

'Go for a spin, guv?'

London "bobbies" Roper Galloway, left, and John Tatham were among the many British car enthusiasts who took part in the fourth annual British Car Run which started at Miller's Scottish Bakery on Guelph Street Sunday.

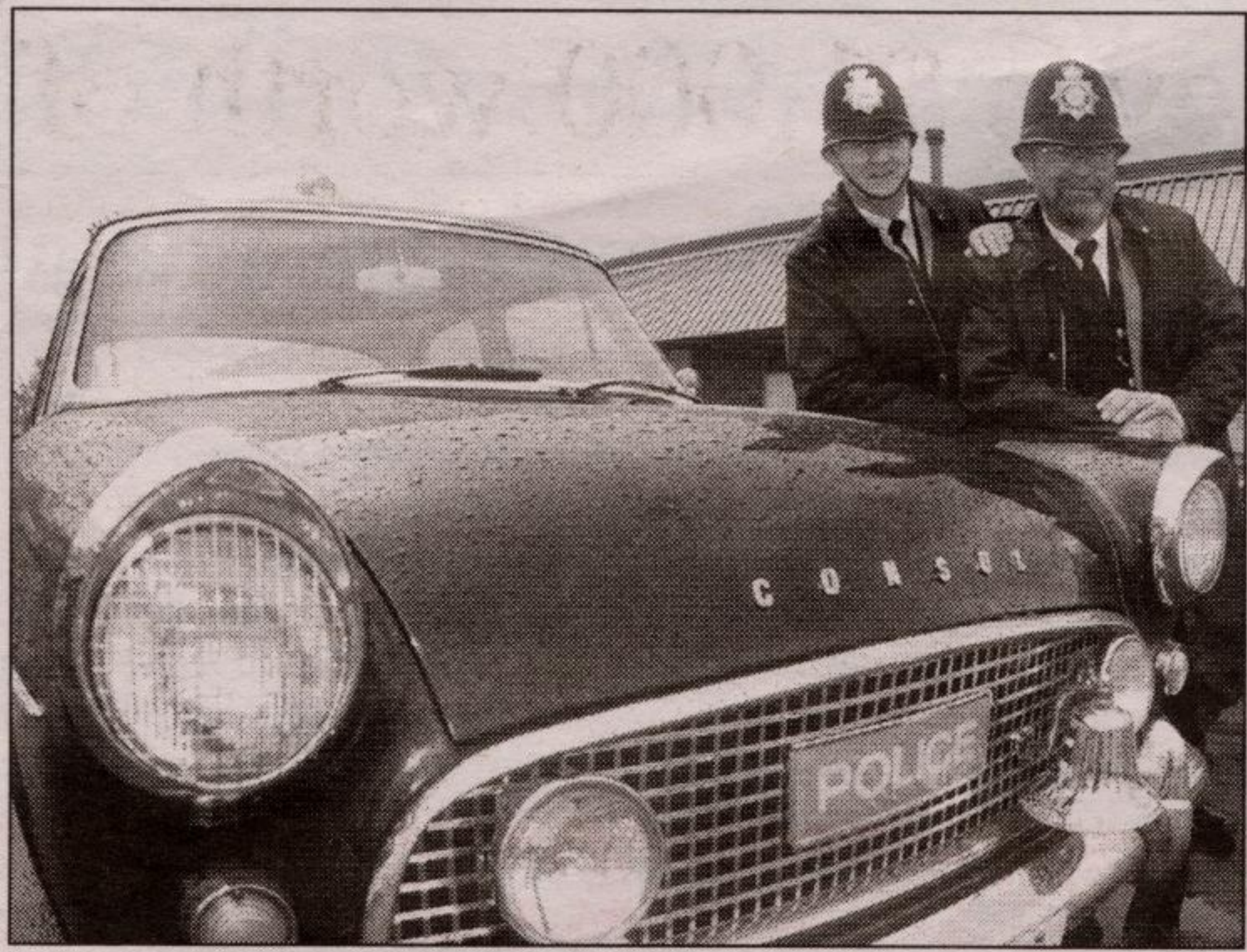


Photo by Christine Smyth

Confiscated bomb detonated in Limehouse

A homemade bomb seized by Halton Police in Oakville Thursday was detonated in a Limehouse quarry later that day.

A Scarborough man was charged with possession of an explosive substance after a Molotov cocktail device was seized during the search of a car stopped on Lakeshore Rd.

near Bronte Rd. in Oakville early Thursday.

Detective Sgt. Norm Ryall said Halton's Explosives Disposal Unit has an agreement with the owner of the Limehouse quarry allowing them to detonate explosives there.

"It's a safe place to detonate under controlled circumstances," said Ryall.

Renegade trustee will resign Investigation clears school board trustees

A Halton District School Board trustee who alleged some fellow trustees, including board chair and Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner, violated board policy and the Education Act, says he will resign after an independent investigation deemed his allegations unfounded.

Burlington Trustee Mike Ellis said his decision to quit comes in the wake of Gardiner asking for his resignation during Wednesday night's board meeting. However, Ellis insists the decision is his alone.



ETHEL GARDINER

"They can ask for my resignation until the cows come home. I am not going to quit just because she (Gardiner) wants me to quit," Ellis said. "But I will be resigning, not because they asked me to, but I have said all along that somebody needed to go... obviously, it needs to be me."

Ellis added he feels he can no longer be an effective trustee and has no other choice but to quit.

"That's why I got into the trustee thing four years ago," he said. "I've been pretty outspoken. I've probably bent a number of rules and I've got people action where the board wouldn't respond. And, if I am not in a position to continue on like that, if I am just going to get black-balled by the rest of the trustees and administration, then it wouldn't be fair to the community (for me) to continue on."

Gardiner asked for Ellis' resignation after delivering a report clearing board members of any wrongdoing.

Ellis' allegations prompted an internal audit conducted by risk consulting company Kroll, Lindquist, Avey. Gardiner addressed the issue by reading from a statement prepared by the board's legal counsel.

"It is quite clear from the report ... that there is no evidence of any financial wrongdoing, misconduct or impropriety on the part of any trustee, employee or other representative of the board," Gardiner read.

"I think it's very sad the board has had to go through this, but when allegations of that particular nature are made, it's incumbent upon the board to assure the public that funds are not being misallocated," Gardiner added following the public meeting.

Specifically, Ellis contends the board presented incomplete information to the public regarding school closures. He also believes the board improperly approved an extension to the personal service contract of Director of Education

Dusty Papke. Ellis said Papke's new deal will ultimately cost taxpayers too much money and that the minutes approving the deal from a meeting in May somehow disappeared from the official board records.

"There are 20 minutes missing in the final approved minutes. If she (Gardiner) is saying there is no wrongdoing I'd love to see how they've got away with there being nothing wrong with that," Ellis said.

"Where did those 20 minutes go from that private session meeting that they knowingly approved on the director's contract? They've got it (the May meeting) finishing at 11:30 p.m. when I didn't even leave the meeting until 11:45 p.m."

The chair, however, stands by the audit report and dismisses Ellis' claims.

Ellis did not attend Wednesday's board meeting. He has received special medical permission to participate from home via telephone.

When the board called Ellis Wednesday around 8 p.m. no one answered.

The trustee said he was out of town, dealing with his medical condition.

"That's specifically why I did ask for a medical leave," he said.

Ellis didn't say when he'll make his resignation official, but indicated the issue of alleged improprieties is not over as far as he's concerned.

He plans to take the matter to local MPP Ted McMeekin with the hope of getting the provincial government involved.



MICHAEL ELLIS

For his constituents, Ellis leaves these parting words, "I've loved my job."

"I've loved it for the past four years. I love the people and love doing what I've done," he said. "But, if I can't do it for them anymore, then I guess it's time they get someone else."

Gardiner stands by the report's findings, which she says cost the board more than \$50,000, and is hoping to put the Ellis issue behind her so the board can continue with its mandate.

"This board is committed to serving kids and we all know that's what we're here for. It's absolutely time that we get on with that," Gardiner said.

"The investigation has taken a tremendous amount of money, a tremendous amount of time and it's has taken the focus away from where the focus should be."

—By Robb Swybrons, special

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