

Solved: The Mystery of the Pembrokeshire Helmet Plate



Last autumn, Mrs Jane Kimberley from Caerfai Farm St. Davids was using her daughter's metal detector in a freshly ploughed field when she unearthed a piece of metal (left) embossed *Pembrokeshire Police* with the number 48 in the centre. The piece of metal lay four inches beneath the surface and about 200 yards from the nearest road.

Hugh Colley takes up the story: Jane sought my help to find out more about her find, especially the identity of the officer it was originally issued to.

The item was swiftly identified as the remains of a Pembrokeshire Police brass helmet plate (see below). The force was formed in 1857 and the collar number of Constables and Sergeants was embossed in the centre of the plate – a practice that continued until the early 1920's. (Se



Research showed that between the establishment of Pembrokeshire Police and 1920, the number 48 was issued on just four occasions. By process of elimination, the finger of suspicion pointed to PC 48 Daniel Jenkins who served from March 1888 until April 1915.

So, did Daniel Jenkins serve in St Davids? A trawl through the Pembrokeshire Police archives by Tony Eden of Milford Haven revealed that Daniel **was** stationed at St. Davids from November 1904 until September 1910.

During my time as webmaster, I have accumulated a vast collection of Police photos including one taken in 1891 featuring a contingent of Pembrokeshire Police dispatched to Cardiganshire to help quell the Tithe Riots.



PC Daniel Jenkins No 48 is stood 2nd from the right (back row) complete with helmet AND helmet plate!!

The man wearing what looks like a leather fire brigade helmet is a bailiff. His job was to collect the tithes from the farmers who were staunch chapel goers. The tithe was 10% of their annual income which went to the Church of England – this sparked angry protest from farmers and led to direct action against landowners.



Pembrokeshire Police on their way to Cardigan – the first PSU!

Footnote: Delighted that the mystery had been solved, Jane discovered from census records that 'Our Daniel' was stationed at Letterston prior to being posted to St. Davids and spent the last few years of his Police service stationed at Little Haven.

How the helmet plate, which remained undiscovered for 110 years, ended up in a farmer's field remains a mystery.

Many thanks to Tony Eden (Secretary, Pembrokeshire Police Association) and Ross Mather (Virtual Museum of Police in Wales) for their help in solving this mystery.