

The murder of Inspector Barry Taylor

by

Tony Moore

I was fortunate to be selected to attend the 3rd Special Course at the Police College at Bramshill in September 1964. The course was set up in 1962 to provide officers, who had been selected as 'high-flyers', with opportunities for more rapid advancement than they would have had normally. There were 54 other officers on the course, amongst them Sergeant Barry Taylor of the West Yorkshire Police. Barry successfully completed the course, which lasted for 12 months, and returned to policing West Yorkshire. In September 1967, all those who had successfully completed the course – 50 of us – were automatically promoted to Inspector.



Just under two-and-half years later, Barry's life was tragically cut short. Shortly after midnight on 15 February 1970, a known criminal, Neil Adamson, who had convictions for violence, and was, on this occasion, armed with a shotgun, broke into Sunny Bank Mills, a factory manufacturing worsted cloth, in the town of Farsley, a village in West Yorkshire, lying approximately midway between Leeds and Bradford. He shot the night watchman, 32-year-old Ian Riley dead, but, in the meantime, the alarm had gone off. A number of unarmed officers arrived at the scene, amongst them Inspector Barry Taylor. The constables were deployed around the perimeter of the factory to cut off the escape of anyone leaving and, accompanied by James Hare, an engineer who lived in a house on the site, Barry went to investigate. The two men were suddenly confronted by Adamson, still with his

loaded shotgun. In his determination not to be arrested, Adamson shot Barry dead and made good his escape. Hare was uninjured. For obvious reasons, the other officers did not attempt to stop him.

A huge manhunt was launched. In the meantime, Adamson had fled the area to Colne, a town in Lancashire, approximately 30 miles west of Leeds, where he sought refuge in a terraced house in Hagg Street, the home of John Depledge, who he had previously met whilst in Parkhurst Prison. Two days later, Adamson was traced to the terraced house and it was surrounded by some 60 plain clothes and uniform officers, including dog handlers. Some were armed. The two men were arrested without any opposition.

Adamson was charged with murdering Barry and the night watchman, Ian Riley, and subsequently found guilty on both counts at Leeds Assizes on 11 May 1970. He was sentenced to serve a minimum of 30 years imprisonment. He died in prison in the year 2000. Depledge was convicted of harbouring Adamson, knowing he had committed murder, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

Attended by over 200 people, including colleagues and senior police officers, Barry's funeral took place at St Margaret's Church, Swinefleet. At the service, the Reverend Ronald Whitehead said: 'We are proud of him in his faithfulness and his responsibility during his years as a policeman. He gave his life for us and let us never forget it ...' He is buried in the churchyard there next to his father. The grave is looked after by his niece, Mandy Cook, who was a member of the special constabulary for a time. Barry Taylor left a wife, Marjorie, and two young children, Mark, aged 3, and Karen, only 4 months. He was subsequently awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.



Sunny Bank Mill is now being renovated as a space for business and community organisations. On 15 February this year, a memorial service was held in the building to commemorate the deaths of Barry

and night watchman Ian Riley. The service was arranged by his niece, Mandy. Once the renovations are completed it is hoped that two memorial benches will be installed, one for Barry and one for Ian.

Note: In memory of Barry (and Ian Riley), Mandy will be taking part in the Great North Run on 13 September 2020, with the proceeds going to the Blue Lamp Foundation (www.bluelampfoundation.org). Donations can be made at <https://www.justgiving.com/Amanda-Cook29>



The Iranian Embassy Siege – a personal recollection

by

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Next month, on the 30 April to be precise, it is the 40th anniversary of the commencement of the Iranian Embassy Siege, when 6 armed men, calling themselves the Group of the Martyr, stormed the building at 16, Prince's Gate and took 26 people, including a police officer, Trevor Lock, hostage. The men's demands included the release of 91 prisoners then being held in Iran and a plane to carry the group with the hostages from England to an undisclosed location. Over the next five days, protracted negotiations resulted in the release of five of the hostages but, on 5 May, the men became increasingly agitated, killing one of the hostages and dumping his body on the porch of the Embassy. This resulted in a 17-minute operation in which the Special Air Service stormed the building, killing 5 of the 6 armed men and releasing 20 hostages; unfortunately, one was shot dead by one of the armed men as assault went in, meaning that only 19 were rescued alive.

I was a Superintendent at Kensington on B District of the Metropolitan Police at the time, and on 30 April, with other senior officers, I was attending the District's quarterly Senior Officers' Luncheon in the