

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42:1 [NIV]

Black History Month – CPA remembers Britain’s First Black Police Officer

By Sergeant Tola Munro, CPA member from Avon & Somerset and former President of the National Black Police Association (NBPA)

Black police officers have played an important role in serving UK communities for almost 190 years, since the dawn of modern policing in 1829. The earliest known is Constable John Kent who policed Cumbria in the 1830s, the son of Thomas Kent a freed black slave. John was described as ‘Black Kent, a person of colour’ in a letter written to the Carlisle Journal newspaper in July 1844. This matter featured in Michael Ewins’ montage of the ‘History of the Cumbria Constabulary through the Ages’, still on display at Penrith Police Headquarters where an appropriately attired black officer is depicted.

Constable John Kent started his career in 1835 as a constable in Maryport on the Cumbrian coast before transferring to Carlisle City Police in 1837. He seems to have policed in a time when what you did was more important than the colour of your skin. He



Cumbria Police Officers - Supt Carl Patrick (left) and PC Denver Matthews (middle) with Sgt Tola Munro



was accepted as a tough, brave copper. Within weeks of starting, reports show he saved a senior constable’s life; faced a knife-wielding mob and disarmed a man armed with a blunderbuss. Along with this he also dealt with the more routine matters of assaults, thefts, counterfeiting, burglary and he was assaulted himself. On one occasion it was recorded of John having being ‘ill-used’ – a probable description of having been subject to racial abuse. John was rightly praised for his work on numerous occasions and by Magistrates who described him as ‘an active and intelligent policeman’.

In 2018 former Cumbrian Police Inspector Raymond Greenhow launched his book, ‘Britain’s First Black Policeman: The Life of John Kent: a Police Officer in Cumberland 1835-1846’. Amongst other discoveries, Ray’s research found new evidence that John Kent later went on to other aspects of law enforcement, firstly as a court bailiff, then as a Constable in Longtown, before

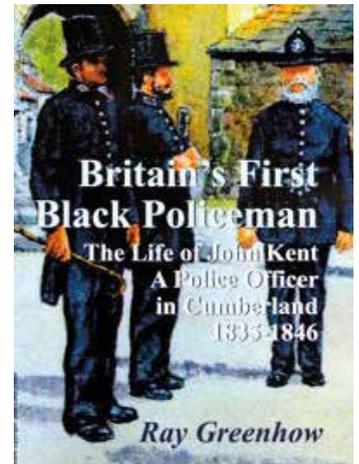
On & Off Duty

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later becoming a 'Railway police officer'. His book fleshes out this conscientious, fearless and respected police officer, universally known as Black Kent who today is still very much a part of the history of Cumbria.

In 2019 Maryport Town Council paid for a blue plaque to commemorate this Cumbrian hero, a unique privilege to recognise the service John Kent gave the town. Cumbrian Police officers, Marcia Reid-Fotheringham (Cumbria's first black High Sheriff), the local MP and others including myself attended the town on 26 October 2019 to see MP Sue Hayman unveil the blue plaque on Brow Street, which is where Maryport's jailhouse used to be.

"Britain's First Black Policeman: The Life of John Kent: a Police Officer in Cumberland 1835-1846." ISBN 978-1-912181-09-4 is published by Bookcase: https://www.bookscumbria.com/cgi-bin/trolleyed_public.cgi?action=showprod_6390



His Path, Our Journey

'For I know the plans I have for you' declares the LORD, 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' Jeremiah 29 v 11

When we consider this often quoted and quite familiar verse, it may sometimes be hard to really grasp the significance these words hold. We are told that God knows everything about us, which naturally includes not only our successes, failures, mistakes, downfalls and achievements but most importantly, also our future. With that foreknowledge we can remind ourselves that God who knows our whole life also seeks to pour out his blessings on us and in doing so also enrich our lives.

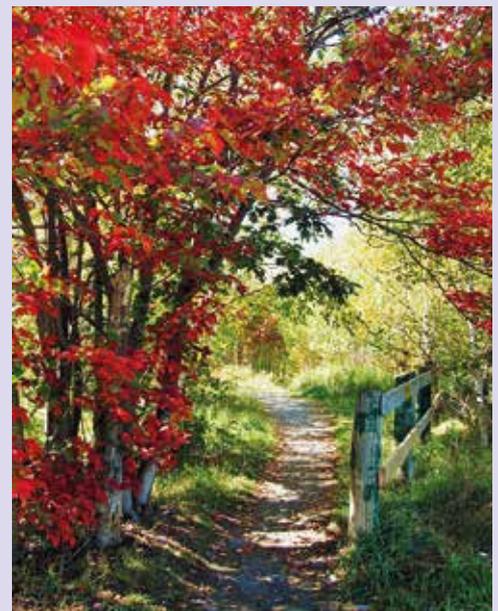
It may not always be that easy to really grasp and understand the significance of these truths. God continually seeks to guide us along a path of righteousness. However, at times, this journey can feel lonely, especially when we find ourselves struggling to understand where God is actually leading us. This can be hard, but through this we should remember that He has already gone before us and knows the challenges and problems that we will face.

At times we will all struggle to understand the 'Why me and why now Lord?' questions. However, through this we should continue to place our trust in our faithful God who promises to always be there for us. Although He never said that our walk would always be easy we should remain focused on His will and direction in the sure knowledge that one day we will fully comprehend the Glory of His mighty power at work in our lives. Trust in Him, always.

A Prayer

Lord, although I am often weak, please help me each and every day to walk in your strength and according to your divine direction. In doing so please help me to remain focused on you even when the path before me is so difficult and hard to comprehend. Thank you Lord that you are with me and before me, always. Amen

Mike Quinnell - Regional Coordinator, North East



From CPA Chair of Trustees – Marie Reavey

The months since early March 2020 have been unprecedented and challenging. For some they have been a time of grieving, for others a time of rest and for others a time of working intense hours. We need remember as Christians, in this time of uncertainty, there is the peace of knowing that Jesus reigns over every situation. Here at CPA we want to thank each and every one of you, for all that you are doing to support our Mission and Vision. There have been some great initiatives utilising social media ranging from regular online meetings to connect, catch up and pray to more formalised prayer meetings. Here at the CPA we coordinated an International Day of Prayer for the Emergency Services which was a huge success. Such truly special events have shown us just what can be done with technology.

Jesus commands us to live in pursuit of a reconciled community with one another and our neighbours, in anticipation of the age to come, where we know we will all be together praising Jesus. We are also told that we should share one another's burdens, rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. We pray that CPA continues to be a place of sanctuary, love and unity and that we would demonstrate the diversity of Father's creation. We want to ensure that colleagues who perhaps are not part of CPA but are facing current challenges know that they are welcomed and supported.

There is fear and anxiety about what the future may bring across the country and across the world. Our emergency services colleagues and many of our members, friends and partners will be feeling this too. But what is sure is that Jesus reigns above it all. We do not need to fear what lays ahead, The Lord is in control. More than ever we need to be pressing into Him praying to see an outpouring of his kingdom in our work places and the communities we serve.

Over this time here at the CPA we have been seeking Him afresh for purpose and vision, for what He wants us as Christian police officers to do. Deuteronomy 16:19-20 says *"You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe binds the eyes of the wise and subverts the course of the righteous. Justice and only justice, you shall follow, that you*



may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you." In addition, Isaiah 42:1 says *"Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon you; you will bring forth Justice to the nations."* We feel that these are significant verses that all police officers and staff, regardless of their faith can aspire to live by.

We pray that from His glorious and unlimited resources He will empower us with inner strength through his Spirit, that Christ will make His home in our hearts and keep us strong. May we have the power to understand just how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is.

'May we experience the love of Christ then we will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.' Eph 3:16-19 NLT

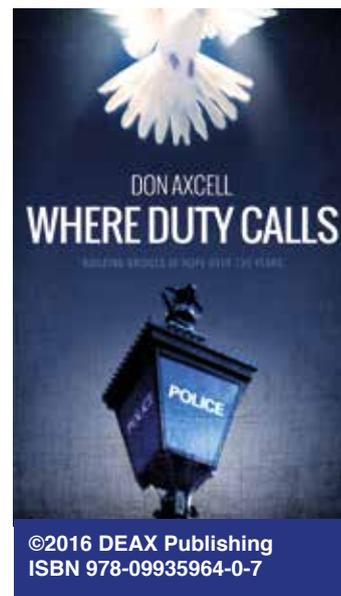
From the Director

Here at CPA we wanted to recognise the importance of Black History Month. We are grateful to Tola Munro for the updated insight into John Kent's life, and the times he lived in.

Our founder was Catherine Gurney and she was born on 19th June 1848. Readers may not be aware that Catherine's grandfather William Brodie Gurney played a leading role in the abolition of slavery as did another of Catherine's relatives called Martha Gurney. Don Axcell's excellent book "Where Duty Calls" provides a rich and thorough account of the history of Catherine Gurney and the CPA.

CPA has a longstanding tradition of engagement and active commitment to justice and to support all our communities. This is entirely supported by our Christian faith which make it very clear that we should always do so (as outlined in Marie Reavey's article).

Lee Russell MA – Executive Director



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OUR MISSION is to

- Be a National Voice for Christians in Policing.
- Encourage and support Christians in the Police Service.
- Communicate in words and action, the truth, message and hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ to colleagues and the community we serve.
- Build bridges between the Christian community and the Police.

OUR VISION is to see

- The CPA as a national charity which actively leads on issues relevant to Christians in Policing.
- An active and growing branch of CPA in every Police Service in the UK and every Christian in the Police Service to fulfil their potential in Jesus Christ.
- Colleagues and those we serve to know Jesus Christ personally.
- Police and Churches working together in every community to reduce crime and improve quality of life.

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ON & OFF DUTY is the CPA monthly digest of news and articles. We also update a monthly Prayer Diary intended to inform and encourage those associated with the CPA. Please forward any items to office@CPAuk.net by the 20th of each month.

NB. All articles published will also be available for unrestricted viewing via the Internet. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the CPA Council.

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