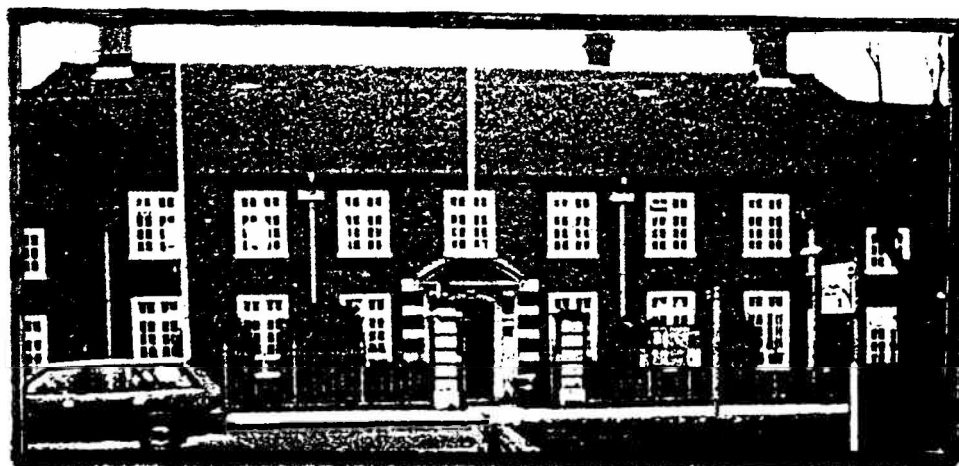
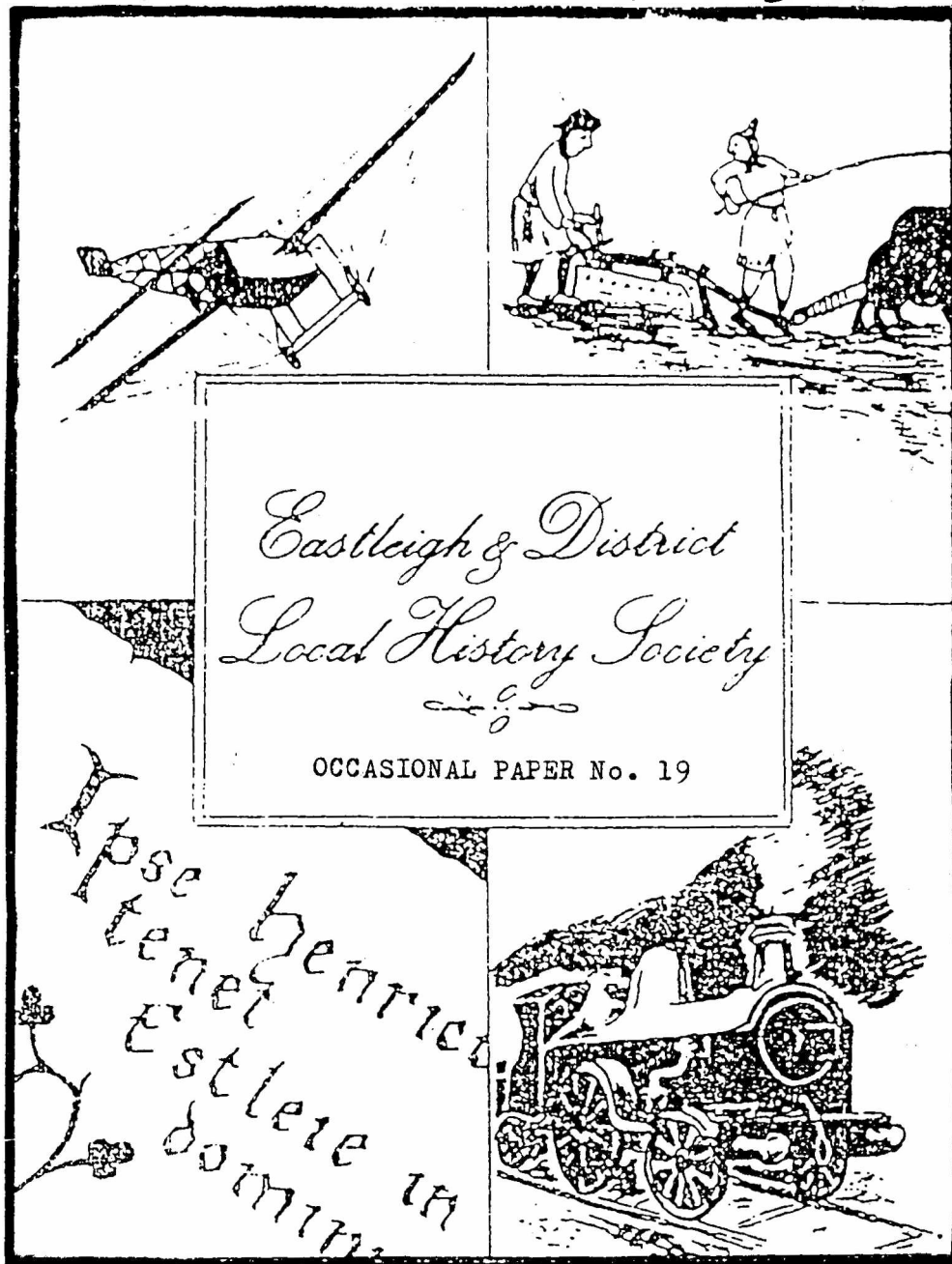
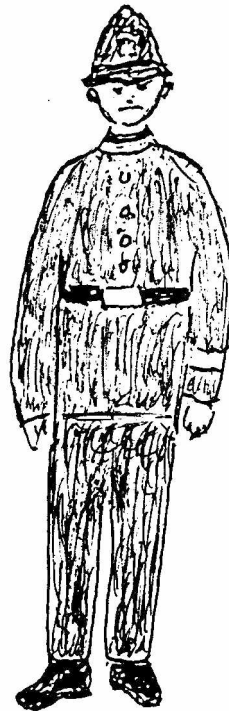


The Police Force in Eastleigh.



Little Eastleigh Farmhouse



Superintendent's house,
30 Romsey Road.



THE POLICE FORCE IN EASTLEIGH

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary was formed in 1839 and with the Essex Constabulary is the oldest County Force. It is one of the most successful and one of the fastest growing, since the shift of population towards the South is making Hampshire an increasingly popular and prosperous area.

Before the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary was formed, policing in Hampshire was rural and based on parishes, police officers being parish constables, with only one or two patrolling each parish.

In Norman times, during the existence of the Manor of Eastleie, courts of law, known as Court Baron and Court Leet, were called and held by the steward in the lord's name. All the people whose names appeared on the Court Roll were summoned and it was their duty to attend.

Court Baron dealt with the transferring of tenements and small offences within the Manor. Each year the Court chose manor officers such as the constable, the ale-taster, the swine-ringer and the bread-weigher, of whom the constable was the most important, helping to keep the King's Peace. He was unpaid and had to perform his duties as well as his normal work. The constable had to report to the Courts the villagers' behaviour, arrest criminals and guard them until their trial.

Typical cases: A miller charged with giving short weight or taking excessive toll, a frequent occurrence. A brewer often charged with brewing beer and selling it at higher than $\frac{1}{2}$ d per gallon, but on trial the beer being found to be of extra quality was allowed to be sold for $\frac{3}{4}$ d. Other common crimes included stealing fruit, fish or corn, cutting trees, breaking fences, trespass of sheep or oxen in pastures, poaching in the park. All these offences were punished by a fine which went straight into the lord's pocket.

The constable had no uniform, only his staff of office.

Edward III's parliament passed in 1361 the Justices of the Peace Act, which stated that three or four men in each county would be assigned to keep the peace. These men were known as Justices of the Peace. They were empowered to issue a warrant, usually given to the constable whose duty it was to bring the suspect to court.

When the Hampshire Constabulary was formed, Eastleigh was a very small part of the Woolston Division. In 1881, the population was only about 1,000 and one or two police officers supervised the area.

In 1890, the police station was at 144 Southampton Road and the adjacent terraced houses were living quarters for married men. When the subdivision became a division, the premises housed the Superintendent's office, another office and three cells. In the administration of the divisional headquarters the superintendent was helped by a clerk sergeant. The only lighting on the ground floor was by gas lamps.

In November 1920, the parishes of Itchen and Bitterne and parts of the parishes of North and South Stoneham were transferred to the County Borough of Southampton, and the Headquarters of the Southampton Division was established at Eastleigh. In October 1923, Romsey Division amalgamated with Eastleigh.

An unfortunate incident took place when W. Deacon was returning from the court in Southampton to Eastleigh. The cart in which he was travelling collapsed in the Avenue. Luckily no-one was hurt. In due course, Mr. Deacon became Superintendent and he was later awarded an M.B.E.

The new division needed a new headquarters so the house and grounds of Little Eastleigh farm were bought. The large 17th century farmhouse continued to be used to house the Police Superintendent until after the end of World War Two, despite damage from bombing nearby. Ten other houses were built on the land of the old farm and provision was made for a court house behind the police station, but these plans were never realised. The old station premises in Southampton Road continued to be used for married quarters until 1959 when the property was sold.

Mr. Deacon was succeeded by Superintendent Ernest Pragnell, who was a big man and had to have a uniform specially made for him. He was Superintendent when Eastleigh's Charter of Incorporation was signed in 1936. Appointed in 1927, he retired in 1944. His end was sudden; while walking along Market Street one day, he dropped dead. That was in 1950.

In October 1928, the Romsey section was taken from Eastleigh and attached to the New Forest Division, while the Winchester section was absorbed by Eastleigh.

The Hampshire Constabulary Athletics Club was formed on 1st January 1929; it had active sections for golf, cricket, swimming, bowls, football, shooting, tennis and athletics. The first organised sports day was held at the County Cricket Ground in Southampton on 8th August 1929, but from the following year, Fleming Park was available. The sports were held there annually until the outbreak of war in 1939. They were resumed in 1947 with Superintendent Broomfield as Secretary. In 1954, he was succeeded by Superintendent Cansfield. The last meeting of this kind took place on 18th June 1960, when representatives of many police forces from different parts of the country took part. On 30th May 1963 a special meeting was held at Fleming Park to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The event was arranged by the Hampshire Constabulary Athletics Club, the Honorary Organising Secretary being Superintendent A.J. Broomfield, who was later to become Assistant Chief Constable of Hampshire.

Another important social event was the Annual Ball held in the Eastleigh Town Hall. In the early days, the band was provided by Charlie Poland who lived in Southampton but was employed in the Railway Works.

There have never been any horses used in the Eastleigh Division, only bicycles since early in this century. In 1936, a motor patrol operated, using motorcycles and sidecars and later Austin Sevens, but gradually the cars were modernised. About this time, the uniform had a jacket with collar and choker and white braiding. Caps were issued in the summer, having a white linen cover for shade and a waterproof for wet weather. Helmets came into general use after the last war.

The Hampshire Joint Police Force to include the Isle of Wight and Winchester was formed on 1st April 1943. At that time, Sergeant Maund was living in the old police station in Southampton Road. He was having a bath in a converted cell when a gentleman came to report a stolen bicycle, having forgotten that the police station had moved some 19 years earlier. He had some excuse, as an old police sign was still on the front of the building.

By 1962, each division, including, Eastleigh, had its own dog unit.

On 6th June 1964, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary held a Force Open Day at Barton Peveril Grammar School. It included a baby show, a water ballet, aqua diving and athletics restricted to members of the Force.