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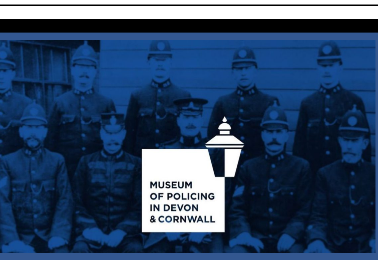

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Members' Newsletter June 2023

Hello...

Welcome to the May/June newsletter – this month we are pleased to be able to introduce our new Patron, John Casson MBE, who will be contributing to the Museum through friend-making and fundraising.
Another new face soon to join the team is an archivist, who we hope to announce in the next newsletter after interviews take place in the coming weeks.

Work on the Museum's long-term digitisation project is gathering pace as scores of artefacts have been lined up to be professionally photographed.

And as our premises in Tavistock starts to take shape, Curator Alison is hard at work, planning and preparing the displays, ready for the public to see.

Finally, we've received lots of helpful feedback in response to the recent fundraising survey – if you haven't done it already, there's still time to have your say before the end of May.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter.

Bye for now,
Team Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall.

CEO's monthly update

Work continues in the Court Gate building in Tavistock, to prepare the premises for opening and the first exhibitions there. The volunteer team have been performing wonders cleaning and decorating at the weekends, while being rewarded with pasties and ice creams from the van parked outside. If you are open to this type of bribery and would like to consider joining the team - who will also be supervising the premises part-time, once it is open - please call 07399 858692 or email ceo@dcpolicingmuseum.co.uk

Lookout on social media for some excellent images already emerging from the Museum's digitisation project, which is well underway in the objects collection in Okehampton, and shortly starting work with the archive in Exeter. With work progressing well over the summer, we'll soon be able to share our new digital resources as they come online from July onward.

I'd like to offer a warm welcome to the Museum's new volunteer Patron, John Casson MBE. Many readers will know John as a staunch supporter of the Museum and a past Chair of the Board. Trustees and the team are delighted that John has agreed to accept a role of Museum Patron, which will have a focus on friend-making and fundraising to support our future sustainability. We all look forward to working with him.

Thanks to all of you who have completed the fundraising questionnaire which was sent out recently – the deadline is the end of May if you'd like to take part.

Another new joiner soon will be a dedicated Archivist supporting the team in Exeter. The team has felt the absence of archival support there for some time so it is really exciting that we will be working with South West Heritage Trust more closely and getting some new 'boots on the ground'. Interviews are being held this month. Look for our new colleague in future newsletter editions.

Lastly, the Museum is increasingly active on the national stage. Members of the team will be off to the police heritage network conference coming up in Birmingham soon, plus exchanging good practice with colleagues through ongoing work at NPCC level.

Until next time…

Greg White, MOPIDAC CEO.

A Word from the Curator
I was recently asked how a Curator goes about starting a new museum or display – what is the starting point - so I thought I would give you an insight into how it works.

Initially, I start by thinking about the visitors, who will come to our Museum - who do we want to come through the door. These are not always the same thing and they vary over the course of the year.

For example, we will likely have lots of families and tourists in the summer months but perhaps more visitors with a subject interest or family history in policing may visit in September, waiting until the autumn school term begins, so avoiding the children. This informs everything else and allows me to tailor information and subjects to the right level.

With such a vast collection to choose objects from, I next think about the subject areas or theme we will want to make displays from. This needs to balance what MOPIDAC wants to say, what the visitors will expect to see, what they might be interested in, and what our supporters and investors will anticipate and enjoy.

For our displays, I have chosen subjects such as fingerprint technology, the challenges of policing in rural areas, communication (with the public and between officers), bikes on the beat, and protecting personnel - which will cover a host of on-the-beat equipment, including truncheons, tasers and protective gear.

Next comes the research phase, which includes picking out the images and objects from out collection that best illustrates each subject. I write copy ready to be turned in to interpretation boards on each area and ensure we have high quality digital images ready to add to these where necessary.

I'd love to hear about what you would like included in a Devon and Cornwall policing museum; what objects would you choose and why?

In addition to planning our Museum, I've been involved with national projects - and on this subject I'd like to ask for your help.

Cornwall Museums Partnership is running activities with museums and galleries on #InternationalPortraitDay which is Friday, June 23, 2023 - asking for Cornish heroes to be showcased on social media on that day.

We have discovered an image in our archive of our own Cornish heroes – four Cornwall police officers photographed in 1939 when they went to Buckingham Palace to receive Gallantry Awards from Hungary.

If you see the photo on our social media platforms, I would be grateful if you could 'like' and share the post, with the hashtag **#InternationalPortraitDay**,so we can shine a spotlight on our Museum as widely as possible.

The photo I have chosen are officers who were decorated after they waded into the sea to rescue Hungarian sailors whose ship SS Elba ran aground off St Ives in terrible weather; they had been rescued by lifeboat but that was overturned by a wave near the shore which was when these brave men stepped in to help.

They are: Sergeant Horace OSBORNE. [OSBORN] - Gold Cross of Merit, P.C. 28 Leslie John Sidney JONES - Silver Cross of Merit, P.C.214 George Edward APPLETON (died in December the same year) - Silver Cross of Merit, and P.C. 40 Noel WILKINSON, also Silver Cross of Merit.

The project also celebrates the reopening of National Portrait Gallery through a UK and international-wide social media campaign, called *Portrait Mode*.

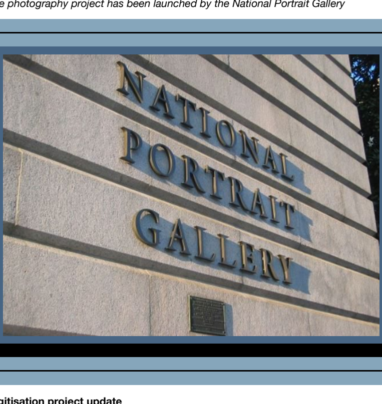
Museums and galleries across Cornwall have been invited to take part to "really shine a light on some of your incredible collections."

Bye for now

Alison Holmes, Curator

Pictured below is the Museum's ***#InternationalPortraitDay*** *photo, showing the officers who were decorated after they waded into the sea to rescue Hungarian sailors, onboard ship SS Elba when it ran aground off St Ives, Cornwall.*

The photography project has been launched by the National Portrait Gallery



Digitisation project update

The team is working through the Okehampton stores, starting from one corner, recording the objects and image numbers to ensure accurate cross-referencing for the future, online, search system.

Specific object collections, such as bicycles, communications equipment, and the Pescado boat model, have been prioritised for use; other themed collections identified will include forensic, photography and public order equipment, road traffic objects and weaponry items, plus amnesty weapons.

Since April 2023, Museum photographer Andrea Leggett, and her partner Keith Tester, a Museum Volunteer, have taken hundreds of images, capturing more than 100 objects – about 1.5 per cent of the collection so far.

However, some objects take much longer to prepare for digitisation than others. It is likely the uniform collection may be particularly resource intensive and will require additional volunteer help to see this over the line.

It is hoped that by July 2023, four of the priority collections will be ready to go live on the SDS microsite, plus video and 3D imaging of at least three items.

To help this project run smoothly, the team at Okehampton has been using specialist equipment, such as a motorised turntable and a professional software package, which has been donated free to the Museum to use for a year.

This will allow any photographed object to be viewed at any angle.

But this relies on each item being photographed more than 130 times, at numerous angles, to achieve the desired effect.

Museum Volunteers Sue and Derek Crowley, and Curator Alison Holmes, have been helping locate interesting objects for the photographers.

Andrea said: "The Museum is now eight weeks into the photography process of our digitisation project.

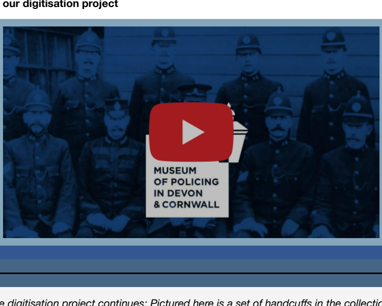
"To give you some idea of the task, we have only reached the second shelf of bay seven in storeroom one at Okehampton Police Station.

"Thankfully, along with Curator Ali, Volunteers Del and Sue are at Okehampton on Mondays.

"Del and Sue are pulling interesting objects together for themed photography and getting on with cataloguing the photos ready for the new MODES system which is due soon."

Andrea added: "Mondays in Okehampton are busy and enjoyable days despite being surrounded by handcuffs, truncheons and oh so many buttons!"

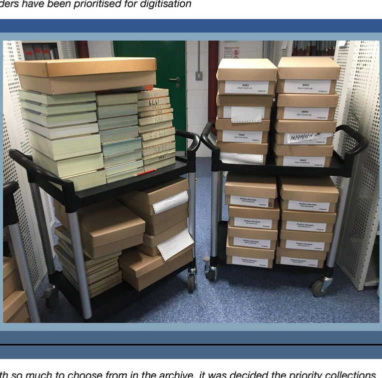
Have you visited our YouTube channel yet? Click the link below to see an update on our digitisation project



The digitisation project continues: Pictured here is a set of handcuffs in the collection at Okehampton (below).

Below: At the archive, Museum Volunteers, left, Sandie Bunyan, Pam Giles and Peter Hinchliffe have been gathering priority collections for digitisation

Collections such as WWII, Police houses, animals, helicopters, maps, and General Orders have been prioritised for digitisation



With so much to choose from in the archive, it was decided the priority collections should begin with digitising material from the Devon area. Below is the finished selection ready for copying

Media news

The Museum is one step closer to the team's goal of a new website after the Digital Sub committee of trustees decided at the end of May to take a proposal forward to be costed for value-for-money and user-friendliness.

With so much happening at the Museum - the digitisation project and the opening of Tavistock in particular - a new website would help showcase our collection and archive of policing heritage in fresh and imaginative ways.

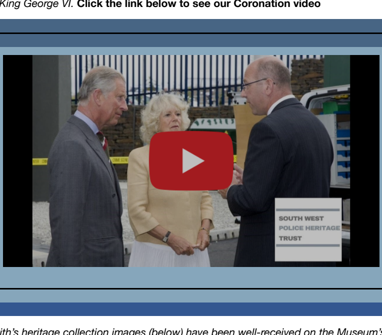
Away from the website, our short video clips of glimpses into the collection and archive are continuing to be a hit. Our Coronation video, made up of archive documents and information, proved popular viewing as a Facebook reel, and also when posted on Instagram and our new YouTube channel.

Museum Volunteer Keith Tester has produced some brilliant social media posts, photographing objects from the collection and challenging people to guess what they are. His idea is a great conversation-starter and a way to showcase parts of our unique heritage. We will be sharing his posts on the Museum's platforms.

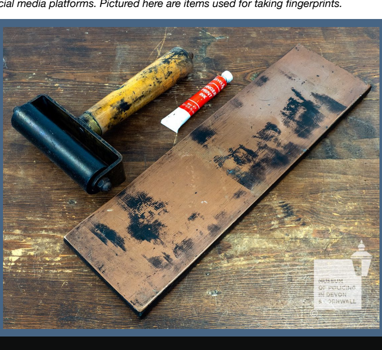
You can help spread the work of the Museum by sharing Keith's posts and inviting your social media friends and followers to like or follow our platforms.

Becca Gliddon, Communications and Marketing Officer

The Museum's volunteers uncovered from the archive how our region's police were selected for duty in London at the 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, royal visits to Cornwall, an Operation Order of the 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, and how our police officers had the 'honour' of taking part in the 1952 funeral procession of King George VI. **Click the link below to see our Coronation video**



Keith's heritage collection images (below) have been well-received on the Museum's social media platforms. Pictured here are items used for taking fingerprints.



Museum News
This month the team is pleased to introduce Museum Patron, John Casson MBE

John joined West Midlands Police aged 18, where he served as a Special Constable (police reservist) for four years.

He joined the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary as a police officer in 1979 and remained with the force until 1987.

During that time, John served at Torquay (1979-1981), Plymouth Charles Cross (1981-1983), Kingsbridge (1983-1985) and Dartmouth (1985 -1987).

He left in 1987 to set up his own security company, Securewest, which he sold in 2000.

Semi-retired from business since 2007, John set his sights on supporting a host of charities and good causes, individually and through the John Casson Foundation, founded in 2012.
It has donated around £600,000 through fundraising.

John is former Chairman of the Devon and Cornwall Police Heritage Foundation. A role he held until August 2021.

- You can read more about John's charitable achievements here.

John Casson (pictured here) has been announced as Museum Patron

Archive Find of the Month.

The volunteer team at the Museum archive have been continuing with their work, cataloguing personnel files, and came across an official programme from a motorcycle competition in April 1953. The programme from the Services Trial for solo motorcycles, held in Bagshot, Surrey, was tucked away inside the file of PC Ambrose Payne.

Described by Plymouth City Police as an 'enthusiastic private motorcyclist' he competed for the Graham Walker cup and souvenir award, in the Police Entrant category, riding a force-owned machine.

The annual event – which began in April 1929 – was held to give motorcyclists of the Navy, Air Force, Police, and Civil Service the chance to compete among themselves in a 'reliability trial of importance'.

The event gave any member of the four services the chance to compete without being a member of any club or holding a competition licence.

"Such concession was unique and removed two possible obstacles to entries," the official programme stated.

In 1948, and the following year, there was a fuel shortage and no petrol for private motoring.

The official programme reports: "Due to the continued fuel shortage the Services decided they would be unable to sanction the use of Service machines and petrol, but notwithstanding this an entry of 129 private owners faced the starter that year."

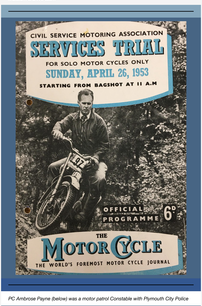
For the 1951 event the Army relaxed the ban on Service machines and gave official support to the trial. The organisers said: "This action was very welcome and naturally led to a larger entry, bringing the trial once more into line with the earlier days in this respect."

In 1953, when Ambrose Payne competed on a DOT motorcycle, manufactured in 1951, the event organisers announced it was 'pleasing to know' that permission had been given by the Home Office for police officers to enter on 'official machines'.

During his time as an officer, PC Payne was employed as wireless officer within the Divisional Unit Scheme at Crownhill, Plymouth. He served a total of 25 years with the force.

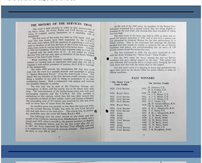
His Deputy Divisional Commander said his experience as a motor patrol Constable was 'of value' in his job.

The programme found tucked inside PC Payne's personnel file, spotted by the Museum archive team



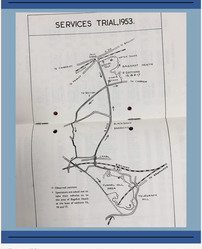
PC Ambrose Payne (below) was a motor patrol Constable with Plymouth City Police

The programme included the history of the event, the trial route, competitors' names, and details of cups and awards



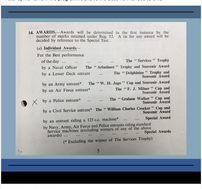
THE HISTORY OF THE SERVICES TRIAL

PAST WINNERS



The route PC Ambrose would have taken - and his name in the programme (below)

PC Ambrose competed for the Graham Walker Cup, an award for Police entrants. A star by his name in the programme shows the class he intended to enter



14. AWARDS.—Awards will be determined in the first instance by the number of marks retained under Reg. 11. A. in the are award will be decided by reference to the Special Test.

(a) Individual Awards.
For the Best performance

of the day ...	The "Services" Trophy
by a Naval Officer ... The "Admiralty" Trophy and Souvenir Award	
by a Lower Deck entrant ...	The "Dolphin Cup" Trophy and Souvenir Award
by an Army entrant* ... The "W. H. Jaques" Cup and Souvenir Award	
by an Air Force entrant* ...	The "F. J. Whittaker" Trophy and Souvenir Award
by a Police entrant* ...	The "Graham Walker" Cup and Souvenir Award
by a Civil Service entrant* ... The "William Charles Crocker" Cup and Souvenir Award	
by an entrant riding a 125 cc. machine*	Special Award

(b) Naval, Army, Air Force and Police entrants riding standard machines (excluding winners of any of the above awards) ... Special Awards

(* Excluding the winner of The Services Trophy)

Object of the Month

Museum Volunteers Sue and Derek Crawley were faced with a surprise when they opened a large box, unearthed from one of the bottom shelves in the store at Okehampton. When the couple, who have been Museum Volunteers since 2010, looked inside, they were stunned to find it contained a host of drugs.

It transpired that the box had been used as a training aid for student officers, giving them a comprehensive insight into (imitation) controlled drugs and psychoactive substances.

The secure training container has glass-fronted panels containing fake Class A, Class B, and Class C drugs for trainee officers to be able to identify them. Their training was likely to have included describing the different types of drugs, drugs paraphernalia and psychoactive substances that police officers encounter on a regular basis.

Demonstrating how to issue a Cannabis warning, and applying knowledge of legislation to a person committing a drug-related offence would also have been part of the training syllabus.

As well as focussing on legislation and powers relating to controlled substances, the training drug boxes and phoney illegal substances would have been instrumental in practical sessions for students.

Museum Volunteer Pam Glies said: "A drugs-trained officer would show new officers the different types of drugs, and how to test if a particular substance was a drug or not."

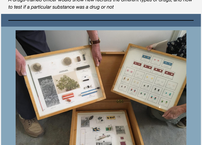
In the Museum archive there is a colour photograph of a Detective Constable giving a presentation on drugs in the early 1990s, as part of a CID course.

And a colour photo, from the archive, shows a group on a Drugs Enforcement Course, taken in June 1975 at the Police Training College, Middlemoor, Exeter.

Look out for these assets as part of the ongoing digitisation project.

Pictured here at the Okehampton stores are Volunteers Derek and Sue Crawley with the drug training boxes

A drugs-trained officer would show new recruits the different types of drugs, and how to test if a particular substance was a drug or not



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