



Richard Bowen

I Knew.....







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The original blog can be found at
<http://dickieboknew.wordpress.com/>



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Hank ROWLINGSON

Hank was Police Constable 101'F' Rowlingson, stationed at Hammersmith Police Station in West London. Hank was there when Dickiebo arrived in 1964, and was the more-or-less accepted 'leader' of the canteen cowboys. That means the bunch of junior cops who took their 'refreshments' in the police station canteen. Hank's main duty was driving the Area Car. (Fast response vehicle.) Any other duty was, in his book, a little demeaning for him. He was, por supuesto, an Advanced Police Driver – 'Hendon Trained.'

Hank was the arbiter in all arguments, and his say-so was always good enough. He was also the Constables' Representative on the Police Federation. This stood him in particularly good stead on days when he was on foot duty – a rarity, indeed. 'Cos then, instead of venturing onto the streets, he would go into the Comms Room – where he had a filing cabinet devoted to 'Federation corres'!!!!, and study 'urgent matters'! Just as well, really, 'cos he just somehow did not look right in a helmet. Which brings me onto the point I want to make! His bloody cap!





Hank was a cross between Randolph Scott and Gary Cooper! About 6 feet tall, slim build, angular face, quietly spoken; his uniform trousers were flared at the bottom – like bell-bottoms, covering his skinny legs; you couldn't see his shoes, as the trouser bottoms covered his feet; his jacket was.....kinda scruffy, I'd say; But.....his bloody cap! Legendary! I've never seen anything like it. If you could take out any stiffening in a pancake, and then scrumple it up for a year or two, then place it on your head, – that was it! Quite without any semblance of shape! It was dirty – though Hank denied that, said it was merely oil, which came from checking the car's oil daily – another onerous requirement for police drivers to have to do! [According to him!] Frankly, his cap was a disgrace. I have a sneaking feeling that the 'E11R' badge was, in fact, a 'GV1R' badge!





One quiet day in the canteen, Dickiebo dared to mention Hank's cap.

D. Hank. Don't you think you should get a new cap?

H. You joking?

D. Well. It's pretty rough, mate. Ain't it?

H. You bloody kids in the job. Don't you know anything?

D. [backing off, somewhat. Fearing what was about to come!] What?

H. This is a driver's cap!

D. [Hesitantly] Yea!

H. Obviously, you know nothing. In my day, when you returned from a driving course at Hendon, you were tested here. By the boys.

D. [Warming to the occasion] How?

H. Dear, oh dear! Well.....on the first duty after returning, everybody would go down into the yard. [Rear of station, where the vehicles were parked.] The station van would be parked in the centre of the yard, and the





new driver would sit in the driver's seat. He'd be blindfolded, of course. [Of course!!!] His brand new, sparkling cap would be placed on the ground, immediately in front, or behind, the rear wheel. He would then have to drive the van for one yard or so, either forwards, or backwards! His choice. As you can see. I made the wrong choice!

D. Well. Don't you think you can get a new cap now? [This about 15 years after!]

H. You don't understand. Do you? [walks away, in a very superior fashion.]

That's how it was with Hank. You could never win any argument. Regardless. He was always somehow bloody superior. I think he made an impression on Dickiebo though. I later became an Area Car driver and Constables' Divisional Representative. As such, it was my very sad duty to visit Hank when he was dying from cancer. Another chapter sadly closed. Good-bye to another person who enriched my quiet little life.

ROBERT JONES



Robert played rugby for Wales at scrum-half and won a total of 54 caps for his country, as well as being a British Lion. He was an outstanding player, even by international standards, and had possibly the best 'long' pass the game has ever seen. He is a quietly spoken, very likeable, intelligent man, and does a lot of appearances on TV as a rugby pundit.

In Robert's day, players were not as professional as today, and consequently, had to 'work' for a living. Most would take some sort of 'fronting' job





for firms if they were not able to get a more lucrative position, which were few and far between. I worked for a group called O. C. S. Ltd., and they had many subsidiary companies. One of these was Caxton Property Services and it's head was Clive Thomas – the football referee. Clive worked from the same building as I did – in Cardiff – and we got on well. I have mentioned before that B used to act as Clive's secretary during her periods of leave, etc.

Clive liked to take on well-known persons to work for him – clearly believing that fame was an important asset towards becoming a successful company! One such person was Robert. Two others that Clive employed at that time were also international rugby players – Adrian Hadley, and Malcolm Dacey. We all got on well together and would meet in our own canteen for lunch and put the world to rights. B similarly got on very well with the lads.

Anyway! Robert eventually left the company and moved on and I didn't see him again for several years. Well, one evening, I was in the White Rose pub in Mumbles and saw Robert, just as he was leaving. He had to walk right past me, so I said, "Hi, Rob", and went to shake hands. He looked a bit surprised, and hesitated to shake hands. Realising that he couldn't place me, I said, "Dickiebo"!!!

A blank look!

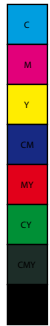
I said, "OCS – with Clive."

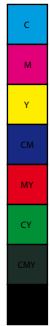
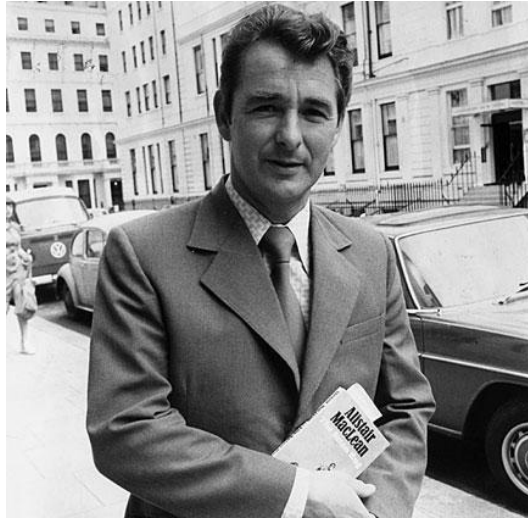
Back came his reply, "I'm sorry, but I know a lot of people and I don't remember you."

Oh! OK, what's your name, ta ta!

Thank goodness Dacey still knows me or I'd really be worried! What it is to be insignificant, eh?

Brian CLOUGH





Virgin Media have today printed the top ten quotes from Cloughie. Dickiebo is borrowing them, and they do remind me of the occasion when I had a drink with Cloughie. But first, some of his utterances. By the way, you either love him, or you hate him! There are no grey areas. For the uninitiated, Cloughie was a former English International footballer, but is more remembered for his magnificent football Managerial skills. If you are not aware of them, then I'll not bore you by listing them as you can't be much interested! Cloughie is admirably summed-up by his own words when he received the Order of the British Empire (O. B. E.); "Old Big 'Ead," he said!





The definitive Clough quote: ‘I wouldn’t say I was the best manager in the business. But I was in the top one.’

Clough’s problem resolving skills: ‘We talk about it for 20 minutes and then we decide I was right.’

Clough on football: (About keeping the ball on the ground!). ‘If God had wanted us to play football in the clouds, he’d have put grass up there.’

Clough on Nottingham: ‘The river Trent is lovely. I know because I have walked on it for 18 years.’

Clough on tactics: ‘Players lose you games, not tactics. There’s so much crap talked about tactics by people who barely know how to win at dominoes.’

Clough on football on television: ‘You don’t want roast beef and Yorkshire every night and twice on Sunday.’

Clough’s advice to John McGovern: (His Team Captain). ‘Stand up straight, get your shoulders back and get your hair cut.’

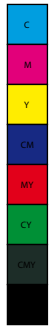
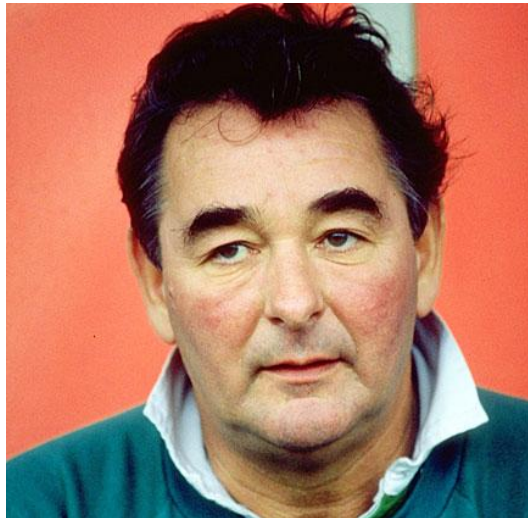


Clough on Martin O'Neill: (Top, young football Manager). 'If he'd been English or Swedish, he'd have walked the England job.'

Clough on David Seaman: (Brilliant England Goalkeeper). 'That Seaman is a handsome young man but he spends too much time looking in his mirror, rather than at the ball. You can't keep goal with hair like that.'

Clough on appreciation: 'Don't send me flowers when I'm dead. If you like me, send them while I'm alive.'

Well now, he was a real character, and I met him one day at Cardiff Arms Park – the famous rugby ground. I don't know whether you remember Clive Thomas? Clive was our one-time top referee and worked for the same firm as Dickiebo. 'B' stood-in as Clive's secretary during her leave, etc.



When Clive had to finish as a referee due to his age, he wrote his book – 'Why Me?' – and Cloughie came to Cardiff for the 'Launch' of the book. Well, that took all afternoon, and Clive and Cloughie were due to travel on to Barry – some half-hour's ride away, to attend a 'Boys Club' dinner with Clive's mate, Frankie Vaughan – the famous singer. Clive was trying to





hurry Cloughie, as they were gonna be late, but Cloughie refused absolutely to go, unless Clive would guarantee Dickiebo a place at their top-table!!!

In a nutshell; It was a top, fund-raising dinner, fully sold out, and Dickiebo was certainly never invited. And – that was stalemate! Clive pleading that nothing could be done; Cloughie, about to lose his mate, saying, “If Dick doesn’t come, then I’m not going!”

Clive frantically looking at his watch, begging. Cloughie not moving.

How was it settled? Well, I had to ‘walk out’ on them. A pity, ‘cos, as you’ve perhaps guessed, I liked Cloughie and really got on with him. The man died far too young, and an awful lot of us miss him.



Not many people do you meet just the once and have such good memories of, but Cloughie – for me – was one.

Shelagh MAGUIRE

I was just sweet 16, and a truly innocent boy, ‘up from the sticks’! Dickiebo readers will know that, at that age, I went to the great city, and joined the Metropolitan Police Cadets. Well, I was stationed at the police garage at





Lambeth – 109 Lambeth Road – and one of our tasks was to check vehicle speedometers. The experts there, were Sgt. Charlie Light, and his oppo, Steve. Steve went on leave and was temporarily replaced by Bob Healey. Bob told me that his niece, the same Shelagh Maguire, was coming to London from her home in Liverpool for two weeks hols. Would I like to ‘show her around’? Not arf! I could even act like she was my first real girl-friend. Yea.

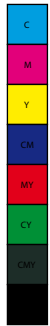
So, came the great day, and we met. Must say, she was a bit of awright! Young – but then, so was Dickiebo. She was yer average height, pretty face – with makeup!! – and nicely ‘developed’, if you know what I mean. Broad Irish accent. I didn’t really know where to take her and, not having much lolly, and too young to drink (gosh!!) I started off at the Houses of Parliament, but she didn’t seem too interested in them so, across the road, I took her to see Scotland Yard. Even less interest. I started to get a panicky feeling, and even contemplated the cinema but she came to the rescue by suggesting a walk along the Thames Embankment. And that, really, is how I knew Shelagh Maguire! Sat on a wooden bench on the Thames Embankment, ‘learning’ how to kiss. Seems totally harmless nowadays, doesn’t it? But that was mucho manly then! Overnight, Dickiebo was transformed. No longer an ‘innocent’, I could now kiss with the best of them. We kissed until my lips were sore, but sooo good!

After two weeks, Shelagh returned home to Liverpool – that was in 1955 – and the last I ever saw of her but..... I shall always remember her with affection. She was a nice girl. Bless yer, gal!

Chief Superintendent Cyril DAVIES

But, not until.....that day!

But, to set the scene. In days of old, when Dickiebo was a mere stripling of a Constable, a Chief Superintendent in the Metro Police, headed-up a Division. Cyril had ‘F’ Division, which comprised of Hammersmith – the Divisional Station, Fulham, and Shepherds Bush. He was a short, quiet, fair-haired Welshman, who rarely, if ever, got out of his pram. His office was on the first floor of the building, sandwiched between the offices of the Detective Superintendent, and the Divisional Superintendent – the notorious Big Jim Starritt, and was pretty much ‘out-of-bounds’ to rank and file officers.





Now, the Comms Room, was, of course, the Communications Room, and was staffed by a civilian telephonist, who simply operated the switchboard, and a Constable, – known as the ‘Reserve’ Officer – who actioned all matters requiring action. The switchboard operator would be ‘relieved’ for his/her Refreshment period, by a Constable, which would occasionally be the Reserve Officer. The switchboard itself was a stand-up box, as it were, with about 20 pairs of plugs on cords, which would be used to connect callers with extensions, etc. At the top of the board, were rows of circular holes – about 4 rows of 10, – and these were activated when an extension was lifted. A silver-coloured disc would fall into the hole, with a black number on it, indicating which extension it was requiring attention. At most stations, as indeed at Hammersmith, the very senior officers’ discs were coloured red, so as to stand out, particularly when the switchboard was busy. Got it? Right, well on that day, Dickiebo was Reserve Officer and at about 10am, relieved the switchboard operator for her Refs.

Shortly after taking over the switchboard, I saw the red disc of the Chief appear. It tapped politely once or twice, and I immediately answered it. Cyril’s voice said, “Send an officer up to my office, please.” Now, about this time, we were just beginning to experiment with new-fangled radios, but unfortunately, they didn’t work very well. So I had some difficulty in contacting an officer. Eventually, however, I did contact PC Timber Woods, who was meandering along Hammersmith Broadway. I asked him to come into the station and go to see the Chief. No problems.

Also on that day, an irate member of the public, who had an enormous sense of grievance against police, went to Hammersmith Police Station to record his disgust. On entering the station, he decided that he would get no ‘joy’ from operational officers at the Enquiry Desk, so he bypassed that area, and went up the ‘back stairs’ to the first-floor. Bingo! All the senior officers’ offices. He chose the correct one – Cyril’s, and in he jolly well went. After a bit of desk-thumping and generally letting-off steam, he began to get threatening, and Cyril got mightily worried for his own welfare, so – picked up the phone, and spoke to Dickiebo.

Things got quickly worse for Cyril, who ended up running out of his office into the corridor, shouting for help! A posse of 9 – 5ers, including the Superintendent’s Clerk, and the Divisional Office Sergeant – all good coppers





at one time!!! – rescued the situation, and evicted the ‘now-feeling-much-better’ MoP. And it was at that moment, that Timber Woods appeared, and asked Cyril if he required an officer!!! Apoplexy, comes to mind!

And that was when I got to know Cyril. He appeared through the door of the Comms Room, huffing and puffing, shaking like Jerry Lee Lewis. I’ll never forget his words; “Are you trying to take the piss out of me? I called for help. I had to be rescued by the Superintendent’s Clerk.” God. That shows just how bad things were. A 9 – 5er doing some police-work! Unheard of. Ugh!

Anyway. That’s howcome I met Cyril, and I can promise you that he doesn’t have much of a sense of humour. Timber enjoyed it though!

RACHAEL

Dunno her other name and, I guess I didn’t really know her, but.....I was thinking of her yesterday, when I read the Jailbird’s A-D’s blog. (Do read it. It’s dated yesterday.)

I always thought that Rachael was a priest but, she couldn’t have been, because there weren’t any women priests then – must have been about 10 years ago, when Nick was in the choir. That was the point really. Bilbow and I couldn’t agree as to whether, or not, there should be ordained women priests. He thought not, whereas I had no strong view and generally, was in favour. This topic was in the news at that time.

Our conversation came to my mind in church that Sunday. Rachael was reading the Lesson and, as was the way at St. Paul’s Church in Swansea, she stood in the aisle, halfway back amongst the congregation, just level with Dickiebo. As I looked at her, I saw that she was immaculate. She was wearing whiter-than-white robes, had one of those cleaner-than-clean faces, and auburn hair, combed (?brushed?) back, off her forehead. And she spoke quietly and eloquently. I then asked myself, “Am I in favour of women priests or not?”

There followed a milli-second’s pause, before a voice in my head (must have been my voice to speak as it did!!!) said, absolutely clearly, “And who the heck am I to sit in judgement on her?” And so it was. I decided to let others worry about women priests, homosexuals, same-sex marriages, and so on – they are probably far better qualified to do so, and..... I

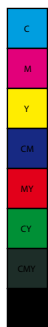




DON'T HAVE TO. I retain the right to have my own opinions, and Rachael, without saying a word to me, convinced me on that count.



Johnny HIDER



I met Johnny when I joined the Royal Military Police in 1956. Although we underwent training at the same time at Inkerman Barracks, Woking, I didn't really know him until we sailed on the SS Nevasa to Hong Kong.

Johnny was a one-off. He just never stopped laughing! Always. About anything. At any time. And his personality was the same. Happy-go-lucky, never taking anything seriously.

His other claim to fame was his sleeping. Or, rather, his 'failure to wake-up'! One day, in HK, he couldn't be roused for breakfast, so the Orderly Sergeant – Sgt. Charlie Matheson – tipped up his bed. Johnny, of course, fell out, banging his head on the corner of a metal trunk which was kept under his bed. It split his head open – there was blood everywhere. And, guess what? Right on. Johnny still did not wake! What a boy.

Johnny was one of my few socialising buddies in HK, and we frequently went out for a drink together. He was just so much fun to be with. The girls loved his boyish laughter, so he was like a light to moths – great!!

Christmas 1957, I was posted to the mainland of Kowloon, whilst Johnny remained on HK Island. I was early-turn Duty NCO and was woke up to commence duty at 0600 hours with the news that Johnny had been killed in an accident on the Peak District in HK. We were all totally devastated. I have previously published some photos of Johnny's funeral, and his old

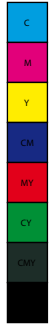




mate from England, Dave Talboys told me that Johnny's parents would very much like to have us call upon them on our return home in 1959. Very unfortunately, I never had Johnny's address, and when I tried (many times) to contact Dave in later years, it was to no avail, as he had moved and nobody was able to trace him.

The last time I saw Johnny was after a 'night-out' in HK. We were a bit sloshed and I got a cab to go back to camp. Johnny wouldn't agree to share the cost, so I told him that he couldn't come in the cab then. He just wouldn't stop laughing! He insisted on getting into the cab, and I insisted on ejecting him. After the cab drove off for about 100 yards, with Johnny clinging to the side, laughing his head off, we had to relent and let the sod have a free ride!!

The sun is shining here now, and I have again been thinking of my ol' pal. I have had over 50 years more than Johnny, and I am truly sorry that he has not been alive to brighten-up others lives, as he did ours. I've missed you, ol' pal.



Baron OMIDI

Back in the early 1960s, a young(ish) swarthy complexioned man entered my life. I was a skinnyish young cop, with no muscle-power at all, and had decided that something drastic was needed for me to 'hold my own' with the London erks. I found that some character called Baron Omidi was





teaching Karate. At that time, not many people had even heard of karate so I thought it a good idea to find out a bit more.

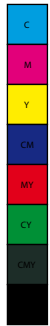
Baron was indeed a very slight man, speaking in stilted english, and looked as though a feather would knock him over. My friends, looks can be deceiving. Without any doubt, he was probably the finest unarmed combat expert in the UK at that time. He had a gymnasium in a basement in Baron's Court Road, West Kensington, beneath an office complex, and that is where I started on a journey that would lead me, years later, to be a Black Belt and Sports Council Approved Instructor at Kung Fu.

Baron was a very quiet man, but seemed to relish having state-of-the-art gadgets. He had a Special Ford Cortina Racing Car, followed by a Triumph TR 6 (or was it 7?), a scooter that was tiny. He once pulled alongside me when I was driving a police Area car, and he did not even come up to level of the drivers' window! He had a speedboat that was apparently the fastest on the River Thames, etc., etc.

He played small parts in films – the only one I saw was when he played the part of a 'cold-war' spy in a James Bond type film – and the birds he pulled were F. A. B.! He mixed with film actors/actresses, heavyweight wrestlers, and chinese kung fu experts, from his days in Hong Kong. All of these, he would bring to the gym to watch us work out. One of the very well-known wrestlers was a Yuri Borienco, who would sometimes train with us.

I remained friends with Baron and his (now former) wife for many years and enjoyed being his guest for dinner at his home in Chiswick on several occasions. We more or less parted company when I took a pub in Oxfordshire and started my own kung fu clubs.

Since starting blogging, I have been surprised at how many 'hits' there have been on my site for Baron Omid. I googled these myself, and was very surprised at the mystique that seems to surround Baron – with many people querying whether he ever existed even! I can tell them all; Baron is real. He was somebody very special and, importantly, I have been with him when he has done feats which I have never seen done elsewhere BY ANYBODY. An example? OK. Well, we were in the gym one day, breaking boards of wood with our hands and feet. One of the lads (yea, it may even have been me!), was having difficulty breaking a board, which was about 3" thick, and had several goes at it before Baron, in his usual stilted way, say, "What's the



matter? Are you a baby? I can break that with one finger.” Oh yea. Show us, was the chorus from the rest of us. Whereupon Baron took the board, walked over to the wall at the entrance to the gym, and held one end of the board up against the wall. He then drew back his other hand and, in one quick movement, thrust his finger-tip through the wood. Head on! None of us had ever seen anything like that before though a part of our training was to thrust our fingers into a bucket of rice, to prepare them for straight-finger fighting. I can remember begging Baron to teach me how to do this, but he simply said, “Mr. Bo. You will never do it. Ever. You have to go right through the board with no negative thoughts whatsoever. And what will happen? You will horribly break your fingers and never be able to fight again, because the wood will not break.” Well, how can you do it if I can’t? “Because I have been trained since I was able to walk. You haven’t, and it’s far too late now.”

Not having heard of Baron for many a long year, about 2 years ago (I think it was!), I telephoned his home in West London. Somebody picked up the phone and said, “Hello Mr. Bo.” After about 30 years! Yes. He still likes his gadgets, doesn’t he?



Thomas Sydney Bertram COATES

Back in 1954, Dickiebo started his first job. I was a ‘Junior Pay Clerk’ (My God. I’ll bet that there’s no such thing in this computer-age!) with Bennett



Bros., Building & Civil Engineering Contractors. It really was the most boring job ever in the history of the world. Every week the workers' Time Sheets would come in to the office. Dickiebo would do the sums; 44 hours @ 3 shillings and 9 pence per hour plus Tool Money (Forget the funnies, please!) minus Income Tax and donation to Dr. Barnado's. Enter all details in the Wages Register and Tax Book, and balance same. Work out what denomination notes would be necessary to fill the individual pay-packets (No. No Bank Accounts in those days for 'working class' people!). Stamp the individual Insurance Stamp books, draw the cash from the bank, pay out the various sites, answers queries. Then, the next week, start the bloody lot all over again. And again. And ad infinitum!

Well, for this effort, Dickiebo was earning £1 per week! Not a lot! And Dickiebo soon found that this was not enough to keep him in fags, and half of it, 10 bob, went in bus fares. Fortunately, the Senior Pay Clerk, a lovely man – Don Lewis – used to sub Dickiebo from his own pocket, and very soon I owed him a couple of weeks' money!! Clearly something had to be done, and that was when I met Thomas Sydney Bertram Coates!

Now, Dickiebo's boss was Don Lewis. His boss was Mr. Edwards, the Cashier (Dickiebo didn't like him as he wore a nancy's ex-RAF tie!!!!) and his boss wasyea, T. S. B. Coates! Mr. Coates' office was, of course, 'upstairs'. Well, it would be wouldn't it? Couldn't have a Director on the ground floor with the (office) workers. So up I jolly well went! You should have seen his face when I asked for a pay rise. Strewth. I thought he was gonna have a heart-atack! He stuttered, "You and I have a lot in common. Your name is Richard James Albert Bo, and I am Thomas Sydney Bertram Coates." (Work that one out!). I think he was stalling to try and think of something, so I hit him with, "Mr. Coates. I only get £1 a week, and half of it goes in bus fares." Gotcha, you sod.

And that is when TSBC showed his mettle. "Ah, my son. What you really mean is can you have a travel allowance. I'm afraid we don't pay travel allowances. But don't worry, because you will be getting an increase after 12 months."

P.S. 1. TSBC was a prominent member of the Jewish faith, but I don't think it made any difference to the reply I got!





2. If you enjoyed seeing TSBC's face when I confronted him, boy, you should've seen Mr. Edwards face when TSBC reported the incident to him! Did he wipe the floor with me – in front of everybody, of course! It was worth it, just to see his face contorting.

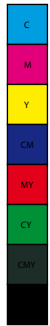
3. Needless to say, I left the firm and joined the Met Police Cadets – on a starting salary of £5.17.6 plus free accommodation.

Tom Littlewood

Many a long year ago, I was Head of Security at a major London Teaching Hospital. At this hospital, we had a Psychiatric Ward on the 2nd floor. It was an 'enclosed' unit, though I must emphasise that the patients were just that – patients. Thus, although the unit was enclosed, it was no gaol and people would frequently be 'coming and going'.

Now Tom was the Senior Nursing Officer of this unit. He was the Regimental Sergeant Major. A hands-on man, who was also highly qualified in his profession, and very highly regarded by one and all. His commonsense approach to his work was obvious, and this came across in lectures that he gave on 'restraint of violent patients'. I ensured that I and all members of the security staff attended his lectures, which were excellent.

One day, I was 'paged' (no personal radios in those days!!) and told that a man was acting strangely in the hospital. I attended, and met with a member of my security staff who pointed out to me the culprit. He was, at that moment, in the public reataurant of the hospital, staring straight ahead, and standing in the middle of nowhere. People were looking at him wondering what on earth he was doing. I immediately sussed that he was from the psychiatric unit and, as the security officer was in uniform and I was not, I told him to go and contact Tom, and I would keep an eye on chummy. Chummy was about 6'3" tall, heavily built, unusually he was wearing a belted white raincoat, and simply kept staring ahead. Now, I don't know whether you have had any dealings with a person who is unfortunate enough to have mental health problems, but I have. They are not easily handled, and if violent, are extremely difficult to restrain. So, I just kept watch on him, praying that Tom would arrive before anything could happen to trigger-off a re-action from chummy. He wandered around the various areas near the restaurant, then began to move further afield, into the offices. He didn't





actually go into the offices. He just stood outside the doors, staring in and not saying a word. He did have a rather vacant look on his face.

Tom eventually arrived and I pointed chummy out to him. Tom went up to him and I stood back, so as not to provoke chummy, but near enough to go to Tom’s assistance if necessary. Tom spoke to him briefly, and the chap nodded, and moved off in the direction of the psychiatric unit. Tom came over, and I said, “I thought he was one of yours from the 2nd floor.”

“Yes”, Tom replied, “He’s an Agency Nurse!”

Alf OWEN

When Newton was still a tiny village, that is, roundabout 1948-ish, it had many great characters. One of these was Alf Owen. Alf had a riding-school on Pickets Mead, and his only interests in life were his horses, and a pint of Best Bitter. (Evan Evans & Bevan, Vale of Glamorgan Brewery)! Having horses, and being a boozier, he was naturally a friend of 10 year-old Dickiebo and his Dad – who hated horses! (Worked that one out?)

Alf was a grizzly old man, with a truly weather-beaten face, always clad in the mandatory thick, grey flannels, turned-up twice at the bottoms, (no bloody jeans in those days!), thick woollen pullover, and ‘hacking-jacket’, with matching flat-cap. Hobnail boots with thick leather laces, which always caught my eye. Why? Well, because of the way that he walked. He walked very slowly, because, as he told us daily, he was ‘all strapped up’ around the stomach, with bandages, after some long-since-forgotten stomach operation. As he brought his feet forward when walking, his toes would point up at the sky, and his foot would then come down, about 6 inches in front of it’s former position. Slow going! His stables were at the bottom of his garden, so he didn’t have far to walk, to get to work. There were two corrugated steel lean-to’s which were called ‘stables’, and sandwiched between them, was Alf’s pride and joy – his ‘Tack Room’. A monstrous abuse of the English language if ever there was one. All it was, really, was a couple more corrugated sheets linking the two ‘stables’, but in there, was where Alf held Court.

Pride of place was his rocking-chair. An old – some would say, very old – wooden chair, with hay thereon, to soften his seat. Having walked the entire length of the garden to get there, he would walk up to the chair, about-face, and lift both feet, thereby ensuring a square landing on the chair. A huge





sigh and – ready for the day. Issuing his orders to us lot of gophers, telling us which horses to prepare for whom, and at what time. I remember one day, he told me to go to his field on the s-bend in Murton Lanes, and fetch in Dolly. I returned about an hour later – the field is only about 3 minutes away! – without Dolly, and Alf never let me forget it. The bloody horse just ran away from me every time I got close! All round the walls of the ‘tack room’ were rosettes which Alf claimed to have won at gymkhanas. Not sure he did but.....if he says so! Anyway, on a rainy day we would congregate in the tack room and listen to Alf’s tales of yesteryear. Great!

He would enjoy a pint, or two hmmm, lunchtimes, not in the Newton Inn, but in the Rock & Fountain, opposite. This was because my old man was frequently ‘barred’ from the Newton by the landlord, Iori Evans. So there would be the old man, Alf, Jack Evans – my favourite dustbin man, – Cyril Thrush, the window-cleaner, Dick Woollacott, the farmer, and John Daniels, the Dentist. When there was a fox Hunt, they would all gather outside the Rock before the start, to imbibe. I shall always remember what I call, “Alf’s Farewell!” He was well past riding, of course. He had a small grey pony, Betsy, which was on the hunt, and had gathered outside the Rock, with a young girl astride it. Then Alf’s beer took over. He lifted the girl off Betsy, and somehow swung his leg over the poor little nag – strapped stomach or not! His feet nearly reached the ground, so he wrapped his legs under Betsy’s belly and went cantering off, up the hill, wildy shouting, “Tally-Ho. Tally-Ho!”

I loved these characters and learnt much from them – which is probably why I am no bloody professor! What’s your excuse?

Charlie NEWMAN

God only knows why, but I’ve had Charlie on my mind for two days now. Haven’t seen him since about 1971. Charlie ‘lived’ in Hammersmith, West London, in the ‘60s and certainly the early, 70s. He didn’t live anywhere special, though I do remember him occasionally staying at Rowton House, which was at 221 Hammersmith Road. That was the doss-house. I always hated getting called into Rowton House to deal with a situation, because it was so totally depressing. All, and I mean all, the beds absolutely stened of stale urine. This was the end of the road for anyone.





Charlie was about 60, though he looked about 70. He was a slight figure, probably because he never ate, had a whitish stubble on his face, a rough complexion, and very rough clothing. It was quite funny how I came to meet Charlie. One day, probably in the late 60s, I came out of Hammersmith nick on foot duty, and turned right, to go up to Hammersmith Broadway. It was evening time, and daylight. I had only gone a few paces, when I heard somebody – Charlie – shout ‘Oy!’ from behind me. Instinct, and good manners, made me turn to see who had shouted, and that was when I met Charlie. He was poised, looking at me, but facing the building-line. His right hand was poised, shoulder height, behind him, and in his hand, was a large brick. Before I could move a pace, Charlie hurled the brick through the large, glass window of an office block. Needless to say, he was mine! Happily he came. Arrested, charged and detained to appear at West London Magistrates Court, charged under the Malicious Damage Act 1824.

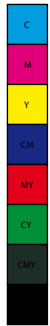
Charlie did this because he was ‘institutionalised’ as we say. Had nowhere to go, nobody to see. Much appreciated the hot meals that he received at the nick and was, in fact, reasonably polite to us. Just why I have had Charlie on my mind for the past 2 days, I do not know. Don’t know whether he’s still alive but very, very much doubt it. And the sad thing is, when he passed away, probably nobody ever knew, because we don’t notice the absence of a nuisance until a long time after it has passed. Then suddenly, we remember it/him, and think about it for a couple of days.

RIP Charlie.

Tom POWELL

I am currently attending Singleton Hospital, Swansea, for physiotherapy on a ‘frozen shoulder’!! The physio is such a sweet young thing – Wendy – and has a distinctive accent. Zimbabwean! [She is also extremely efficient.]

Well, like you do (!!), I got her chatting, and told her that when I was a kid – round about 1952 – I knew a girl called Janet Couch. Janet lived in a house called ‘Polperro’ in Marytwill Lane – next door to the Glyn Vivian Home of Rest for the blind. Her father, I believe, owned a large Travel Agency called – surprisingly – Couch Travel Agency! He was a larger-than-life figure of a man, always resplendent in a 3 piece suit and a trademark blue polka dot dickie-bow. Had a large moustache and wore frameless glasses. Janet was a pretty blond – shoulder length hair. Quite a large gal!





I think I've mentioned before that 'Polperro' had a large ship's bell outside the front door, with a length of rope hanging from the striker! I loved giving it a hearty ring whenever I delivered their evening newspaper. Sometimes Mr. Couch would come out and catch me. He would say, 'Why do you have to ring that bell?' I would explain that this was done, so that he would be aware that his paper had arrived. He usually answered, 'Well, the whole street don't need to know!'

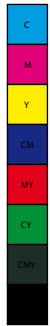
Anyway, I digress! I explained to Wendy that Janet had gone out to Bulawayo to marry a farmer – when Zimbabwe was Rhodesia, of course. Wendy got real excited by this, as she comes from – you're ahead of me, aincha? – a farm near Bulawayo, and most of the farmers knew each other. She's gone home on hols this week, and is going to make enquiries for me. I'll keep you posted.

Well now, it was on Christmas Eve, I think it was 1953 or 54, when me and bro, Bilbow, were delivering our papers in the evening. Being Xmas Eve, we knocked on each door, wishing people a 'Merry Christmas' and duly receiving a monetary thanks for our year-long service. Times were quite hard in those days and we had never before seen such money. Our pockets were literally full of coins – and not only small denomination coins! Unbelievable.

Anyway, it was just as we came out onto the road after ringing our favourite bell, that we saw Tom. Tom Powell, really, was like a tramp, only he lived in a house. He lived in Newton Road, between Ernie Richards' butcher's shop and my mate, Popeye Hixson's house. I think it was his sister who also lived there. She looked just like an owl! Dead ringer!

Tom used to shuffle around the village, literally keeping his head down, speaking to no-one. Always dressed in a filthy white, belt-less mac, with a cap pulled well down over his eyes, and – almost invariably – his nose 'running' into his mouth.

On this Xmas Eve he was no different. Shuffling slowly up Marytwill Lane, must have been bloody freezing! Kinda spontaneously, Bilbow and I took a handful of coins from our pockets and offered them to Tom. I'll never forget his re-action! None!!!! He just looked at us with cold, seemingly unseeing eyes, and no re-action whatsoever. A bit taken aback, and a bit



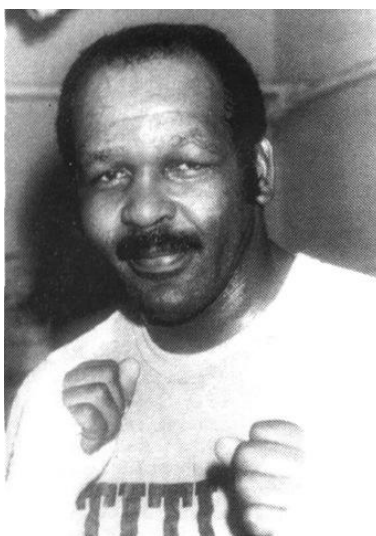


embarrassed, I think, we just stuffed the money into his raincoat pocket and moved on.

I don't ever remember seeing old Tom again. Obviously died somewhere along the way. I just feel that some poor buggers have a hell of a life, don't they? Makes me even more determined to enjoy, and be very thankful for, the life that I have been given.

R. I. P. Tom.

Neville MEADE



“Gentleman of the ring known for his devastating punch.

Heavyweight boxing champ Neville Meade shot to fame in 1980 with his devastating punches wowing TV audiences during a British title bout.

But the boxing world was sent into mourning after the 6ft Swansea boxer lost his battle with cancer on 13 March, 2010.





Cruiserweight Enzo Maccarinelli expressed his “shock and sadness at the news”, while his former manager Colin Breen paid tribute to Meade, saying he had the heart of a lion.

He said: “He was one hell of a fighter and packed an almighty punch. He had his problems, but he was a true gentleman.”

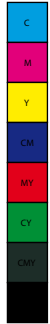
Jamaican-born Meade turned professional in 1974, two years after taking gold at the Commonwealth Games.

He slogged away for six years, losing 11 times, before hooking up with trainer Jimmy Bromfield and boxing out of Colin Breen’s gym in Sandfields, Swansea.

Despite being in his 30s, and weighing in at around 16 stone, the new set-up seemed to bring out the best in Meade.

Mr Bromfield said: “He was a big guy, but had a devastating punch. We worked with him for five fights, which were back-to-back knock-outs.”

Mr Meade died, aged 61, at Ty Olwen.”





Nev was, quite simply, a toff! Much has been said about his latter years – alcoholism, virtual destitution, arrest for assaulting a police officer, etc. – and people are fully entitled to their opinions. Personally, I speak as I find. I first met Nev when we were members of Fairwood Park Golf Club. I loved him! First time I saw him, it was bucketing down with rain. He was on the 1st fairway, wearing a pretty-much full-length plastic mac, and his small bag of clubs slung haphazardly over his broad shoulders. I watched him, riveted by this spectacle. He, well, not-so-much swung and hit the ball; as raised his club, and thudded it down on the poor unsuspecting ball! In the clubhouse afterwards, I stood chatting to him and was amazed at his modesty. Never in a million years would you have believed that he was the British Heavyweight Boxing Champion. But he was! Quiet, unassuming, did good work with youth clubs, and, frankly, deserved better. Nev’s funeral is on 31st March, in Swansea. God bless you, Nev.





Dixon of Dock Green Well, 'tis a wee exaggeration to say that I *knew* George. But...I did have a cuppa and a chat with him at his home.

George Dixon, aka Jack Warner, was living in an apartment in West London, with his wife. I can't remember whether the address was a Kensington address or Chelsea. Both districts were adjacent to Hammersmith, where I was serving at the time. So when an 'Emercall' (Emergency Call) came out from I. R. (Information Room at New Scotland Yard) that a woman needed police assistance, and no local Area Car responded, we accepted the call.

On arrival at the given location, there stood a li'l old lady, mightily distressed. She turned out to be Jack's wife, and, nearly crying, said that she had just locked herself out of their car, with the keys on the inside!! Hardly a crisis, but, nonetheless, that was the sort of thing that we took pleasure in helping with in my day!!!

Needless to say, the car was immediately opened, using my 'jiggler', whereupon, the good lady told us who her husband was, and insisted that we 'come in and meet him'!! We did, and had a cuppa and a chat. Jack was, at that time, quite elderly and rather frail, but we had a good chat about 'Dock Green' which, in fact, was an area known as Paddington Green. I knew the area a little, as a group of us used to drink at a pub there on Sunday lunchtimes. The pub landlord was a Bert Murray, brother of the Middlesex and England Wicketkeeper, Jack Murray.





‘Twas a real pleasure meeting Jack and, looking back now, I realise that our era of policing was simply 100% different to policing today. Undoubtedly time for us to move on, methinks, and leave matters to today’s generation.



Today, our police rarely wear the uniforms that we wore; armbands (worn to show that one is ‘on duty’) are extinct; jigglers are banned from being carried or used; police will not help anybody gain access to their vehicle as above; any type of ‘emercall’ as outlined, will not be answered;

and – well, when did you ever see or hear about a cop actually talking with MoPs????

No wonder the police and public have drifted apart.

Clive THOMAS



Clive Thomas was a football referee who officiated in both the 1974 and 1978 World Cups, and in the 1976 European Championship. During a long and sometimes controversial career as a referee in the old English First Division he was known as “The Book” for his strict interpretation of the laws of the game. Clive was well-known to EVERY football fan in the UK and, dare I say it, the entire world! Why? Well, for starters, try this;

- He blew the final whistle seconds before Zico of Brazil scored what would have been the winning goal from a corner in a 1978 World Cup match against Sweden.
- He was also strongly opposed to extravagant goal celebrations, going so far as to break up celebrations and order players back to their positions for the re-start.
- Thomas drew the ire of Ipswich fans when, during a 1975 FA Cup semi-final against West Ham, he disallowed a goal from Bryan Hamilton which seemed legitimate by giving offside despite a better-placed linesman not flagging for it.



- Thomas drew the ire of Everton fans when, during a 1977 FA Cup semi-final against city rivals Liverpool, he disallowed a goal which seemed legitimate and had gone largely uncontested by even the Liverpool supporters.



Despite these, Clive was generally acknowledged as being our finest referee of the time.

I knew Clive as we both worked from Caxton House in Cardiff, for the O. C. S. Group. Regular readers will recall my blog on ‘I Knew.... Brian



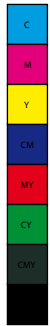


Clough’ where I gave some details of our friendship, and the fact that ‘B’ sometimes stood-in for his secretary when she was away for any reason.

Anyway, what I really wanted to tell you, was about a conversation that I had with Clive, many, many years ago. It was a year or two after he disallowed the Brazilian goal in the World Cup game, much to the anger of all Brazilians!

I was sat having lunch with him, and he said that he had just been for a haircut, but did not actually have one! He always used the same hairdresser in central Cardiff and was well-known there. On this occasion, he waited his turn, chatting to the owner of the hairdressers’. When his turn came, he sat in the chair and the owner said, “Clive, I have a new apprentice, do you mind if he cuts your hair?” Naturally, Clive said that it was OK, whereupon a young lad appeared and approached Clive. The owner, by way of introduction, said, “Clive, this is Mario. He comes from Brazil!”

Clive jumped out of the chair, throwing off the towel, and hastily left the shop, muttering, “You bloody well keep him away from me!” He told me that he could see Mario eyeing-up the cut-throat razor, though I think he was probably exaggerating a little!



Clive with Garth Crooks and Sir Peter Snape

I recently saw that Clive was appointed as High Sheriff of Mid-Glamorgan. Nice one, Clive.









