

Memories of Campden Police by Dorrie Ellis



Dorrie Ellis (r) visiting the Police Station when it was being renovated in 2000

My first introduction to Chipping Campden came in 1924 when Superintendent (Edward) Albert Bunker (Uncle Bert) - an uncle by marriage - was promoted as Superintendent to Campden Police Station from Cheltenham, my home town. Albert's father, Edward Bunker, had also served in Campden as a police sergeant in the late 1800's.



In the early days, when visiting the Campden relatives, we would travel by train from St. James Station in Cheltenham and be picked up at Weston-sub-Edge Station by Tommy Edwards, the batman cum chauffeur allocated to the 'Super' as his division was a widespread one stretching from Stanway to Stow-in-the-Wold. Uncle's first car was a Ford 'Tin Lizzie' - canvas top and leaking side screens and later a mustard-coloured Morris Oxford - very stylish!! It was as well that "Uncle Bert" had a driver as he hated driving and traffic and on reaching home his remark was always "Safe home, thank God"!! He was quite an austere person and chose his companions carefully. He always wore uniform on official occasions as did his driver.

He kept a diary of events and would cover it up when you took his cup of tea to the office. On the day of his retirement in 1937, he took the diary into the garden and had a bonfire - what a pity!! They retired to a house in Cheltenham and called it "Campden".



The wedding of Supt Bunker's daughter in 1927. Dorrie Ellis is the bridesmaid on the left.

Being a widespread police section the once-a-month pay day meant a gathering at the station for local news, although after the first war most stations were connected by telephone. Most would come by bicycle or motor-bike - Sgt. King, who I remember particularly (probably because he was the only one who spoke to me) would cycle up from Stanway - up Broadway Hill and Campden Hole! - with his shiny black rain cape if it was wet and his bicycle clips and they would all gather in the guard room.

I was taken in there once by one of the constables when he caught me coming down the stable ladder with an apple that I had 'pinched' from the loft - and he locked me in the cells for all of three minutes (not my idea of fun).

My chief memory of the "guard room" was at Christmastime, on our usual visit to Campden - "Auntie Em" was a very good cook and hostess as she had been employed as a housekeeper in one of the big Cheltenham houses where she probably met her policeman in the traditional manner - at these Christmas festivities, the Campden Mummers would be invited into the guard room at the

Station to perform their traditional seasonal play with refreshments as a reward - a memorable treat!!

Up to W.W.1. the main problem of the North Cotswold Division was monitoring outbreaks of foot and mouth and anthrax disease in a mainly agricultural area. One case of anthrax occurred on Horace Badger's farm adjacent to the Police Station and cattle were burned in the field behind the police garden.