

“Travelling abroad as an individual was like travelling in thick fog. Travelling as a member of the Association was like travelling in clear sunshine. Everywhere I was welcomed, helped and treated like on old friend. The experience was wonderful”.

— British Police Officer writing on his travels.



by Ray Bedford

THE International Police Association (IPA) was born from an idea of Arthur Troop BEM (then a Sergeant in the Lincolnshire Constabulary) in August 1949. Arthur wrote an article for the U.K. “Police Review” detailing his success in establishing correspondence links with police in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Africa. He suggested that such contacts should be put on a proper footing and extended to include the exchange of holiday visits and professional experiences.

In a very short space of time the concept took hold and in January 1950 the IPA was officially constituted.

The IPA logo incorporates the globe surrounded by the words “International Police Association” and underneath the globe a scroll with the words ‘Servo Per Amikeco’, an Esperanto motto devised by Arthur Troop and meaning ‘Service Through Friendship’. The badge is enclosed by the internationally recognised laurel wreath, a symbol born from ages past depicting those valued virtues of the police profession, those of bravery, loyalty, integrity to name a few.

Since those early formative years the IPA has grown to become the largest Police Organisation in the world with over 200,000 members world-wide. There are currently 49 Sections world wide, and other countries are looking at forming their own Sections. The controlling body of the IPA is the International Executive Council. Each

National Section is self governing under a National Executive Council upon which each Region is represented by elected Delegates. Each Region is controlled by its own Executive Committee of elected members.

The IPA aims to promote amongst its members:

- Cultural relations in all activities which can broaden its field of knowledge.
- Ties of solidarity and mutual assistance in connection with the social purposes within its jurisdiction.
- Exchanges of professional information — taking into account the restrictions provided for in the rules.

With this in mind the IPA has these objectives:

- To unite all serving and retired members of the Police Service with a view to establishing ties of friendship and mutual aid among them.
- To organize exchange holidays, pen friendships and group visits.
- To encourage and stimulate the work of public service, to promote respect for law and maintenance of order among members of the Police Service in all member countries,

and, when the opportunity arises, to engage in social and cultural activities.

- To publish an International Police Review in several languages, a bibliography of police works and, if possible, any other publications on police, legal or judicial matters.
- To exchange publications regularly among National Sections with a view to encouraging relations between members in the IPA throughout the world.
- To establish a correspondence service to inform members on all subjects of interest to the Association.

By virtue of our chosen profession Police officers are, to a certain extent, cut off from many of the social activities in which we would otherwise take part. Within the framework of the IPA lies the answer to the problem. Whilst due respect is paid to Police rank, there is no distinction between the ranks within the IPA. All ranks, from the Probationary Constable to the Chief Commissioner, have equal rights and privileges within the Association and all members may stand for election to office, and there is no distinction as to sex, race, colour, language, religion or politics.

During the IPA’s 36 years of existence, individual Sections have established holiday accommodation of various kinds from 5-star hotels to quaint village houses and caravans. Rental would make any travel agent green with envy. For those contemplating their once-in-a-lifetime trip the IPA opens many doors, but remember you must be a financial member of the IPA for at least six months before using the services provided by the IPA. It is of course our wish that you would also see fit to remain in the IPA actively.

Membership is an ongoing association and one can obtain many benefits from belonging, but there are those subtle benefits that one can derive from ‘belonging’. In my case I have entertained, hosted and accommodated many Police officers the world over, friends that I will see again when furlough is due. It’s not hard to see why the IPA is the largest Police organisation of its type in the world and still growing.

Members interested in ‘belonging’ can contact me at Headquarters Northern Region, Brisbane or the Secretary of your local IPA Region. ●

Senior Constable Ray Bedford of Northern Region, author of this article, is well known for his interest in the extra-mural activities of police forces, particularly the study of police history. He is also Assistant Secretary General of the Australia Section of the International Police Association.