

Robert Bartlett



Surrey Constabulary During the Great War

Robert Bartlett
August 2015

"It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived." - George S. Patton

1914 August 4: Nine men from the Guildford Borough were **called to the colours** as reservists leading to shortages. The 17 men of the Fire Brigade were sworn in as special constables and lamps, whistles and handcuffs were obtained for their use; 12 Specials were being paid five shillings a day. The strength of the force with Specials was 36 but there were additional duties associated with the mobilisation. The Chief Constable reported that “150 local gentlemen had rendered excellent service as Town Guards” but most wished to be relieved of their duties by the end of the month. Officers engaged on “point duty” (was this vulnerable points as opposed to traffic points) were armed with pistols. Police lost the use of the drill hall for their training and purchased an ambulance for £14 2 6d for use by the police. Large numbers of soldiers were billeted in the town.¹

1914: On the outbreak of war there were two thousand **Special Constables** in the county. During the war some four thousand nine hundred and eighty seven were sworn in

1914 November: At the beginning of the war leave of absence was also suspended but restored in November 1914.

1914: SCC Archive: **Item ref: CC98/14/6** Enquiry into disappearance of a couple at Godalming

Police use of Dogs

1914-1918 Denis Turner: The earliest record of dogs being used by the Surrey Constabulary was during the First World War. A prisoner of war camp had been established at Frith Hill, Frimley and although most inmates were quite happy to sit out the war, from time to time some thought it their duty to escape. The surrounding countryside was ideal cover for the escapees. To assist in searching for them the police at Camberley obtained three Bloodhounds for the purposes of tracking. Kennelled at Camberley Police Station and handled by Sergeant Kenward and his assistant PC Pink they were used several times with some success but their use was discontinued after the war.

¹ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

Surrey Constabulary officers serving with the army during the First World War



First World War Surrey Constabulary

If you have any information relating to any of these men, or other casualties, Surrey History Centre and the Editor would like to hear from you.²

Surname	First Names	Rank	Military Corps	Remarks
Bridger	Wilfred	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	
Budd	Arthur	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	
Gater	Watford Estough	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	
Gibson		Sergeant. Major	Military Police	Reg Hollis Gibson 1501 MPSC?
Marshall	John Charles	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	Policeman from Rowledge, born 1885. Service papers survive, 27 pages. Gassed April 1918
Peet	George	Lance Corporal	Military Mounted Police	Policeman from Guildford, born 1889. Service papers survive 19 pages. Served in Surrey Police 24 May 1909 to 20 July 1915
Runnegar	Thomas James	Lance Corporal	Military Mounted Police	Based in Caterham in 1915 awarded MM
Ryall	Frederick Arthur	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	
Smithers	Noah	Lance Corporal	Military Foot Police	Son of Mrs. Smithers, of Green Side, Ripley, Surrey. Born 1886. Police Constable living in Stroude, Virginia Water in 1911. Died of Wounds 21 May 1916
Tanner	Ernest	Lance Corporal	Military Mounted Police	
Tassell	Arthur Henry	Corporal	Military Mounted Police	Policeman from Chertsey, born 1889. Service papers survive 29 pages

² Source for Surrey Police WW1: Surrey History Centre Reference: 9152/1/5/4, September 1915

Robert Bartlett

West	Walter Henry	Lance Corporal	Military Mounted Police	
------	--------------	----------------	-------------------------	--



L/Cpl Bridger

L/Cpl Budd

L/Cpl Gater

Serg /Maj Gibson



L/Cpl Marshall

L/Cpl Peet

L/Cpl Runnegar MM

L/Cpl Ryall



L/Cpl Smithers

L/Cpl Tanner

L/Cpl Tassell

L/Cpl West

At the outbreak of the First World War a large number of the men from the police forces of Surrey were called to serve with the military. Sixteen men were wounded with three being permanently incapacitated. Eighteen officers lost their lives in the conflict. Three men who survived were decorated during their service:

Walter Tuppen – Distinguished Conduct Medal
Thomas Runnegar – Military Medal
Gunner Henry Brand, PC Egham – Military Medal
Harry Feasey Distinguished Conduct Medal (Joined post war)

1915 Walton on Thames – serious disturbances – bad feeling against German refugees who were living in the town

1915 George Bridger was fined 5/- for **trespassing in search of game**, having been discovered at the foot of Coast Hill by PC Lightfoot.

1915 April 10 Wyke and Normandy: As a taxicab containing four soldiers was passing through the village on Sunday, a tyre came off one of the wheels, causing it to skid and

overturn in the ditch by the roadside. One of the occupants, who was extricated from the cab, was badly injured and was removed to the County Hospital, Guildford.³

1915 June 4: Weekly Rest Day suspended owing to the war. On 31 December 1915 one rest day in fourteen became the rule until the rest day was fully restored.

1915 October 13: Guildford experienced its only **Zeppelin raid** the only **casualty** a swan in the River Wey and seventeen fowls roosting in trees.⁴

1915 October 13: 2200 a Zeppelin L13 approached the town from the direction of Newlands Corner. Bombs were dropped and later police investigation showed that ten bombs fell in the Borough and two more at Shalford Park killing a swan on the Wey and 17 roosting fowls at St Catherine's. This led to a stiffening of the lighting regulations resulting in 49 summonses and a total of £37 in fines.⁵



ALFRED VICTOR SMITH 1891-1915 VC

1915 son of a former Guildford Borough officer: Alfred Victor Smith, was the only son of William Henry Smith, and was born at Guildford, Surrey on 22nd, July 1891. His father William Henry Smith was a former postman, who later served with the 11th. Prince Albert Own Hussars, where he became a lance corporal gaining the medal and star for active service in the Nile Expedition of 1884-85. Following this, William Henry joined the Guildford Borough Police force in 1888, and was later assigned to the Cambridge Borough Force where he was raised to the rank of sergeant, later Chief Detective, and later still Chief Inspector. For four years from 1901 to 1905 he was appointed to the Chief Constable of St. Albans and later Chief Constable of Burnley.

The day before Christmas Eve 1915, Lieutenant Smith was in the battlefield at Helles, Gallipoli, a peninsula on the European side of Dardanelles. The scene was one of heavy fighting, and the young lieutenant rose from the trench to throw a grenade. The sides of the trenches were thick with glutinous mud, and confusion reigned from the bombing and shell fire. The young officer stumbled and the grenade fell from his hand into the trench. Lieutenant Smith called out to his fellow officers and men of the danger, and he ran for cover. He immediately realised that his comrades had no means of escaping, and with seconds to go before the blast sacrificed his own life by throwing himself on top of the bomb.

³ 1915 April 10th Surrey Advertiser

⁴ Surrey Police a Pictorial History 1851-2001 Gerry Middleton Stewart

⁵ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

The explosion instantly killed him but his heroism and split second timing saved those in the trench from death or injury.

Alfred Victor Smith was awarded the Victoria Cross on the 3rd of March 1916.

1915 Guildford Special Constabulary 47 section leaders and 228 special constables ⁶

First World War Attack: Albury Gunpowder Mills: First World War introduced Additional hazards to mill operations when the factory was provided with **anti-aircraft guns** by early 1915, and St Martha's Church was heavily camouflaged with branches to prevent the building being used by enemy pilots as a landmark for navigation.

The worst scare of the war was when in 1915 a **German Zeppelin** dropped twelve bombs in the St Catherine's area of Guildford not far away whilst the pilot was looking for the gunpowder works. Damage was caused to property but the only casualties were a swan on the river, and seventeen chickens. ⁷

1916 Food was short and PC Fuller Guildford Borough was awarded a gratuity of 10 shillings for the action he took leading to the conviction of a butcher for having diseased meat in his possession. ⁸

**PC 160 Noah Smithers
Died of Wounds 21.5.1916 Age 32⁹**



PC Smithers served as a Lance Corporal P/1978 in the Military Foot Police. PC Smithers was the son of Mrs Smithers, of Green Side, Ripley, Surrey and is buried in Noeux-Les-Mines Communal Cemetery; Pas De Calais He enlisted at and gave his residence as Guildford.

Age	22
Height	5' 10 ½"
Complexion	Dark
Hair	DarkBrown
Eyes	Brown

⁶ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

⁷ http://www.weyriver.co.uk/theriver/industry_5_gunpowder.htm

⁸ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

⁹ www.surrey-constabulary.com Roll of Honour

Robert Bartlett

Birth Place Pyrford

Noah Smithers joined the Surrey Constabulary on 26th June 1905 aged 22, and was sworn in before Col. Hadaway and Mr Alan Chandler at Guildford on 1st July 1905. His appointment number was 1456 and his collar number 160. At the time of his appointment he gave his trade as Farm Labourer working for Mr Cleverley at Ripley. He was first stationed at Farnham later serving at Frimley Green, Virginia Water, Addlestone, Horley and finally Lingfield. During his service he was promoted from third class to 1st class Constable. On 6th September 1911 he was fined 10/- for being in the bar of a public house when off-duty for two and a quarter hours without reasonable excuse on 2nd September



The Commonwealth forces from June 1915 to August 1917 used the Communal Cemetery at Noeux- les-Mines. Units and field ambulances carried out the earlier burials but in April 1917, the 7th Casualty Clearing Station began to use the cemetery. It contains 980 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. (CWGC site)



January 1916 PC Rose Metropolitan Police: Single-handed raided a gypsy camp on Bookham Common (out of his area he was based at Epsom) and made some arrests of “absentees” under the Military Service Act. (Later in 1919 Rose was injured in the Epsom Riot)¹⁰

1916: Two members of the Guildford **Fire Brigade** were **appointed temporary constables** at 30 shillings a week subject to the condition they remained members of the brigade and the Chief Constable was authorised to give the necessary certificates to exempt them from military service.¹¹

1916 A local branch of the **No Conscription Fellowship** was established in Guildford to counter compulsory military service. Police raided the house of two local officials and seized literature statements the publication of which would be “likely to prejudice the recruiting training or discipline of His Majesty’s Forces.” The Guildford Bench fined the officials £25 and £100.¹²

1916: The Guildford Watch Committee resolved to grant £10 to the **St. John Ambulance** towards fitting up a ward in the Congregational Hall for the purpose of receiving casualties in the event of an air raid. St. John at that time had two motor ambulances and one horse drawn.¹³

1916 September 1: “NMV” on Motorcars: At Kingston on Thames yesterday two men were summoned by Surrey Constabulary on a charge of displaying on a motor car without authority the letter “NMV” which were calculated to lead to the belief that the car was being used in the service of his Majesty or a government department. The NMV stood for National Motor Volunteers. Police Sergeant Nash of the Surrey Constabulary said having consulted the relevant authorities he suggested that the War Office should have an opportunity of considering the case before the magistrates disposed of it. Mr Bodkin for the defendants said that in the regulations it was clearly laid down that such a case should first be submitted to

¹⁰ “We are not manslaughters” Martin Knight Tonto Books 2010

¹¹ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

¹² They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

¹³ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

the military authorities in order that they may decide whether it should be dealt with by court martial or by a court of summary jurisdiction. It was an astonishing thing that a summons should first be issued against a member of the Volunteer association, which was doing work under War Office direction for using letters issued by the association. The case was dismissed.¹⁴

1916 December 6: Canadian soldier from **Witley** camp charged with **murder**

1917 March 11: The Times: Superintendent Arthur Simmonds Surrey Police awarded a **King's Police Medal**

Defaulters book Nov 1866-Jul 1911¹⁵ Arthur Simmonds No of appointment 951

1917 Awarded the King's Police Medal for services rendered during the war and for long and meritorious service

1918 The following letter was received from the Home Office on Feb 28 1918

I am directed by the Home Secretary to say that Col Kell CB MI5 War Office has expressed to him his appreciation of the good work done by the members of your police force in connection with the numerous inquiries & reports as to aliens and suspected persons [?] persons which have been of the greatest assistance to him in carrying out the duties of his department, & in particular has brought to his notice the names of the following officers as having rendered very useful service

Supt Arthur Simmonds

I am to request that you will convey to your officers the Home Secretary's satisfaction in receiving this account of their work & that you will cause a note to be made in the records of the officers who are named by Col Kell as deserving of special commendation

(Note from author: Colonel Kell was the head of MI5. The police during both world wars had considerable contact with the Security Service and established departments to undertake security duties.)

¹⁴ The Times Friday, Sep 01, 1916

¹⁵ Ref 9152/1/2/1/3



Superintendent Simmonds KPM

1917 March 26: At Lincoln Police court Irene Clarke was charged with **stealing by means of a worthless cheque** and handed over to Godalming police. It was alleged that she had stolen the cheque from an army officer at Guildford.¹⁶

1917 September 10: Four drowned -Schoolboy's body recovered: The Chertsey police on Saturday recovered the body of Arthur Mean aged 8 which was floating among the weeds a quarter of a mile from Chertsey Bridge. The boy was drowned on Monday evening in a punt

¹⁶ The Times (London, England), Monday, Mar 26, 1917

accident at Chertsey Weir. Inquests have been held on the bodies of three other victims of the accident. When a verdict of death by misadventure was returned.¹⁷

1917 September 25: Oxted. A twelve-year-old boy from Limpsfield dropped a **stone over a railway bridge** onto the Brighton to London train. The stone hit the engine boiler and rebounded through the looking glass, which was smashed, the driver narrowly avoiding injury. The engine driver stated boys often dropped stones over bridges to see if they could get them in the engine chimney. The lad was fined £2 and four shillings costs for the glass.¹⁸

1917 October 10: German prisoners recaptured: While proceeding to business yesterday Mr Marsh Clerk to the local district council met three men, two were wearing German naval uniforms and the third a German military uniform. He called a party of cadets to take the men to Camberley police station where they were found to be prisoners of war who had escaped from an internment camp in Hampshire the previous night. One of the men was member of a German submarine crew. The prisoners, who said they wanted a holiday, were sent back to the camp under armed escort.¹⁹

1917 December 1: Food Hoarding: The Camberley police on visiting the house of a local resident Mrs Ivy Chambers found 56lb of butter, 20lb of sugar, 20lb of tea and half a sack of flour. She was fined £5 and her father from Sunningdale fined £20 for aiding and abetting.²⁰

1917 December 17: Missing bank messenger arrested: Recovery of bank notes: At a late hour on Saturday evening the Leatherhead police arrested George Elliott a bank messenger on a charge of absconding with funds belonging to the London and South-Western Bank in Fenchurch Street. He appears to have been staying at The Swan Hotel, Leatherhead since Wednesday, the day on which he was last seen in London and was identified by a police inspector through a photograph. At the time of his disappearance he carried a leathern wallet bearing the name of the bank and containing banker's credit slips for £8,000. There were also two Bank of England £100 notes and six Bank of England £50 notes. The wallet also contained £5 in Treasury notes. Elliott will be charged this morning at the Mansion House.²¹

During 1918 the Force employed its **first policewoman**, a sergeant who was posted to Farncombe to deal with prostitutes who had moved into the area close to the army camp at Witley. After the war she left the Force. On 11 November 1918, the final armistice was signed and the guns were at last silenced. Eighteen Surrey Police Officers (including Boroughs) paid for peace with their lives. The chief constable prepared a full report recording the Force's experiences during the war years with a view to helping plan a coordinated police response in the event of any "...future war..." - prophetic words indeed.

1918 When the local bobby, PC Hancock, reported that William Grover of Watson Road, Westcott had been seen **riding his bicycle at night with no light** he was fined half a crown.²²

¹⁷ The Times (London, England), Monday, Sep 10, 1917

¹⁸ 1917 September 25: The Times

¹⁹ The Times (London, England), Wednesday, Oct 10, 1917

²⁰ The Times (London, England), Saturday, Dec 01, 1917

²¹ The Times (London, England), Monday, Dec 17, 1917

²² Terry Wooden Westcott Local History Society January 2012

1918 PC Hancock retrieved the **fully clothed body of Mrs Elizabeth May Newnham** from under an inch or so of ice in the Westcott Millpond. When the inquest was held in the Reading Room Mrs Louisa Harris of Westcott Common gave evidence that Elizabeth lived at The Barracks in Westcott Street, where she and her mother provided a laundry service. It was reported that Elizabeth had been much depressed of late owing to the prospect of she and her mother having to leave their home in consequence of a change of ownership. Dr McComas advised that the deceased had previously suffered from mental illness and had spent 7 years in an asylum. The jurors recorded a verdict of suicide while in an unsound mind²³

1918 Early: In early 1918 there was a mass walkout by Guards Machine Gunners stationed at Pirbright, Woking. The origins of this mutiny are obscure, yet for three days every private soldier refused duty. Instead they organised voluntary route marches along the lanes near the camp, in defiance of their officers, returning only for meals. The strike was eventually called off when a colonel of the Welsh Guards arrived and, giving an assurance that there would be no victimisation, asked for a spokesman from each of the five regiments involved. According to an eye-witness:

“Five old soldiers agreed to come to the front, though to my knowledge they were by no means ringleaders. They were taken off to London under close arrest, court-martialled and sentenced to two years each in a military prison. The breach of faith may have come about because the GOC London District overruled the colonel. But I think we were naive to expect the public school code of honour to be extended to mere rankers. The rest of the rebels - they must have numbered a couple of hundred or so - were split up into their original regiments, and a detachment sent to its reserve battalion for a short time before being put on a draft for France again . . . Many of those men were killed in action during the Great German Breakthrough of March 1918, and in subsequent fighting”.²⁴

1918 February 28: At the Egham Police Court on Friday, before Mr Weller and other Magistrates, David James Andrews of the **Canadian Army Medical Corps** was charged with being in **possession of a loaded firearm** at Englefield Green. PC Butterfill said that at 9.30pm, he saw the defendant proceeding towards Priest Hill. PC Butterfill asked him where he was going. The defendant, under the influence of drink, became very abusive and told him to mind his own business. After taking his name and number, the Officer told him to go away. At 9.45pm, the defendant returned to the police station and called for “the civil policeman to come out”. PC Butterfill went up to the defendant who said;” What business had you to stop me?” He also raised an objection to the officer for having done so, because he was not a military policeman. By the aid of the moonlight, the officer saw that the defendant had something in his hands and asked him to show him. The defendant in doing so dropped a revolver and then got down on his hands and knees to search for it. PC Butterfill managed to pick it up first and found that it was cocked. He placed it in the safety position and arrested the defendant. Fined forty shillings”²⁵

1918 July 22: Wyke and Normandy Boys' theft of a bicycle. At the Farnham Bench on Thursday, George Alfred Frank Kinge was charged with stealing a bicycle value 30/-, the property of Ernest Goodchild of Normandy. Prosecutor said he placed the bicycle against the back door of a house where he went to do some work. Defendant who was working with him

²³ Terry Wooden Westcott Local History Society January 2012

²⁴ <http://www.af-north.org/solidarity/mutinies.html>

²⁵ 1918 February 28: From Edward Priestly: The Staines and Egham News.

in the morning in the garden, shortly afterwards left, and did not return, and he (witness) afterwards missed his bicycle. From a statement made by defendant to the police, it appeared that he smashed the back wheel when riding at Horndean, and sold the bicycle for 6/-. A letter was read from the Gordan Boys' Home stating that the lad had been discharged because he was continually absconding. Defendant stated that he would like to go to sea, and he was remanded for a fortnight to allow inquiries to be made.²⁶

1918: Although crime was falling in 1918 the **National Union of Women Workers** urged the Guildford Watch Committee to employ women police “in view of the grave dangers to women and girls and particularly on account of the conduct of members of the public in the vicinity of the river.” As most of the river problems were outside the Borough no action was taken and women officers were not appointed.²⁷

1918 PC James Gascoyne Guildford Borough commended for bravery in stopping two brewery horses in North Street²⁸

1918: Guildford Borough: By 1918 ex-sergeant C. A. Emery had been promoted to the rank of major and awarded the MC for bravery. Ex PC Punter had been promoted to Squadron Sergeant Major and mentioned in despatches. Ex Detective Constable Mansfield had been promoted sergeant in the Royal Garrison Artillery and mentioned in despatches for courage and devotion to duty in rescuing wounded and saving ammunition under shell fire.²⁹

1918 November 11: First World War Riot on **Witley Common** – Canadian Army Camp

Canadian Army in Surrey

Before France – a memoir: After a run of some twelve hours from Glasgow, and long before daylight on the first day of the new 1918, several hundred very sleepy soldiers were routed out of the train at Milford, Surrey. We detrained in a cold drizzling rain onto cobblestones slippery with mud. The outlook was none too pleasant—just mud, and bushes, and trees dripping water. The up-look was no better. It had been raining for hours – maybe for days – and the earth had become a quagmire. After batteries were formed we "fell in," "right dressed," "counted off," "formed fours," and "by the right," moved away by sections. We marched several miles through mud to a city of wooden huts set in, and surrounded by, more mud. As we sloshed along, the watery surfaces of shrubbery and buildings, walls and lamp poles, metal equipment, brass buttons and faces, reflected flashes of light from occasional road-lamps. Here and there a comforting contrast appeared taking the form of slightly more cheery glimpses of the bright green leaves and red berries of holly – the one midwinter bit of colour. Our destination (always "just around the next corner") was a quarantine section of the artillery area at Witley Camp. The distance marched was probably less than three miles, but seemed more like nine. Witley Camp! With clothing and equipment heavy with moisture and our feet slipping in our shoes, we entered a barbed-wire enclosure to be assigned to wooden huts. We were issued three boards and two end-sections apiece, which, when properly assembled, were to keep us several inches off the floor when and if we slept. We brought so much mud and water into the huts that the floors became shallow lakes.

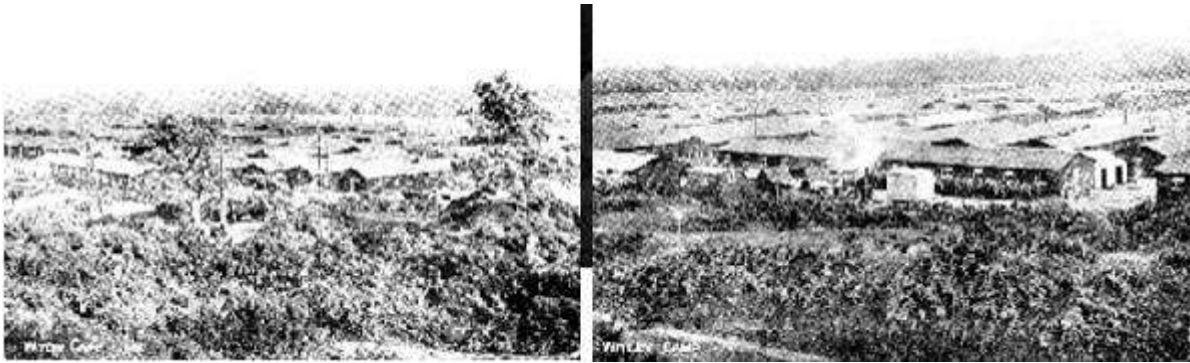
²⁶ 1918 July 22nd Surrey Advertiser

²⁷ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

²⁸ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

²⁹ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

The air, if there was any (and there must have been some for most of us continued to breathe) was so full of moisture that the walls and ceilings absorbed to the point of saturation. Later this became most annoying in the form of steady dripping on us (or on the floor, that splashed back up into our faces). Those who knew how, or were ingenious enough to guess, put the "Five piece bunks" together and rolled into their blankets. Those who could not make the tricky little bunks work just rolled into their blankets on the floor and slept where they lay. Although tired and cold and, I repeat, wet, and a bit "touchy" as we rolled into soggy blankets, most of us were also "healthy"³⁰



1918 December 20: Witley Common petition received by Captain Sant from shop keepers on the camp complaining they were repeatedly **threatened by soldiers**. The matter was passed to the military authorities.

9 February: Witley Camp: Some soldiers had been arrested by military police. There had been **rioting on Armistice Day** and a good many other incidents, which as a rule were not very serious. Those arrested were rescued who then wrecked the officer's quarters; the canteen was looted and all the drink stolen; then an attack was made on a number of shops known as "Tin Town". The police were mostly kept off the site by the military but this did not stop successful claims under the Riot Damages Act, much to the chagrin of the chief constable.³¹

1919 February 9/10: Troops awaiting demobilisation **rioted on Witley Common** after military police made an arrest. The officer's quarters were wrecked, the canteen looted and all the drink stolen. Shops in Tin Town were attacked and looted. The traders sued the police under Riot Damages Act, which was awarded against the police.

1919 March 11: Before the coming of the **Federation** there was a recognition post war that there needed to be some form of safety valve for the men who were more reluctant to accept the style of police management before the war. Surrey had changed and officers did not take part in strike action but these were potentially dangerous times. The chief constable in **GO 630 established a Board**. One officer and one constable were to be elected annually by ballot of the officers and men, respectively, in each division. There would be opportunities for discussion of matters concerned with the conditions of service will be given on each pay day. Should any subject be brought forward or a vote in favour of it be arrived at in any division, such subject shall be put before all other divisions for their discussion and a vote taken on it. Should a majority of the whole force be in favour of it, it will then be brought before the chief constable at the ensuing conferences, and other matters which have been brought up by

³⁰ From: Chapter IV: The Canadian Army—in British Isles,

³¹ Durrant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 48

divisions and agreed to by a majority of the members of the force will be dealt with at the conference.

1919 April: The naked and **decomposing body** of a newly born girl was discovered on a dust heap in **Haslemere**. The mother was Harriett Roe; a single domestic servant who was traced and charged with concealment of birth. She had given birth in the lavatory of the house where she worked and hid the baby that was probably dead, in a bucket until she could dispose of it. The court was unable to be convinced that the child had a separate existence and the mother was bound over “to give her an opportunity of redeeming her past.”³²

1919 May 20: The Surrey Police on bicycles and in motor cars are scouring the wild and unfrequented common around Woking in search of an alleged burglar who was captured on the premises of Woking Cooperative Society. **Twice he escaped** when hotly pursued by the police by plunging fully clothed into the Basingstoke canal and swimming across and twice he was recaptured. A third attempt at escape was successful and he got away. He was described as big and powerful and was initially discovered on the premises by the manager but escaped into the street where he stole a bicycle and knocked down one of his pursuers. He was caught, taken back to the shop by a number of men and as the police were being telephoned he wrenched free from the two men holding him and escaped leaping on another bicycle **hotly pursued by police**.³³

1919 May: YMCA Hut 4, Witley Camp: Dear Sir – It has been my great pleasure and privilege to have been associated with the Canadian YMCA in their work in this hut among the Canadian troops. Lately there has been a certain amount of rioting and disorder in some camps, but this has been greatly exaggerated, and though the men were not wise in doing what they did, they certainly had much provocation. What generally happened was that a very few men started in the riot and then many joined in just for amusement. Now I know that owing to the exaggerated reports which appeared in the newspapers a great many people both in England and in Canada have very mistaken ideas as to the discipline of the Canadian soldiers in camps. For three years I have lived in this hut, right in the midst of the men, and I can testify to the excellent order and discipline of the Canadian troops. In this country we have all greatly admired the magnificent bravery of the Canadian soldiers at the front, and it is greatly to be deplored that an utterly wrong impression as to their discipline and good behaviour in camps should have become prevalent. Maurice Acheson³⁴

1919 22 May The Clandon Park Robbery: At the Surrey Quarter Sessions at Kingston, George Telling Trewen, aged 39, hospital orderly, Williamina Ross, aged 36, housekeeper and Christina Ross aged 48 were each sentenced to nine months imprisonment for stealing and receiving a quantity of goods valued at over £100 from Clandon Park the residence of Lord Onslow. Mr Cecil Whitely prosecuting said that Clandon Park was used as a military hospital during the war. When it was closed Williamina Ross remained on the premises as housekeeper and had access to all the rooms where the hospital furniture and that belonging to Lord and Lady Onslow were stored. She then proceeded to systematic robbery, the stolen articles being packed in boxes and stored in various places. Some of the property was found in Trewin’s house in a trunk belonging to Christine Ross, who was a cousin of Williamina Ross. Counsel said that Williamina Ross and Trewin were engaged to be married, and suggested that they had taken the furniture with the object of setting up house. The stolen

³² “Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Guildford” Caroline Maxton Wharnccliffe Books 2005 page 123

³³ 1919 May 20: The Times

³⁴ 1919 May: YMCA Hut 4, Witley Camp: Letter to: The Times

property included a number of family heirlooms. Mr Whitely said that Lord and Lady Onslow had expressed the hope that the Court would deal leniently with the prisoners.³⁵

1919 Baby farms: Mrs Flitter aged sixty and Mrs Bell aged forty-one appeared at Surrey Assizes charged with the deaths of two babies and with the wilful neglect of seven others. The first baby to die was Allen MacDougal at just fifty-five days old. The doctor who examined the child described him as pinched and emaciated with the face of an old man. The child was skin and bone with no trace of any fat. The defendants were looking after babies mostly of unmarried mothers for a fee. They were sentenced to eighteen months in prison without hard labour.³⁶

1919 June 16 Witley Camp, near Godalming, was the scene on Saturday night of a serious outbreak of violence among Canadian troops stationed there. Between thirty thousand and sixty thousand Canadian soldiers lived on Witley Common during the First World War with local police strength of a sergeant and three constables. Policing of the camp was by the military but on two hundred and thirty nine occasions in three years, prisoners were handed to the Surrey Constabulary. During the riot eighteen shops were looted and £9000 worth of property stolen.

1919 June 17: The greater part of “Tintown” as it is called locally was burned to the ground, and a part of “Little Tintown” about half a mile away was also destroyed by fire. Nearly twenty thousand Canadian soldiers occupy the camp. The trouble is believed to have arisen from irritation at delay in demobilising the men and shipping them home. The disturbance started when a large body of men assembled on one of the parade grounds to hold a demonstration against the delay. Whether the fire in Tintown was an accident is not yet determined. There seems no doubt however that the smaller fire was the result of a deliberate act of incendiarism. Many men strongly disapproved of the rioting and helped to extinguish the fires.³⁷

1919 18 June: Riot at Epsom Metropolitan Police District: The brother of Station Sergeant Thomas Green killed by Canadian soldiers when they attacked Epsom station, was Edgar Green who at that time was a member of the Surrey Constabulary stationed at Egham. There is nothing that indicates that Surrey assisted during the riot but of course they may have been concerned over the camp at Witley where Canadians had previously rioted.³⁸

1919 26 June Thursday: The body of a Canadian soldier was found in a chalk pit on Headley Road, Epsom (in the Surrey force area) close to Woodcote Camp. Cause of death was a fractured skull. Saturday 28th the inquest was held in Leatherhead and an open verdict was returned. The death of Private Frederick Bruns aged about 25 was found at the bottom of the 60-70 foot chalk pit. The doctors differed about the wound found on the deceased’s nose. Superintendent Coleman Surrey County Constabulary gave neither evidence there were no instruments found nor any blood at the top of the pit. It was heard from a Canadian soldier that he heard shouts whilst on guard and soon after a soldier from the camp (a hospital) said “My friend has jumped the fence and I think he has fallen into the quarry. I think he may have been killed.” The guard was called out and the body found.³⁹ (There are authors who try

³⁵ The Times (London, England), Thursday, May 22, 1919

³⁶ “Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Guildford” Caroline Maxton Wharncliffe Books 2005 page 124

³⁷ Calgary Daily Herald published Tuesday, June 17, 1919

³⁸ “We are not manslaughters” Martin Knight Tonto Books 2010

³⁹ Epsom Advertiser 4 July 1919

to make the link between the death of this soldier and Sergeant Green – some form of revenge attack that the authorities covered up as they did not want to cause problems with Canada, the soldiers and local people. It is not easy to believe this was the case.)

1919 22 July: Guildford Assizes: Canadian soldiers Connors, McAllan, MacMaster, Masse, Wilkie, Yerex and Todd stood trial for the manslaughter of Metropolitan Police sergeant Thomas Green at Epsom during the June riot.⁴⁰ Two found guilty of riot and the others discharged.

1919 – The Police Federation is born: Following a police strike in London in 1918, and subsequent trouble between an unofficial body called the National Union of Police and Prison Officers and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, the Government appointed Lord Desborough to head a Committee of Inquiry into the Police Service. The Committee reported in June, and recommended standard conditions of service for all police forces in Great Britain. The Home Secretary was to become directly responsible for the service, and an advisory Police Council was to be appointed. Desborough also recommended that there should be a Police Federation to represent the interests of constables, sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors on matters affecting their welfare and efficiency. The Government quickly accepted the Desborough Report and the pay scales he recommended. This meant a substantial improvement in police pay for most forces. It was also announced that, following the passages of the Police Act and the setting up of the Police Federation, members of the police forces would no longer be allowed to belong to a trade union, meaning the end of the Police Union. A second strike, called in defiance of the Police Act, was a failure: only on Merseyside was there a large response from the police, and rioting had to be put down by military intervention. All 2,000 strikers were dismissed. In November 1919, the first Annual Conference of the Police Federation took place.⁴¹

1919 August: Murder Middleton Road Guildford: Mrs Caroline Martin was at home with her husband Frederick and their twelve year old son Freddy. After lunch on a Sunday Caroline heard a strange noise upstairs and ran there to find her husband standing in the bedroom and Freddy with difficulty trying to get off the bed. There was blood everywhere; young Freddy's throat had been slit. Caroline screamed and a neighbour came to find the boy was dead. Detective Constable Manfield was called to the scene where at the back of the house in the scullery he found a great deal of blood with a carving knife lying in it. The police opened the lavatory door and found Mr Martin alive but unconscious, bleeding profusely from a cutthroat. He was taken to hospital. It became clear that Mr Martin had syphilis although he had received treatment for some ten years. He was soon to have a minor operation and he was worried that his earlier disease would be revealed. Martin had taken Freddy to the doctor earlier that year to see if there was any trace of the disease in his son but there was none. Doctors thought that Mr Martin had syphilis on the brain, was unfit to plead and was detained at His Majesty's pleasure.⁴²

1919 about – report from Chief Constable on learning points from policing the First World War: The major points are: Surrey was an unrestricted area and being close to the Metropolis received an influx of refugees at times of anticipated air raids. These refugees were for the most part from the east of London and mainly consisted of aliens many of whom were undesirable characters. They arrived in trainloads and got off where they liked causing

⁴⁰ "We are not manslughters" Martin Knight Tonto Books 2010

⁴¹ <http://www.polfed.org/aboutus/69DD9AB47F534348AD5D1415843163AA.asp> Internet 19 Jan 2010

⁴² "Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Guildford" Caroline Maxton Wharncliffe Books 2005 page128

considerable difficulties and annoyance in the districts where “they dumped themselves”. Housing had to be found for them without warning “but the feeding capacities in view of rationing and the scarcity of food were much taxed and special arrangements had to be made with the rationing authorities.” Occasionally all the schools and like buildings had to be used to house undesirable refugees and in any future war preparations should be made beforehand to deal with it. One suggestion was that railway companies should be prohibited from bringing refugees down without consultation with authorities of the districts to which they bring them. Locations outside London suitable for receiving refugees should be agreed beforehand and they should not be taken to any other place. It was accepted that this would not deal with those that arrived by motorcar of which there were many.

Surrey was in the danger zone and on any invasion route and arrangements had to be made to deal with the receipt and passing on of inhabitants, cattle, implements etc. from Sussex but also to arrange for the evacuation of the county itself. In order to carry out these duties a force of four thousand Special Constables was raised in addition to those on ordinary duty. These Special Constables were earmarked for defence of the realm duties only and did no other work of a police nature. ----- The main requisite was to collect all persons, cattle, material etc., and move them by routes other than the main roads so as to leave the latter free for military use. ----- In villages Special Constables were detailed for the various duties, some in connection with the removal of inhabitants, others for cattle, etc., everything required to be moved being dealt with by the requisite numbers of Special Constables. Others were detailed to keep order along the various routes selected and some were in place at every junction of the main roads to hold up refugees if necessary to keep the roads clear for the military. The rendezvous for all cattle, etc., was Richmond Park.

There was much guarding of key and vulnerable points, which seem to have not been considered by the authorities in the move to war. Much of this was done by the Special Constabulary or unarmed policemen

The providing of billets for military authorities was another great tax upon the police, fifteen thousand found in the first winter of the war. The troops arrived ignorant of everything and had to be “spoon fed”. The spy and signalling mania with which the public became infected proved a source of continual trouble and the public was a perfect nuisance. Every Defence of the Realm Regulation added to already onerous duties of the police and the influx of aliens from restricted areas and their supervision also caused a great deal of work. The correspondence became colossal.

I was very hard pressed all over the county to allow notice to be given of air raids. This I refused to do with the result that instead of sitting up all night in fear the inhabitants slept comfortably in their beds and only learnt of the raids by reading the papers next morning. The police and special constables were given full instructions as to their duties should bombs be dropped in their vicinity and that I held was sufficient.

Being an unrestricted area Surrey experienced an influx of Belgian refugees who came in large numbers without warning and were distributed across the county. The time of the police was much occupied in finding and registering them.

At the busiest time in the War a census of all agricultural implements was urgently called for. It can be imagined what the distribution and collection of two thousand two hundred and fifty forms meant in the way of work for the police. Then there was the requisitioning of horses of

which many thousands were obtained in this county. Countless returns were called for from time to time and when considering the preparations to be made in the event of another war as many of these matters as possible should be foreseen and dealt with beforehand.⁴³

1919 3 November: First meeting of the **Police Federation** in Surrey



1919 men returned from the war serving in Woking. Note wound bars and overseas chevrons

Overseas service chevrons were introduced in early 1918 and were small and inverted and worn on the right cuff. King's Regulations "no longer fit for military service"; blue stripe indicates one year's overseas service. This was worn on the right lower sleeve. The wound stripe was worn on the left lower sleeve

⁴³ SCC Archives CC98/72 undated



Helmet plate of PC267 one of the veterans rear right⁴⁴



First World War medals awarded to Superintendent White Surrey Constabulary

⁴⁴ From Tony Collman December 2014

Joined up at 12 and later joined Surrey Constabulary

Among those who went to war was Private Sidney Lewis, now known to have been the youngest soldier to fight in the war.

A cutting from the Daily Mirror in September 1916 recalled how Lewis joined the East Surreys at Kingston in August 1915 aged just 12 and fought at the Somme for six weeks.

He was awarded the Victoria medal and the British war medal for his efforts. It is said his unusually lofty stature was enough to sway the recruitment officers.

He went on to join Surrey Police and later ran a pub in Kent.

Mirrorpix



Sidney Lewis joined up in Kingston aged just 12

1919 PC Arthur George Gunner awarded King's Police Medal for Gallantry when in the darkness on the bank of the River Wey at Godalming tackled and arrested a drunken soldier who immediately before had threatened to shoot a military policeman and who was believed to be armed with a revolver. In 1971 at a Reunion at Camberley PC Gunner was guest of honour when aged 85