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# Purposeful Collaborations in Devonport Police and Services in the Community

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# Purposeful Collaborations in Devonport – Police and Services in the Community

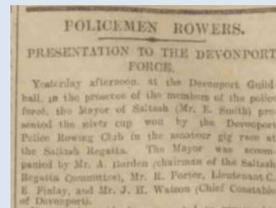
The police force in any community were (and are) PART of the community, and not a body apart. Nineteenth and early twentieth century Devonport newspapers illustrate this very strongly – with police sporting events being seen as community triumphs (or disasters). And since the Devonport community had 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!



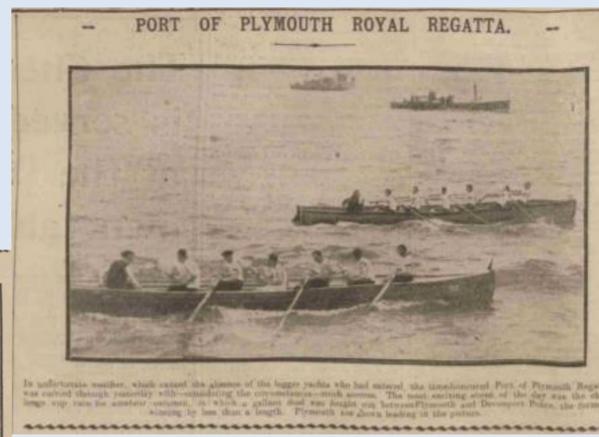
Mount Wise Cricket Ground



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



*Western Daily Mercury*,  
6 July and  
11 June 1912\*



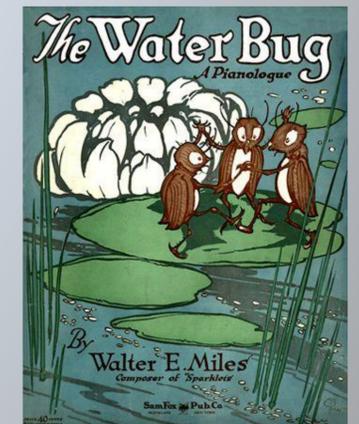
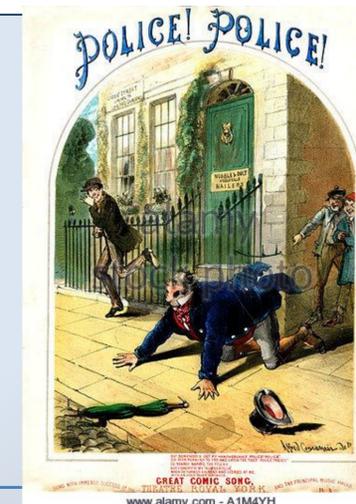
*Western Daily Mercury*, 22 August 1912\*

**Cricket!** It is on the former Naval, then United Services, ground at Mount Wise that Plymouth Cricket Club still plays. Devonport Cricket and Football Clubs, however, originally had their own pitch (also used by naval cadets) at Trevol Fields, part of Devonport Park. WW2, fast bowler Captain A A Scott, DSO RN, came down from Torquay (where he was based) in June 1944 to play in a match, Navy v Dockyard. Back in 1923, the *Western Morning News* noted that ‘Owing to the exigencies of the service’, the navy personnel in the Devonport side was constantly changing, but even so ‘the cricket is always kept at a high standard’.

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 had 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 January 1912\*



\*Newspaper extracts (c) British Library Board



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