

Fredrick Sprackling (P.C.42) moved from Gillingham to Fontmell Magna on 9th July 1887, but the only information we have about him is that on 26th November 1887 he passed the necessary examinations qualifying him for promotion. He had worked in the Headquarters in 1879. In the 1891 census he was aged 30, had been born in Maiden Newton, his wife Harriet was 36, born in Thorncombe, their son Bertram was 4, born in Gillingham and Algernon was 2 months old, having been born in Fontmell. We have no date of when he left Fontmell or if he continued in the Police Force in Dorset.

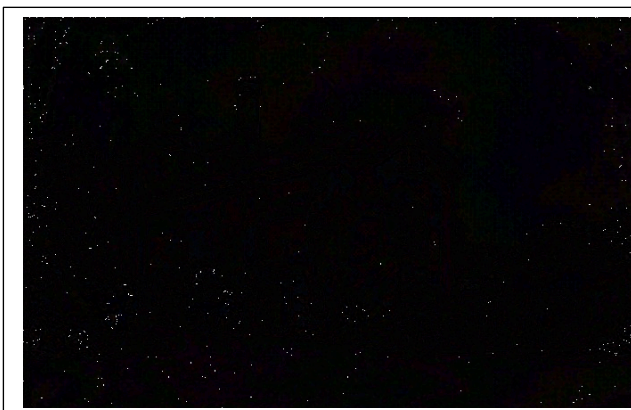
By the spring of 1901 census when George Andrews was already stationed here. He was then aged 32 and was born in Chickerell, Dorset. His wife Louisa was 30 (from Oxfordshire) and they had two sons, Leslie George and Ewart Moreton.

Trouble at the village pub.

Here's a story about events that took place at the village pub in May 1900. It seems that, on the 24th, May, it was customary in those days, for the men of the village, after work, to go to the pub and have a few pints of ale and a sing-song to celebrate Fontmell Club and Queen Victoria's birthday. P.C. Andrews was a relatively new village policeman in Fontmell and, on leaving the pub this particular night, the revellers were met by him. The ensuing confrontation led to two men being charged and summoned to appear in court. The proceedings of the court were published in the Western Gazette of the 29th, June 1900.

Ernest White, a thatcher, and Henry Jenkins, a shepherd, both of Fontmell Magna, were summoned to court for an assault on P.C. George Andrews whilst he was in the execution of his duty. In stating the facts, the prosecution said that, although the Police-Constable was not injured, he hoped the bench would mark their sense of the defendant's conduct and show that the police must not be intimidated in the execution of their duties.

P.C. Andrews said that he was stationed at Fontmell Magna. He had been 8 years in the police force. On May 24th he was on duty near the Crown Inn (now the



Fontmell) and had received complaints of noises after the inn closed. At 10 o'clock that evening, several young men left the inn and five or six commenced to shout and sing. P.C. Andrews allowed the men to shout and sing for a few minutes, but as they continued, he asked them to stop. He spoke to no individuals, but to the whole group. White then came up to him, put his clenched fist close to P.C. Andrew's face and, cursing him, said ***"You have no right interfering with these chaps when they come out of the pub, as they are allowed five minutes and more to clear out and do as they like"***. P.C. Andrews replied, ***"Look here Mr White, I have my duty to perform, and in doing it I care a snap for no man"***. The Defendant again put up his fists in a fighting attitude, saying, with an oath, ***"I'll beat your brains out, and throw you in the river if you ever interfere with these chaps again. If it wasn't for that little thing in front of your hat, I'd do it now"***. After White had finished talking, Jenkins slapped his hand on the P.C. Andrew's shoulder and gave him several backward and forward shakes, saying ***"I'm your man any day"***. P.C. Andrews replied, ***"I'm not here to fight, but to do my duty"***. Jenkins answered ***"Why don't you do it like the man did before you, then you'll get on with us chaps all right. If you upset one of us chaps, you upset the lot. The best thing you can do is go home out of sight, for if you don't, I'll smash your brains, and you'll find yourself in the river"***. Jenkins continued in a fighting attitude and used threats to P.C. Andrews. Both defendants were under the influence of alcohol.

Tom Gray, a 19-year-old youth of Compton Abbas, Stephen Rideout, a carrier's man of Fontmell, George Bradley, a labourer of Bedchester, Alfred Lane, and Charles & Edwin Toomer all gave evidence in support of the defendants. However, the court considered the case proved and the Chairman said the police were not to be interfered with in the course of their duty. The defendants would have to pay £2 0s 9d (£210 today) each, including solicitor's fees and costs.

Western Gazette 14th, February, 1867.

Thomas Ridout of Fontmell was summoned by P.C. Payne, for riding asleep in his wagon in Gillingham, without any person in charge of the horse. The defendant said he was sorry and hoped the bench would not be too hard upon him this time. He was fined 10s and costs.

We are always pleased to increase support for the society and welcome new members. Meetings are normally held at the village hall on the 3rd Thursday of the month, from 4.00 - 5.30. If you would like to help, please come along. Telephone Roger Hillman on 01747 811878

FONTMELL MAGNA VILLAGE

ARCHIVE SOCIETY

(Newsletter 23 – 2023/2. Designed and produced by Dave Hardiman).

Chairman's introduction.

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2023 from FMVAS.

The Fontmell *Public house, early C19. Rendered, colourwashed walls with shallow-pitched slate roof.*

Fontmell Magna Village Archive Society welcomes the reopening of The Fontmell which has played a large part in the life of the Village. Our records show a William and Ann Monkton were the first licencees in 1841. In 1936 Captain Barratt also ran the petrol station opposite and the car park was a tennis court. His son Ted sadly was killed crossing the road between the pub and petrol station. Roger Hillman Chairman

Police & Policing Fontmell.

The Toll House on the Sutton Turnpike (South Street) may have been erected in the early 1850s. It replaced a small building situated on the highway verge. Shortly after the passing of the Highways Act 1862, parishes were amalgamated when the Shaftesbury Highway District was formed. The Shaftesbury Division of the Turnpike Trust was terminated on 1st November 1865. It would seem likely that the old toll house was bought and renovated by Dorset Police in time for their first appointed officer in Fontmell to take up residence.



Some Fontmell Policemen.

Nehemiah Spicer P.C.26 (1828-1917) was born in Fontmell Magna but was never stationed here. He was the son of John Spicer and Ann Sharp. The Spicer family was widely spread throughout the village and Bedchester and numbered no less than 48 in the 1841 census. The family trade was carpentry but Nehemiah, then only 12, was an agricultural labourer and was a boarder with Mrs Mary Mayo at the shop in Church Street. In 1851 he was still living in the village but was now classified as a servant. At some stage in the late 1850s he must have left the village to join the Dorset Constabulary, for in 1860 the police records show that he had been stationed at Langton Matravers and was now posted at Steeple. In 1861 he was moved to Sixpenny Handley where he met and married Emma Lucas and where their first two children were born. During this period Nehemiah was promoted from 3rd to 2nd class constable. Regular relocations took the family first to Shapwick from 1864 to 1866 and then to Wimborne and Spetisbury and finally to Piddletrenthide in 1870. This was Nehemiah's final posting, for in 1873 he was declared medically unfit and retired with a pension of £82 (about £7,500 today).

Joseph Pomeroy (P.C.25) moved to Fontmell Magna on 21st February 1861 as a constable first class. In the 1861 census he was aged 33, his wife Mary Ann was 32 and his daughter Mary Ann was 6 – all born in Beaminster. On 29 October 1862 he was acquitted of a charge of being under the influence of liquor at Fontmell Magna. On 12th June 1863 he was demoted to 3rd class constable. He was 'fined a week's pay and reduced for being drunk at Fontmell Club.' He left on 14th September 1863 being transferred to Lulworth and was then charged with being drunk in daylight at Cerne. He eventually resigned on 29th September 1865 having been absent from General Inspection and found drunk. His report stated, 'Fined and removed.'