

# The Fingerprint Society



## PRESS RELEASE

18<sup>th</sup> August 2008

### The Fingerprint Society commemorates 60 years since landmark fingerprint identification

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948 a crime took place in Blackburn that was to shock the nation and make forensic science history.

3 year old June Anne Devaney was taken from her cot in Ward CH3 of Queens Park Hospital and brutally murdered. The only tangible evidence was fingerprints found on a Winchester bottle that was lying next to the empty cot.

This discovery triggered a mass fingerprint exercise (the first of its kind), where all males over the age of 16 and were known to have been in Blackburn during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May, were to be fingerprinted and compared to the marks found at the crime scene.

After the collection of over 46,000 sets of fingerprints the identification was made on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1948, and the donor, 22 year old Peter Griffiths (an ex-Guardsman) was arrested the next day. He was found guilty of the murder and was hanged at Walton Gaol on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1948.

On Saturday (16<sup>th</sup> August 2008), to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fingerprint identification, 3 members of The Fingerprint Society committee (pictured) attended the grave of June Anne Devaney and placed a floral tribute.

#### **THE FINGERPRINT SOCIETY:**

The Fingerprint Society was formed in 1974 to advance the study and application of fingerprint evidence and to facilitate the co-operation among persons interested in this field of personal identification.

They currently have a global membership in excess of 500.

Website: [www.fpsociety.org.uk](http://www.fpsociety.org.uk)

The Fingerprint Society would like to thank Margaret's Flower Market of Colville Drive, Bury who kindly donated the flowers and the website cottontown.org for its information on the location of the grave.

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*Photograph:*

*Left - Kevin Kershaw (Greater Manchester Police)  
Centre - Cheryl McGowan (Lancashire Constabulary)  
Right - Richard Case (Greater Manchester Police)*

*All committee members of The Fingerprint Society*



***In Remembrance of June Anne Devaney***

*On behalf of The Fingerprint Society, in recognition of the crucial role that the fingerprint system and fingerprint experts played in bringing your killer to justice over 60 years ago.*

*Rest in Peace,*

