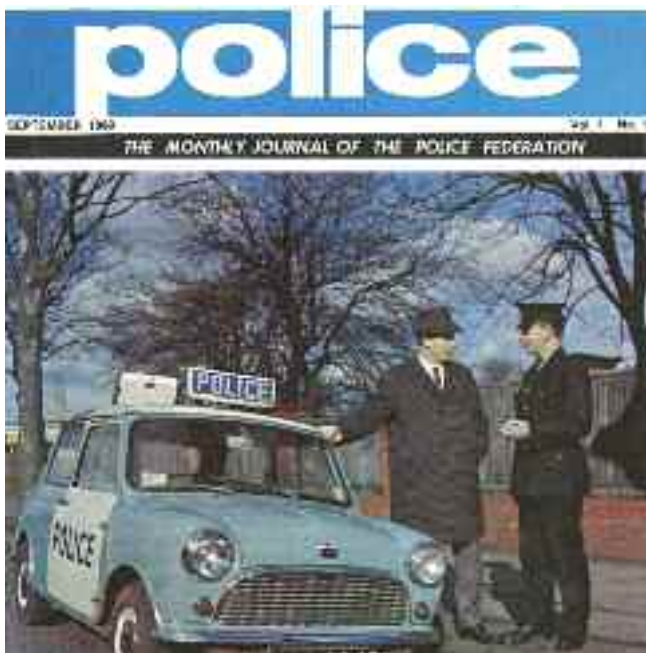


# Life begins at 40

From an unlikely birth into a room full of stoned hippies, *Police* magazine celebrates its 40th year documenting issues impacting on officers from strikes and pay to sexism in the service. Founding editor Tony Judge looks back



The first edition of *Police* magazine rolls off the press in September 1968



Women campaign for equal rights in 1968

At my time of life, I don't get this "modern man" thing, where Dad's either rush, or are dragged, to witness the births of their offspring. I must confess, however that I was in at the birth of *Police* some 40 years ago this autumn, and I will never forget it. After a dreary overnight train haul to furthest Carlisle, I arrived as dawn was breaking at a former bakery where the printers had installed the first web-offset plant in the north-west.

As I walked in, my nostrils were assailed by an unfamiliar odour, which turned out to come from the roll-your-own spliffs being smoked by a group of hippies who could have been fugitives from Woodstock. Some were lying, fast asleep or stoned on the gantries of the giant press, under the baleful gaze of the phlegmatic Cumbrians who were, like the hippies, lost for words. The group were members of the editorial staff of a psychedelic weekly, *The International Times*, a British by-product of the Summer of Love. My arrival coincided with that of the boss of the print firm, who just happened to be the chairman of the Carlisle bench. It took him less than a minute to banish his unwelcome customers from the site,

and the first copies of *Police* began to be stacked up.

We were not short of things to write about. As usual, the Federation was in the middle of a bitter row with a Labour government. The Home Secretary who had just vetoed an arbitration award happened to be a politician who was once a hero to the police service—"Sunny Jim" Callaghan, the man who had been our first consultant and chief negotiator, who had pulled strings to get the 1960 Royal Commission to put the Bobby at the top of the public service payroll. To make matters worse, the pay rise that had been negotiated in September 1968 was just over three per cent when inflation was in double digits.

To make the new magazine more than just a register of Federation business, I persuaded two well known feature writers to become columnists for peanuts - Ted Willis, the man who resurrected PC George Dixon of Dock Green, the Bobby shot dead by Dirk Bogarde in *The Blue Lamp*, and Claire Rayner, who was beginning to make her name as the agony aunt in *Woman's Own* (now who's a chauvinist pig?). The first edition also featured Dogberry, the figure who became a recorder of

funny happenings in the job, and also the scourge who embarrassed a succession of jobsworths and petty bullies in high places. This small stable of regular contributors was completed by PC John Edwards of Worcestershire, better known as Jedd, for my money the best police cartoonist of them all.

Our readership consisted of the 90,000 members in the service, about two-thirds of current strength. They had their problems as they do today. Apart from pay, the big issue was manpower. London and most of the larger urban forces were still working a 48 hour week, being paid for the additional four hours.



Photography: Photo by Nobby Clark/Getty Images

Hippies: the first edition of the magazine was viewed by an unusual audience

Our members policed a population in which crime was rising, but nothing compared to the situation that exists today. There was a small black community, confined to the inner cities. Immigration and racism did not figure

Police officers came into direct confrontation with the public during the miners' strike at Orgreave in west Yorkshire



Photography: LondonPhotos - Homer Sykes / Alamy

high on the political or social agendas, a situation that was to change in very short time. The all-inclusive philosophy that applies today is light years away from the homophobic/jingoist mindset of society in the 1980s. Relationships outside marriage were not tolerated. If an officer was cited in a defended divorce case, he was likely in some forces to be charged with bringing discredit on the force.

Women were second class citizens in the police service, but seismic change was just around the corner, although these were directed from happenings outside the service, with the passing of anti-discrimination legislation. By and large, the Federation was not in the van of women's rights. How times have changed for the better.

In the past four decades, *Police* has reported on major events and developments that impact on working coppers. These included the inner-city riots of the early eighties and the two years' miners strike. We were the voice of the service in the mid-seventies when we took on and defeated the Labour government to force them to set-up the Edmund Davies Inquiry. The biggest battle was with the Tory government in the early Nineties, when we mobilised on a huge scale to defeat the core proposals of the infamous Sheehy Inquiry, although we lost substantial benefits as the price of peace, notably housing allowance. Sadly, that kind of unity is borne of frustration by rank and file officers who feel let down by successive governments, as instanced by the unprecedented mass protest at the beginning of this year.

The reality of the Federation's position when it comes up against government obduracy, is that the only weapon available is the force of persuasion. That position is coming under increasing pressure, perhaps with ominous consequences for the future. Meanwhile, *Police* must continue to speak for the rank and file, and at times for the whole service, in demanding fair treatment for the best police service in the world.

A 40th birthday is not normally a cause for celebration, because it can be seen as the onset of middle age. It may prompt wistful recollections of bygone youth, but that only reminds us of phrases like "never again". In the case of the 40th anniversary of the start of *Police*, there should be justifiable pride in a not inconsiderable achievement.

Back in 1958 the then general secretary of the Police Federation, Arthur Evans, brought forward a new venture, the Newsletter, which conveyed news of pay and conditions negotiations. It appeared at irregular intervals over the next ten years, by which time it had become more of a magazine, appearing at shorter intervals. It was then that the decision was taken to produce a monthly magazine, with a circulation aimed at covering the wider membership, not just the branch boards.