

## Obituary - David Hill QPM

The late David Hill, red24's senior security consultant and a former Deputy Chief Constable of Gwent Police, has died aged 62.

David Hill QPM served as a police officer for 33 years, retiring in 2000. He subsequently pursued a career as a senior security specialist with London-based consultancy red24. He died in March this year, after losing his battle with melanoma cancer.



Before joining red24, David enjoyed a long and highly successful career with Gwent Police, joining the force in 1967, having dabbled previously in the rock 'n' roll industry playing for Tom Jones one time, alas before he was discovered!

David, as a raw recruit aged 22, was initially a patrol officer in the Newport area but it was his time in CID that defined much of his career with high-profile roles such as Commander of the Western Area of the National Crime Squad - the forerunner to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) - where he was in charge of 400 detectives across the Midlands, Wales and Southwest England. He led many serious criminal investigations including enquiries into murder, drugs and human trafficking, sexual assault and serious financial crime.

He was respected throughout the region, and nationally, for his hard work and dedication.

It was during this period that he first met Neil Thompson, former Detective Superintendent in what was then the Regional Crime Squad. Neil also went on to become a security specialist at red24, and fondly remembers his time served with David both in and outside of the force.

"I first met David nearly 20 years ago when I was a Detective Chief Inspector in No.7 Regional Crime Squad (RCS) and he transferred from Gwent as the Regional Coordinator. He was a Chief Superintendent who had spent the majority of his career in CID, and his experience commanded great respect.

"What impressed us all was that he was a forward thinker who immediately brought in new ways of working, which fitted the RCS concept but increased its efficiency and output.

"I was part of David's senior management team. It was a team that worked hard but no matter what the situation, he was always available to advise and guide us. He was



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the ultimate professional, always led from the front but listened to others, and combined this with a great sense of humour – you need that, particularly in difficult circumstances.

“He received continuous praise from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in the way he commanded his squad and his region became the role model for all other regions. There are still some of his management team serving with SOCA who would categorically say that they learnt more from David Hill than any other person they had served with.”

He rose to the rank of Assistant Chief Constable and finally Deputy Chief Constable.

In 1988, David was awarded the Queen’s Police Medal for his distinguished service. Amongst many other achievements, the Gwent force had the second highest crime detection rate in the whole of the UK by the time he retired.

David’s work at red24 was no less notable, utilising his considerable experience in kidnap, extortion and counter terrorism for the benefit of his many clients.

Neil Thompson said: “He was our senior security consultant and was constantly in demand by the media to give his views on crime and terrorism. He spoke at a large number of conferences, became a Director of our South African crisis management centre, mentored the General Manager and also headed up HR. He was a man who could wear many hats with ease.

“He had so much experience from his days in the force at senior level which stood him in great stead, particularly a sense of balance and fairness. I remember him responding to questions in a TV studio when the police shot Jean Charles de Menezes. It was being reported that de Menezes was a terrorist and David calmly responded, live on air: ‘Let’s not call him a terrorist yet, let’s just wait and see’. How wise.”

Maldwyn Worsley-Tonks, red24’s Managing Director also recalls David’s time as a senior security consultant: “David brought many skills to the business through his operational experience in the police and his general common-sense approach to life. This helped him generate a great interface with clients when advising them on their security issues. He was also pivotal to the restructuring of the red24 business in 2007, turning it into a profit-making organisation for the first time since it was established. On a day-to-day basis he was highly respected by colleagues and clients alike, which provided outstanding support to the business development team.

“On a personal level, I always had respect for, and greatly valued, David’s opinion on professional and personal issues. He was a kind and considerate person, with an enormous experience of life to draw on which provided him with a refreshing view on many subjects. He was a great story-teller and had a wonderful sense of humour which always made him a pleasure to be with. There are very few people with that sort of charisma.”

Outside of work David enjoyed life to the full. He was a devoted family man and animal lover, with his beloved Alsatian, Diffa, as a constant companion. True to his



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Welsh roots he also enjoyed singing and was a keen supporter of the national rugby team.

Fortunately for Neil Thompson he was also accomplished in DIY: “I have been renovating a house in France for a number of years and we spent many weeks together installing new electrics and plumbing. David’s skill as an amateur tradesman was matched only by his capacity for red wine and I can vividly remember him accidentally falling through the floor after one of our ‘tasting’ sessions! He just loved life and had a tremendous sense of fun.

“He was a colleague, mentor, and a friend - a very special person.”

David is survived by his wife Eryl, sons Darran and Jason, and five grandchildren.

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**Notes for editors:**

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