

Further details in our winter 2011 Newsletter

This photograph was taken outside the Fforestfach Division HQ of the Swansea Borough Force in about 1923. It shows Chief Constable R D Roberts alongside his Deputy Supt R Bowen, The building was still surviving until about 10 years ago and could be seen from Carmarthen Road near the entrance to the Trading estate. It was a white building of typical police architecture, a Glamorgan Police premises until 1918 when the Borough was extended. The lady in the picture is the wife of Sgt Taylor probably the Matron. Second from the left is Pc Edwards father of the late PC14 Gwyn Edwards.

Mr Roberts was the first Swansea Chief Constable to have risen from a Police Constable. He took command in 1921 following the death of Captain Alfred Thomas aged 51 yrs, (Known as Captain Alf from his army days). Captain Alf was a bachelor, a native of Swansea. He previously served as a Supt in Nottingham. His death was not unexpected – he was given 6mths leave of absence during which time he visited Switzerland in the hope it would assist his TB problem, but he died soon after returning to Swansea.

Mr Roberts – was first appointed Acting Chief Constable and later his full appointment at the age of 58 was not straightforward. Some members of the Watch Committee wanted a younger man because of the potential effects on the Superannuation Fund. He undertook to serve until 65yrs of age even though under the Desborough Regs he could remain until he was 70. He was appointed by 10 votes to 7 with many having serious doubts - not to his ability. All the discussions, hesitancy etc were resolved by the old man with the scythe. Yes, the Grim Reaper claimed Mr Roberts 6 weeks prior to his 65th Birthday. He was taken ill at the Royal Agricultural Show at Singleton in 1927 and died at his home in Tycoch the next day.