

On Her Majesty's Service

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WASC 1827

The Librarian,
Mr. McLaren,
R.A.R.D.E.,
Powdermill Lane,
WALTHAM ABBEY,
Essex.

METROPOLITAN POLICE
WALTHAM ABBEY POLICE STATION
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WALTHAM ABBEY, ESSEX, EN9 1EL
Telephone Lea Valley 716222 Ext.

Your ref. :

Our ref. :

Undated
Received Dec 1987

Dear Mr. McLaren,

Re: The circa 1914 R.G.P.F. group photograph of police.

In spite of a few months research on the photograph, I have been unable to get very far with identification of the individuals - yet.

This lack of success is mainly due to the poor returns on numeral identification. As you know most are totally unreadable, and many leave a number of possible combinations. All we can say with a fair amount of confidence is that the group IS 'N' division, it IS Enfield Highway sub- Division, and that it IS either the R.S.A.F. or R.G.P.F., prior to 1917. This final date is based upon the retirement of the senior officer in the group. The earliest date, 1913, is based upon the arrival date of Sergeant Hiscocks, the only other "cert" in the group. There are clear signs of collar crowns which make it a Government establishment group.

To take the group line by line, starting from the rear left:- 1 & 2 no trace, 3 is 957 no name, 4 is ?32 no name, 5 to 9 no trace. Next line from the left:- 10 is 241 no name, 11 is either 187 or 197. 187 was P.C. Cornwell in 1909, 12 is either 1120 or 1130, both with no name, 13 no trace, 14 has three possibles, 131 was Rowe at R.S.A.F. in 1910, 134 Fielder and 136 Hall from 1909. The other possible being an untraced 139. 15 to 21, the rest of that row are "no trace".

The next man, the first on the next row, 22, is ?41, a number which provides a number of locals, 341 Phillips, 641 Phelan and 841 Singer, none of whom came up from those R.G.P.F. files. There was a Phillips at the RGPF but he would have gone by the time we are considering. 23 & 24 no trace, 25 1138 no name, 26 P.S. 128 or 129 no name, 27 is Inspector Simmons or Simmonds who was on Enfield Highway until 1917, and appears in a town station photograph of 1916, 28 is P.S. 128 (again) or 28 for which we have no name. 29 is P.S. 48N/88876 Albert Hiscocks of the town station. (1913- 30 & 31 are no trace, 32 is 1142N again no name, and 33 is 333N which comes up to P.C. Cook who lived in Honey Lane circa 1914. The extreme front row, those sitting, 34 is no trace, 35 is 724 with no name, 36 is either 1132 or 1137,

there being a visual disagreement between the helmet plate (1137) and the collar. Which makes little difference, as I have no names for either ! The next, 37, is either 212 or 818, or a combination, which doesn't help a lot. Last but not least is 1120N, who until the 5.10.14 was P.C. Harry Manning with a warrant number of 74599. He was at Waltham as 415N in 1893 to 7 as P.C.415N but retired from the force on that date as 1120N. The only thing is that he had medals (a friend of mine has them) which are not evident. He was 45 years old upon retirement, and I leave it to you to decide whether he looks 45 in the photo. The medals (or ribbons) are not important leads in themselves, the Inspector is not wearing his either - he had three in 1916. So if "Manning" can pass for 45, we can date the photograph in the 1913-1914 bracket, if he is younger, a new 1120N, the bracket is 1914 to 1917.

Well if you followed me through all that, all well and good. I suggest you keep the letter with the photograph, and if I come up with any severe improvements later I will let you have them.

The problem is that the numeral issue register is at Brixton, and with so many numbers astray it is unfair to ask for someone else to look through them on my behalf, especially as it would require date spans to provide a choice. Some of the numbers have three names attached for just one year, others stay with one man for 25 years. As you can see from Manning, although he appeared to spend all his service on 'N' he still had two different numbers during the period. It may very well be that he actually changed his number to transfer into the R.G.P.F., as many of them have 1100 series numbers. It may be that the photograph is a combination of town and factory men. P.C. 333N Cook was probably town, and P.S. Hiscocks most certainly was. Thirty eight men appears just too high a number for the known strengths of either, especially with some of the known missing faces.

I hope that your exhibition goes well in the E.F.D.M., it presented a good show on the opening evening.



Bryn Elliott.

P.C.536'J'