

TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 142. Nov 2023



Father, the Gaffer, Bennie (call him what you want) and I had been downriver doing a recovery. The boat had been launched, then lifted out again at the Finnieston Ferry steps. We were now in the back of a Police car towing our boat on its trailer, back to Glasgow Green. It was nice not to be in a rush, no blue light or siren, able to sit back and enjoy the ride home, satisfied with the work we had done. That soon changed. We had crossed the river (Glasgow Bridge), turned left and were coming along past the Police Training School (Oxford Street), when the radio notified that there was a bank robbery in progress at the Queen Elizabeth Flats which was nearby. As the message was coming over, Police Officers were running out of the training school, heading to assist at the Flats; they saw the boat; so, several jumped in and sat on the seats or on the bottom of the boat holding tight onto the ropes; blue light and siren on, and a few moments later they were jumping overboard and into the Bank. What a way to arrive. you want to have seen the faces of the local Neds. In some ways, I wished this had happened today as it would have been recorded on dozens of phones and been all over Facebook.



You will no doubt know that every Division has its own shoulder number. So, another day, we were heading along the side of the river (Clyde Street) in a Northern Division (N) Land Rover, boat on tow, when over the air came a report of a robbery in a Bank of Scotland nearby, (Bath

Street). The Radio was very crackly, but the driver had made out enough, he spun the wheel, switched the siren on and sped up at right angles to the river. Now at that time Bath Street was a one-way street, but this did not deter our would-be Stirling Moss and a few minutes later he slammed on the brakes outside the said Bank of Scotland. Out he jumped baton in hand and ran into the Bank. The Bank manager looked at the Police Officer with the "N" on his shoulder and since the Bank was in "A" division, the manager pressed his alarm bell thinking the Officer was fake and this was a robbery (Very smart Bank manager). The mistake was soon sorted out. Due to the crackling of the radio, none of us had heard the word "Royal" before Bank of Scotland (The Royal Bank alarm proved to be a system fault). It got even funnier when, after everything had been sorted out, the Bank manager said to our driver "how did you get here, anyway?" and our driver, pointed out the window and said "by boat". Sure enough, the way the vehicle was parked outside all you could see was the boat. After all was cleared up, we went back to the mundane business of assisting the Police at the Forth and Clyde Canal. Excellent Police work.



When you are in a marked car, you never know what you suddenly have to take part in. We were being driven sedately, heading to assist with a recovery, driving along a road running parallel to the river. For those of you who know Glasgow, it was Ballater Street. We stopped at traffic lights, (Gorbals Cross). A car came fast up the road on our right (Crown Street), the driver leapt out, and shouted that there were two women in the river at the bridge he had just crossed (Victoria Bridge). Siren on, blue light on, we turned right through the red traffic lights, across the Bridge and were in time to work with members of the public, who, using lifebelts and ropes, were trying to bring the women to the quay wall. We took over and fortunately, the women wanted to come out, and were holding tightly to the lifebelts. Down the quay wall ladder onto a water level beam, a rope around each woman and they were able to safely climb up the ladder. How did they get into the water, none of our business and as local Officers and an Ambulance had arrived almost immediately, we left them to sort things out, proceeding on our way.