had also joined from the police in September 1833.

Constable Fair, stationed at the Snakes Lane cottage and stable, was tasked with patrolling between Woodford and the 13-mile post at Abridge. The other two patrols, covered the New Road as far as Walthamstow.

At the time of the Metropolitan Police expansion, brought about by the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839, Woodford was one of only three stations able to take charges in the Outer District of the police area termed as 'K' Division. The station then retained a strength set at one sergeant and five constables, under the supervision of a single Inspector stationed at Ilford. The men selected to undertake duties in the new outer areas were the best already in the service at that time, as befitted the great trust that had to be placed in them to work entirely alone in a new remote area that was primarily open farmland and forest. Extra allowances were paid for moving. Their places in the original police area were taken by newly employed men.

In 1845 Woodford boasted two police stations, one of which was the old station 54. The second building in use at the time was also of similar, brick and slate, construction. The premises were on a yearly tenancy from John Wood of Woodford and acted as both station and section house accommodation. No full description, or location, has been found for this station house.

Any prisoners had to be taken to face the Magistrates sitting at the Petty Sessions sitting at Ilford on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month. In later years, the court used was the Waltham Abbey



Petty Sessions sitting on a Tuesday. The logistics of attending either venue from Woodford were formidable.

There was one structure we know about that had seen use by the previous members of "The Watch" and the Parish Constables, this being the Woodford Gaol. This small single storey building was situated in what was later the High Road outside the building called "Elmhurst", close to the void created in modern times by a cutting for the North Circular Road where it joins the M11 motorway. The Woodford Gaol was later used as a bathroom before demolition in 1928.

The men policing the area in early times were dressed in a uniform consisting of blue tailed jacket and trousers. The coat was high necked and swallow tailed, the trousers white in summer months and blue in winter. The collar of the jacket could be reinforced by the addition of a four-inch-high leather stock designed to prevent garrotting, a not uncommon means of attack. Also reinforced was the 'stovepipe' design top hat head wear chosen because of its civil connotation. For defence the officers were also equipped with truncheon, rattle and cutlass. The first was -at that time made from male bamboo, but a variety of woods were tried out. In addition to the lethal qualities of the cutlass, night duty officers had a limited call on firearms well into the 20th century. The truncheon and rattle were kept in pockets provided in the tail of the jacket.



The men employed were literate, some only just so, but basically coarse and often over fond of their drink. They were not drawn from the lowest orders of society, but it certainly was not the occupation expected of a gentleman. The pay was low, but adequate. A starting rate of £1 – 1 - Od (£ 1.05p) had been introduced in 1829 and remained unchanged until 1869, working was onerous but sure if the officer remained healthy.

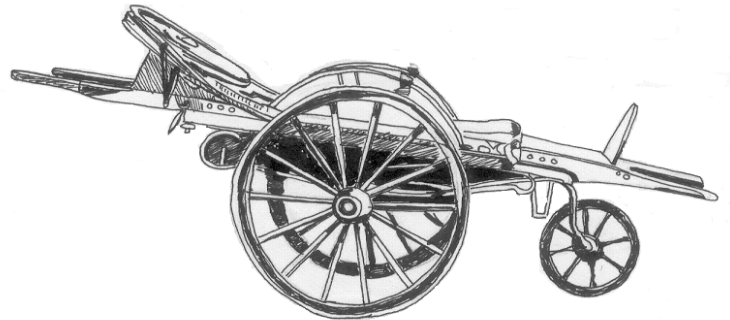
For this small amount the men were required to work every day of the week, on either a twelve-hour full shift or only eight hours split over sixteen. Initially the uniform was worn always - both on and off duty - a situation which led to the introduction of an emblem signifying the mans duty state. Worn on the left sleeve until finally abolished in 1968, the duty armband was to be worn only during duty hours. With such hard conditions and long hours' large numbers of men were dismissed from the service before their limited pension was payable as "worn out".

Charles Beeves, Police Surveyor, reported on November 2nd. 1855 that the Metropolitan Police Receiver had been given notice to quit the lease of the premises used for police purposes at Woodford. A house had been found for temporary accommodation for the constables, it being "of indifferent character and altogether wanting in cell and stable provisions".

A plot of land belonging to a Mr. Wood, possibly the same man as the owner of the 1845 building, having a 35-foot frontage onto Woodford Green, available on a sixty-year lease at £10 per an-

num, was deemed suitable for the erection of a new station. The Superintendent of 'K' Division confirmed that the site was suitable. The Home Office sanctioned the deal in November 1855 and the property was taken on. This site was located close to the present Epping Road and Broadmead Road junction. The Home Office also sanctioned the rental of other premises in Woodford to provide a temporary police station and stable. The station cost £39 per annum and the stable 4/- (four shillings or 20p) weekly. As they had in 1840, the men serving at the station remained largely in private lodgings.

The Metropolitan Police introduced a custom-made hand cart for heavy carriage work in 1860. The cart, properly known as the Bischoffsheim hand ambulance, was almost the sole means of transporting the dead, ill or merely drunken, to either mortuary, hospital or police station until the Great War period brought motor ambulances to the fore. Fitted with a folding canvas hood it was finished in chocolate brown with red lining - the Royal coaching colours. The accommodation of this cart in the temporary police station will have been a problem, but it was undoubtedly kept in the stable when out of use.



Police Orders dated January 11th 1864 set down the state of the Metropolitan Police Force at that time. Woodford was shown as a station on 'K' Division where charges were taken, but there were still no cells. Two police sergeants and ten constables were stationed there. The Commissioner issued instructions to various divisional superintendents via Police Orders of December 31st 1864 that they should liaise with the Surveyor in efforts to obtain sites where police stations might be erected. Woodford was one of the listed stations despite the site having already been identified.

During 1864 steps were taken to change the 'Peeler' style uniform. Over the following few years it began a lengthy evolution towards the classic late Victorian police uniform style including the helmet.

On the formation of W, X, and Y Divisions, Woodford was transferred from 'K' (or Stepney) Division to the 'N' (or Islington) Division in October 1865. (P.O. 28.10.1865). Five sergeants and thirty-six constables, variously stationed at Woodford, Loughton and Chigwell transferred divisions, two sergeants and ten constables being from Woodford.

In 1870 the long awaited new station building was being erected on the corner of Mornington Road, Woodford. It would appear when comparing the shapes of the two sites, that the site built upon was different from that acquired 15 years earlier. Designed under the leadership of the Chief Police Architect T.C. Sorby, the opening of this new station was announced in Police Orders of March 24th 1871: -

"New station to be occupied N. The police of N Division are to occupy, and take charge of the new station at Woodford, 25th. The rent payable by the officers occupying these premises is to be as follows: -

One married sergeant at 3s 6d weekly	3s 6d
One married constable at 2s 3d weekly	2s 3d
Four single constables at 1s 0d weekly	<u>4s 0d</u>
	9s 9d,



In common with almost all police stations of that era, most the space was set aside for the housing of police officers and their families. The exact proportion of ranks and numbers housed at any one time varied considerably. As a rule, the only areas set aside for police operations consisted of the cells, a charge, or Reserve, room and the three stall stables.

The building, laid out in three levels each including accommodation, featured a basement where washing, cooking and eating were catered for.

Late in 1873 the Metropolitan Police underwent another minor shake up which resulted in a new sub-division based upon the new Woodford station being formed. Police Orders of October 18th 1873 gave notice of the new formation and listed the numbers and duties of the men assigned to the four constituent stations; Woodford, Chigwell, Loughton and Waltham Abbey.

**“Woodford
Chigwell
Loughton
Waltham Abbey**

One inspector (mounted), two station sergeants (one mounted), one reserve sergeant, eighteen constables including a divisional detective and five attached to the Reserve. Six constables.

Two station sergeants (one mounted) and ten constables (one mounted).

Two station sergeants and fourteen constables (two mounted).”

In this group were a force of five constables for Chingford, an area still without its own police station.

This force of sixty men, under the inspector, was divided into ten sections. Five worked days and five nights. These were still 12 hour days and seven day weeks.

One inspector and horse were shown as an "Augmentation to the N Division", over and above the previous arrangements. To create the new sub-division the previous area was, in effect, split into two. Inspector Anderson was displaced to the southern part around Walthamstow leaving the northern section to a new man, Sub-Divisional Inspector (SDI) Todman. Robert Todman arrived at Woodford with a total of ten years' police service and was to give exemplary police service to the people in the locality for a further eight years.

In June 1874 Woodford was connected to the growing system of private police telegraph wires, at the same time acquiring its own station (telegraphic) code of "W.F.". Connected directly to the station at Lea Bridge Road, Walthamstow (W.A.) operators at Woodford could gain connection with the Divisional Headquarters at Kingsland, Islington (N.D.).

For an unknown reason, probably not unconnected with the excessive number of days hours each man was expected to work, the SDI ran off with the weeks pay for his men, and those of the Government arms factories at Waltham Abbey, in April 1881. Amounting to £154 12s 0½d, largely made up of gold coin, Robert Todman took delivery of it from Superintendent Green at the local headquarters and made his escape. Although he had returned to Woodford and changed from his uniform no one had seen him.

It was the following day before the alarm was raised by the Chief Inspector in charge of the Waltham Abbey arms factory. Following a period of grace largely caused by the suddenness of his move, and disbelief that he had not been set upon and robbed, a nationwide search was launched. In the meanwhile other funds were obtained to pay the men.

Robert Todman was found by an alert constable in a village near Bolton, Lancashire, three weeks later. Put before the Waltham Abbey Petty Sessions, and then sent for trial. The result was not to follow the path of inevitability. After hearing the evidence and the defence Todman was found "Not guilty" of the felony by the jury, he was nonetheless quickly dismissed from the police force - without back pay - on July 13th 1881.

According to a police surveyors reported comments on Woodford police station in 1881, the building, although new and specially built as a station house, suffered from a poor internal layout of rooms.

The first modern means of message transmission, the A.B.C. telegraph, was introduced to the Metropolitan Police service in the 1870' and 1880's. Woodford had received its own equipment by the time it left 'N' Division.

On August 1st 1886 a new division, 'J' (or Bethnal Green) Division, was formed in the east of the Metropolis. The Woodford sub-division, less Waltham Abbey (and, Chingford), policed part of this new area. Waltham Abbey remained within the 'N' (Islington) Division.

In the 1906 Kelly's Postal Directory two police stations were listed for the Woodford area. The building shown to be at Woodford Wells under Inspector Arthur Seymour was that in Mornington Road, whereas the other building at Woodford Bridge under Sergeant William Key is better known under its title of 'Claybury' - the station opening in 1900 to serve the Chigwell area. It was an unfortunate quirk of political boundary changing 47 years later that placed the Claybury building outside the area it was intended to police. According to a 1904 document, Woodford had a single set of married quarters in use at this time, the rental being 5/6d weekly. The other residential space was probably set aside as single men's quarters.



In January 1909 the infamous anarchist wages robbery and murders of a Tottenham constable and a young lad took place. Subsequently to be known as the "Tottenham Outrage", the major portion of the action took place in and around Walthamstow as the suspects fled across the Lea Valley to the east. The final moments of this drawn out incident were enacted in Hale End, attended by a number of officers from Woodford.

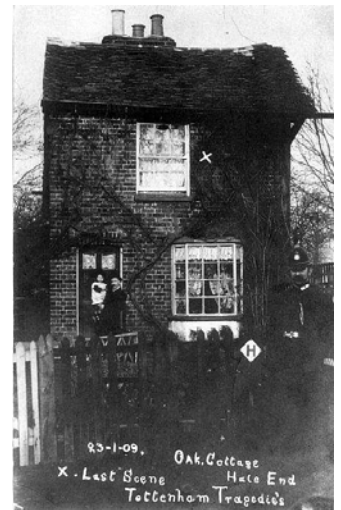


The snatch of the money and the resultant deaths in the shadow of Tottenham police station resulted in a 'hue and cry' the like of which had not been seen since the Middle Ages. The two robbers were chased on foot onto the River Lea Marshes in a non-stop running gun battle that expended hundreds of rounds of ammunition by villain and police alike. In spite of this, and numerous injuries, no further innocent lives were lost.

The frantic chase crossed over into Walthamstow in the vicinity of Blackhorse Lane and then made its way by a torturous route along paths and lanes into Chingford Road near the site of the present Greyhound Stadium. The pair of gunmen hi-jacked a passing tram. The driver fled and hid on the upper deck, leaving the conductor to be forced into the driving role. The police also obtained a tram and the chase was on as the first tram set off south towards "The Bell".

The temporary driver of the first tram managed to rid himself of his hijackers by convincing them that the police station was around the next corner as he approached the tram station, now known as Walthamstow Garage. The pair left the tram and ran off down Farnham Avenue to hi-jack a milk float which they used for the length of that road until changing to another cart when near Forest Road. This latter cart took them to Fulbourne Road and into Winchester Road, Highams Park where the pair again took to their feet.

One of the anarchists called Helfeld fearing that the game was up shot himself in the head near the railway cutting, but the other, Lepidus managed to get as far as the junction of Oak Hill and Hale End Road where he entered "Oak Cottage". When he also realised that he had failed to lose the pursuing police he also shot himself. The money was never officially found.



Prior to the Great War the police station received extensive works which included a 7 foot deep front ground floor extension which increased the available working space in the Inspectors Office considerably. Further works included the erection of a 'lean-to' style parade room and bicycle shed against the north wall in the rear yard of the station and some re-arrangement of the internal room uses.

At this period in the station's history more rooms were allocated to police work. The ground floor now provided a charge room, extended inspectors office, a C.I.D. office and a single room at the back newly set aside to serve as a detention room, waiting room and police surgeons room. As a result of the latter's multi-use arrangement the window on this room was provided with a new set of bars. An odd item evident from the plans for the new works is that "a lift" was to be removed from the new C.I.D. office. This item begs the question - "What was the lift for?" - was an earlier residents family member disabled? or was this merely a means of providing access to the basement kitchen. Whatever, a lift was a rare item in any police station at this time and it may be that



POLICE HORSES AT WOODFORD

The top image has been dated as 1908 and was taken at Woodford Well near to the front of the police station

Below was 1912 and features a different horse, the white horse on the right, normally stationed at Woodford that was employed at the Dock Strike that year.



the term meant something different.

In common with most London police stations, during the Great War period police manpower at Woodford was greatly increased by the addition of part time men from the newly formed Special Constabulary Reserve. Made up of elderly shop keepers and business men in the main, there were younger elements employed, primarily those awaiting the inevitability of call up into the armed forces. It was as a result of the availability of this reserve manpower that police were able to operate an embryo air raid warning system throughout the war years.

Before any of this air raid reporting structure could be set up the station suffered a double blow 'with the tragic loss of two ex-Woodford constables called into the Royal Navy by the war. P.C.749J Albert Winton, a policeman since 1910, and P.C.282J F.C. Haines who had been in the police for seven years, were recalled to the Royal Navy and serving in the North Sea aboard the old, 1893 built, protected cruiser H.M.S. Hawke. The vessel was torpedoed by the German submarine U9 on October 15th 1914, a bare two months into the war. Only three officers and 49 men survived out of a crew of 400. The two Woodford policemen were not amongst the living.



Towards the end of the Great War police pay was inexorably falling behind that of factory workers, leading to a number of short term special allowances being introduced. Even these measures proved insufficient to support police and their families. In 1918 the police went on strike, a matter which led to the Government of the day increasing wages and making promises which were to be met after the war was over. Unfortunately these promises were not honoured when the war was over, leading to another, disastrous, police strike. Many of these strikers were sacked. It is not known if any of the men from Woodford were among the hundreds of 'J' Division officers sacked.



When the first aviation legislation was framed by the Home Office from 1913 it was decided that, in spite of inadequate training, the police would administer the licensing arrangements for civil airfields. Although the war had put this matter aside, from 1920 this duty was resurrected and the police in Woodford were, for a time, responsible for administering two short lived civil airfields in their area; the two sites were at New Barns Farm, Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell Road, Woodford.

Police Orders of 14th December 1926 announced another change in the boundaries between police stations. Wanstead sub-Division was to comprise the stations of Wanstead, Leyton and Leytonstone, and Woodford the stations of Woodford, Loughton, Claybury and Barkingside.

In the general re-organisation of the divisions north of the River Thames in 1933, Woodford remained largely unaffected, it remained a sub-divisional station of the J or Hackney Division, with Wanstead (previously a sub-divisional station with the same status as Woodford) now joining Barkingside, Claybury and Loughton as sectional stations.

In January 1936 the system of about fifty police telephone boxes installed throughout the J Division was brought into use. About half of these, twenty four in the range J29 to J52, were directly connected by private wires to the manual switchboard at Woodford. For the greater part, these boxes were installed to serve officers at other stations, from Waltham Abbey in the North to Barkingside in the east.

The locally used boxes were:

J30 Situated on the east side of Hermon Hill about 40 yards south of South View Drive - South Woodford E1S.

J31 In the High Road 16 yards north of Southend Road at Gates Corner (a position that no longer exists because of the North Circular Road 'canyon'). This box was supplied with a post mounted air raid warning siren and was re-sited at one time.

J32 On the corner of Snakes Lane and Charteris Road.

J33 In the High Road, Woodford, on the west side 9 yards south of Chingford Lane.

J35 Beside the north side of Roding Lane, 20 yards west of Loughton Way, Buckhurst Hill. This was an air raid siren equipped box from November 1939.

J36 Epping New Road, on the east side opposite the junction with Rangers Road, Buckhurst Hill.

J4 1 On the south-east corner of Woodford Avenue and Roding Lane South, South Woodford. This was a siren equipped box from January 1940.



Although some of these boxes were removed earlier, the greater part survived until withdrawn in the autumn of 1970. The last box on J Division, Woodford Box J52 in Chigwell Lane, Debden, was disconnected in February 1971.

When war again came to Woodford the police authorities were faced with not only the protection of the police station itself, but with the strengthening of each of the police boxes. This was mainly achieved by using masses of sandbags, although substantially built blast walls were also used at some locations. Although the task of filling and stacking the bags was allotted to civilian workers at the start of the war, unfortunately for the police all subsequent maintenance fell to them. From the first, very severe, winter of the war the flimsy sacks rotted and spilt their contents. It was to the ordinary beat constables that the police hierarchy turned to undertake repair and replacement.

With the worsening situation becoming evident on the Continent - as the German army smashed its way through the Holland, Belgium and France - the authorities in the United Kingdom were forced into looking at whatever defence measures might be possible to deflect a Nazi war machine intent upon invasion. Discussions took place between the Home Office, police and military on May 13th and 14th. It was decided that a general request for volunteers to form a civilian defence corps should be broadcast on the B.B.C. at 9-10pm on May 14th - the day of the Dutch surrender. To cover this appeal by Mr. Anthony Eden, 20,000 leaflets were quickly printed and 50 delivered to each police station, as the crowds appeared at the station it was soon evident that more were needed.

Further appeals were broadcast requesting weapons for the L.D.V. On May 16th the request was for the loan of rifles these, together with spare military equipment, allowing the London area to

share out 6,000 rifles to the volunteers. Before the month of May was out, the rifles were followed by successful appeals for shotguns and all types of ammunition. Three hundred and fifty of these weapons were issued via the police at Woodford. The Loughton and Buckhurst Hill sections of the L.D.V. were allocated one hundred weapons each, with fifty each going to those at Chigwell, Chigwell Row and High Beach - in spite of the latter being an area under the police responsibility of the Walthamstow sub-division.

The police at Scotland Yard were a little worried that the whole matter of setting up the L.D.V. appeared to be devolving upon them, and direct involvement in the setting up of an armed unit was not then seen as something the police ought to be involved in. It was soon explained that after the initial involvement, the L.D.V. would look after its own affairs. Fears that the groups might set themselves up on police premises, like an armed branch of the Special Constabulary, were allayed.

Orders were given that the 3 feet 6 inch high spear headed railings that graced the front of the station were consigned to war scrap late in 1941. A 108 foot length of the one inch spaced bars and the station lamp and standard were given up early in 1942.

In many ways Woodford was lucky in the war years, with very few severe incidents and the loss of no officers recorded either during police operations in the United Kingdom, or whilst serving with H.M. Forces at the front. One officer very nearly entered the casualty list early in the war though. Having sneaked into 33J police box outside the girls school for a quick puff of a cigarette, this particular officer was disquietened to hear a sharp rap on the outside, as if someone (perhaps the patrol sergeant ?) were requesting entry. Gingerly opening the door, he found it obstructed by an object he quickly identified as being a large and deadly Nazi land mine bomb and its accompanying parachute shrouds. It was some time before the officer managed to convince the switchboard at the police station that he was serious about being trapped in the box by a land mine, leading to his eventual safe rescue.

On Saturday November 9th 1946, a courting couple drove into a roadside clearing in Epping Forest. The local couple from Woodford, Kenneth Stuart Dolden on his demob leave from the R.A.F., and Jacynth Bland, a local music teacher, who had been going out together for only a matter of weeks.

Having spent an enjoyable day together in Woodford, in the early evening the pair had borrowed Kenneth's father's car and gone dancing at Walthamstow until about 9.15pm. They left and took a short drive up to the forest near High Beach, where they arrived about a quarter of an hour later. The young couple, he was 23 and she was 22, both got into the rear of the car and were cuddling when the door opened.

The figure of a man, stood beside the open door looking in. Dolden immediately took exception to this apparently blatant 'peeping tom' activity, he ordered the man to "Get out". Still in a crouched stance, Dolden moved forward towards the car door, and the stranger. He received a blow to the head and then shots, possibly silenced, rang out. It was 9.40pm.

Three bullets struck Dolden and a fourth sank into the rear seat. Staggering forward, he fell to the ground as the shadowy figure ran off into the darkness. Jacynth ran off down the road towards Woodford and soon encountered another car about 150 yards away. She was let in and the three of them drove to the first police box they encountered. Box 36J situated in Epping New Road. Told to stay by the box to direct police to the location of the shooting.

The first van actually arrived at 10.08pm, Miss Bland was able to direct the first Woodford police officer, P.C. Waiter Reddieliffe, quickly to the scene on the west side of Fairmead Road where Dolden lay mortally wounded in the back of his fathers car. Lying on his back in great pain, he was made comfortable until the ambulance arrived at the same time as Detective Constable Stuart Osborn.

Quickly sent off to Forest Hospital, Buckhurst Hill, he died of his wounds later. The content of his last gasped breaths cleared Miss Bland from any complicity in the murder. This saved a great deal of unnecessary and distressing questioning for her and time wasting for the police.

Alerted by police at home in Monkams Avenue, Woodford Green, Dolden's father, Alfred, was able to be present when his son passed away. After his death three bullets were extracted from wounds in his chest and abdomen. The first two were extracted at the hospital, but the third only came to light as a result of the post mortem examination undertaken by the famous forensic scientist, Dr. Keith Simpson.

Although the shooting had taken place well onto the Waltham Abbey police section, for a number of reasons (and not for the last time in such cases) the enquiry took place at Woodford station. As well as Kenneth Dolden dying at Buckhurst Hill, the first police enquiries were undertaken from the Woodford police station and involved officers from that area. In any case the facilities at Waltham Abbey were insufficient to house an enquiry team.

The case dragged on until April 1950 before the murder squad was finally stood down. "Who killed Kenneth Dolden ?" was a question that was never answered.

With the re-building of Barkingside police station in 1964, the title of sub-divisional station passed from the old and overcrowded Woodford to the new Barkingside.

In the 1965 police boundary changes Woodford police station's area of responsibility was altered to take account of the provisions of the London Government Act 1963. Now in the London Borough of Redbridge, responsibility covered the areas of Woodford Green, Woodford Bridge and South Woodford - including the land upon which the Claybury police station stood and 200 yards beyond it.

Although the old married quarters had been absorbed into office use in 1962, work involving a considerable amount of structural alteration. In spite of the consequent increase in available workspace the building was considered wholly inadequate for police purposes. As no additional land was available adjoining the existing station site in Mornington Road, other land was sought where a new station might be built.

A new site was found at 94-100 High Road, Woodford Green. This site, previously housing, was some 400 yards south of the old station on the corner of Chestnut Walk. It transpired that the land was owned by developers intending to build a petrol filling station. A mutually acceptable deal was struck with the developers. In October 1964 the freehold of the Chestnut Walk site was purchased by the police for £30,000. At the same time the freehold of the existing station at 1, Mornington Road, Woodford Wells was sold to the prior owners of the Chestnut Walk site. The arrangement, financially much in the favour of the new owners, required that they wait until the new station was complete before they took control of the old station and land.

Building companies were invited to tender for the construction of the new station. The bid of £95,865 put in by Messrs. Hawkins Brothers (Gosport) Ltd., was accepted. Work commenced in

June 1967 and was completed by the end of 1968. At the same time the properties in the High Road were re-numbered.

Police Orders dated December 24th 1968 announced:-

"Buildings (J). A new sectional police station for Woodford (JF) at 509 High Road, Woodford Green, Essex will be taken into operational use at 6 am., on Monday 30th. December, when the existing station will be closed."



On December 31st 1968 the officers at Woodford moved out of the old station, trading cramped conditions for an unaccustomed spaciousness in the new, larger, premises. In addition to the officers from the old station, the 'J' Division Juvenile Bureau, Secure Prisoner Unit and Dog sections took up residence. A number of other part time residents included police subject and first aid training. The new building was, like the old, situated adjacent to the A11 1 London-Newmarket trunk road. A decade later, after the M11 motorway was built along the route of the Roding Valley and opened, the road designation changed to A104.

With the police now moved out, the contractors moved in and demolished most of the old police station in order that the petrol station project could proceed. One section of the rear portion of the old station, previously the cells and stables (neither of which featured a basement area), was retained to provide the basis for an exclusive housing development called "The Mews". In 1992 the site remains occupied by the petrol station and the housing development.

1993 a view of the former stables adjacent to Mornington Road, Woodford incorporated into Mews Place a development behind the garage that replaced most of the original police station building.



Until the late 1950's police mobility had primarily relied upon policemen patrolling on foot or bicycle. Finally, these methods were supplemented by the Velocette light-weight motor cycle scheme. Better known as the "Noddy bike", first put into service late in 1959, it was finally taken out of service late in 1969, replaced by small motor cars destined to be nicknamed "Panda cars".

In 1986 the old 'J' Division was disbanded, only a matter of weeks before completing its centenary. In the place of the old divisional formations came Area - consisting of a number of the old sized divisions - and Divisions - little more than a re-designation of the old sub-divisions. Woodford was to be part of the Barkingside Division with Loughton, Chigwell and, later, Waltham Abbey. At this period the Dog Section moved out to operate under Area and stationed at "Claygate House" - the new name for the old Claybury police station in Woodford Bridge. A few years later part of the Children's department also moved to the same location. The training and the little used Secure Unit function's remained.

In 2016 Mews Place continues.

Today [2017] the garage has also given way to new build flats. Google Earth.

