

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Thames River Police were highly successful with their original mission to protect the trade with the West Indies on the River Thames. This success led to their adoption by the state in 1800, expanding their remit to protecting all trade on the river. In the process they continued to prove their worth, not just in combating crime on the river but also in aiding with the land investigations into the Ratcliffe Highway murders of 1811.

Such actions demonstrated that a preventative police force could work and would be a positive force in London. This contributed to the creation of the Metropolitan Police, based on the same principles of preventative policing as the Thames River Police. Ten years later, they amalgamated with the Metropolitan Police and unlike the other police offices, including the famed Bow Street, they continued to exist as Thames Division. They continued to police the river through the tragedy of the *Princess Alice* disaster, the danger of the World Wars and the trials of the twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Although the river has changed over the last two centuries, particularly in the last fifty years with the decline of the docks, the Thames River Police today carry on as the Marine Policing Unit with the same mission that they have had for most of their existence, namely to protect people and property on and by the water. Although the decline of the docks meant that the founding function of protecting trade on the river vanished, they still contribute by assisting with operations further out in the Thames estuary where ships now dock. The inscription of the West India Committee's archives as a UNESCO memory of the world ensures the preservation of the Thames River Police's early history.

As forerunners of the Metropolitan Police and thus all the forces that the latter has inspired, the Thames River Police are the founders of modern policing and their principles are still practised globally. They remain the oldest continuously serving police force in the world, founded by a partnership of Patrick Colquhoun, John Harriott, the Government and the West India Committee in 1798 and their historical significance is indeed accurately reflected in their association's motto – 'Primus Omnium', the first of all.

