



STOP MESSAGE

The magazine of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Past Members Association



**House fire Victoria Road
Portsmouth**
October 1977

An Unusual Obituary - Common Sense

An Obituary printed in The Times. Interesting and sadly rather true.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, life isn't always fair, and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a 6 year old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch, and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers:

I Know My Rights

I Want It Now

Someone Else Is To Blame

I'm a Victim, Pay Me

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.



Are you reading this magazine and are not a member? Why not join the Past Members Association and receive your own copy? Membership costs just £10 per year.

Magazine contributions sought and gratefully received.

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Front cover: Dennis Watertender Ladder UTP 78 K and Bedford Watertender JOW 96 IP, both from Southsea, in Victoria Road North, 3 October 1977. UTP 78K started life with the Portsmouth City Fire Brigade as a Pump Escape in 1972, converted to a Watertender Ladder (or technically a Pump Ladder) in June 1977 and then converted a Water Carrier for Fordingbridge in 1983. JOW 96 IP was issued new in October 1976.



STOP MESSAGE



Welcome from the Editor



So, here we are with Issue 2 of "Stop Message". I hope that you will find it an enjoyable read and that it stirs good memories of the past. I am grateful for those who reacted to my request for articles and letters. As we plan to have 4 issues each year your ongoing contributions will assist me greatly.

Our membership continues to grow and as I write this we have 236 members. We have our ceremonial Standard and coffin drape, a tie has now been ordered and a lapel badge is being designed.

A programme of social events is being planned and we hope that we will be able to tempt everyone to attend some of them. Our Xmas event and curry and chilli club night were both a great success.

I would remind everyone that whilst we will do our best to send notifications to all members, email remains the fastest and the no-cost route. Do please tell us if you change or open up a new email account. Those with internet access can also keep up to date by regularly checking our website www.xhfrs.org.uk.

Finally, I welcome Carole Hobbs, Ann Bone and Chris Lunn to the Committee and wish to thank Colin I've who, due to other commitments, has had to resign from Committee work.

Alan House

Guest editorial

Eric Hounslow



I was delighted to be invited to pen a guest editorial for the PMA Magazine, not least because it affords me the opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts of Alan House and his hardworking committee who have brought the Past Members Association from an idea to a progressive, active and flourishing organisation. It provides members “yesterdays men and women” with good communications and an excellent social programme.

Change has been so swift in the Service that few who have been out for more than a handful of years can understand much of the contents of the “Exchange” the Official Brigade Magazine. It is good therefore to have our own magazine with news, views and articles helping us to both fondly reflect on what was, and to keep in touch with former colleagues, personalities and events.

It is pleasing to know that the PMA has a membership in excess of 235 and rising. So much hard work has gone into the founding

and launching of the Association, I hope every member will do their utmost to recruit at least one colleague so as to ensure the Association goes from strength to strength. How about it? There is an active social programme on offer through the year so do give it your support.

Lamenting change is not, universally, a useful pastime, for change, providing it is for the good, is both productive and necessary. The Service of today is business orientated where “The Business Plan” appears to be the overarching and oft quoted mantra and statistics and targets are the watchword. (Except for Regional Controls that is, where Business Plans, it seems, can morph to financial and technical disasters) Government driven “demilitarisation” has, some would claim, led to a less than well dressed Service and, allied to external social change has, perhaps, completed the transfer of the Service we knew from a way of life to just a job.

I close by placing on record every good retirement wish to Alan House who, after an incredible 42 years (4 types of helmet and 4 cap badges in the same county) hangs up his Gallet on 30 April. His sense of tradition and history has served us and the Service well and his energy and professionalism has kept Hampshire at or near the top in the appliances and equipment league. A proud record indeed!

Eric Hounslow



New Years Honours List Congratulation

Congratulations to Norman Brown, for many years a retained Fireman at C29 Eastleigh, who was made an MBE in the New Years Honours. Norman, a Second World War Veteran who served with the Royal Engineers in France and Belgium, has a long and proud record of public service. He was a great supporter of the Ben Fund and outside the Service has been a stalwart of the British Legion. The Award is for services to the Legion in Hampshire. In addition to being District Chairman he has been a pivotal figure in the Poppy Appeal in Hampshire for the past 15 years. Norman, now a sprightly 83, said that the Legion had been looking after heroes for 88 years and he wanted to put something back for what his mates had done and for what the lads and lasses are doing out there today.

Eric Hounslow

The Jester's Tale

Seeing my old mate John (Joe) Lacey's item in the Past Members Association website on his Maserati Ghibli, it made me think that readers might be interested in a little secret I keep in my garage.

Ever thought that it might be a really fun thing to do to build your own car? Well if you've got all the skills of a highly trained mechanic with years of experience, a comprehensively equipped and full sized workshop with every imaginable tool and piece of equipment, unlimited free time at your disposal, a bank account with a balance somewhere in the region of the GDP of a small country, and most importantly a wife/husband/partner who is happily resigned to not seeing you in the evenings and at weekends for years on end, you might, just might, make your dream a reality. In my case I had none of the above.

What started as a good idea finally hit the road some 10 years and several thousand pounds later, meet the Jester.

The journey starts with buying the tube frame chassis from the manufacture Sylva Sports Cars. Next you find a suitable donor car, in this case a nice little Mk 1 1.3 Ford Fiesta Ghia. Then all you have to do is strip all the components and parts off the donor car fit them onto the new chassis, slip on the one piece plastic body, put in a couple of seats and away you go, what could be easier than that?

It didn't take very long to realise that with my limited resources and even more limited skills I was going to need some serious help. Riding to the rescue in the nick of time came an old Army chum Peter. Not only does Peter have a full size fully equipped workshop, he's a trained and skilled mechanic, amateur racing driver and most importantly, when it comes to cars, he's a sucker for a lost cause.



Peter took one look at my earlier efforts and said, "I thought you were meant to be building a car, not a shed! Lets start again shall we". So we did, or more accurately, he did. Using skill, ingenuity and in some cases just brute strength, he slowly and painstakingly, weekend by weekend, brought the Jester to life.

The end of the story you might think, well think on. Even with Peter's prodigious talents he was going to meet his match with the Vehicle and Operators Services Agency (VOSA) and their fiendishly difficult Single Vehicle Approval (SVA). The SVA is a testing procedure that every amateur built car has to go through before it can be licensed, and it's tough! So off to Specialist Sports Cars in Wales, who make it their business to know the 1001 mindboggling pernickety criteria that have to be complied with to get the car through, at a price, and wow what a price!

So there it is, the Jester's tale, yes it gets taken out on fine summer days and it's enormous fun and it certainly turns heads, and what about performance, 0 to 60? I've never been brave enough to try it!

If you still think that a kit car is for you, I wish you all the luck in the world, you're going to need it!

Philip (Cris) Crisford



The Fire Service & D-Day

As the build up of military personnel and hardware was assembled along areas of the south coast in preparation for D-Day, a number of military marshalling areas were established.



Military Camp, Martins Corner, Nr Fareham, June 1944

Each marshalling area consisted of a number of encampments divided into areas. As an example, marshalling 'Area A' which was situated in B Division of Fire Force 14, had 23 separated camps. Such camps were hidden in forested areas and each was the home for troops who lived in tented accommodation together with their vehicles, equipment and supplies, including large fuel and ammunition dumps.

Due to the non existent water supply in many of the camps, the preferred vehicle was the Mobile Dam Unit with its 500 gallon water tank. Additionally, a number of static water supply tanks were constructed, ranging from 5000 gallon to 20000 gallon capacity. In some locations surface 6" pipes were laid to provide water routed to temporary hydrants. This work being completed by NFS personnel,

but often with the persuaded help of the military.

As the weeks passed towards what would become known as D Day on 6 June, the number of troops and the supply dumps increased considerably.

When in the camps the NFS detachments trained the encamped troops in basic firefighting and fire prevention measures. During what was a very dry period in the lead up to June, several fires did occur and crews went into action on a number of occasions including a serious fire in a canned petrol dump. There were a number of vehicle fires with crews facing the challenge on several occasions of fully operational tanks on fire. Many of the fires started in the gorse and grass, sometimes as a result of training. Due to the high concentration of personnel and supplies, including ammunition

hidden in adjacent wooded areas, it was obviously essential that these were dealt with quickly.

Great emphasis was placed on the need for secrecy and all letters from NFS personnel were subject to military censorship. The question of security was also heavily enforced with Control Room staff due to the amount of sensitive information passing through. Certain messages, particularly those involving the movement of vessels were passed in code.

Additional to their normal range of training, crews received instruction from the military on the art of camouflaging vehicles and, in anticipation of heavy attacks on the area should the German Military become aware of the troop and equipment build up, light rescue training was given to firemen to support the Civil Defence Rescue Service. This was the first time that a structured programme of rescue training had been given to the Fire Service. These were the days of limited availability of breathing apparatus and also limited trained wearers. Additional BA sets were amongst the increased identified equipment and subsequently it was necessary to train additional personnel in its use.

Due to the Fire Service operating in what would be seen as a military target area, increased training



Military Camp "Nr Portsmouth" June 1944

was given in preparing and dealing with a gas attack and also 'objects dropped from the air' including anti personnel mines, phosphorous bombs and unexploded bombs.

The Fire Service became involved in unusual tasks during this period, assisting the military with top secret operations. In anticipation of the needs of an invasion force following the initial beach landings, a number of floating concrete sections were built in great secrecy at various locations. As soon as it was deemed safe to do so these would be towed across the channel and joined together to form a Mulberry Harbour to be used by reinforcing supply ships. These sections when built were sunk in various locations out of sight from German reconnaissance aircraft. A problem arose

to place the additional workshops facilities in the main target areas, opting instead for mobile 'field' workshops that could be set up where needed.

The mobile workshops could be sent out to deal with servicing and maintenance requirements around the areas but could be brought together at a given location to form a full field workshops, capable of maintaining a number of vehicles at one time.

Any major repairs to vehicles were dealt with 'north' of the Blue area. Vehicles would firstly be taken to a dispersal point where they would be stripped of equipment and await onward transport/movement to a repair depot out of the Region as designated at the time by Regional Headquarters. At the time a new Divisional Workshops facility was being constructed

“ Objects dropped from the air, including anti personnel mines, phosphorous bombs and unexploded bombs ”

when trying to refloat these ready for deployment when the mud into which the sections had sunk refused to release them as planned. NFS crews were used to provide water jets to disrupt the hold of the mud and successfully remove them from their hiding places ready for deployment across the channel.

A request was also received for urgent and top secret assistance in trial pumping at Lepe, where a 3 inch pipeline had been laid under the Solent between Lepe and the Isle of Wight to simulate the flow of petrol. This led to the creation of PLUTO (Pipeline Under the Ocean) which was used to feed much needed petrol to the invasion troops advancing throughout Europe.

With the increase of vehicles in the Blue areas it was necessary to increase the vehicle workshops facilities. A further consideration was that, should the Germans discover the build up of military forces along the south coast, it would likely prompt the attention of the German air force. It was therefore seen as sensible not

at Kingsworthy near Winchester, and extra resources were put to bringing this facility into operation earlier to serve as a dispersal point. The building was made available one month prior to D Day and in April 1948 it was this location that served as the Workshops for the newly formed Hampshire Fire Service.

All transport officers and workshops staff, including those moved to the area as part of the Colour Scheme, were expected to learn the locations of all establishments throughout their own and neighbouring areas so that they could be used as necessary beyond the 'home' Fire Force.

Alan House

To be continued...

Dennis Pump Escape from Station 1
(Southsea) in Russell Street circa 72/73



Another New Recruit

It was 1970 and I had applied for a position with the Portsmouth City Fire Brigade. I have completed the strength test. To carry a 12 stone man 100yds in under a minute. ‘Right then pick that little bloke up and run across the yard and back’ Ok you’ve passed’. It was all over in less than 25 seconds. I have passed the physical test. To be; over 5ft 6in and have a chest measuring at least 36in with an expansion of 2in. No high heels or padded underwear. ‘Ok you’ve passed’.

I am male, although there appears to be no examination to confirm this fact. Those of you who knew me then when I was younger, will find this surprising, because having such a very delicate visage I could easily have been mistaken for an attractive young lady. Well I agree I might have had to stand in the shadow of the Portsmouth Guildhall clock on a particularly dark and rainy night. Anyhow in time honoured fashion I got the, ‘OK you’ve passed’.

‘Right then, you got through this bit now you’ll have to take the written exam and that takes place in the

old AFS fire station at Somers Road, be there on Friday report to Mr. Allen’. The old AFS fire station was in fact a converted garage across the road from the main station. I am informed that the main station was rebuilt by firemen after the war, using salvaged bricks collected and cleaned from bomb rubble, every brick had been used and pressed into service again, now that is energy saving and green.

Having attended and passed the written papers, which included, arithmetic, dictation, comprehension and general knowledge (one question sticks out

in my mind - who was the Peach Melba named after!)

I was told I would get a letter in a couple of weeks. It duly arrived informing me when I was to report for interview. On arrival at the interview I was taken to see the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Bray, who asked me among a very wide range of questions whether I had read the bible, naturally I lied and said yes.

At the time I didn’t know he was a Church of England lay preacher, but fortunately at school I had been top of my class for religious knowledge so I knew where Golgotha was.

Coming from Wymering I knew it was a big pub at the end of Allaway Avenue in Paulsgrove, phew! Just got away with that one. After that he had a warm spot for me for the rest of his service.

From beyond the grave I'm sure I can hear his voice now. "Yes young man it has four letters and begins with H."

**“ Yes young man it
has four letters
and begins with H ”**

It also transpired that a key question was 'What was your employment immediately prior to entry?' Well I had trained as a professional chef but for various reasons I had changed trades and had been working as a motor mechanic at Wadham's immediately before applying for the fire brigade. The significance of this only became obvious much later.

The PCFB was not a wealthy brigade and every penny had to be spent wisely, hence Mr Allen the finance officer played a key role in every aspect of the selection process.

I later found out that recruitment also involved taking in men of a size that would fit the uniform and whose trade skills could be deployed for the benefit of the brigade. Obviously in the week that I applied they were looking for a 6ft 2in motor mechanic. Wisely I had not revealed my cross-dressing tendency at this time or who knows when I would have got in!

You will have noted from the sequence of events above that the selection process evolved gradually, employing the cheapest sifting method first. I can almost hear Chief Officer George Brunner saying, 'Find me men to fit these trousers'.

I'm sure the service today could learn a lot from this.

Having got me this far for thruppence ha'penny, the PCFB felt confident enough to fund the cost of a medical examination. So one bright and sunny afternoon I was dispatched to the surgery of Dr Langmaid in Festing Grove, Southsea.

The surgery was situated in a large semi detached Victorian house consisting of three storeys over a sub

basement. The ground floor had a huge bay window with smaller ones above. I climbed the six or seven steps to reach the front door.

Using the large bronze ring knocker, I proclaimed my arrival. The doctor's receptionist, who turned out to be Mrs Langmaid, from her garb she had just come through from the kitchen, bid me enter and I was guided through an adjacent hall door into the presence of the great man of medicine.

So this is where the brigade is spending a full florin.

The doctor's examination room was ill lit, by a low wattage ceiling lamp and a small desk lamp. He confirmed my name, age and a few other forgettable questions and then said "Go behind the curtain and strip off to your underpants, I'll see you in a moment".

For some reason the act of undressing is considered embarrassing and not an activity to be undertaken in front of someone, but simply appearing near naked seems to be quite another thing, how strange we are!



Escape to work, Fratton Road, Nr St Marys church. Sub Officer Tom Smith, Leading Fireman Malcolm Tipton, Fireman Bill Collins and Fireman Bob Seal

Turning, I noted a heavy drape, which was obviously the curtain he was referring to. Preparing to undress I drew it back and stepped into almost blinding sunlight. I was in the bay window, so there I was, my modesty protected from the doctor by a heavy velvet drape but on public display to all of Southsea, it was sheer farce and absolutely hilarious. I stripped off as instructed and returned through the curtains to the doctor and Victorian rectitude. Dr Langmaid placed his hands on my lower abdomen and bid me cough. So there was a gender check after all, luckily I'd left the frillies off that day.

PCFB - No 134

Letters



An opportunity for members to express their views, share news, seek assistance or simply tell us what is going on in their life. So, if you have something to say, make the page come alive for all to see. We would like to hear from you.

Hi Alan

Thanks for the 1st issue of the PMA I received today. I think I will sign up for membership, particularly if there are more articles like the one submitted by Malcolm Waterman, I laughed till I cried. As you know, I served at a 'rustic' station, C35, and we had our fair share of 'Burts', great country characters, also to be found in stations like Burley. I could also relate to CFO Pearson having been at the wrong end of his nature whilst in charge of a night duty in Control. We were in the process of mobilising to an incident and I was unaware of his entrance into the Control Room until he was alongside me saying "Don't you stand when the Chief comes in". He was obviously not amused and, I have to say, neither was I.

Best regards

Chas Pickett
ex Control and C35 Sutton Scotney
Oregon, USA

We would very much like to join you for a Christmas celebration on 10 December, unfortunately we live about 350 miles away in the lake district, so it is not really a viable trip for one night at this time of year, if however you had an evening in the summer of next year we would seriously look at the possibility of coming down for it.

Please pass on our good wishes to everyone and we will try very hard to attend at least one event in the year

Bob and Mary Smith
Ex D56

With regard to the Gosport article, the 2 guys with Jack Hutchins are on left of picture Tom 'Jock' Brown, who ended up at Fareham, after Gosport and Havant, as a Leading Fireman. He was Ben Fund rep and did a superb job. The guy to the right is Les Pratt who at one stage was the WT Ff at Petersfield when 2 pump retained stations had such an arrangement.

PS: Is it Dennis Hancock holding the foam branch on page 19 of issue 1?

Re PE HOU 558 Gosport, I was on the night crew that broke the escape ladder when doing a stretcher rescue from the smoke chamber roof, Kevin Clifford was the LF in charge. That was the end of PE's at Gosport as it was replaced by a new WRL with 135.

Phil Griffiths

Wow! Hi Alan or should I still say Sir.

What can I say it was a pleasant surprise to hear from the old homeland and looking at all those faces. Some I haven't got a clue, some just seem to jump out at you like Derek Wynne. One thing predominant is the amount of grey hair but who am I to comment on the hair. I remember being at Eastleigh training school (the old one that is) on my first BA course and John Bishop saying to me "my god Fm Barron haven't you gone grey" and my response was "yes and it's all your fault, I only had 3 grey hairs when I joined the job now look at me". So life goes on and it's 20 years since I've been out of the job and there isn't a day goes by that I do not think of my time in the brigade and all the guys (oops here comes the odd American word) and my time in the job.



Moved around a bit since retiring and lived in Florida for 13 years and owned 2 businesses, one real estate company and the only British owned cab company in Florida. More upmarket, using minivans and SUV's - more like a limo service than the typical yellow cab service. While doing that we came into contact with many retired firemen from all over the country and they all said the same thing that they seem to have lost contact with the job and that it was the best time of their lives and I can say hand on heart I have to agree. One of the biggest shocks I had in Florida was when we invited a client to our house one evening and he bought along a friend and who walked into my home but Mick Barnes. Well you could have knocked me down with a feather. Walked into a convenience store one afternoon and standing in line to be served was Sammy Small. So it is a small world.

While in Florida I met some very interesting people and after 13 years doing 16 hour days and finally receiving our green card (legal resident alien), Di and I decided to retire so we sold the business and moved to Oregon (the day after we sold the house it was hit by "Hurricane Charlie" now that was a close thing). We spent 2 years up in the Cascade mountains just down the road from Crater Lake (the deepest lake in the USA and 7th deepest in the world). After living out in the wilds for a while we decided it was time to move again so we upped ourselves and moved. This time we moved to Idaho, close to Yellowstone Park and in a day trip we can leave the house and go into Montana see "Old Faithful" in Yellowstone and stare at the Grand Tetons and wonder at all their glory. Then into Jackson Hole for a snack then over the mountain pass back into Idaho, just in time to watch the evening news.

So having been retired again for 5 years and wondering how I ever had the time to work, somebody convinced me to come out of retirement and start a new venture calling on my work experience when I worked at the Admiralty Surface Weapons Establishment on Portsdown Hill prior to joining the Brigade. So a new venture starts which seems quite normal to do here, but it will seem quite strange to a fellow Brit as it is to an American that a Brit is doing what I am doing but that is another story.

So kindest regards to all and I hope to be kept in the loop and look forward to the next issue and somehow get a payment to you for my membership, although at the moment I don't think I will be able to attend many functions but the thought will be there.

Jim Barron formerly Fm Barron 166
Blue Watch Woolston
Havant
Green Watch Woolston
Green Watch Copnor
Now just the Limey, Rigby, Idaho, USA

Ed: No need to call me 'Sir' now Jim, but standing up when I enter the room is appreciated!!

I would like to pass on Julie's and my thanks to those Committee members who were responsible for arranging the Christmas Function at The Holiday Inn on the 12th December. We thoroughly enjoyed the event as did everybody else I have spoken to, so well done to all who made it possible. Especially nice to see those on our table (Terry Pattison and Tony Batchelor) who have not enjoyed good health in recent years back on good form.

As we had a fair distance to travel we took advantage of the 'special offer' of the cheap rate overnight stay with breakfast at the hotel (and very good it was too).

It was however a little disconcerting when Ron Fenech strolled up to me in the restaurant at breakfast and said "do you realise the last time you and I had breakfast together was in 1976". While my wife was still choking on her slice of toast he quickly clarified the statement by reminding me that we were at the canteen van on a 20 pump fire in the middle of the New Forest - not on some romantic weekend break. Hey now those really were the good old days !!!

Peter Cowmeadow

Seeing the article on Gosport Fire Station in the inaugural 'Stop Message' brought back some memories for me!

The year must have been 1954. I was out for a walk in Havant with my father and brother; we stopped at the old NFS station in West Street and my dad, being in the Portsmouth AFS, got chatting to the caretaker fireman George Lerwell. Alongside the two Austins, an ATV and a PE, he was tending a brand new AFS Green Goddess which he was about to take to Gosport. We told him our uncle was a SubO there.

"Do you want to come?", he said. Of course we jumped at the chance and off we went in the big Bedford and saw the new Gosport station for the first time. Uncle Hector was not on duty though. We came back on an ATV.

In 1963 I joined the AFS at Havant and soon found out that the 15 mile ride I had in the EP that day was nothing compared with what was to come. We could drive a couple of hundred miles in a weekend on exercises and the furthest I think we went was to a pump competition near Cheltenham! Other long trips were Moreton-in-Marsh and London Docks.

The Hampshire Fire Service had a competitions culture at that time; perhaps that might make a future article.

I hope of interest

Dennis Wills

AFS 1963-1967

ex Leading Firefighter B20 Copnor

I would like to thank you for sending to me the Stop Message magazine, I have found it very interesting and it certainly brings back memories.

I had to laugh over the story "A Visit to Wickham"; there must be something about them Burt fellows. An old friend of mine, Lionel Burt, ex Inspector of Police, told me he once waved to the Queen instead of saluting "in his own words" when he was a young copper in London.

When I was a Messenger Boy at the Tivoli Fire Station at Copnor I was helping to clean an appliance when the DO said to me "go to the house and tell the men that Fire Chief Johnson will be here in about 5 minutes". I casually walked over and said "hey fellas, the Chief will be here in 5 minutes". Well, it was like an explosion, there was one big scramble and I had a cuff behind the ear that sent me flying. That was my first taste of discipline to do things at the double in future and, I might add, it was good grounding when I later joined the Army.

I thoroughly agree that Hampshire should have a memorial to the members who lost their lives doing their duty and I am happy to donate a small sum to that cause.

James Watson, Australia

ex NFS (Portsmouth)



Rather than the Editor constructing letters or simply making it up, let's be hearing from you.

"As detailed, get to work".

Political Correctness for the Battle of Trafalgar

Order the signal, Hardy.

Aye, aye, sir.

Hold on, that's not what I dictated to the signal officer. What's the meaning of this?

Sorry, sir?

England expects every person will do his duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability. What gobbledegook is this?

Admiralty policy I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors lest it be considered racist.

Gadzooks Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco.

Sorry sir, all naval vessels have been designated smoke-free working environments.

In that case, break open the rum ration. Let us splice the mainbrace to steel the men before battle.

The rum ratio has been abolished Admiral. It's part of the Government's policy on binge drinking.

Good heavens Hardy, I suppose we'd better get on with it. Full speed ahead.

I think you'll find that there's a 4 mph speed limit in this stretch of water.

Dammit man, we are on the eve of the greatest sea fight in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest please.

That won't be possible sir.

What?

Health and safety have closed the crow's nest sir. No harness. And they say that the rope ladder doesn't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until a proper scaffolding can be erected.

Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay Hardy.

He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle Admiral.

Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd.

Health and safety again sir, we have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled.

Differently abled? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of Admiral by playing the disability card.

Actually sir you did. The Royal Navy is under-represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency.

Whatever next? Give me a full sail. The salt spray beckons.

A couple of problems there, too, sir. Health and safety won't let the crew up the rigging without crash helmets. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?

I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy.

The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone Admiral.

What? This is mutiny.

It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There are a couple of legal aid lawyers on board watching everyone like hawks.

Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?

Actually, sir, we're not.

We're not?

No sir. The Frenchies and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation.

But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil.

I wouldn't let the ship's diversity co-ordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on a disciplinary.

You must consider every man an enemy who speaks ill of your King.

Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest, it's the rules.

Don't tell me - health and safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy and the lash?

As I explained sir, rum is off the menu and there's a ban on corporal punishment.

What about sodomy?

I believe it's to be encouraged, sir.

In that case - kiss me Hardy.

The Perils Facing A Fire Prevention Inspecting Officer



I thought some of you may be interested in this true tale of the perils facing an Inspecting Officer. This happened in the mid 1970s, probably about 1975. I was then a Day Duty FP (now FS) 48 hour Station Officer, stationed at Alton. To set the historical context, this was the time of Sub Divisional Commanders. I shared an office with Sub Divisional Commander ADO Don Welton and two Fm working day duties (one of them was Les Pratt, ex Caretaker Fireman at A14 Petersfield). Harold Stinton was Div Com and Ken Tomkins was Deputy Div Com, but enough of nostalgia, back to the story.

Whilst still young, fresh faced and with a full head of hair, I decided one day to carry out a reinspection of Gales Brewery in Horndean. The Brewery had an old Factory Act certificate and no FPO had visited for well over 10 years. Surprisingly Don Welton thought it a good idea to accompany me on this visit. (Don's explanation was he wanted to monitor my work, nothing to do with the renowned hospitality shown to visitors at this brewery then!).

During the inspection Don and I found ourselves on the second floor of the office block trying to locate a fire exit into the factory area. A helpful secretary guided us towards her stationery cupboard, where I duly found behind her coat and some boxes, a small door. I moved the obstructions, slid back the barrel bolt and tried to open the door but found it stuck. With typical Fire Brigade finesse I applied a gentle pressure with my shoulder when the door suddenly gave way causing me to fall forward through the doorway.

The door opened into a very small space which quickly became apparent as being a WC. What also became quickly apparent was the 2 feet drop in the floor level.

The third unexpected humiliation that washed over me as I was nose-diving to the floor was that

To say I was embarrassed was the understatement of the year. My discomfort was not eased by seeing a grown ADO and a secretary rolling on the floor with tears of laughter running down their faces.

As can be imagined the news of my sudden visit to the toilet spread like wildfire around the Brewery. Unfortunately I had to spend a further 2 days on site completing my inspection. Every time I walked through the Bottling Plant, where the young girl worked, a huge cry went up, accompanied by various ribald comments in an attempt to embarrass both her and me. I eventually spoke to the girl concerned, who after her initial shock, found the whole episode very funny.

As a postscript, the Brewery Manager on hearing the story said to me, in his broad Hampshire

“ She tried to push me out, close the door, smooth down her skirt and re-adjust her clothing all in one go ”

the toilet was occupied by a very nubile 17 year old girl. I don't know who was more shocked, her or me. Although she didn't have enough arms, she was galvanised into action. I mumbled some apology and climbed back into the office. With hindsight I could perhaps have emerged with more dignity by uttering something like "Excuse me Sir" and making a composed exit via the main WC door.

accent "knowing the lass as I do, you ought you to consider yourself lucky because if she hadn't been so shocked, her normal reaction would have been to grab you and shut the door behind you!"

Sadly, after all these years my overriding memory is of Don Welton falling about laughing and not of the young girl concerned.

Mick Robinson



Pictures: My home - Haystack Rock, Cannon Beach - Rockaway

Oregon, 'Gods Country'

As a first submission from me for the PMA, it is difficult to know where to start. Alan House asked if I would write an article so I have decided to explain why I moved to the United States and why this particular neck of the woods.

For the benefit of the 'newbies' to the HFRS, let me introduce myself. I started my service with the Hampshire Fire Service back in the 60's as a retained firefighter at C35 Sutton Scotney, then in the early 70's joined the staff in Fire Control. In 1997 I took early retirement and crossed the big 'pond' to start a new life in Oregon.

Back in 1988 I returned from vacation and was asked by several folk, "Where did you go for your holiday", "Oregon", I replied. "Oregon, where's that?", they asked. The upshot of that is that I wrote an article for the Firespread magazine to enlighten the geographically challenged members of the Service.

So, why did I settle on Oregon. Several reasons I guess, I have a sister and her family here, (the reason for my vacations), I can own and afford to drive a pick-up truck (gas is still way cheaper than the UK), but most of all, because Oregon is such a beautiful and diverse corner of the world. Where better to spend the rest of one's life.

To draw a picture of the Pacific Northwest would be impossible in one submission, so I'll break it down into instalments. The State of Oregon is a little larger than the United Kingdom, the coast is about 300 miles long, all of which is publicly owned. It varies from

literally miles of wide sandy beaches to rugged cliffs. At the northern end is the city of Astoria, sitting at the mouth of the mighty Columbia River, from here, a 4 mile long bridge connects with Washington State. Travelling south on the coastal Scenic Highway 101 takes one though Seaside, a resort quite famed for it's beach volleyball tournaments, on further to Cannon Beach, named for cannons from an ancient shipwreck found in the sand. Lincoln City, renown as a Mecca for kite fliers, Depoe Bay and Newport where one can watch blue whales just off shore. If you are into sand buggies then Florence is the place, with miles of massive sand dunes, a little further south there is even a Winchester Bay. The last major stop before you cross into California, is the city of Brookings. There, in a very tiny nutshell, is 300 miles of Pacific Ocean coastline.

Travelling east, to get to the rest of the State, one has to cross the coastal mountain range that runs north south, pretty much the length of the State, and consists largely of thousands of square miles of Douglas Fir. Elevations in the passes approach 1700ft and then drop down into the Willamette valley, the subject of article 2.

I trust you will enjoy taking this journey with me.

Chas Pickett

A Court of Protection?

A secret court is seizing the assets of thousands of elderly and mentally impaired people and turning control of their lives over to the State - against the wishes of their relatives. These draconian measures are being imposed by the little-known Court of Protection, set up 2 years ago to act in the interests of people suffering from Alzheimer's or other mental incapacity.

The court hears about 23,000 cases a year - always in private - involving people deemed unable to take their own decisions. Using far-reaching powers, the court has so far taken control of more than £3.2 billion of assets. The cases involve civil servants from the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), which last year took £23 million in fees directly from the bank accounts of those struck down by mental illness, involved in accidents or suffering from dementia.

The officials are legally required to act in cases where people do not have a 'living will', or lasting power of attorney, which hands control of their assets over to family or friends. But the system elicited an extraordinary 3,000 complaints in its first 18 months of operation.

Among them were allegations that officials failed to consult relatives, imposed huge fees and even 'raided' elderly people's homes searching for documents. Carers trying to cope with a mentally impaired loved one, forced to apply for a court order to access money, said they felt the system put them under suspicion as it assumed at the outset that they were out to defraud their relatives.

The Government says everyone should establish a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) to state who should look after their affairs should they become incapacitated - although most people will be utterly unaware of this advice. Only 130,000 people in Britain have registered these LPA's with the authorities, and the problems begin when someone is suddenly or unexpectedly mentally impaired.

Without this document, relatives must apply to the courts to decide if they are fit to run the ill or elderly person's affairs. In many cases relatives have to complete a 50 page form giving huge amounts of personal information about themselves, their family, their own finances and their relationship with the person they wish to help care for. The majority of

applications are decided on the basis of paper evidence without holding a hearing.

The court has the same powers as the High Court, but is closed to all but the parties involved in the case and their lawyers. The press and public are banned. The presiding judge then decides whether a family member can become a 'deputy' acting for their mentally impaired loved one. If no one is available, or if the judge decides a family member is not suitable, the court can appoint a local authority or in some cases a solicitor to carry out the task.

The OPG then charges an annual fee of up to £800 to supervise the activities of the deputy, whether they are a family member or a professional appointee. The court takes over control of people's finances, which means deputies - whether a relative or not - must get authorisation to pay expenses such as rent and household bills on their behalf

Only if a relative is given Power of Attorney before a person is mentally incapacitated will they be able to avoid applying to the court and the OPG for the right to control their assets later.

“ An accident left her journalist husband Michael in a coma ”

But relatives caught up in the system say they are suddenly confronted by a legal and bureaucratic minefield. Children's author Heather Bateman was forced to get permission from the court to use family funds after an accident left her journalist husband Michael in a coma.

In a moving account of her family's ordeal in Saga magazine, she wrote "Michael and I were two



independent working people. We had been married for 28 years. We had written our wills, both our names were on the deeds of the house we shared in London and the Norfolk cottage we had renovated over the years. We had separate bank accounts and most of the bills were paid from Michael's account. Now, to continue living in the way we always had done, I needed to access the money in his account.

The Court of Protection brought me almost as much anger, grief and frustration into my life as the accident itself. [It is] an alien, intrusive, time consuming and costly institution, which was completely out of tune with what we were going through. It ruled my waking moments and my many sleepless nights."

without taking any notice of my appeal - therefore costing my mum yet another £800 per year. It's nothing short of robbery. All I want is to be left alone to pay my mum's bills and to safeguard as much of her money as I can, but these people are constantly demanding high fees for their 'services' which, as far as I can see, consist of harassing people and little else!"

Neil Hunt, of the Alzheimer's Society, said "It is important that people make plans for their future. But the disturbing truth is that making plans for the future is often the last thing on our minds. Everyone should make a lasting power of attorney to ensure their wishes and rights are protected."

Source: Mail on Sunday 25 October 2009

“ Their letters are bullying and threatening and they completely ignore everything I say ”

Mrs Bateman even had to apply to the court for permission to pay the couple's daughter's university fees. She added "I could write as many cheques as necessary up to £500. But if I needed to access more I had to get permission from the court."

An internet support group, Court of Protection Problems, reveals other struggles with the system.

One recent posting by 'gillm1', whose mother suffers dementia, said "They are causing me so much stress and worry and I feel I am being treated like a criminal. Their letters are bullying and threatening and they completely ignore everything I say. I have grown to hate them! They took years to process my application and I object strongly to the extortionate fees they are demanding."

Another writes "They have upped my supervision level

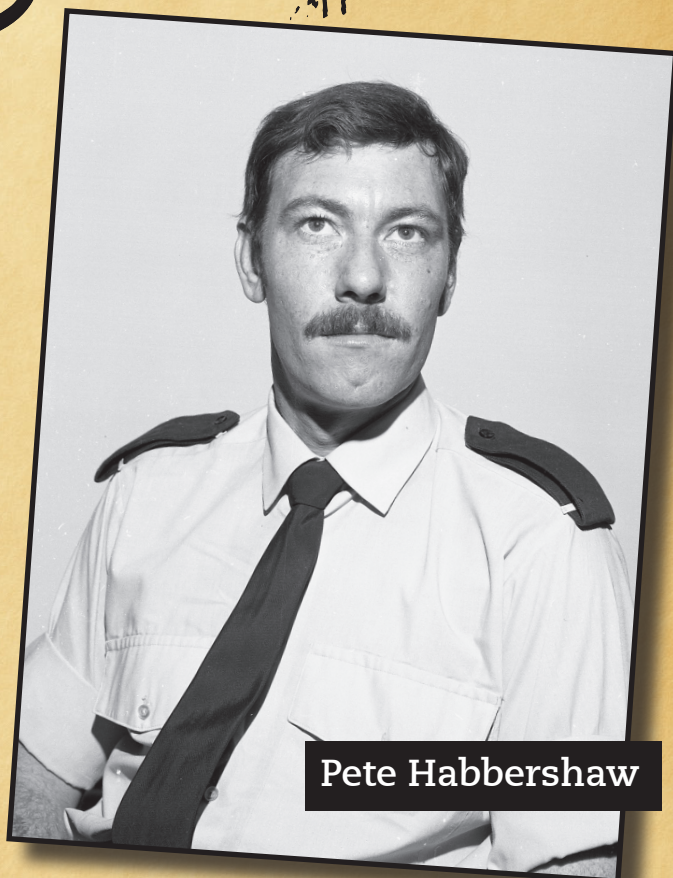
Footnote: There are two Lasting Power of Attorney forms which can be downloaded from the Office of the Public Guardian, one covers issues relating to your Health and Welfare whilst the other covers your Finance and Property. Even when these forms are completed neither is valid until it is registered with the Court of Protection. Registration cost £120 for each Lasting Power of Attorney.

Anyone needing help to download and complete the form can contact Eddie Winter by email on eddie.winter@xhfrs.org.uk or via his mobile 07738249414.

WANTED



Mick Gass



Pete Habbershaw



Bob Streeter



White Watch Woolston at Redbridge



Wanted for impersonating young firemen with grey-free hair, looking, healthy and fit, (well some are), likely to be telling stories of many big fires and rescued ladies from smoke filled buidings, with a lamps swinging above their head. Approach only with caution!

Mick Phillips



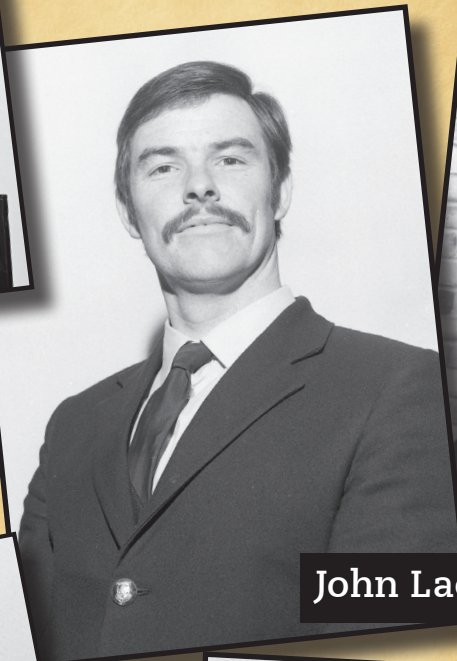
Ivan Jack



Eddie Winter



John Lacey



D Division Photo - But why?



National Association of Retired Firefighters

Hampshire Branch

“The National Association of Retired Firefighters (NARF) exists to look after the interests of all retired members of the Fire Service. The benefits of joining NARF are numerous and monetary savings may far exceed the cost of the small annual subscription of £8.00.

Benefits include:

Four nationally produced newsletters per year with information, news, items of interest, reader's articles, etc.

Membership of an organisation dedicated to working on behalf of retired firefighters. The association is a member of the Public Services Pensioners Council, Age Concern Forum, The National Council of Ageing and The National Pensioners Convention.

Advice on pensions, tax, benefits, etc.

Savings on financial advice, travel insurance and private medical insurance.

NARF has an excellent relationship and close working links with the Fire Fighters Charity.

Working with the Past Members Association to keep in touch with old comrades and the Service.

Membership is open to wholtime, retained and non uniformed personnel who have retired. Personnel in their last year of service are invited to become a

As an ex 'Ben Fund' Divisional Secretary I am currently trying to set up links with the new Fire Fighters Charity reps in order to keep active communications between serving and ex members of HFRS. I have also been co-opted onto the Past Members Association committee as one of the links between our 2 associations.

So, how does NARF work for us in Hampshire?

Finance is, and rightly so, a major concern to all retired personnel. Our primary objective is to protect our pension rights and conditions and to provide associated advice and support when it's required. For example, we are most conscious of maintaining the benefits of our index linked pension agreement, NARF's value may not be noticeable during the early years of retirement, but just look at it carefully after a few years and you will see the benefits are considerable! The welcome increase to our service pension in 2009 will unfortunately not be repeated in 2010 as the retail price index was in minus figures up to September. However, the Old Age Pension is expected to increase by 2.5% in April.

“ Following a minor bout of arm-twisting from certain ex members of HFRS (who shall remain nameless) ”

member without a subscription for that year. Partners of former firefighters are also eligible.

For those of you who don't know me:

I retired last Christmas and wanted to “keep in touch”. After the benefits of NARF membership were explained to me, I immediately joined. About 6 months ago, following a minor bout of arm-twisting from certain ex members of HFRS (who shall remain nameless) I, ‘willingly’ accepted the position of Secretary.

A real area of concern to NARF and all retired members is that Central Government has activated an initiative to look into the validity of pensioners existing ill health awards. To date this has only involved London and Surrey Fire Authorities. In due course this initiative is expected to widen to include all Fire Authorities members in the UK. NARF is fortunate to have two experienced voluntary national committee members that have been advising individual members

undergoing assessment on their ill health award situation.

The message for all of us is clear; to be effective we must be a strong organisation with an acceptable proportion of members in NARF compared to all retirees from our service. Only then do we stand a chance that our paymasters will take notice of us, particularly at this time when finance is difficult to say the least.

The current Hampshire Branch committee is:

Chairman – Derek Wynne

Secretary – Chris Lunn

Treasurer – Bill Bates

District Representative – Phil Griffiths

Committee Members

‘A Division’ – Vacant

‘B Division’ – Ted Jones

‘C Division’ – Phil Griffiths

‘D Division’ – Roger Penney

Co-opted members – Malcolm Eastwood and Alan Simpson

The ‘A Division’ reference needs to be filled as soon as possible, there must surely be one willing person up there interested? Just contact any of the committee or make a phone call to Secretary Chris 01243 377557 or Chairman Derek 023 9281 6678. Note: We still recognise and divide Hampshire up in the old Divisional areas.

Join us, it’s only for the cost of a couple of drinks each year, your £8.00 annual membership fee will be automatically collected direct from the April pension payment each year.

NARF and the PMA do and rightly so, complement each other and work in harmony to support our retired personnel. It’s not one or the other it’s both, one protecting our fundamental financial conditions and one for encouraging social and welfare activities.

The NARF website (www.narfire.org.uk) contains much useful information on our organisation, including objectives, benefits and contact organisations.

Make no mistake the Government’s impending initiatives will clearly affect us all. There has never been a better time to join NARF.

Contact me for an application form.
Chris Lunn, chris.lunn@ntlworld.com
01243 377557

In a Higher Place



Many PMA Members will recall the Reverend Tony Wilds who was appointed the first Brigade Chaplain in the early Eighties. Tony was Vicar of Chandlers Ford at the time and agreed to officiate at the inaugural

HFB Carol Service held in the Restaurant at Headquarters. Tony was a personable, easy going, down to earth individual and was a natural choice for the appointment of Brigade Chaplain by CFO George Clarke. Tony undertook a basic recruits course, took every opportunity to familiarise himself with the brigade and its folk and held the honorary rank of Assistant Divisional Officer.

In addition to spiritual and welfare duties he was instrumental in helping to secure the facilities of Winchester Cathedral when the Brigade Carol Service expanded to become a major event in both the Cathedral and Brigade Calendar. The popular and well supported Carol Service would attract a congregation of almost a thousand and was a most prestigious and moving event. Tony later moved to be Vicar of St Mary’s Andover.

So, where is he now? Well, promotions have come his way and he is now the grandly titled The Venerable Tony Wilds, Archdeacon of Plymouth. That would seem to make him the equivalent of an ecclesiastical Divisional Commander (or whatever that is in new money). Well done Tony, you were a pioneer, and thanks for all you did for us.

The Chaplain for the Service today is Rev Dr Derek Overfield who remains available to assist serving and retired members and can be contacted on 01264 366080 or email indchap@aol.com.

Past Times

Focus on Road Traffic Incidents

Whilst across the UK the number of property fires continues to be in decline, the number of calls to incidents on our roads continues to increase. Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs), now referred to by the emergency services as Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) - something to do with the legal definition of an accident! It was not really until the early 1960s that fire services began to carry equipment specifically for road accidents and then only with limited capability and often only on specialist vehicles such as Emergency Tenders (ETs) and Rescue Tenders (ResTs). The attendance of the fire service at road accidents from the beginnings of motorised transport evolved really from the call being made because of fire or the risk of fire, rather than the aspect of rescue or extrication as it has become more widely known.

In recognition of the increasing number of calls to accidents involving road vehicles the Hampshire Fire Service introduced EPCO hydraulic rescue sets in 1960. Funding for Landrover Rescue Tenders was approved in 1966. Air operated 'Cengar' saws were issued in 1971 to selected pumping appliances.

"Motorway Rescue Tenders" were introduced in November 1971 to meet the anticipated demands of the newly constructed M3 motorway. Air lifting bags were introduced in 1972. American built Dodge Powerwagons entered the fleet in September 1979.

Things have moved on considerably since tackling the outcomes of an accident using a fireman's axe, crowbar, hacksaw and, if you were lucky, Epcro or Blackhawk hydraulic rams.

Vehicle technology advances with increased safety features for vehicle passengers has required the fire service to develop new techniques and equipment to deal with construction methods, disarming safety systems, modern day windscreen and fuel systems, etc.

Firefighters today need to place much more emphasis on training for vehicle incidents and developing techniques to match the challenges of vehicle technology than ever before in the past. They have a far greater range of equipment, techniques and information at their disposal to tackle ever increasing vehicle safety technology, including in-cab Mobile Data Terminals (computers) which can display vehicles by make and type with all of the inbuilt safety systems and hazards.

The photos below may remind you of these incidents from the past.

Alan House



Portsmouth 1970



Winchester By-Pass, late 60's



Southwick Hill - Cosham 1971

**Aldermaston Roundabout
Ringway Basingstoke
29 April 78**



RTA circa 1975
(Nice to see that the Health
& Safety box for personal
protective equipment has
been ticked!)

**Location not
identified but
Basingstoke
Motorway Rescue
Tender at incident.**



Flying the Flag

The PMA now has its own ceremonial Standard and coffin drape displaying the Association badge and the various cap badges associated with the county dating back to 1948.



Coffin Drape



Standard

The coffin drape speaks for itself whilst the Standard can be carried or displayed at a range of events. One of the best displays of Fire Service Standards takes place each year on the second Sunday in September (this year being 12 September) at the Annual Service of Remembrance at the Firefighter Memorial in London, and in May (this year being 9 May) at the Fire Service Monument situated at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire.

The colours used in our Standard and the drape are derived from the first official flag given to the Fire Service by HM King George VI on 18 August 1943 to commemorate the second anniversary of the National Fire Service (NFS).

The flag was presented to the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, at a large parade of representatives of Fire Forces from around the country in Hyde Park, London. A Blue Ensign design for use on fireboats was also issued in November 1943.

The issue of the NFS flag came with instructions in respect of a brief ceremony for raising the flag before morning roll call and hauled down at sunset.

The Fire Brigade Union protested that the flag was "a waste of time and material" and that the formal hoisting of the flag before morning roll call was "a totem pole charade". Industrial unrest even in time of war!

The Fire Service College flag also has its origins in the official NFS flag.

Alan House

Obituary - Bert Chalmers, aged 91

As I read of the passing of Bert Chalmers I was reminded of the happy and rewarding times I spent in his company. I served with him on white watch at Cosham for about 15 months.

However the recording of these memories necessarily requires me to use words not familiar to the current service, such as; Fire Brigade, Fireman, Station Officer, half scale epaulettes, Hose King, Caterer etc. language which I regret is now all but taboo.

Bert never served as a Fire-fighter. Bert served as a Fireman. And what a man he was, a giant of a man in stature although he was a quiet and gentle man in style, he had fists like cooked hams. I recall once seeing him walk across the drill yard at Station 3 (Cosham) carrying a fireman under each arm. I know little of his pre brigade history save to say I did learn he was a parachute packer during the war.

When I joined white watch in 1971 he was the watch caterer and also the station hose king and also the senior hose king in the city. He was very capable with a needle and thread and also his heavy duty sewing machine which only he ever used, some suitable apprentices were allowed (under the strictest supervision - Fm. John Pannell will attest to this) to wire bind a hose coupling or use the Stenor Vulcanising machine to weld in a hose patch on the canvas or fancy new style Duraline hose. He was highly respected from the Chief Officer down, he had more influence upon the station than he probably realised.

In those days catering was seen as a very important, if not vital, aspect of watch life. Indeed on my induction interview (not an expression in use then - the Tannoy would simply blare out the surname followed by the simple word OFFICE you went either for a medal or an upbraiding - I never received a medal!) Amongst the many items of guidance and advice I received through a cloud of pipe smoke, Station Officer Tim Mason said "You are not obliged to join the catering club, but I expect you to. See Fireman Chalmers he is the watch caterer." Ah! Erinmore Flake, ready rubbed, how we miss those moments in these enlightened times.

The catering was superb, on days we would have cheese rolls with or without raw onion at mid morning tea break, at lunch time a main course and sweet, mid afternoon high tea (yes a cooked tea at 16:00, egg on toast beans on toast or something similar - it's unbelievable isn't it, but we did). On nights we had a large evening meal, two courses and in the morning a cooked breakfast. With Bert there was always more bacon or extra fish or meat and vegetables or extra

pudding. We dined like lords and all this for 8/6d per tour all tea included (I swear it gets cheaper each time I tell this story), this was pre decimal currency and as a young fireman I was getting around £19 per week.

It was obvious to us all that Bert had very good contacts for food and also his uncle owned the fishmongers shop in Cosham High Street. Although given the quality and amount of food we had, I'm certain that Bert was subsidising us with his caterer's allowance.

One weekend evening around 19:00, Bert was in the kitchen cooking whilst the remainder of the watch were in the mess room enjoying their stand-down after parade, waiting for their meal, those were the days. There was much to-ing and fro-ing with the TV, which was located upon a purpose built shelf adjacent to the dining hatch. BBC, ITV, BBC, ITV - volume up, volume down, volume back up again. This uproar unbeknown to us was causing great irritation to Bert. Unexpectedly, back slammed the dining hatch, out came a huge fist bearing a large cooks knife and with a flourish and a large blue flash the power cable to the TV was severed. TV off! No channels, no volume and suddenly a room full of very sheepish and very well behaved quiet firemen who all seemed preoccupied with reading magazines. That's how watch discipline operated in those days!

On the night of his retirement I was duty cook and as a parting gesture we had all contributed extra money to pay for a steak supper, the watch members were anticipating an easy evening of story telling banter. On parade at 18:00 Station Officer Mason, the last officer in PCFB, possibly the UK to wear half scale epaulettes operationally, asked Bert if there was anything he particularly wanted as a parting memory of his service. Bert immortalised himself by saying "Yes I'd like to do a few drills Guv'nor". There followed the biggest, wettest water carnival you can imagine, some stand-down. Goodness knows what would have happened had there been a call, we had every piece of equipment on the station in use. The subsequent meal was thoroughly enjoyed and the crack (craic) was of the highest order.

Bert left with his memories of the service but he certainly left us with great memories of him. Fireman Bert Chalmers he was a totemic man.

Malcolm Waterman

Snippets

Need Some New Specs?



Noted in the Wiltshire Fire Brigade Pensioners newsletter is a recommendation for the purchase of spectacles indicating that Glasses Direct (www.glassesdirect.co.uk) provide very good value. You need to know your prescription and you can order direct online or you can phone 08456 882020 for assistance. It might be worth a look if you are thinking of replacing your glasses.



Andover Fire Brigade Log

Vic Furze, ex StnO Winchester, has been spending his time placing a log book from the Andover Fire Brigade on the web. Covering the period 1901-1916 the record lists incidents and other activities of the brigade with details of all members serving at the time. The whole journal, including photographs, consists of 250+ pages and is available to read online at www.andover-fire-log.co.uk. Vic is hoping that readers will be able to add to the information he has produced for all to read. Vic can be contacted on vic.furze@andover-fire-log.co.uk.

Recent Retirements

Name	Date	Station/Location	Length of Service
Steve Pegler	31 10 09	Group Manager, Southampton	30 Years 4 Months
Dave Brown	30 11 09	Station Manager, Hightown	30 Years 8 Months
Bob Turner-Sales	01 12 09	Watch Manager, Fire Safety, Redbridge	32 Years 11 Months
Simon Mechen	03 11 09	Crew Manager, Schools Education Team	31 Years 4 Months
Clive Morris	31 12 09	Community Safety Officer, Service HQ	7 Years 4 Months (following retirement as a Firefighter)
John Collyer	31 01 10	Firefighter, Petersfield	21 Years

We wish all those listed a long and happy retirement.

Final Salute

It is with regret that we record the death of the following past members of the Service:

Ken Heppell

**on 28 August 2009
aged 68.**

Ken served as a Firefighter at Petersfield Fire Station until his retirement in November 1995.

Richard Carrington

**on 9 October 2009
aged 38.**

Richard served at Hightown Fire Station and had served with HFRS since 1990.

John Black

**on 17 November 2009
aged 64.**

John served as a Firefighter at Hartley Wintney and Odiham Fire Stations before leaving to commence a full time career in the British Airports Authority Fire Service until retirement as Chief Fire Officer of that organisation in 2000



Fred Thomas

**on 25 September 2009
aged 90.**

Fred was a Sub Officer with the Southampton Fire Brigade serving at Central (St Marys) Fire Station prior to a short period as Instructor at the College of Maritime Studies, Warsash, from where he retired in May 1974.

Arthur Tanner QFSM

**on 15 October 2009
aged 85.**

Arthur was the Chief Fire Officer for Southampton Fire Brigade and appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the newly formed Hampshire Fire Brigade on 1 April 1974, a rank he held until his retirement in August 1978.

Paul Fyrth

**on 1 November 2009
aged 66.**

Paul served in a variety of posts with many years in Fire Prevention/Fire Safety until his retirement at the rank of Divisional Officer at Divisional Headquarters (Redbridge) in January 1994.

Albert Chalmers

**on 9 October 2009
aged 91.**

'Bert' Chalmers served as a Fireman in the Portsmouth City Fire Brigade until his retirement in 1972.

Frank Griffin

**on 9 November 2009
aged 76.**

Frank served in the Control Room at North Hill House Headquarters and at The Castle Headquarters until April 1973 when he retired as a Senior Control Operator

Lest we forget





Christmas bash



12 December 2009