Met Celebrates Women’s Centenary

The Metropolitan Police has celebrated 100 years of female officers in the force. The first female officers joined the Met in 1918 as part of “women patrols” and had to be accompanied by male colleagues for their “own protection”.

Women officers also had to be ‘well read’, be able to write legibly, be physically fit, have no dependent children and be aged between 35 and 38.

After five weeks’ training, Grace Russell, Patty Alliott and Lillian Wyles became the first female officers to patrol the capital’s streets.

Met Commissioner Cressida Dick, the first woman to lead policing in the capital, said today’s female officers owe a lot to the first pioneers.

She said: “I’m immensely proud to celebrate the centenary of women officers. With our brilliant history and the inspiring achievements of current and past female officers and staff, the experiment was not only a success, it was the start of our legacy to policing and to London.

“I want to thank all women officers and staff, past and present, for their dedication and service to the Met. ‘All of us who are thriving today owe so much to the brave pioneers of the past’

Cressida said her long-term vision is to ensure women make up half of the force, compared with 27% of the force currently.

She hopes a new recruitment drive will encourage more women and more women from ethnic minority backgrounds to join the force.

She added: “I want to use the celebration to appeal to all women to consider having a career in the Met. “Being a police officer is a diverse and challenging job, but it is extremely rewarding, and you get to make a difference to so many people.

“We have launched our female-specific recruitment campaign and there is no better time to be a woman in the Met.”
Happy New Year to you all.

As 2019 starts, I am very proud to reflect upon the work and activity across the country which we reported on in Grapevine in 2018.

The momentum and enthusiasm continues with a number of forthcoming events, including the Senior Women in Policing Conference in Birmingham in March which coincides with International Women’s Day.

I look forward with interest to the results of the recent Police Federation menopause survey “Everyone Pause”.

I do hope that officers and staff have contributed to the survey so we can go some way to fully recognising and addressing the impact of the menopause.

We will be reporting updates throughout the year on other matters concerning women in policing and the work within force networks and associations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone about events or initiatives in your area.

Nicola Carter
BAWP Co-ordinator

Who are we?
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PC’s Defibrillator Plan

Northumbria Police’s PC Emma Bowman and the Gateshead West Neighbourhood Policing Team are backing a campaign to install defibrillators in schools in their local community. They have already raised £890 for the cause via Just Giving.

New Year’s Same Demands

A s always it is my pleasure to welcome you to the winter edition of Grapevine and I hope that you find this edition informative and insightful.

First of all, I hope that you all had an enjoyable and restful Christmas and New Year and that you managed to spend some time with your family and loved ones.

As we move into 2019, I always find it useful to reflect on the past year, which unsurprisingly has continued to be challenging and eventful but has seen colleagues stepping up across the country to meet those challenges.

The complexity of policing continues to rise, the demands placed on us continue to rise, and the expectation from the public is also rising, and we are having to face all of this against a backdrop of ongoing uncertainty regarding funding.

I continue to be incredibly proud of the dedication and commitment of colleagues across the country in response to this and I have no doubt whatsoever that this will continue, no matter what challenges we face over the coming year.

Linked to the funding issue were the discussions around whether, as a service, we have the capacity to actually address hate crime to the extent that we should. In particular misogyny hate crime was one of the examples quoted.

As you all know I am a strong advocate for tackling this type of crime, but I am also well aware as a Chief Constable of the wider demands being placed on the service. However, I am committed to finding a way to address both and will continue to work hard with Chief Officer colleagues to find a way to do this.

Elsewhere in this edition you will find some great articles including one about the Diversity Development Day that we hosted in October at Ryton where we focused on the development of diversity among our staff, as well as being able to hear about lots of other national updates.

You will also read about the Survey that was commissioned by the Police Federation to mark World Menopause Day on 18th October. The survey entitled ‘Everyone Pause’ really looks at this important issue and allows everyone to have their say on the wider implications of this issue.

Looking forward, we are holding the Senior Women in Policing Conference in Birmingham on 6-8 March and the focus will be ‘Change, Culture, Collaboration, Conversation’. I am really looking forward to the three days and hope to see you there.

As always, thank you for your dedication and support over the past year both to me as President and also to each other. Enjoy the read and take care.

Dee Collins
BAWP President

Proud Of All Our Work

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The Metropolitan Police wants more female firearms officers. Getting more women into specialist units is a priority and candidates are being invited to open days to discover more about the role. The organisation is hoping the recruitment drive will address the gender imbalance in its specialist teams. Just over 25% of all officers in the force are female, but in Specialist Firearms Command there are just 63 women compared to 778 men.

Sky News was given inside access to one of the open days where Lucy D’Orsi, Deputy Assistant Commissioner in Special Operations, addressed the potential new recruits. The force is marking the 100th anniversary of its first female officer which had given the campaign a timely boost (see page 1 and page 7).

DAC D’Orsi told Sky News: “We are definitely underrepresented with women officers in the firearms command, so it has given us a healthy nudge to look to improve that.”

She added that women bring “a difference in thinking and style” to a unit, and that good communication skills and the ability to quickly assess risk and threats, as well as working in a team, were vital.

Merseyside Police Inspector and officers from Cheshire and Lincolnshire Police have ensured the life of the first ever warranted police woman has been properly remembered and celebrated.

Insp Vicky Holden and colleagues raised £2,500 to provide a headstone and a service to honour the life of Edith Smith, who became the first warranted female police officer in 1915.

Edith died in 1923 after a lifetime spent supporting vulnerable women and children and campaigning for women in policing. Sadly, she had been buried in an unmarked grave in Halton in Cheshire.

Vicky said Edith, who was from the Wirral, had been an inspirational woman and that her life had paved the way for female officers in the force. She was delighted that she had now received a service in tribute to her work and a proper resting place.

She said: “We are absolutely delighted that thanks to the help of the public and staff members from a number of police forces and societies, more than £2,500 was raised to provide a headstone for Edith’s grave and for a service to remember her life.

“Edith contributed a phenomenal amount to policing and her work paved the way for the officers of today, particularly female officers.

“As well as her police work, she travelled throughout Britain, giving talks, writing books and campaigning about woman’s policing.

“We couldn’t believe that despite all of this and her unique place in British history, Edith’s grave remained unmarked.”

A JustGiving page, raffles and cake sales were organised across the forces to help raise the funds needed.

Vicky added: “Edith’s final resting place has been rightfully marked and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated, your contributions have made it possible to mark Edith’s place in history and I would like to thank Edith, for all she has done for police officers of past and present.

“Myself and other female officers wouldn’t be here now if it wasn’t for her - she paved the way and had so much to contend with.”

Edith joined the Woman Police Volunteers in 1914 before being posted to Grantham.

In December 1915, Chief Constable Casburn signed Edith’s warrant card and she received the power of arrest – becoming the first full WPC in history.

Senior Met Police officer has defended women in policing after TV show The Bodyguard came under fire for unrealistic portrayal of female senior officers.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D’Orsi, said: “Bodyguard’s storylines may be far from reality... what is true is that every day in the Met women are running armed operations, surveillance operations, carrying firearms, supporting victims of crime and abuse, and leading the biggest police force in the country.”

She added: “Seeing women in these critical, important roles will surely inspire women to consider the Met as a career.”
The outstanding work of women investigators has been celebrated at this year’s Police Federation’s National Detectives’ Forum awards.

Sussex Police’s DI Clare Shiel came first in the Services to Detectives category for being an outstanding role model. She has led numerous investigations and was responsible for an operation to recover a woman who was kept as a slave in appalling conditions for almost two decades.

DI Shiel said: “I’m really chuffed and humbled. It takes years to become skilled at your craft. I’ve been a detective 23 years and I am still learning now.”

Her supervisor, DC Phil Carter, said: “Alex was really struggling with unbearable pain that she didn’t understand and her GP couldn’t fathom. No one knew at work – she didn’t want to let anyone down.

“Sh was surviving on a couple of hours sleep a night then driving 30 miles to court and 30 miles home day after day.”

He said she was exhausted and burnt out after the prosecution, and it wasn’t until after the case had concluded that she was diagnosed. She is still receiving treatment.

DCI Clare Shiel receiving her award. Photo: Anderson Photography

A team led by Hertfordshire Police’s DCI Dee Perkins won the Detective Investigation of the Year after they uncovered a global paedophile ring.

DC Carter added: “Alex is a hero – my hero. She took a massive investigation and ran it perfectly; the judge commended her on the investigation, the case, her handling of the evidence and her tenacity, all echoed by the prosecution and defence Barristers. She was not a seasoned detective when she started but she is now, thrown in at the deep end and came up fighting.”

Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave said: “It was a seven-week trial and there were convictions all round - 13 years.

“It was a tremendous result. The diligence, professionalism, attention to detail, ability to manage disclosure issues, the translation issues.

“You name it, Alex had it all.”

DCI Alexandra Protts with Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave at the Police Federation National Detectives’ Forum. Photo: Anderson Photography

DC Alexandra Protts with Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave at the Police Federation National Detectives’ Forum.

More Female Detectives Honoured For Work

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DCI Shiel said: “I’m really chuffed and humbled. It takes years to become skilled at your craft. I’ve been a detective 23 years and I am still learning now.”

Retired Avon and Somerset Detective Constable Christine Williams was honoured for her work in child protection that has spanned a 37-year police career.

She retired in August but plans to return to the force as police staff, working as a major crime investigating officer.

Merseyside Police’s DC Hannah Marren was second in the New Trainee Detective category for her work in successfully steering cases through to charge and conviction.

A team led by Hertfordshire Police’s DCI Dee Perkins won the Detective Investigation of the Year after they uncovered a global paedophile ring.

And DC Trudi Rogerson, from Staffordshire Police, was awarded third place in the Services to Detectives Awards.
A detective inspector who was off sick for nearly a year after she was paralysed from the waist down has said disability doesn’t have to have an impact on careers.

Paula Craig retired from the Met in June after 30 years’ distinguished service. A keen marathon runner, she was hit by a car in 2001 while out cycling and was confined to a wheelchair. But she returned to a role in the Flying Squad where she carried out undercover duties after the force made adjustments to her working environment.

She said: “I was really fortunate because the then commissioner, Sir John Stevens, came to see me in hospital, bearing in mind I was injured off-duty. I didn’t think I’d get my job back. But I desperately wanted it back and he was just amazing. He came in, said ‘yeah, no problems’.”

At the end of her recuperation she took on the London Marathon as a wheelchair athlete and went back to work two days later. The following year she was promoted to detective sergeant.

She said: “I just thought I would be behind a desk for my service because of my situation. But I did my inspectors [exams] and then a superintendent who I’d worked for on the national when I was able-bodied said to me, ‘I want you to run the homicide task force’. That was actually quite brave of him I thought, but I knew I could do it. It was interesting. Obviously as a wheelchair-user you turn up in the middle of the night, got all of the firearms team looking at you like, ‘who let her through the door’, until they realise you’re the DI.”

Paula spoke to colleagues at the Police Federation National Detectives’ Forum (PFNDF) in Manchester about the issues she encountered and how she was determined that she would not been seen as different person to who she was before her accident. Her career has been peppered with misfortune after she suffered a late miscarriage that forced her off work for a further three months. And a series of bone infections has forced her off work again in recent years. But she has “absolutely loved” her work, during which she has taken on a variety of challenging and interesting roles in murder investigation, covert operations, professional standards and counter-terrorism.

Paula remains active and has taken on open swimming. She competed in a 5k this year and has her sights on a 10k for 2019. She also plans to learn sign language next year, carries out charity work for disadvantaged and disabled children and is working on a Master’s Degree.

She added: “If somebody looks at me and thinks ‘you’ve done it, therefore I can do it’, that’s great.”

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**A History Of Women In the Metropolitan Police**

- **1910** First women began their training, over five weeks on the same lines as the male recruits.
- **1919** Women began patrolling without uniform. They were Grace Russell, Patty Alliott and Lilian Wyles.
- **1920** The first female officers began patrolling.
- **1930** New Conditions of Service were introduced which required women officers to resign on marriage.
- **1937** The marriage bar was removed.
- **1946** Shirley Becke and Barbara Kelley become the first women promoted to Detective Inspectors.
- **1949** Woman Detective Constable appointed to Flying Squad.
- **1955** WPCs Ethel Bush and Kathleen Parrot each receive the George Medal.
- **1959** Women are no longer precluded from becoming authorised firearms officers.
- **1968** First black woman officer Sislin Fay Allen joins.
- **1969** Chief Superintendent Shirley Becke became the first women Commander.
- **1969** Women receive Equal pay.
- **1971** First two women appointed as drug dog handlers.
- **1974** First female officer joins Firearms Unit.
- **1978** First two women appointed as Deputy Assistant Commissioners.
- **1983** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **1987** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Special Crime Directorate.
- **1990** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **1993** First woman appointed to lead the Flying Squad.
- **1998** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **2000** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **2003** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **2008** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.
- **2017** First female officer appointed as Assistant Commissioner in Specialist Crime Directorate.

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n exceptionally courageous female police constable has been awarded the overall Scottish Police Federation Bravery Award, writes Aaron Wilson.

Constable Laura Sayer was honoured alongside fellow officers Kenny MacKenzie and Finlay Dobson.

In June 2018, Laura and Kenny were called to a house in Greenock’s Gateside Garden to assist an NHS partner in performing a mental health assessment of a patient.

When it was recommended that the man, William Taylor, be sectioned, the pair soon became caught up in a frenzied knife attack that resulted in serious injuries to both officers.

In a joint statement with her colleague, Constable Sayer, said: “The past few months have been extremely challenging and we have faced a long road to recovery which has, at times, been very difficult. We are very proud to be recognised with this bravery award and to share this moment with the colleagues who helped during the incident.”

Kenny was stabbed several times in the neck and body as he attempted to disarm Taylor of the large knife that he had secretly concealed on himself.

He then turned his blade on Laura, stabbing her in the neck and arm, leaving her with such severe nerve damage to one of her hands that she was unable to return to work for several months.

Despite having been in the job for just 12 weeks at the time, Laura and her colleague continued to attempt to bring Taylor under control and prevent him from inflicting injury to himself or either of the medical officers present at the scene.

In spite of her severe injuries, Laura and Kenny managed to call for back-up and heroically pursued Taylor into the street.

Constable Finlay Dobson arrived on the scene soon after, and also attempted to disarm Taylor. It took a further five officers to finally restrain Taylor and bring him under control.

Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Justice who presented the award to Laura and her colleagues, said: “These officers are a shining example of the extraordinary acts of bravery and heroism that are frequently demonstrated by our Scottish Police Force but which often go unrecognised.

“I personally commend their bravery and thank each of them for their outstanding service. I am delighted to present this award to these exemplary officers.”

Detective Constable Susan MacLennan (not pictured) was also on hand to help to provide first aid and comfort to her wounded colleagues at the scene, but elected not to have publicity.
The BAWP held its first Professional Development Day at the College of Policing in October, writes Elizabeth Masterson.

Among the guest speakers was Chief Inspector Miles Ockwell, a District Commander in Sussex Police. He gave a presentation about the UN Solidarity Campaign HeforShe, based on committing leaders and organisations to gender equality.

Surrey and Sussex have become Thematic Champions for Law Enforcement with the UN, and in May this year, senior officers from a numbers of forces nationally signed a pledge with three commitments to HeforShe:

- To improve the gender imbalances at senior levels;
- Continue to work to combat domestic abuse and sexual abuse and finally
- Support the annual reporting of gender equality information.

The gender pay gap was discussed, as was the gap between male and female officers of rank within forces and nationally. The percentage divide between male and female officers increased further up the rank structure: latest figures show that 32% of constables are female nationally, compared to 23% of Chief Superintendents.

The second speaker was Bee Baily, an ambassador for Trans Progression and Co-Chair for the National Trans Police Association.

Bee spoke openly about her personal experiences and gave an insight into the experiences by those in the trans community.

Questions around the trans community that may have a practical impact on policing, such as how to treat a person in custody and who searches them, come down to understanding the law and what it affords us to do.

Section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 affords individual protection surrounding disclosure of information. The consequences of breaching this law can have a detrimental effect on the individual. People are often ignorant to the requirements of the law, whether that be due to a lack of understanding, knowledge or malicious intent. The detrimental effects on the individual can have a life changing effect.

Also speaking was Jackie Smith, a newly appointed current Non-Executive Member of the College of Policing, who has spent 12 years in the Crown Prosecution Service. She gave an insight into the leadership challenges she has faced, and those facing the College of Policing.

Dave Spencer, of Northamptonshire Police, talked about a coaching programme being introduced by the Superintendents’ Association: Talking About Difference Matters.

The day was rounded off by a ‘randomised coffee break’ – a simple yet ingenious opportunity to network with others by having a coffee for half an hour with someone you don’t know.

I loved the idea so much, I’ve launched it in my own force!

IAWP Board Election

Four British officers have been elected to the Board of Directors for the International Association of Women in Policing.

Julia Jaeger (Retired Met) is the new 1st Vice-President; Annita Clarke (Bedfordshire) is now the 3rd Vice-President; Jane Townsley (Retired BTP) has been elected as Executive Director; and Lisa Gore (South Wales Police) is the new Region 13 Co-ordinator.

All four are looking forward to furthering the work of IAWP in Britain and overseas.

Survey To Report On Menopause

The Police Federation of England and Wales has carried out a survey on the menopause to improve understanding and support. The survey was open to male and female officers in all Federated ranks. The ‘EveryonePause’ survey, which ran in the Autumn, was the first of its kind. The results will be released in the New Year.
Northumbria officer Nikki Marshall gave no thought to her own safety as she sprang into action to help two young children who had fallen into the River Tyne.

The youngsters, siblings aged just nine and 12, had been playing on the river banks with friends. After the little boy had slipped into the icy-cold water, his sister had jumped to his rescue but the current had pulled them apart and was quickly whisking them downstream.

Nikki, who was off-duty on a run with her pet dog, spotted the youngsters in trouble and immediately jumped in.

She grabbed the girl and fought the current to safely pull her onto the banks of the river, while a passer-by helped to get the schoolboy to safety. 

Nikki, a mother-of-two with 17 years’ police service, said “adrenaline took over” during the dangerous rescue attempt.

The Detective Constable, who works out of Gateshead, said: “Straightaway you’re out of your depth. You can’t put your feet down, the water was freezing and the current was so strong.

“I consider myself a good swimmer but I was getting pulled under and that was starting to worry me. I think it was the adrenaline that got me through it.

“I think I was just in the right place at the right time and the most important thing is that everyone was okay in the end.

Nikki has now been put forward for a Commendation to recognise her bravery.

Northumbria Police’s Chief Constable, Winton Keenen, said: “Every day I hear about how our officers and staff continually go above and beyond to protect the communities we serve and this is certainly a great act of heroism.

“I have no doubt that she saved their lives and she should be very proud of herself for her response to a potentially fatal situation.”

Cumbria Police have held a Women in Policing conference to mark the achievements of women in the past 100 years, writes Sarah Dimmock.

The day celebrated the achievements and success of women in policing and other public services, to support, motivate, develop and inspire present and future leaders within the North of England.

The event was attended by nearly 200 officers and staff and we have had positive emails flooding in from those who were able to join us.

Speakers included Cumbria Chief Constable Michelle Skeer, PCC Peter McCall and Helen Pankhurst, the great-great granddaughter of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst.

Each speaker was asked three questions to reflect on in their presentation: what the culture of your organisation was when you joined? What is the biggest cultural change you have seen during your career? What would you like to see change or be different in the future?

The key messages from the day included a true celebration of the progress made by women in today’s society, with many senior policing positions now being held by women.

However, we still have some work to do around unconscious bias, both our own and that of other people.

The main message of the day was to be brave. If you want something go for it, if you don’t like something challenge it, and never second guess yourself or make excuses.

The event was a non-profit making conference and donations made on the day supported Women’s Aid and Edith Smith’s memorial service. Nearly £3,000 was raised for these causes.