

## Information about the old Police Museum by Jim Byrne - July 2021

Good Evening Tony

As mentioned, the Tasmania Police Museum used to be in the old Gymnasium above the cells at the rear of Hobart Police Headquarters. The museum items were set out on three large tables and the present-day Commissioner (Commissioner McCreadie) assigned me the job of sorting out the exhibits and cataloguing them into a special Museum Register. The change rooms of the Gymnasium had four large metal cabinets along one wall and in these I kept all the Australian State Police Uniforms, caps and large items.

I wrote to all Commissioners in each State for a uniform plus Hat and Badge.

Some of the good articles that I can remember is a quantity of forged five pound and ten pound notes, plus a special light box used by forgers when forging bank notes or forging signatures on cheques. This was a pine box with a sliding coloured piece of perspex with a strong pilot light fitted inside.

There was a display of Long Service Police medals, plus an amount of Miniature medals, early Tasmania Police and Queen's Medals.

There were quite a lot of Certificates in frames presented to different Inspectors and Constables setting out their service whilst stationed at Hobart, Launceston or at a country police station.

One Certificate that I can recall was presented to an Inspector for his work in cleaning up a bout of sheep and cattle stealing, and it outlined that many farmers donated Twenty or Fifty Pounds. The Certificate and framework was outstanding.

There was also quite a few pairs of the Old "D" Type Handcuffs and the Come with Me Cuffs. The "D" size hand cuffs all had keys. There were quite a lot of old Tasmania Police photos and I put a lot of these in photo albums.

There was also a large box of all the old Murder files. I sorted these out and re-boxed them in Archive boxes with Moth balls. There were also a large quantity of Old Helmet Plates and Night Badges (these were like the old Inspectors Badge but coloured black). There was one of the Old Tasmania Police Helmets with a badge, there was also three or four black helmets with a recast Launceston No. 20 helmet plate on them. Commissioner McCreadie presented me with one some year after.

There were also three beautiful Mantel clocks which were presented to Commissioned Officers in the early days when they retired, and the families donated them back to the Museum.

Just prior to Commissioner Richard McCreadie retired, my wife, daughter and I were invited down to Richard's Office, and whilst visiting I noticed one of the beautiful Mantel clocks on his side table. I commented on seeing it in the Police Museum and he looked surprised and he asked me a bit about it. I told him that while I was in Charge of the Museum I looked after the clock. Richard then informed me that one of his staff had purchased the clock from a second-hand dealer shop in Hobart and paid I think \$500.00 for it. The clock had a brass plaque on the front commemorating who it was presented to and for what occasion.

There were also a quantity of batons carried by Inspectors and Officers in the old days. Sergeant Peter Prestidge of the Photographic Section gave me quite a lot of old Police photos plus a lot of blue folder with Tasmania Police embossed in gold on the front and I put the photos in these. He also gave me some of the real early 1800's Police Gazettes which he had stored upstairs in the Photographic Dept.

There was also a collection of early Police pistols, some in cases and some by themselves. There were several shotgun cartridges in a display. Apparently the story goes that a guy living in Grasstree Road, Risdon Vale came home one night and found his Mrs in bed with another guy and he went and got his double barrel shotgun and when he went back into the bedroom he pulled both triggers but the both barrels misfired. Both shells had the imprint of firing pin on the head.

There was a blue glasses case which contained two Gold Plated Two-shilling pieces. When Deputy Commissioner Tom Marshall was a constable on the Hobart beat he was approached by a man who asked Tom if he could lend him a few bob as he did not have any money with him. Tom gave him two florins and sent him on his way. Sometime later the man wrote Tom a letter and enclosed the blue glass case with the two Gold Plated florins. Incidentally I saw this letter and the glasses case with the two florins in the Heritage Museum at Zeehan, apparently on loan.

The only key to the upstairs Museum was getting it from Mr Fook's Office and signing for it. Mr Fooks was the public servant in the Metropolitan Superintendent's office, but things still went missing.

After reporting missing items from the Museum in the company of the late Inspector Frank Fletcher I visited the Museum with the view of checking items with the Inventory only to find that the book was missing and could not be found.

The Museum was the packed up and moved to a small room on the ground floor of the Accommodation Block at the Police Museum.

On different visits To the Academy, I found items still going missing and after a few reports glass cases were installed around the walls of the Academy but I am sorry to say they were kept locked for a short period and then they were forgotten about.

Hope this gives you a little bit knowledge about the Museum. I am sorry to say that during the end of the 1960' and early 70's no one was interested in preserving Tasmania's Police History.

Regards Jim