

General Meeting

Steeton Hall, Steeton, Keighley

Thursday, 18th October 2018

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, there was a minute's silence in respect of members who were no longer with us since our General Meeting on 26th.

In particular – Brendan Boocock (died 25.7.18.), John Raymond Walker (died 31.8.18.) and Christopher Edwin Renshaw (died 25.9.18.).

Roll Call -

Vince Curran, Tony Hennigan, John & Susan Chambers, Graham Berry, David Lonsdale, Fred Dadswell, Steve & Sue Metcalfe, Jack Davies & Laraine Davies, Graham & Judith Sheard, Liz Baluk, Alex Robb, Peter Maughan, Ian & Elizabeth Hemsworth, Ivan (John) Andrusiak, Paul Spencer, Dave Sands, Jens Hislop, Steve Windle, Alex & Linda Barclay, Steve & Julie Brown, Tilly Smith, Lionel Fletcher, Chris Allan, Keith Foster, John Cowan, Terry Nattrass, John Sharp, Jim McSharry, Ron & Carol Harrison, Les & Margaret Allinson, Roger & Ann Yearby, Joseph O' Doherty, Terry Slocombe, Jane Dickerson, Peggy Holmes, Andy Holmes, Sheila Dunstan, Richard Berry, Derek Callon & Tony Durkin (50 Members & Partners).

Apologies –

Sue Neave, Paul & Dot Margerison, Bill & Nena Nicholson, Bernard & Pauline Grundy, Peter Whitley, Allan & Angela Jacks, Steve Walker, Hilary & Judy Baxter, Brian Hinchliffe, George Wardley, Sue Marshall, Monika Beckwith, Patrick Rout, Fraser Dunn & Bev Condron, Simon Todd, Brian Russell (his wife has got 'Parkinson's Decease' (23 Members & Partners)

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2018 – Were read & approved on a proposal by Graham Berry and seconded by Ian Hemsworth.

Approved

Chairman's Address –

New Members – Two new members have joined the Branch since the meeting on 26th July:

Michael Wilkinson and Martin Pharaoh.

New Widow Membership – Susan Boocock.

On behalf of the committee and members, Tony welcomed all of them to Keighley & District Branch of NARPO and hoped they would participate fully in all future social functions.

Resigned Members – Ernest Mathers, Scott Carter and David Callender.

Framed Certificate – was presented to Richard 'Dickie' Beeston at his home by Graham Berry for his long service to our Branch.

Torquay Conference - held on Friday 7th September 2018. This was attended by Tony Hennigan and John Chambers. There were no motions put before Conference this year.

A 'Review of the Year' by Mr Brian Burdass (Chairman of NARPO) was presented to Conference in which he mentioned the National Website page and recognized our web-page as a good example of what is required.

Income & Expenditure was presented by the Financial Controller Helen Morgan.

The guest speaker was Ann Widdecombe – former politician and non-dancer!!

Four speakers after lunch – talking about Life, Work and Leisure after the Police.

All the business of Conference can be watched live on the internet via the NARPO web-site.

Centenary Celebrations in 2019 – We are asking members for ideas and suggestions.

Regional Meeting - held on Saturday, 6th October 2018. This was attended by Tony Hennigan and John Chambers. Nothing controversial, other than the **Hillsborough Update** which Tony read to the meeting. A copy of the report is attached set out below:

HILLSBOROUGH UPDATE:

'Since the last Regional Meeting there have been the following developments of interest.

On 20 August Sir Norman Bettison appeared in court and all charges against him were withdrawn. CPS announced that problems with witnesses had led to this decision. As later reported in the press, however, there were allegations in court that there had been 'naked political interference' in the investigations by the IOPC into the matters relating to Sir Norman. It was reported that between 2013 and 2017 the Hillsborough All Party Parliamentary Group (HAPPG), the Families Group, CPS and the IPCC (now IOPC) had been meeting regularly to discuss matters relating to the Hillsborough investigations. The HAPPG led by MPs Maria Eagles, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham. (Burnham and Rotherham now being the Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool). It was said that Rotherham had written to the IPCC sending a list of questions which should be put to Sir Norman when he was interviewed under caution. The IOPC have denied that this pressure has affected their investigations. Representatives of the Families Group have now exercised their right to seek a review of the decision to withdraw the charges.

On 22 August I had a personal meeting with Louise Hague MP, Shadow Policing Minister. This contact had been facilitated by Richard Critchley who met her during a Parliamentary visit. I spent an hour and a half outlining all our concerns through matters relating to Hillsborough. She appeared to be very interested in problems affecting our members and our concerns regarding the ongoing inappropriate comments by politicians. She also told me that she was involved in efforts to speed up the process of investigations by the IOPC in particular in relation to the ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation investigations.

On 10 September David Duckenfield appeared via video link to enter his pleas of 'not guilty' to 95 charges of manslaughter by gross negligence. A provisional date for trial was set for 14 January 2019.

On 20 September 2018 I chaired a meeting in Sheffield which was attended by Ian Todd Deputy Director General of the IOPC and Rob Beckley Head of Operation Resolve. Other senior members of their teams were also present as were members of our Hillsborough Welfare Group, the Federation and Superintendent's Association. Matters relating to witness welfare were discussed and we were informed that on 3 October a meeting would be held at Preston to decide which witnesses would be called in person and which evidence may be served. At that stage an agenda for trials would be set.

This meeting followed our letter of complaint to the IOPC following their public announcement in March which we considered to be inappropriate. We have a promise of an early meeting, when witness details are agreed, and an apology for not arranging a personal meeting and update for so long.'

West Yorkshire Group Meeting – has not been held since Thursday, 12th October 2017. The website has fallen due to the 'lack of interest' shown by the Leeds & District Branch. Hopefully, there will be a meeting in January, organised by the Huddersfield Branch, to see where we go from here.

Christmas Lunch will be held at Steeton Hall on Sunday 2nd December 2018 commencing at 12 noon for 12.30pm. It has been fully booked. Menus and cheques required by John a.s.a.p.

Pc Gabbatt's 'gold watch – Tony outlined the history surrounding Pc Gabbatt and his 'gold watch' presentation. A report is attached to these minutes.

'PC Gabbatt was a distant relative of Sue Metcalfe and the watch had just been returned from Australia. Nothing was known of PC Gabbatt other than the gold watch apparently being presented to him upon his retirement from the police in December 1899, by the 'inhabitants of Silsden' as a 'token of their esteem'. Tony promised to look into the matter for Sue and her family.

Tony subsequently contacted a most helpful guy from Silsden History Group and here is part of his response:

Thank you for your inquiry about P.C. William Gabbatt in Silsden. I have checked his census records and note he was living as a police constable in Silsden in 1891, 1901 & 1911, living at least two different addresses that are still there. Like most police officers he was not local, having been born in Preston - the policy of the West Riding Police Force being not to place police officers where they had grown up and were known. It is of interest that his youngest daughter was born in Arncliffe in 1877 when William was 29. He may well have been in the

Force in Arncliffe at the time. I have not yet checked out the 1881 census record for the family.

Silsden Urban District Council took over from the Local Board in 1895. I doubt, however, that there will be any references to individual police officers in their records as I understand the Police Force were administrated entirely at County, not local level.

I wonder if you are aware of the famous Police Station Riot that occurred in Silsden in 1911. William Gabbatt is not mentioned in any of the reports, but then he was by that time well retired.

The watch is fascinating and I thank you for sending us a photograph of it. If I uncover any more information I will send it to you.

I had never heard of the Silsden Police Station Riot and so following further communication with my new contact at Silsden Historic Group, I received the following account:

The hard-line constable who sparked an anti-police riot

Silsden would not normally spring to mind as the setting for a violent anti-police riot, but 100 years ago in April, an angry mob, armed with stones and anything they could lay their hands on, descended on the police station. Having chased two officers back to the station in Keighley Road, the hundreds of men and women threw what missiles they could find, breaking every window in the station and at the neighbouring police house. Both officers and members of the public were hurt, children of constables were forced to take cover in the police cells and only when reinforcements arrived by taxi from Keighley and Skipton was the riot ended.

The disturbance, which became known as the Police Station Riot, was sparked; it would seem, by the arrival in Silsden of a tough new police constable. It resulted in 200 villagers signing a petition to the then Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, calling for an investigation into alleged police aggression.

PC Henthorn announced his intention to tame the town's unruly element and claimed he would soon have them so docile that he would be able to leave his gold watch hanging unmolested on the church gates. A few days later, PC Henthorn was jumped on and seriously assaulted as he carried out a night-time patrol. From his hospital bed, he identified his two attackers and one of them, Ben Hodgson, was arrested, dragged from his bed in the middle of the night and taken to the police station. Ben Hodgson pleaded not guilty at his trial in Skipton, which was attended by many of his supporters, but despite claiming he had been with his mother in Keighley at the time of the attack on PC Henthorn, he was found guilty and sent to prison for three months.

The day after the trial, on Saturday, April 8th, 1911, emotions were running high, the general feeling in the town being in sympathy to Hodgson. The Craven Herald reported at

the time that Hodgson's case had been keenly discussed in Silsden and it was felt a demonstration had been deliberately planned.

Trouble started at Bolton Road End, Kirkgate, where two officers, PCs Barton and Cook were on duty. 'A number of men began trundling stones down the road in the direction of the constables with the intention of irritating the officers and inducing them to retaliate', reported the Herald at the time. 'It was not a big crowd, but it was a lively one and judging from their conversation, it would not have taken much to start an open conflict between them and the police constables there and then.'

The constables were not drawn, however, and preceded along the road. At around 11.30pm someone set off the town's fire station alarm, which continued for several minutes. The long drawn-out call caused 'several hundreds' to go to the fire station.

Many of the people ran into the street in scanty attire and the fire brigade turned out only to find the alarm a false one, but the alarm served a purpose for those on mischief bent, for almost immediately, roughs in the crowd turned their attention on the constables on duty and gradually forced them down to the police station.

The recently-built police station was then at the bottom of the town [in the Becks]. It appeared that once in sight of the station – where Hodgson had been taken following his arrest – the mob 'lost their heads'.

They shouted and bawled and uttered violent oaths against certain members of the constabulary and made an attack on the police station.

Inside the station was PC Bell, who lived there with his family. He and two other officers took cover behind furniture while his children were put in the cells for their own safety. The mob took up position in a field opposite the police station and proceeded to throw stones gathered from the bed of a brook running between the road and the field.

Bricks, stones and bottles were hurled over the road for a space of half an hour or more. Two of three officers who were on duty when the firing began were lucky to escape serious injury, and when the attack was at its fiercest, they had to seek cover.

Hundreds of stones were thrown, each accompanied by loud cheers. All the windows in the police station and the neighbouring home of PC Henthorn were shattered. Street lights in the area were also put out, plunging the scene into darkness.

Shortly before midnight, the besieged officers put in the request to both Keighley and Skipton police stations for help, but it was another quarter of an hour before reinforcements arrived, leaving just four officers to fight off the rioters.

At 12.30am, six officers arrived from Keighley and forced the mob back towards Silsden. It was not clear whether they were forced to use their batons. It was reported that one

woman received a blow to the head and for some time a crowd of up to 300 people remained in the streets. Each new batch of officers was met with cheers and the roads around the police station were strewn with stones.

The next day, thousands of people visited the scene of the battle. The Herald reported that the anger of the crowd appeared to have been solely directed towards PC Henthorn, but that he had not been in the station at the time.

Two men – Oswald Firth and Walter Hindle – were arrested as a result of the attack and at their trial the following week in Skipton, officers Barton and Cook told how they had seen them throwing stones at the police station, but following evidence from other villagers, who claimed the two men had been innocent bystanders, the charges were dropped. A third man, Charles Hemmingway, was, however, found guilty of malicious injury, fined 40s. and ordered to pay costs.

The chairman of the bench said a tougher course of action could have been taken, but he had adopted a more lenient approach in the interests of all concerned, but the people of Silsden were still aggrieved and a petition was sent to the Home Secretary complaining of the police and calling for an inquiry to be held.

PC Henthorn, who had so inflamed local opinion, was withdrawn from Silsden and an investigation was carried out by the chief constable. An inquiry into allegations made by Silsden people was held in private by the chief constable in Skipton after the Home Secretary said any complaint should be handled by the local force.'

Sadly, and with some poignancy, Ben was the first Silsden soldier to be killed in action during World War One. Dying for his country is hopefully what Ben will be remembered for, not some Silsden skirmish, and we owe him and his ilk a great debt. RIP Ben.

I apologise for the length of this message and I can but hope that you find it informative and worthwhile. At least we can now archive these oh so relevant details as part of the legacy we inherited from those who preceded us in policing our specific area. I have an enquiry ongoing with police archives to find out a little more of PC Gabbatt and will share it with you once I receive it...'

Life Membership Award – At this point in the meeting, **John Chambers nominated Anthony Joseph Hennigan to be a Life Member of NARPO Keighley & District Branch**, to his great surprise. John's comments are recorded as follows:

'It gives me great pleasure to nominate Anthony Joseph Hennigan to be a Life Member of NARPO Keighley & District Branch.

Tony joined NARPO upon retirement and soon became a Keighley & District Branch committee member. Due to the ill-health of Branch officials, Tony was elected Branch Chair

in August 2012. Since that time, Tony has been tenacious and meticulous throughout his time in office.

The Branch was dying in 2012. We had a membership of 130, of which meetings consisted of approximately 20 people attending Social Meetings and only 8 people attending the 2012 A.G.M. With Tony at the helm and me as his rudder, we have increased our membership to 220 members in the past 6 years, with others in the pipeline. We regularly have 50 to 60 members attending our social functions and this year we have 110 members and their guests coming to the Annual Christmas Luncheon, held at Steeton Hall Keighley on Sunday 2 December 2018. It is completely sold out!!

I was nominated a 'Life Membership' award in 2016 for which I was truly grateful, but at the time I felt Tony should have been nominated also. Two years on, I think Tony has warranted a 'Life Membership' award for his outstanding efforts and achievements in the NARPO organisation.

I have known Tony for the past 45 years; as a first class policeman and an extremely good friend. Between us, the Branch has been turned around in a most successful manner. It is no exaggeration to state that he is at the front when it comes to pushing the Branch forward. His conscientious approach and likeable nature is renowned throughout his colleagues. I have yet to find a person who does not like him and his character. He is a proud man with a meticulous eye for detail. He is always approachable, polite and courteous to any suggestions or thoughts which could improve the Branch or the wider NARPO Organization.

Tony has resolved a number of member's personal problems ranging from chasing bad debtors to bereavement counselling (he was a volunteer with the Citizens Advice for some years). His experience as a police officer and later as a BBC Investigator has proved fruitful and worthwhile as a NARPO Chairman. Tony always has the well-being of other members uppermost in his mind and he is a regular problem solver and person to turn to.

He has been responsible for the Branch website which got a mention at our recent Annual Conference. He also manages another website called 'KOPz' (Keighley's Old Police) which includes officers who have not yet retired. Many of these members have joined NARPO upon retirement.

In May 2017, Tony was elected as Regional Chair and I was elected as Regional Secretary of the North East No. 2 Region of NARPO. We have agreed to stay on an extra year until 2020 because of the lack of willingness and reluctance to do these jobs in NARPO Centenary year.

At present, we only have 2 Life Members in our Branch - me and Peggy Holmes, a Police Widow (the wife of Brian Holmes). I believe our Branch is worthy of another Life Member in Tony Hennigan, so it is without reservation that I propose Tony Hennigan receives a Lifetime Membership Award, which I believe will be seconded by our Treasurer, Graham Berry.'

Graham Berry, the Branch Treasurer, then seconded the motion which was 'carried' unanimously to loud cheers and genuine applause. Everyone was very pleased with the motion.

John then told the meeting that he would write to Steve Edwards (CEO of NARPO) to start the preparation for a Life Membership Award and Badge to be presented to Tony at the Christmas Luncheon.

For once, Tony was stumped for words. He thanked the meeting for their kind words and gratitude. He was obviously upset but over-joyed by the nomination which he accepted gratefully.

Any other business –

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.15 p.m. after which, Tony gave a very good presentation of his life after the Police Force as a BBC Investigator.

It was followed by a most enjoyable pie and pea supper.

Proposed **Jens Hislop**

Seconded **Ian Hemsworth**

Chairman **Tony Hennigan**

Date **25.7.2019.**