The police force in any community were (and are) part of the community, and not a body apart. Nineteenth and early twentieth century Devonport newspapers illustrate this very strongly—police sporting events being seen as community triumphs (or disasters). And since the Devonport community had the Dockyard and the Royal Navy, and supporting Raglan Barracks at their core—collaboration with the naval and military authorities also went beyond working together to police the streets, sweeping up drunk and disorderly soldiers and sailors, to present to the magistrates. They were part of the life of the community—encouraged to join local sporting clubs like Devonport Albion RFC, and the Devonport Cricket Club, as well as to have their own clubs, like the Devonport Police Rowing Club, which participated in the local Regattas. Equally, serving naval or army personnel of all ranks were encouraged, while in Devonport, to join in local clubs—playing cricket, football and rugby—and organising the local regattas, brought the local communities together on the water.

On 25 November 1931, the Western Morning News announced with gratification that members of the police force at Devonport (by now a Division of the Plymouth City Police) were interested in setting up their own chess club, and joining the regional league. The Plymouth city club welcomed the prospect of the new branch.

When Devonport Albion RFC was formed by Dockyard apprentices in 1876, the team rapidly became regionally and then nationally successful. While some of the military police joined the side initially, it became an increasingly professional, paid side. In 1891, according to the Western Morning News, 31 March, Devonport Police were responsible for policing between 8,000 and 10,000 spectators, who turned up to watch Albion beat Newport.

Aiding the policing of Devonport, was a division of the Metropolitan Police, based in the Dockyard, and with its own Recreational Club. Like the Service messes, the Club developed the habit of an annual party for the poorest children of the community, paid for out of its own funds plus extra donations from all ranks, as part of a community outreach to those most likely to be delinquent or offend. In 1912, this was a Christmas party, featuring PC Greeves as Father Christmas! As well as a ‘sumptuous tea’, where the kids were waited on by the police and their wives (who made the dainties), they were entertained by the police with comic duets and recitations. At the end they were sent off with mince pies and oranges handed to them by ‘the generous bobbies whom the children learned to love—at least in plain clothes’.

Western Daily Mercury, 22 August 1912*