



Tales of the Riverman 27



On Friday 20th June 1990 I received a message from a Park Warden at Richmond Park that he had seen a woman on the outer ledge over the parapet of the bridge at Rutherglen. He had run to phone for assistance, and when he returned a few moments later the woman had disappeared. He presumed she had jumped or fallen into the river. No one saw whether or not the woman had actually entered the water.

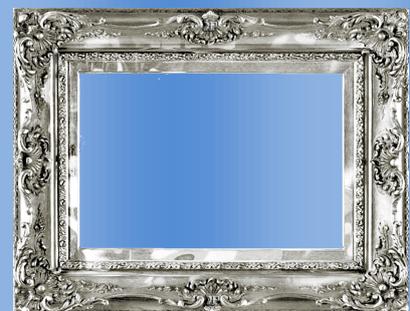
What appears to have happened was that the woman, very drunk, had been looking over the parapet of Rutherglen Bridge with a coat in her arms. The coat hung down on the outside of the Bridge, looking as if the woman was standing on the outside ledge. Thus, the Park Warden correctly raised the alarm. He, of course, had to leave the locus at this time to go to a phone and by the time he returned the woman had disappeared (subsequently found to have left the area). The Park Warden naturally assumed she had gone into the water. I carried out an intense surface search between Rutherglen Bridge and the Tidal Weir hoping that, if the woman had entered the river, she was still floating, perhaps washed downriver with the currents. I found nothing. I then commenced a search at Rutherglen Bridge using grappling irons. Within a few minutes I had recovered a solid silver bowl, which I subsequently handed over to C.I.D at Glasgow Police E Division. I say subsequently, because I actually walked over to the Eastern Police HQ, which in those days was in Tobago Street.



As I turned into the Police Office Courtyard I was confronted by men wearing white suits and mask the likes of which I had only ever seen in Science Fiction Films.



This, I found out later, was due to an incident in the north of the City which required personnel protection suits; but that Friday night, I just turned on my heels and walked back home with the silver bowl. The bowl was really beautiful, intricately shaped and designed, and obviously very old.



Next day I continued the search at Rutherglen leaving the silver sugar bowl on the kitchen table. This time, I located a solid silver picture frame. I delivered both the bowl and the frame to Eastern Police C.I.D. later on that day.



Bill Knox

On the following Tuesday evening the silverware was shown on the STV Bill Knox Police “Crime Watch” programme. I am told that a member of the Regional Crime Squad was sitting at home watching the programme when he suddenly became excited on seeing the silverware. He subsequently visited Barlinnie Prison and spoke with an inmate. This led to C.I.D and the Sub Aqua Unit Officers coming to quiz me on the 3rd July, in order to get the exact locus of where I had found the silverware. We went to Rutherglen and I showed them the spot, which it appeared, was only a few feet away from where the Barlinnie Inmate had said he had thrown items into the river. The Police Underwater Unit searched the river and found a bag of silver coins at this locus and another bag of silver coins at another spot pointed out. The silverware and coins were stolen along with armaments, allegedly taken to make Police think that the robbery was for money, but were dumped as the original idea, (so we were told), was to lay hands on weapons.



What the real story was, I never found out. What happened in the north of the City? No information!



But just think, if the intoxicated lady had not stopped to look over the parapet of Rutherglen Bridge, if the Park Warden had not spotted her, if he had not assumed she had jumped into the river, I would not have been called out to search and would not have found the silverware. The gang may never have been caught.

My mother would love to have kept the silver sugar bowl.