This paper deals with an experience of ethnographic fieldwork within the French national police and several English police forces. The PhD research is about police socialisation and police learning on the job, and relies on fieldwork within the police, direct observation, in-depth recorded interviews as well as many valuable informal exchanges. This methodology proved very fruitful and allowed us to observe the socialisation process of the police recruit in a way that would not have been possible with other research methods, especially the direct transfer of experience, informal skills and cultural attitudes (in the making) from experienced police officers to police recruits. The experience of fieldwork within the police in both countries has been very different if not completely divergent. Access to the police is very restricted in France for researchers who are considered as intruders, you constantly have to work on your acceptance and legitimacy, dealing with suspicion and evasive strategies from police officers. I would argue that as well as being an interesting insight into French police culture it also makes it more challenging for the ethnographer to survive in “enemy territory”. And once more or less accepted by some patrols, I was sometimes presented to the public as a plain clothes senior officer and even had to deal with some situations which obviously pose striking ethical issues. On the contrary, the experience of ethnographic fieldwork within various English police forces has been much more straight-forward and facilitated, I was wearing an observer ID and the public was asked if they did not mind having me around and I faced less suspicion from police officers. Interestingly, self-reflection on this ethnographic fieldwork within both countries informs our comparison of police socialisation and police culture. In other words, the choice of fieldwork research methods contributed greatly to our research questions.