

ROUND & ABOUT IN THE PARISH.....

I was asked if I knew anything about local policeman in the area and as is often the case Ian Etherton and his parents have provided me with lots of information.

The first police house in the village was where Beatie and Jim Cundy once lived (which was next door to the Social Club in Danehill) and this photo provided by Max Butler shows the police



house with its blue light and notice board in the front garden. This was rented by the police force from Beatie's grandmother.

Reg Patten was a policeman during the second world war. His house (Pine View), which again was rented, was along Beaconsfield Road. Reg had a son-Mick, and David Etherton has a vivid memory of sitting on

the field gate opposite the Crocodile with Mick when Reg went into the pub to quieten down the rowdy Van Doos (these were the Canadian soldiers stationed at Sheffield Park). "Dad will be back out very soon" said Mick, and sure enough he was, as the

soldiers threw him out into the road!! Mick followed his father into the police after his national service in the navy in the Korean War and he was one of the first police dog handlers with the Sussex force and used to take his dog into schools.



Around 1950 a new police house was built in

Danehill and the first policeman to occupy the newly built house was Reg Grey. He lived there with his wife, Pam, and their daughter. The police house had three bedrooms, but the family only needed two of them for sleeping so Pam kept her chickens in the third bedroom.

Vi Etherton's adopted brother, Alec Dixon, was the policeman at Buxted at the same time as Reg Grey was policeman at Danehill so they used to cover for each other on their days' off. This was ideal as Alec could pop in and see his parents who were still living at Beech Cottage. One of their jobs was to visit schools to inspect the children's bicycles for roadworthiness. Vi recalled that Alec fixed her bike whereas the other children had to rely on fathers, or Bill Marten from the cycle shop at Chelwood Gate to fix theirs. Vi's bike was a hand-me-down from Rita Crag's parents when they emigrated to Canada.

Another story that Vi Etherton remembers is that Alec and Reg had been having tea, while on duty, with Hilda and Tom Jeffrey who lived down Brookhouse Bottom. After two hours there was a radio call asking what they were doing. Quick as a flash, Alec replied that there had been a report of loud music from the direction of Colin Godmans and that they were staking the area out from a safe house before going in. Just a ploy - which seemed to work.

Another instalment will follow in due course, and my thanks to Ian, David and Vi Etherton for the information and to Max Butler for the photos.

Jill Rolfe