

STOP MESSAGE

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



www.xhfrs.org.uk



Balmer Lawn Hotel, Brockenhurst, 19 October 1970.
Make pumps 10, plus TL from Southampton Fire Brigade.

INSIDE



A TRIBUTE

A look back at the career of the late Les 'Smokey' Cummins

HFRS HAPPENINGS

Catch up on Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service News

PAST TIMES

Focus on Twyford Fire Station

FUNNY THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW (MAYBE!)

Coca-Cola was originally green.

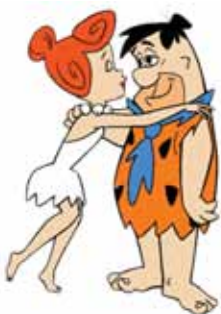


Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only... Ladies Forbidden'... and thus, the word GOLF entered into the English language.

Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the U.S. Treasury.



It is impossible to lick your elbow.



The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV was Fred and Wilma Flintstone

DESPERATELY SEEKING?

Ads seen in "The Villages"
Florida newspaper. (Who says seniors don't have a sense of humor!)

FOXY LADY: Sexy, fashion-conscious blue-haired beauty, 80's, slim, 5'4' (used to be 5'6'), searching for sharp-looking, sharp-dressing companion. Matching white shoes and belt a plus.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT: Recent widow who has just buried fourth husband, looking for someone to round out a six-unit plot. Dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath not a problem.

SERENITY NOW: I am into solitude, long walks, sunrises, the ocean, yoga and meditation. If you are the silent type, let's get together, take our hearing aids out and enjoy quiet times.

WINNING SMILE: Active grandmother with original teeth seeking a dedicated flosser to share rare steaks, corn on the cob and caramel candy.

BEATLES OR STONES?: I still like to rock, still like to cruise in my Camaro on Saturday nights and still like to play the guitar. If you were a groovy chick, or are now a groovy hen, let's get together and listen to my eight-track tapes.

MEMORIES: I can usually remember Monday through Thursday. If you can remember Friday, Saturday and Sunday, let's put our two heads together.

My favorite....

MINT CONDITION: Male, 1932 model, high mileage, good condition, some hair, many new parts including hip, knee, cornea, valves. Isn't in running condition, but walks well.

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: Balmer Lawn Hotel,
Brockenhurst, 19 October 1970. Serious
fire on second and third floors and roof,
started during renovations. Painter's
blowtorch blamed. TL from Southampton
Fire Brigade also attended. Base Pumps set
into nearby Balmer Lawn River.



STOP MESSAGE



Welcome from the Editor



Autumn is approaching fast. What happened to Summer? Whatever the month, its still trying times for all of the emergency services who continue to struggle with budget cuts and make plans to work with less. Many will of course say that this is all about working more effectively and with greater efficiency. Maybe there will be a move to smarter ways of doing things but, cuts are what they are. I would say

that its 2013 when the public safety services are really going to be affected by 'new ways of working' and perhaps, in the minds of some, sheer madness.

The Hampshire Branch of the National Association of Firefighters, (NARF) has been dissolved by vote of its members. Sad, but perhaps a sign of the times and the consideration of relevance. It is harder these days it seems to find those who want to be involved and sit on committees across all forms of organisations. Perhaps it's just too busy in retirement! Nationally of course NARF still exists and direct membership is still available.

It's pleasing to note that the Fire Fighters Charity has decided to make some changes in direction and one of those changes is to improve engagement with and recognition of retired members and their families. I was one of those asked to go to London for a discussion on how best to serve retired members of the Service. The recently appointed Chief Executive, John Parry, (ex-CFO, Oxfordshire) is driving the changes. Your continued support for the Charity, ('Ben Fund'), is, as ever, very important, but remember, the Charity is there for you and your family to use.

Finally congratulations to David Howells should be recorded for his award of the Queens Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service (QFSM) in the Queens Birthday Honours List. Well deserved David for all of your commitment and guidance in the past.

Until the next time.....
Alan House

Les 'Smokey' Cummins

A tribute by a 'Dep' to 'THE DEP'



DCFO Les Cummins 1924 - 2012

It was with great sadness that whilst away on holiday I received a text message to say that 'Smokey' had passed away. His funeral was well attended by past-colleagues and I was asked to give an eulogy which I have modified as this tribute.

Les interviewed me when I applied to become a fireman with the Southampton Fire Brigade. In his probing style, this fearsome man, (well, that's how he seemed to me at the time), and whose reputation was already known to me, questioned me about already being a part-time fireman in Hampshire and told me that fighting ship fires was not like fighting gorse fires! On my first day, after reporting to the Southampton Fire Brigade Headquarters at Redbridge Hill and being kitted out with uniform etc, he pounced on me in the entrance foyer prior to me leaving for 'Central, my station of posting. 'Right, Fireman House', he said and, with a wag of his finger advised me again that ship fires were different to gorse fires and walked up the stairs with that half throat clearing/half chuckle sound that he would often make. Within 15 minutes of placing my kit on the pump escape at Central fire station, I was on my way as 'fifth man' to a reported ship fire in the 'New Docks'. Smokey's wagging finger passed before my eyes, but fortunately it was not on this occasion a call of any significance.

Born on 23 March 1924, Les's early years were more difficult than for many, making him decide to join the Merchant Navy at a very young age. Included in his experiences at sea during World War 2 were the convoys taking supplies to support the beleaguered

Russian population during their horrendous period of war with Nazi Germany. Les was not one to dwell on this period of his life, but those who have heard him give a glimpse of his experiences will have realised just how tough conditions were for the crews on these convoys and the hardship that he personally endured. These early life experiences did, I believe shape his approach to life and people and he knew that to achieve you had to work hard. He was by his own admission mostly self-educated, resulting at times in the use and pronunciation of words that would raise a smile.

A look through past records show that he joined the National Fire Service, on 10 May 1946, when he reported as Fireman 248226 L C Cummins, to the Regional Training School at Rake, nr Petersfield and then, after training was posted to Southampton. On 1 April 1948 upon the disbanding of the National Fire Service, he was amongst those selected to continue service with the newly formed Southampton Fire Brigade, at 'Central' (now known as St Marys) fire station. From the beginning Les was one who liked to be in the thick of the action, in time gaining the nickname 'Smokey' that stayed with him throughout his career and indeed, into retirement, although it would be a brave man that called him that to his face!

He quickly showed his willingness to get involved when on 1 October 1948 he was appointed one of the 2 FBU Reps on Brigade Staff Committee, so from its very beginnings, he was helping to shape the Southampton Fire Brigade.

In March 1949 he qualified to be a 'duty officer' in the Brigade Control Room, placing him in charge of the function of receiving calls and turning out fire engines during any absence of a Leading Fireman who would normally be in charge.

He had worked hard to achieve the necessary qualifications to gain promotion, and he achieved his first goal in December 1952, when he was appointed as a Leading Fireman, based at 'Central', but two weeks later was transferred in his new role to the Docks fire station, returning to Central in March 1954 on promotion to Sub Officer.

In this rank he attended many courses, including the Sub Officers Course at the Fire service College in Dorking, Surrey. He attended a course for Emergency Tender crews with the London Fire brigade and he was a qualified Civil Defence Rescue Training Instructor – (I cannot help but wonder how much he would have wanted to be involved with today's Urban Search and Rescue Teams!)

In 1960 he gained the rank of Station Officer at Central and then on promotion to Assistant Divisional Officer in 1964 moved to a role in the new Brigade Headquarters at Redbridge Hill.

An unusual promotion then took effect in September 1968, when he jumped up 3 rank grades to become a Divisional Officer grade 1, in the position of Deputy Chief Fire Officer, passing others who previously had been a higher rank than him. He was appointed as the Deputy to Chief Fire Officer Arthur Tanner, a man who had progressed his career very much in tandem with Les.

In October 1970, the position of Deputy was upgraded to the rank of Assistant Chief Fire officer.

'Hello Fire Control, 40 on the air proceeding to....', in the days of the Southampton Fire Brigade told crews that 'The Dep' was on the way to the incident that they were attending and that they best be on their guard. The whirlwind that was 'Smokey Cummins' would charge around the fireground and in and out of the fire building,(or ship), looking into places no-one else would and appearing suddenly alongside alongside BA wearers, (without wearing set himself, of course).

April 1 1974 saw Les move across to the newly formed Hampshire Fire Brigade as Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Operations. It was a culture shock for him as much as it was for the wider group of personnel who had not worked with him before, with Portsmouth crews and County crews meeting the whirlwind at many incidents for the first time. There was a steep learning curve on both sides, working with the retained crews. He was everywhere making his mark and simply 'being Smokey'! He took no prisoners as he shook things up and shaped things to his liking. The ex-SFB guys of course had seen it all before and just sat back and smiled.



Sub Officers 's L Cummins and A Tanner, Mayor's visit to 'Central' February 1960

'HX from Echo 2, mobile to....', told the county crews that he was on his way.

Many stories surfaced regarding his approach to dealing with incidents, attending very often in his soft cap and often in shirt sleeves.

If his hands went on his hips or his was head cocked to one side and, with tightened lips, you knew he was not best pleased with what he saw or heard. If he put on his full fire-kit, you knew it was a serious incident!

In the hot dry summer of 1976 when the whole of the County seemed to be on fire, he was everywhere and he quickly learned that large gorse and forest fires were not like ship fires!

Never losing his desire to be in the thick of things, he was inside and outside of the building, directing crews, even grabbing branches to show where he wanted the jet of water directed, I have often imagined him working within the environment of today's 'Incident Command System', or as is more likely, not working within it!

Stories are often told still about his 'conversations', (arguments) with Brigade Workshops and the likes of Ray Ford and Bill Carter telling them how the fleet should look. Long standing members of the Control Room will also tell you great stories of their 'involved conversations' with 'Smokey' as he 'suggested' alternative mobilising moves. After all, he did qualify as a control room 'Duty Officer' in 1949! Late night and early morning visits to the Control Room were common.

Totally committed to his role, he would be in his office (or some other work location) very early each morning. It was not uncommon for him to make an early morning drop-in at a fire station or to advise an officer to meet him at some ungodly and unsociable hour. On top of his early morning starts, late nights were just part of his working day.

I could not help but reflect that as I wrote this tribute very early one morning that once again me working for 'Smokey' involved an early rising from bed!

Never afraid to confront individuals and situations or to take issue over things that did not please him, he was nevertheless a fair and upfront officer, who kept his word and could always be trusted. His 'engagement' with the fire trade unions, was at times legendary, but officials of both organisations at the time, I know, respected him and held him in high regard, despite many difficult and trying periods. At my last meeting with him, Les chuckled when the conversation turned to his days across the negotiating table, when he reminded me that he was once himself a FBU official, trained by one of the most diligent and articulate trade unionists and long time 'old school' FBU official, Jack Rogers, who also served in the Southampton Fire Brigade.

Les enjoyed the 'poacher turned gamekeeper' role and he was of course the main negotiator with the FBU in Hampshire during the first national fireman's strike. He smiled as he told me of his clandestine unofficial meetings with FBU officials during that difficult period to 'sort a few issues' with applied common sense.

If 'Smokey' directed you at an incident, or told you to follow him, you just did it. Trust in his judgement was just natural. You might follow him into an uncomfortable environment but somehow the confidence he exuded was enough to make you think that it must be ok.

One of his passions, during what little time he had outside of his role, was gardening and his garden was a picture of neatness and productivity. I well recall a watch colleague at 'Central', telling us how he had just watched from the window of his flat, overlooking Les's garden, as 'The Dep' planted his cabbages with the help of a torch in the darkness of the morning.

He was a Deputy to three Chief Fire Officers – Arthur Tanner, (Southampton Fire Brigade), Archie Winning and George Clarke, (Hampshire Fire Brigade), all of whom, I am sure, benefitted from his style and willingness to tackle difficult issues, at times, no doubt, raising their eyebrows just a little!

His last Chief Fire Officer, George Clarke, in a letter to Les as he approached his retirement included these words:

'I know that your retirement is not altogether one which you are anticipating with unmitigated pleasure. I shall be forever grateful for your extraordinary perseverance and loyalty to me over the past 6 years.

When you were appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer, you said that you would stay 2 years. I wonder where we would be now as a Brigade if you had retired in 1980? In particular, I don't think that our Brigade Headquarters would have developed so far, so quickly, if you had not stayed with it until the final phase had been given the go-ahead. You can be certain that I will always make sure that you will be given the proper credit for what has been achieved'.

Les of course retired prior to the official opening of what is still the Headquarters complex in Eastleigh, by Her Majesty the Queen. Hopefully, by repeating the words of George Clarke here today, I can in some small way keep that due credit to Les in the minds of others. He was awarded the Queens Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service and I recall how modest he was with regard to receiving this award. Having, as a Staff Officer, arranged to have the nameplate above his office door changed, to include his new post-nominal's for his first day back at work after the award, he told me in no uncertain terms to change it back to the original!

On his retirement from the Brigade in March 1984, he did not of course 'retire'. He took on the role of gardener and green-keeper at Bramshaw Golf Club, a job he kept for 27 years. He was also Chairman of a swimming group for those having back problems. He was of course also able to devote more time to his garden at home. For a period he was Chairman of the Hampshire Branch of NARF, and he was a long-time and regular supporter of the Southampton Fire Brigade Comrades Association and was one of the first to join the HFRS Past Members Association.

Whenever he and I spoke, he would want to be brought up to date with all that was happening in the Service, shaking his head from side to side in disbelief or bewilderment at some of the issues that were very alien to him. That pose of hands on hips and cocked head as I was 'questioned' by 'The Dep' was often apparent.

When on my career path I proudly took on the title of 'Dep', I would often reflect on how 'Smokey' would have dealt with an issue, knowing full well that to me and to many others who served with him, that he truly was 'THE DEP', a good fireman and a trusted officer who, I believe, did much in his career to enhance the traditions of our profession.

I am thankful that just a few weeks prior to his passing, Malcolm Eastwood and I took Les out for lunch. He of course wanted the usual update on things, including a long conversation about the sad loss of two firefighters at Shirley Towers in Southampton – a building which he was still able to operationally describe from his



Getting an ejector pump to work on a ship incident c1956

Southampton days. He also told us that following being affected by a mystery virus he had a greatly reduced lung capacity and that his mobility was greatly impaired following a couple of falls, necessitating the use of a walking stick. He described how he fell at the bottom of his garden and that, after a period of unconsciousness, he had woken up in the rain but could not get up or summon help. With typical 'Smokey' grit and determination, he pulled himself along the ground, over what was quite a distance, and managed to get into his kitchen to use the phone. Malcolm and I reckon he was just too proud to call out help to summon his neighbours! His humour whilst he told us this 'adventure' showed that his spirit had not left him, even if his body had become a little frail.

He very proudly showed us both around his immaculate home and well tended and orderly garden, and somewhat unexpected by myself, his collection of fire brigade

treasures and memories on his shelves and souvenirs from his various holiday travels. A side of 'Smokey' that was not always apparent as he performed his role as 'The Dep'. He was always immensely proud of his days with the Southampton Fire Brigade. Bill Driver, who was for a period the Chief Admin Officer working with Les at Headquarters, wrote to me on being told of his death and included these words:

'I know he used to sometimes drive people mad but his dedication to the fire service was 110%. The Chief, (George Clarke) and myself would arrive in the office at the 'normal' time – Les had been gardening for an hour, visited 2 or 3 stations and was, (to use a pun), on fire by 0900, with smoke coming out of his mouth, having already sorted out the priorities for the Chief to attend to. If there were 53 weeks in a year he would have filled them and lived all of them in a fire service uniform. He may not have actually got it right all of the time but, he was 'Smokey' so it was right! Where he

got his energy from was actually in doing what he loved'.

Farewell 'Smokey', you will be fondly remembered by many for your commitment, your operational prowess, for being a good fireman, a trusted fire officer and of course for your sometimes unique and quirky use of the English language, word pronunciation and delivery, (which are difficult to say in written form, but he could be very 'pacific' about things and liked 'canine' pepper in cooking!).

A character, who made a huge impact on individuals and on service delivery in so many ways. He was a legend in your time and, will be so for many years to come I suspect.

There are those in the Service today who would benefit from his way of doing things. He still brings a smile to the many who knew him and who had the experience of working with him.

Returning to the retirement letter that George Clarke wrote as a Chief Fire Officer to 'The Dep', he ended his very heart-warming letter by saying:

'I have been privileged to have worked with one of the 'greats of the British Fire Service and my career has been better for it'.

I and, no doubt, many others, also feel that way. Rest in Peace Dep.

Alan House

Perhaps others will want to keep his memory alive in 'Stop Message' by recounting their story of Les.

Feeding at Incidents... Continued

On gaining control of the fire service on 1 April 1948, very few Local Authorities saw the need to operate any vehicle to provide refreshments at incidents



Jam or Fish Paste sandwiches my dear?

The vehicles issued for AFS use were sometimes called into use and the WVS, (later WRVS), still had a strong presence nationally and it was they, along with the Salvation Army who were widely used to provide refreshment at emergency incidents by many fire brigades.

On 1 April 1968, Civil Defence in the UK was placed on a 'Care and Maintenance' basis and as the organisation was stood down, all vehicles issued leading up to its demise were placed into storage for a gradual sell off.

Here in Hampshire, an AFS Canteen Van was stationed at Havant and used regularly at AFS exercises. No evidence has been found of it being used outside of AFS activities to feed fire crews. Any feeding was ad-hoc, using local arrangements and 'emergency rations' stowed in old biscuit tins on appliances.

Jacobs Cracker biscuits with Dairylea cheese triangles, luncheon meat or corned beef, topped off with a Mars Bar and washed down with orange squash or a 'cuppa' kept fire crews going at many an incident.

As a result of receiving a 'salvage award' as a result of participation in the firefighting operations on board the oil tanker 'Pacific Glory' following its collision with the 'Allegra', off St Catherine's Point, in the Solent, 23 October 1970, it was decided to build a purpose-designed Canteen Van. Built in what was then, the Hampshire Fire Service Workshops, on a Bedford TK chassis, the new vehicle, NHO 554L entered into service in May 1973, and located at Winchester fire station and crewed by operational personnel, which at that time was a mixture of wholtime, (day crewing) and retained.

Use of the Canteen Van was in the main, for protracted incidents when full hot meals were needed. A hot main course, usually something with chips and baked beans followed by a dessert – often tinned mixed fruit and custard. Just the job at a prolonged or cold incident! Refreshed crews would then happily continue to work for many hours.

The Canteen Van was also put to good use as a temporary kitchen at stations when they underwent some form of building work, with the facilities of the vehicle being put to good use whilst parked in the station yard for weeks at a time.

In June 1982 the formal use of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) was introduced for the first time on a 12 month trial, for the provision of hot drinks and sandwiches at incidents of a duration in excess of 3 hours. The WRVS, requesting that they liked to be given notice so that they could heat water and arrange transport. They had been used before, but the arrangement was a bit ad-hoc, being more of a hangover from the 'Cold War' era and left over Civil Defence arrangements.

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AFS Austin CaV delivered to Havant in April 1956

By February 1983 the arrangement was not working too well, with comment from crews about the time it was taking for refreshments to arrive at the scene. One incident in the Fordingbridge area, (they like their food down in 'The Forest'), on 22 February, highlighted an incident when feeding was requested and the local organiser had gone on holiday leaving the tea making equipment and supplies locked in her garage, resulting in urns having to be sourced from the next nearest in Sway.

A report submitted following an incident at Home Farm, West Tisted on 23 July 1983, stated that 'refreshments were not enjoyed by personnel', highlighting that the sandwiches were either sardines or jam and suggested that 'if you don't like either of these, the men were going hungry'! The report was submitted by the Divisional Commander for C Division, Divisional Officer Jack Damant. The Chief Fire Officer, George Clarke, suggested in a note to the ACO (SS), Harold Stinton, 'I don't know how we can go with likes and dislikes, but perhaps a 'spam, cheese and tomato agreement might be possible'. Serious strategic for the top team of the day!

By the end of the 12 month period a total of 20 calls Had been attended and it was decided to continue the arrangement, with stations providing 'Stage 1 Feeding' – tea and biscuits from identified 'Feeding Stations', (Basingstoke, Aldershot, later Rushmoor, Gosport, Copnor, Eastleigh, Andover, St Marys and Redbridge), topped up with vehicle ration packs. The WRVS would provide 'Stage 2 Feeding' – drinks and

sandwiches and 'Stage 3 Feeding' – hot meals provided from the Canteen Van by the personnel from Winchester fire station for incidents of 6 hours or more. These categories of feeding set to continue for years to come.

Life was still not totally clear though and there was always close monitoring of any incident for which the Canteen Van was requested and often officers would leave it late to request the vehicle, not considering how long it took to get it stocked, mobile and working at the scene in time to make a difference to hungry crews. Frustration would result in 'local arrangements' being made, which would come to light after a petty cash return was made. By that the time the 'men' were happy but the person who made the decision often became the subject of correspondence. The ordering of 31 fish and chips at 40p per portion, by the officer in charge following a fire at the Conservative Club in Romsey taxed the minds. Total bill being £35.40.

The topic of feeding remained on the agenda and minutes of many a Divisional Commanders Meeting. There was still dissatisfaction except when the Canteen van was mobilised, but as stated earlier this was often late in being requested. The reliability of the WRVS, although really nice people was questionable and the choice of refreshment offered often criticised. The first mention of The Salvation Army came as a result of an incident at the infamous Pounds Scrapyard, in Portsmouth in March 1985. It seems that although considered, it was not thought at that time an arrangement was possible.. Self Heating 'Hot Cans' were now given more serious



NHO 554L with side awning, as first built in 1973



Colden Common tyre dump fire, 19 February 1974

consideration, although variants of the type originally produced for the military had been trialled at various times before. The 'Hot Can' though had improved when samples were secured in September 1985.

Still the close watch was made of the mobilisation of the Canteen Van. This time for an incident involving the roof of The Plough Inn, Long Parish, on 9 April 1987. It would seem that the officer concerned was recorded as arriving at the scene of the incident at 0444 and requested the Canteen Van 6 minutes later. It was a 'Make Pumps 4'. (These were the days when the Dep read the operational incidents logs each day and actually knew what was going on!) The officer defended his actions saying that he was mindful that crews would probably have not eaten since the previous evening meal, which could have been 10 hours prior and because it was a damp cold morning a tot meal would have been more beneficial than biscuits or sandwiches. His report

was accepted 'on this occasion'! I cannot of course say who the officer was but it seems that ADO Phil Crisford was thinking of the welfare of his crews! Another 'investigation took place into making 'local arrangements' at an incident at Havant Thicket on 7 May 1987. Again, its not for me to name the officer, but ADO Malcolm Waterman appears to have had a reasonable explanation for claiming £22.90 for sausage and chips, at the 8 pump fire within the notorious thicket, highlighting that the crews had hot food within 35 minutes of being requested and that the Canteen Van was known to be 'off the run'.

A review of feeding at incidents was concluded in April 1990, resulting in arrangements for Stage 2 Feeding to be passed to The Salvation Army from the WRVS. A purpose built vehicle was supplied by the Salvation Army and operated for the whole of the County from the Salvation Army Centre in Oxford Street, Southampton with the exception of the Aldershot/Farnborough as this area fell under the London Region of the Salvation Army. The vehicle which was handed over on 27 December 1990, was kept at St Marys fire station. From this it was also possible to serve basic hot meals such a pies and bacon. Their organisational structure was such that they could provide food stocks very quickly from their established from the permanent kitchens in their Centres. A towed caravan known as 'Unit 2' could also be mobilised from the Salvation Army Centre.



Date unknown, but it appears to be in Portsmouth, Possibly Fine Fare, at The Tricorn, 10 March 1978? If so, this was CFO Clarke's first 'job' after appointment.

Alan House

To be continued...

Ramblings from an old Farnborough hand



I was interested to see the photograph of the Farnborough crew on page 19 of the May 2012 issue. Having searched out the position of the same photo in my scrap book, I deduce that this was in October 1973 as I appear, as far as can be judged in the photo, to have a rank marking and I was a T/LFm at that time. I was made a substantive L/Fm in January 1974 but the photograph for that appears on a later page of the book.

The occasion was a divisional drill competition at Lasham airfield at which Farnborough did quite well, winning six cups out of eight, among them the one-man dressing drill where we were 1st 2nd & 3rd, the major pump drill, the 35ft ladder drill and the championship cup for 'the most successful afternoon'. The Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough got the major pump drill for a works Fire Brigade cup leaving just one for Basingstoke!

I've managed to dredge most of the names from the depths of the ancient brain, from the left:- Harry

Williams, the 'old boy' Cecil Miles, Paul (bam-bam) Chandler, Dave Knight, Les Nash (father of Brian Nash of Control he also features in the middle of the photo above), Colin Davies, Frank Poulter, Karl (Dick) Lewis, David (Butch) Hardy, Mervyn Jones and Mike Williams. On the right was the RT SubO whose name eludes me now.

Cecil Miles was due to retire in about 1978 but in mid 1976 a ruling was made that allowed a proportion of active war service could be counted towards retirement age. Cecil inquired and found he had 2 years allowable and, taking into account this and the leave he was due for the year, found that he should have retired 'last week'. He graciously consented to stay on until lunchtime then disappeared. What a way to go!

The major pump drill from open water with two lengths of suction and one delivery line of two lengths was carefully prepared for. The length of each nominal 100ft delivery hose was required to be not less than 75ft (which allowed

for burst near an end to be cut back and retied) and by an amazing coincidence, that's exactly what they were! The washers in the couplings of the suction hose were carefully trimmed and lubricated so that the female coupling would spin freely when being screwed up and the end of the threads were nicely filed to ensure the connection 'made' first time. The Dennis Jaguar Wrt throttle had a stop fitted to give the correct revs for priming and delivery pressure so that the pump operator didn't need to waste time adjusting it. The 'open water' was an above ground tank so it was not unusual for one of the crew to end up in the tank along with the suction hose to ensure the strainer stayed under water. Practice enabled the pump operator to have the water closely following the crew running the delivery hose without over-taking them. Well, not often anyway!

I had a go at and won the 'one man dressing drill'. This involved running from a start line to one's fire kit draped carefully over a hat stand with the boots and leggings placed just so beside. Having dressed with at least three of the six tunic buttons done up, onto a standpost key and bar and ship them to a dummy hydrant, followed by coupling then running a single length and branch then onto a finish line to be inspected for correct dress. This was obviously a 'dry' drill. Again, the length of the hose turned out to be exactly the minimum allowed and was carefully chosen to roll up dead flat and even, although using an old lightweight unlined hose may have

been taking gamesmanship a tad too far! A bit of work and lubrication to the coupling lugs helped easy running and a belt length of 'just so' to stick the branch in helped save that vital few seconds. At the end all the tunic buttons had to be done up so buttoning while running thus became a vital skill and having a few of them sewn to the outside of the button hole to look as though they were done up could sometimes be got away with.

The 35ft ladder drill just involved plenty of practice to get the heel down in the correct place and an enthusiastic heave tempered with a touch of caution to get it pitched to the right height first time. I can't remember now whether this was also a 'carry down' drill. If so there was some opportunity for a bit of gamesmanship there.

At some-when around this time the aluminium 45ft ladder was being introduced into the Service and for some reason Farnborough's 45 was matched and won in a match against Fareham's wheeled escape at a slip, pitch and carry down at some sort of show or competition, I can't now remember just what or why. This was quite a coup as the escape was considered the faster appliance in such drills though not as handy off hard standing. In the true competition type spirit there was much scrutinizing of the rules beforehand, searching for any advantage that could be gained. We noted that the 'correct' drill for a carry down on a wheeled escape involved it being 'let out in the carriage' to bring the ladder to a shallower angle for the carry down. This Farnborough naturally insisted on being done as it took Fareham that vital few extra seconds. The man who ran up Farnborough's

ladder was, of course, the lightest, tallest and therefore quickest of our ladder runners who flew up but arrived at the top ever so slightly knackered. Fortunately un-noticed by the on lookers, the man who actually carried down was one of our bigger but slower lads who had been secreted below the window cill well before the start and already had the 'victim' over his shoulder. Ah, gamesmanship, what would we have done without it! This was of course, in the days before Health & Safety got a bit silly, a live carry down; the 'victim' selected being not an ounce over the minimum required twelve stone soaking wet.

The Motorway Rescue Tender in the back ground was an interesting device as it seemed to be an attempt to carry out two rather different functions. To be a fast response appliance carrying RTA type equipment for motorway incidences and to also have a rough/soft ground capability presumably for farm accidents and the like. In true dual purpose fashion it did neither of these functions at all well. As can be seen from the photograph of Fareham's appliance, it was based on a forward control version of the Land Rover. This version had basically a standard Land Rover chassis 'beefed up' in places to allow a heavier load to be carried, fitted with bigger wider wheels and powered by a six cylinder engine of, I think, 2½ litres. Along with some fairly useful gear there was also an electric winch attached to either the front or rear bumper powered by two large and very heavy lead acid batteries. Quite why when standard Land Rover after market equipment featured a winch run from the power take off or from the front of the engine,

I can't imagine. There was also a hefty trolley jack - very useful for our car maintenance, and a pair of large pulley blocks with three rather short lengths of heavy weight rope which had to be knotted together to get a reasonable pulling distance. Of course, when in use a knot inevitably came up to a pulley block and then ? ? ?

With all this weight, to envisage the 'fast response' function required a bit of creative thinking as I never succeeded in winding the thing up past 50 MPH on the flat. The slip road to the M3 motorway at Farnborough is uphill so one would arrive at the top of it with blue lights flashing madly at maybe 30 MPH. Trying to then join the motorway with big artics cruising down it at 60 plus and flashing their head-lights to let us in was, to say the very least, a tad tricky not to say somewhat embarrassing!

The cross-country capability was also a bit suspect and tended to show that the 'beefing up' did not extend to the steering gear. A sharpish left turn in the rough usually resulted in the track rod getting friendly with the sump and the front wheels pointing at each other. The army used some of these Land Rovers fitted as flat bed trucks and during a 11D visit to their workshops in Aldershot, we asked them what they thought of them. Their answer was that, yes it could carry bigger and a rather heavier loads than the standard model, or it could go fairly well off road, but not both at the same time, and in any case it was no good at either without the Rover 3½ litre V8 engine.

Frank Poulter

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.

Hello Alan.

I am sending you a photo of recruit's Course R3/77. What was special about the course was its interruption by the industrial action of 1977 at the six week point in the course. We resumed after, and I cannot remember whether it was for eight or ten weeks, but I am sure it was the longest recruit's course in Hampshire's history. Perhaps you could confirm those details.

As well, it may be appropriate to invite memories of that course, such as the crew who dropped the last remaining escape ladder at training school, who was the number one of the crew, who was the instructor and the reaction of the station officer at the time of the incident as well as memories of being billeted at Redbridge Hill fire station.

Mark Bates.

Ed: I am not sure about the length of the course – any offers to confirm? Mark is also keen to try and get a group of PMA volunteers together to form a working party to contribute to tasks for the Fire Fighters charity at Harcombe House. This would a great way to give back. A party, as you may know went, up from Hampshire for many years. Anyone interested, please let me know.



Dear Alan,

Many thanks for your excellent magazine. Eric Hounslow had mentioned that it was not to be missed and he was absolutely right.

An amazing coincidence regarding Elaine's letter. Only days before receiving my first Stop Message (Issue 8), I had been telling friends about the Biro 'set-up' for new recruits - we'd been trying to find a ball pen that actually worked. Back at North Hill House, I was presented with the 'empty Bic trap' by Harry Martyr who was also in the Fire Prevention department along with Frank Wightman. Bill Coggan was the Service's Senior Fire Prevention officer at the time and enjoyed a desk in the same office over looking the lawns - set out as a putting green - at the back of North Hill House. It was towards the end of my first week and I was wearing a white shirt with my Junior Fireman uniform as stores didn't have a 14 1/2 in RAF blue. This didn't go down well particularly as the only white shirt I had was a dress shirt with a white silk stripe in it. Even more suspicions now surrounding these 'cocky' new recruits.

I was told to take the empty Bic up to Miss 'Dickie' Bird and to specifically ask for a replacement Biro. The response: 'It's not a Biro young man; it's a ball point pen and I've been watching you; rather full of yourself aren't you.....and so it went on!!! Actually, looking back, she was absolutely right and I learned much later that Miss Bird played an important role in the NFS during WW II. She clearly meant to put this young upstart, know-it-all in his place. Well, it worked but why I always remember it is because our teachers at school always used genuine, red Biro's that were often given free range on my work. I'd already learned, in no uncertain terms, that these were the genuine article and that the 'trade name' was not to be used routinely for 'ball point pens!! Halcyon days.

Actually, the use of trade names in a 'generic' way is quite interesting - you can see I'm retired. In vacuum cleaner reviews people often refer to their 'hoover'. One reviewer said that their 'new hoover' was not as good as their old one which was a Samsung. The new one didn't 'hoover-up' nearly as well'. At one time a food mixer was a 'Kenwood' and I even remember an automatic washing machine being called a 'Bendix'. Undoubtedly there are more and new names will be coming into usage. Going back to the vacuum cleaners, will a cyclonic vacuum cleaner be referred to as a Dyson? I'm sure you can think of a lot more. Anyone think of some amusing - but printable ones?

Anyhow, thoroughly enjoyed Stop Message and looking forward to Issue 9.

Kind regards,

Martin Nash

Ed: Any offers? I can think of one - 'Plaster' in the UK versus the equivalent normal use name in the USA, irrespective of manufacturer - 'Band Aid'. Both originate from the origins of the original manufacturer trade names 'Elastoplast' and yup, 'Band Aid'.



Mosel Valley 26 May 2012

Blue Watch Southsea Twinning Trip 2012



As I reported in a previous issue of "stop Message", our Southsea-Kettwig, German twinning is going strong. This year, our 27th, it was our turn to be hosted in Germany. Every year we have a theme and this year was no exception, we had a great surprise in store, they had booked us for a tour of the Mosel valley ON CHOPPER TRIKES.

The weather was superb, wall to wall sunshine as we wound our way along this very scenic area of Germany. We spent the day receiving admiring waves from passers by and other motorists as well as being photographed everywhere we went. Our only problem was, because the weather was so nice half of Germany had also decided to go out for the day and finding a parking place for eight very large machines was impossible. We had to go hungry and thirsty until the evening when we made up our losses with copious amounts of cool beer, a large BBQ and much camaraderie. To steal a phrase from a well known TV show, "absolutely fabulous".

Chris Lunn

Ed: Was the nice big green one behind yours Chris?

Hi Alan,
Your package (Stop Message), has finally found me, thank you very much, I received it last night at our local Volunteer Fire Brigade Annual General Meeting. Whilst I have retired from the permanent Brigade, I joined up with Mosgiel Volunteer Fire Brigade, (Mosgiel is part of the Dunedin Brigade - week day manned by permanent -night/weekends by volunteers) & I will complete 50 years service this December. I have stepped down from the Officer ranks & now enjoy the odd squirt, whenever I am quick enough to catch the appliance. Great to see that the cartoons have survived, my copy is framed & on the wall of my study, I have a lot of happy memories of my time in Portsmouth, I guess that by now all the members of White Watch, Copnor Road will have retired. We hope to be back in the UK next year & would like to make contact. Once I have had time to read the magazines i'll get back to you, I belong to our Fire Brigade Restoration Society & may be able to send some snippets for your magazine.

Thanks again, John Bethune. New Zealand.

The BalloonTender!

How fascinating to read Ken Davis's recollections of the Balloon Tender during its period at Lyndhurst. At that time I was Station Officer in charge of Lyndhurst and to be honest didn't view it quite as enthusiastically as Ken did.

If we turn the clock back to the mid -1960s Lyndhurst was then home to two Water Tenders, a Land Rover Rescue Tender and a Land Rover hose reel tender. At that time only the first Water Tender had a full radio installation so when two or more of the stations appliances were attending an incident contact between each other was virtually impossible. Around 1965 we were issued with a really nice pair of experimental Walkie Talkie radios made by a company called Storno. As part of the trial we generally carried one on the first Water Tender and one on the Land Rover and the quality of these was such that even after someone had shut the Land Rover door on one the radios telescopic aerials we could still always maintain contact with each other. All good things come to an end and the trial finished and we were eventually issued with the then standard home office portable radios that were frankly useless. The quality was such that we could stand in the station yard looking at each other yet not be able to establish contact using the radios. It was suggested that perhaps we were using them wrong and would have had more success if we tied hand written messages to these and threw them to each other. The problems were never resolved and the radios were eventually replaced with the Burndept ones that were not a lot better, hence the need for the balloon.

I haven't a clue how we at Lyndhurst got lumbered with it but lumbered we were! There were a

number of disused airfields in the area and these were in many respects ideal venues to practice flying the balloon and trialling its communications facilities. There were a number of problems in that the weight of radio equipment that the balloon could carry was very restricted, there were air traffic control implications and flying conditions had to be near perfect. Unfortunately the old airfields had become increasingly used as recreational areas and as Ken has already suggested the appearance of us with our balloon was a sure fire way of attracting attention. Being the Station Officer I was invariably the one stood doing nothing and it usually fell on me to try to explain to the population at large just what we were trying to achieve. At this time astronauts had been using radio communications between the earth and the moon for well over 20 years and despite a well-rehearsed and almost feasible explanation there were generally two reactions, some would clutch their sides and roll around the ground laughing others, would simply shake their heads in disbelief and wander off in a daze! As it happens fairly soon into the trials it became apparent that a similar improvement in fireground communications could be achieved far more easily by simply elevating the repeater system using a Hydraulic Platform or Turntable Ladder.

As has already suggested the balloon was only used operationally once during the time that it was allocated to Lyndhurst and I'm sure that it was on this occasion that someone managed to hammer a ground anchor through the tail fin.

I have to confess that I was rather relieved when the unit was moved on to Eastleigh!

Dick Lindsay

Youth Quiz

It might be a bit of a 'long-shot' but Alan Wells has asked if anyone out there still has any records or rules used with the Youth Fire prevention Quiz that saw prominence in the calendar of the Hampshire Fire Brigade for a number of years. If anyone has anything perhaps they could advise me.

Editor

Scrapbook Memories

Some photo album memories submitted by Stop Message readers

Mystery plane crash.
Certainly Hampshire
Fire Service crews.
Likely early 60s?



Docks fire station c1968



Pump Escape ('No3') and 'Major', ('No4'),
Woolston Fire Station 1973



Rushmoor under construction and on completion 1990



Petersfield Fire Station and wholetime fireman's house 1960

Martyn Long,
Terry Hawton,
Roger Penney,
Dave Colliss and
others at squash
tournament.



A very young footballer,
Tom Carr being
congratulated by CFO
John Pearson



Hambledon, January 1994.
John Arnold photo

HFRS Happenings



FLEET NEWS

As reported last time, seven Rescue Pumps are in the process of being delivered, the first two have entered service at Hardley and Whitchurch. The remaining five will be allocated to Eastleigh, Fareham, Havant, Lyndhurst and Petersfield.

Hardley are also the owners of a new Land Rover L4P, the first one not to have been built in-house for over 30 years, having been built by Emergency-One, Scotland.

Also mentioned last time was detail regarding the replacement appliances for the Special Equipment Units and Multi Role Vehicles. It has now been decided to have designated appliances rather than a prime mover with demountable bodies. Four Response Support Vehicles, five Command Support Vehicles, two Environmental Protection Vehicles and two Foam Pod's will be purchased in the next few years. Plans are also in the pipeline

to move some appliances in Southampton between stations by the end of the year. Proposals include moving the ALP and Small Fire Vehicle from Redbridge to St Marys and move the Special Equipment Unit from St Marys to Redbridge.

INCIDENTS

10th September, ToC 04:06, ToS 07:11. Make pumps 6. Stable Cottage, Swampton, Near Andover. Fire involving semi detached property of two floors, 8m x 5m, 100% by fire, 2 CAFS jets, 2BA, 1 hose reel. Attendance RP Andover, RP Whitchurch, make pumps 6, WrT Andover, WrT Overton, WrT Sutton Scotney, WrL Kingsclere, CSU Headquarters, SEU and WrT Basingstoke.

12th September, ToC 03:27, ToS 12:54. Make pumps 6, ALP 2. The Curzon Rooms, Curzon Road, Waterloooville. Fire involving

derelict building 15m x 15m, 1st floor and roof 100% by fire, 2 ALP monitors, 2BA. Attendance WrL and WrT Waterloooville, pumps 4 and ALP WrL and WrT Cosham, ALP Redbridge, SEU Cosham, SEU support crew WrL St Marys, CSU Headquarters, Command Support Portchester, pumps 6, ALP 2 WrL and WrT Havant, ALP Basingstoke, MRV Eastleigh. WrC required, WrC Fareham.

GENERAL - The HFRS is hoping to save more than £80,000 a year by sending Land Rovers to tackle small rural fires. Under current policies a full size pumping appliance with a minimum crew of four is sent to all calls.

In a report submitted to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee, it states that a trial at three retained fire stations last year, Waterloooville, Fleet and Ringwood was a success. The only problems that arose were down to the rota and which crew members will crew the Land Rovers. In the latest figures available, excluding Portsmouth and Southampton, there were 1,954 small fires across the county between April 2010 and March 2011. If they had all been attended by a Land Rover, rather than a full size pumping appliance, a saving of £83,000 would have been made.



Small Fire Unit

The report states: ‘Many fires in rural areas are small and pose limited risk. Most of these small fires in the open can be dealt with using limited water, equipment, and personnel and do not need a major appliance with a crew of five or six.’

Currently the HFRS operate 18 Land Rovers, a mixture of L4Ps and L4Ts and following the committee’s approval of the recommendations in June, there will be a review of which stations they are based at.

Because Portsmouth and Southampton are unitary urban authorities they were not included in the trial, however Redbridge already operate a Small Fire Vehicle and Southsea will be receiving one during August with an identical appliance also entering service at Basingstoke later in the year.

As from the 1st June Stockbridge Fire Station is now home for Hampshire Constabulary’s Safer Neighbourhoods police officers. The police and fire service in Stockbridge will share office space at the fire station in a bid to save costs and maintain a police presence in the community.

The move is the first of its kind taking place in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and part of the constabulary’s estate modernisation programme. 18 police stations, one of which is Stockbridge, have been earmarked for closure because the buildings are not fit for modern policing or not cost efficient. By selling some of the inefficient buildings, Hampshire Constabulary hopes to make some of the savings it has to make as a result of the reduced budget. With both emergency services sharing the facilities of one building, the costs will be reduced for both organisations.

Colin Carter, Guest Contributor

Following the completions of the Coroners Inquest into the Shirley Towers fire, a paper has been submitted to the Fire and rescue Authority outlining the Service’s response to the outcomes, including improvements that have already taken place and how a future improvement programme will be implemented.

A ‘Retained Duty System Sustainability Project’ has been launched which will focus on ensuring the continued efficiency and effectiveness of the Retained Duty System. The project will include 6 specific work areas at this time:

- Improve the workloads and capacity of watch managers (Sub Officers)
- Review of recruitment and retention and improve the level of availability
- Quantify the effectiveness of selective paging (call in the personnel needed)
- Improve the operational effectiveness, the development of skills and maintenance of competence of retained personnel.
- Improve the communication and engagement with retained personnel
- Review and recommend the disposition of operational appliances at retained fire stations

The Joint Working in Hampshire Programme continues to gain momentum with ‘business process improvement’ being the aim of a joint venture between HFRS, the police and the Hampshire County Council. The previous stand-alone HFRS Occupational Health team and now co-located with the Police at their premises located at Netley.

Past Times

Focus on Twyford Fire Station

The origins of the fire service in Twyford dates back to 1929. The Parish Fire Brigade was taken over by the Winchester Rural District Council under the Fire Brigades Act 1938, and then in August 1941 being designated station 1T in B Division of Fire Force 16 (16B1T) under the National Fire Service. On the formation of the Hampshire Fire Service in April 1948 Twyford became part of 'C' District (later re-titled 'Division'). The fire station was situated in an old garage rented from The Dolphin Hotel, together with a requisitioned piece of land in Hazeley Road having a hut and a hose drying gantry and siren.

Fire crews from Twyford saw action during the blitz, particularly in Southampton and in Portsmouth during the heavy raids of late 1940 and early 1941.

Following the formation of the Auxiliary Fire Service, Twyford was chosen as the location for a unit and a 'Green Goddess' at the Dolphin Inn garage. It was in use from 1956 until 1966 when

the vehicle and personnel were transferred to Winchester. The only death to have occurred in Hampshire involving a member of the AFS was on 17 October 1958 when AFS Fireman David Stokes of the Twyford unit died as a result of an accident whilst riding an AFS issue BSA motorcycle when taking part in a regional convoy exercise to Moreton-in-Marsh. The accident occurred at the junction of the Alresford and Petersfield roads. His name is recorded on both the Hampshire Firefighter Memorial and the National Firefighter Memorial in London.

For a period, part of the fire service stores was located in a garage at The Old Brewery in Twyford. This was given up in October 1954

A new fire station was approved to be built on land in Hazeley Road in 1960 at the cost of £10,350 and the station was opened in 1961.

Following a of 'Fire Cover Review' C37 Twyford closed its doors for the last time on 3 July 2000.



Circa 1976. Bedford TK issued January 1974.

Circa 19. Bedford 'S' Watertender YHO 400 issued October 1960. Later badly damaged following a collision with a shop in Winchester, January 1963.



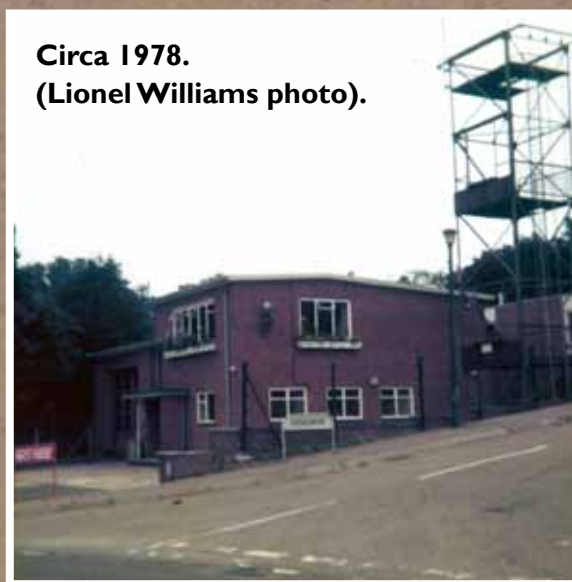
Not dated but Circa 19. The tree next door has been trimmed back. Note the canvas hose drying up the tower. Remember the joys of scrubbing, drying and rolling? It would be 'nicked' today!



1950. 'The Intruder' was on stage at The Guildhall, Winchester according to one of the posters.



Circa 1972. (Dick Lindsay photo).



Circa 1978. (Lionel Williams photo).

What led to Olympic and Paralympic success?

It was a mix of ambition, speed, endurance – and loads of good luck. Yes, that's what it took to get tickets to see the Games!

Knowing that we would both be retiring in 2012, we did think about applying to become volunteers. Then the thought struck us: what if we were allocated to a subterranean car park or some other off-site duties? We might not get to see any live action. So, back in April 2011, we each applied for the maximum number of sessions allowed. We had limited success and decided to boost our haul by purchasing a couple of Thomas Cook packages which offered London accommodation and additional tickets. Subsequently we pounced on any tickets we could get when fresh waves were released. We were right on the button and so, with a combination of luck, perseverance and extravagance, we accumulated an impressive range, from synchronised swimming to top-drawer athletics. Oh, and all the opening and closing ceremonies! (I hasten to add that all these purchases were legitimate, not from dodgy overseas sites.) Were we smug? Well, we tried not to be!

One of our targets was to choose events at different locations, not just the Olympic Park, so that we had a wide-ranging experience. Of the Olympic Park venues, the actual stadium was without doubt the most impressive, but of the other locations, Greenwich (where equestrian events were held) took some beating. However, we didn't get to see any of the cycling events in the velodrome.

Was all the effort and expense worth it? Absolutely! The Games were all we hoped they would be ... and more. There was a genuine 'feel-good' factor everywhere we went. We felt very

proud that Great Britain had hosted and organised everything so brilliantly. The Olympic Park itself was amazing: the landscaping and beautiful planting would not have looked out of place at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Some of the sporting highlights for us included seeing Jessica Ennis compete in two of her heptathlon disciplines, Mo Farah win his second gold medal in the 5,000 metres, and Usain Bolt and the rest of the amazing Jamaican sprint team in the 4 x 100 relay final. There was no question in our minds that the enthusiastic, loud encouragement given by the spectators – particularly for the British competitors (or for any unfortunate underdog) – spurred competitors on to some fantastic achievements.

The opening and closing ceremonies were breathtaking, truly fantastic. It has been said by many commentators that what made these Games so very special was the part played by the 7,000+ volunteers. Their enthusiasm and genuine helpfulness deservedly earned them the title of Games-Makers.

It was a great privilege to be there, to see all that sporting excellence and unbridled patriotism. We will never experience anything quite like it again.

David and Elaine Howells

Ed: David and Elaine are off to the World Firefighter Games to be held in Sydney in October when David hopes once again to participate in the marathon running, (f a recent injury is resolved). Best of luck David.



Ed: Elaine was drawn to photograph the spectacle and flag waving, whilst David.....

Snippets

Two 'snippets' from the February 1947 and October 1947 editions of 'Fire' magazine that may raise a smile with some.



PMA ties and Lapel Pins

PMA ties and Lapel Pins are now available for purchase from Alan House. In two designs, the ties have in the stripes, the colours of the HFRS Meritorious Service Medal and the Fire Brigade Long Service and good Conduct medals with "PMA" shaded in the background. One has the PMA badge logo.

Tie: Cost £5 - plus 70p for postage
Lapel Pins: Cost £3.50 - plus 50p for postage.



Rural part-time Service strangled by Red-Tape

by "Man o' Kent"

★ NOW that country districts are relying upon the efforts of volunteer retained firemen for firefighting, some extremely unsatisfactory arrangements must disappear or the whole system of part-time rural fire defence will collapse.

In the Kentish settlement, from which I write, the fire station is on the outskirts of the town. Even if one runs briskly, it is impossible for anyone in the centre of the town to reach the fire station in less than three minutes. The retained firemen are scattered about, engaged in their various occupations, but, at least, three are on call at any time during the day. These three all work in the town.

Dash to Station

At the first note of the siren, or the fire bell, they down tools and run, or cycle, to the distant fire station. Often they pass the appliance while on their way to the station. Other times, the fire is near their place of work and if permitted to do so, they could start to attack it within a few seconds of the alarm being given.

Red Tape, however, demands that they must report to the station before assuming duty, because, if they do not, they are not entitled to insurance benefits, or to any payment. Red Tape expressly forbids the appliance stopping to pick up any of these men, unless, of course, they have first been to the fire station to report for duty!

The utter stupidity of such regulations was illustrated recently when an outbreak of fire was discovered late one Sunday evening, when there were only two full-time firemen on duty, and the retained men were in their homes or the local hostelry. The fire had become intense before it could break out and disclose its presence.

→ Next column.

The garage, which was in the centre of the town was a wooden structure, surrounded by houses constructed mainly of timber and weatherboard. As, however, every fireman, except one, went direct to the fireground and got to work instead of reporting at the station on the outskirts of the settlement, the fire was confined to the garage; and the only damage to any adjacent building was a slight scorching.

Stupid Rules

Now, had these firemen adhered to the rules and reported to the station, the damage would have been extensive, and human life would have been at risk. Yet the only part-timer to become entitled to pay, or to be covered by insurance, was he who went to the fire station while the others fought the fire!

Unless, these stupid rules are amended, or abolished, it will be impossible to obtain men for part-time firefighting. These regulations make good men into laughing stocks. After all, one cannot blame the average member of the public who sees the ridiculous in the firemen all running to the fire station while the scantily manned fire appliance passes them on its way to the scene of the call.

Surely a record book could be kept on the appliance itself so that any part-time fireman on being picked up, could sign the book to show that he had assumed duty and was, therefore, entitled to pay and compensation should he be injured. The existing arrangements are most unsatisfactory where retained men are concerned. Sweeping alterations must be made if fire defence in country districts is to be accorded quickly and efficiently.

CANTEEN SERVICE FOR RURAL FIREFIGHTERS?

by

Man o' Kent

★ THE time is fast approaching when, in many rural districts, firefighting personnel will be entirely part-time in character. As success will depend on the physical fitness of the men on the fireground, the question of providing them with a reasonable amount of suitable sustenance will have to be tackled.

Recently, two fire brigades in a rural part of Kent were engaged from 21.00 until 08.00 next day at a wheat-stack fire. It is doubtful if any of the firemen had had supper before being called. The majority appear to have had nothing to eat from 17.00 to about 09.00—16 hours—except one small sandwich and a cup of very weak tea supplied during the night. The least said about the tea, the better. Anyway, it was on this generous ration that the men were expected to perform 11 hours of hard manual work.

A few weeks earlier these same brigades fought a forest fire from 18.00 until 06.00 next day. During these 12 hours each had two sandwiches and two, or three, cups of tea, for which he paid.

Retained firemen feel that this state of affairs should be reported to the proper authorities by the fire officers responsible for the protection of the areas concerned; and that, at fires of more than a few hours' duration, and, particularly when more than one fire brigade is at work, a properly equipped canteen should supply officers and men with suitable fare, and not just a snack collected by the full-time men from their own rations. As it is fairly certain that the early part of 1948 will see the end of most full-time men in rural districts, presumably no rations at all will be forthcoming after that no matter how many hours the fire lasts, unless, of course, the authorities provide them.

A special allocation of tinned food, milk, tea and sugar for retained firemen at long working jobs is not an unreasonable request by men who forego so much to protect their fellow citizens, and the property of those citizens, from fire.

There is no work harder than that of firefighting, which demands the maximum output of physical, and mental, energy from the arrival of the first attendance until the outbreak is under control.

Actually firemen deserve extra rations to provide the extra stamina needed to fight fires; in fact, they are heavy workers.

The present ration is not sufficient to allow any housewife to provide the hearty meal needed by a fireman just back from protracted firefighting during which period he has existed for 12 hours, or more, on a small sandwich and a cup of tea.

When the ration is cut still more, it is doubtful if many retained firemen will be able to display on the fireground that alacrity and strength so greatly desired by their superior officers, and, in the long run, the general public. What I now state may cause displeasure at high level in the Service, but in my opinion the effective protection of life and property against fire is of far greater national importance than the composure of mind, or temper, of any officer, no matter how great is his degree in the NFS oligarchy.

Moving on to Pastures New

Chris Rogers

9 May 2012
Crew Manager,
Southsea
21 years 1 month

Andrew Purves

11 May 2012
Firefighter, Basingstoke
26 years 10 months

Alan Gulliver

15 May 2012
Retained Crew
Manager, Ringwood
8 years 9 months

Richard Barrett

31 May 2012
Response Support
Assistant, Headquarters
18 years 6 months.
Previously Sub Officer
in charge Alresford Fire
Station

John Brandrick

31 May 2012
Retained Firefighter,
Liphook
37 years 9 months

Lee Fisher

3 June 2012
Station Manager, OiC
Andover
28 years 5 months

Wendy Lambert

5 June 2012
Head of Finance
and Office Services,
Headquarters
23 years 2 months

Stuart Thompson

9 June 2012
Firefighter, Lyndhurst
13 years 3 months

David potter

14 June 2012
Retained Firefighter,
Botley
11 years 1 month

Andy Cottrell

29 June 2012
Watch Manager,
Community Safety,
(North)
18 years 10 months,
plus previous 3 years
with Bedfordshire and
Luton FRS and 11 years
with RAF.

Martin Talman

30 June 2012
Firefighter, Southsea
9 years 1 month

Gary Roe

6 July 2012-09-30
Temp Group Manager,
Winchester
23 years 7 Months

Carl Coombs

16 July 2012
Firefighter, Botley
17 years 6 months

Robert Gargaro

17 July 2012
Retained Firefighter,
Petersfield
10 years 2 months

Mark Barnes

18 July 2012
Firefighter, Southsea
23 years 3 months

Jane Waterston

18 July 2012
Crew Manager, Control
41 years 11 months
(including service as
Divisional Commander
Secretary).

Tessa Lock

23 July 2012
Crew Manager, Control
32 years 2 months

Mark Butler

31 July 2012
Retained Watch
Manager, Kingsclere
26 years 6 months

Andy Roberts

2 August 2012
Retained Firefighter,
Brockenhurst
24 years 7 months

Brian Buck

4 August 2012
Retained Firefighter,
Lyndhurst
22 years 6 months

Steve May

22 August
Watch Manager,
Winchester
31 years 8 months

John Jowitt

22 August 2012
Crew Manager,
Winchester
29 years 11 months

Tony Yeates

26 August 2012
Paint Sprayer, Fleet
Maintenance Centre
27 years 2 months

Mark 'Stan' Stainer

30 August 2012
Firefighter, Gosport
22 years 2 months

Bob Bendall

31 August 2012
Fire Investigation
Technician,
Headquarters
43 Years 8 Months,
including previous
wholtime service prior
to retirement as an
ADO.

Jonathon Kennedy

19 September 2012
Watch Manager,
Training Centre
28 years

Russell Tucker

20 September 2012
Firefighter,
Brockenhurst
32 years 2 months

Derek Mugridge

26 September 2012
Crew Manager, Schools
Liaison Team
30 years

Paul Hebdige

26 September 2012
Watch Manager,
Training Centre
30 years

William Jewers

27 September 2012
Firefighter, Basingstoke
25 years 6 months

Martin Merritt

20 September 2012
Firefighter, Winchester
30 years 1 month

We wish everyone listed every success for the future



Final Salute

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

George Barnard

On 26 May 2012

Aged 85

George served at Aldershot and Fleet fire stations before his retirement in 1981.

Vic Cavill

On 28 May 2012

Aged 84

Vic served at various locations around the county, with extended periods in B Division and D Division post- amalgamation in 1974, retiring as the Divisional Officer, Fire Prevention at D Division, Headquarters, Redbridge Hill in 1985.

Doreen Bass

On 4 June 2012

Aged 82

Doreen served as secretary at Headquarters when it was based in Winchester and then at D Division Headquarters, retiring as Secretary to the Divisional Commander.

Mick O'Connor

On 9 June 2012

Aged 77

Mick originally joined the Portsmouth City Fire Brigade. He served as a Rider Station Officer at St Marys and was serving at Southsea in that position when he retired in July 1986

Barry Knight

On 16 June 2012

Aged 62

Barry served at Alton fire station until his retirement as Leading Fireman in July 1997

Ray Ford

On 25 June 2012

Aged 81

Ray served at Workshops, becoming the Workshops Manager, before moving to Headquarters as the Transport Officer until his retirement in 1988

Keith Boyce

On 1 July 2012

Aged 62

Keith served as a Leading Firefighter at Rushmoor, prior to leaving to serve as a Sub Officer until his retirement in 2005

Peter Darwin

On 9 July 2012

Aged 67

Pete served at Cosham as a Firefighter until his retirement in 1999

Colin Matthews

On 15 July 2012

Aged 72

Colin originally joined the Southampton Fire Brigade. He was for a number of years a Rider Station Officer at St Marys and was serving in C Division (Eastleigh) Fire Safety at his retirement in July 1994

Pete Pearson

On 17 August 2012

Aged 74

Pete served most of his career at Lyndhurst with periods at Christchurch and Redbridge Fire Prevention, before retiring as a Sub Officer in October 1991

Roger Young

On 18 August 2012

Aged 70

Roger was a member of the Portsmouth Auxiliary Fire Service, based at Copnor, until it disbanded in 1968,

Les 'Smokey' Cummins

QFSM

On 11 September 2012

Aged 88

Les, originally joined the National Fire Service in 1946, transferring to the Southampton Fire Brigade in 1948, rising through the ranks to become Deputy Chief Fire Officer. In 1974, on the formation of the Hampshire Fire Brigade, he was transferred in the position of ACO 'Ops' before becoming DCFO. He retired in this position in March 1984.

Roland 'Tommy' Thomas

On 19 September 2012

Aged 64

Roland served as a firefighter at Horndean Fire Station until his retirement in 2003.

Pigs might fly!



Pig Racing
at HFRS
Headquarters
4 August 2012.
You would
never think that
grown-ups could
get so excited
over fluffy toys!

