

STOP MESSAGE

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



www.xhfrs.org.uk



**Make Pumps 10, HMS Collingwood
15 October 1976**

SPECIAL BUMPER EDITION!

*Inside...
Guess who became a trucker?*

EATING IN THE FIFTIES



Pasta was not eaten in New Zealand.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

All potato chips were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

Rice was only eaten as a milk pudding.

Calamari was called squid and we used it as fish bait.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

"Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.

Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock!!


The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties "Elbows Or Phones."

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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'Nile Block', HMS Collingwood, Fareham.
Make Pumps 10, Hydraulic Platform required.
Upper floors of an accommodation block, at a
Naval establishment, well alight. 15 October
1976. (This would probably attract a much
bigger attendance of resources today!)

STOP MESSAGE



Welcome from the Editor



Bedford Watertender Ladder,
ETR 303L, Redbridge

Welcome to this larger than usual edition of Stop Message, trying to make amend for having failed to produce one during this past January. It has been a busy period for me, not least due to having to move the museum collection out of HFRS Headquarters and into its new home within the 'Solent Sky' aircraft museum in Southampton and reviewing and reshaping the Firefighters Memorial

Heritage Collection located within The Fire Service College, Moreton in Marsh. Additionally I have been finishing the creation of an online Book of Remembrance, dedicated to those members of the fire service who have died in the course of their duties, about which you can read more within this edition.

Updates on the new home for the museum collection at Solent Sky will be included in future edition. The large display room on the second floor of the building will house a joint display with the Hampshire Constabulary History Society. What I am seeking right now, are volunteers who would be willing to help transform the empty room into a professional looking display, recording our history for the benefit of visitors in the future. I am looking for anyone who is willing to give some time decorating, constructing, lifting shifting, inventory creation, text labels setting up displays etc. The skills of electricians and those with skills in woodwork would be particularly welcomed. Help to preserve our proud history will be greatly appreciated. Later, after fully opening to the public, I will also be trying to find volunteers to give some time as friends of the museum, to help maintain the look of the collection and help tell our story for visitors. If you would like to help, just get in contact with me for more detail.

The latest review of how the Service will look and protect the public in Hampshire in the future has now been completed and approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting in February. There is no question that the organisation that we, in the PMA, were part of and knew so well has greatly changed, and will continue to do so over the next three to four years, to be almost unrecognisable in terms of our memories, and perhaps, our understanding. Through the pages of 'Stop Message' we will endeavour to share the changes and explain the new ways of working. The 'rights' and 'wrongs' of the changes will, for now, be the matter of personal opinions. History and results will provide the endorsement or challenge.

'Hampshire Fire Headquarters' is now 'Hampshire Fire and Police Headquarters' or 'Hampshire Police and Fire Headquarters', depending which sign you read as you travel along Leigh Road. In terms of change, those who have visited or have worked within the building in the past would probably not believe the internal restructuring and appearance - and there are many months of more changes to come!

Until the next time ... Alan House

For those who make use of the Internet, the Association Website has been redesigned, incorporating many of the suggestions fed back to us by PMA members. This remains one of our primary means of keeping colleagues up to date, along with Facebook and Twitter. Links to details of retirement events etc, may be found on one or all of these methods of communication to members. Please remember these routes to keeping everyone informed. We also welcome your feedback for improvement. www.xhfrs.org.uk

Beer Facts - you may not have known

‘Holding a Wake’

Lead cups were once used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination of too much ale and the lead would sometimes knock out the drinkers for a day or so. Those finding and, taking them for dead, would prepare for burial. The family would gather around to eat drink and wait to see if they would wake up.

Getting ‘Bombed’

A ‘Bombard’ is a leather jug holding 8 pints. A full Bombard of ale would have it's affect upon the drinker!

Going Berserk

After consuming large quantities of ale or their brew called ‘Aul’ the Vikings would be fearless going into battle without armour or even shirts. ‘Berserk’ means ‘bare shirt’ in Norse.

Rule of Thumb

Before the availability of thermometers, brewers tested the temperature of their maturing brews with their thumbs. Too cold and the yeast would not grow; too hot and it would die.

Wassailing

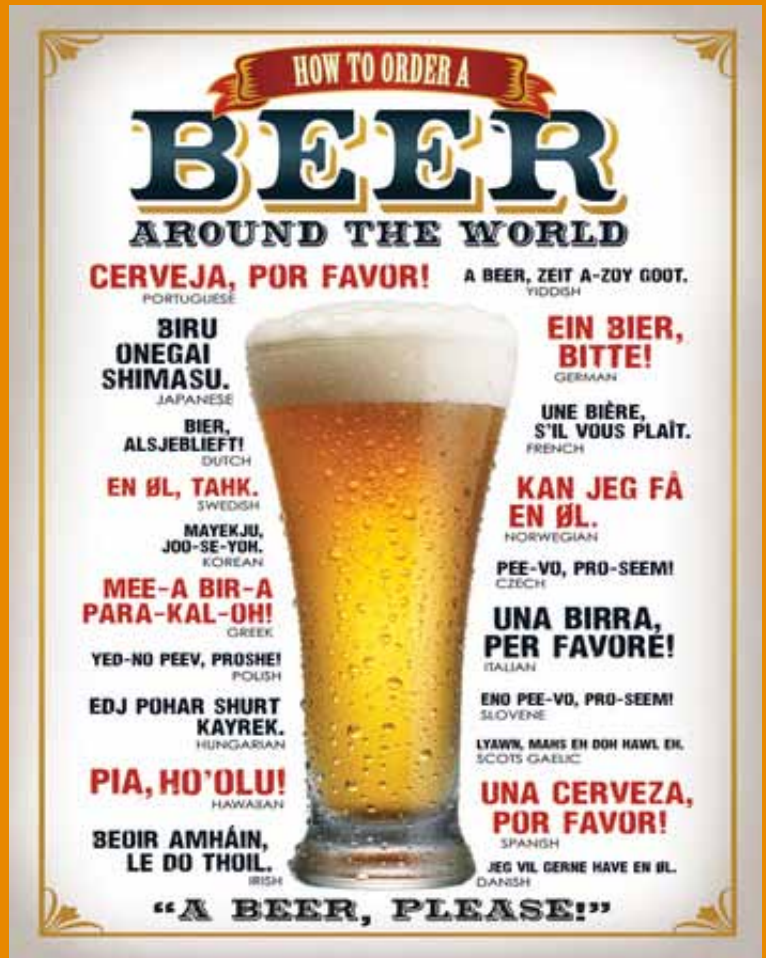
The word comes from olde English ‘was Hal - Be Hale or Be Healthy. Wassailing traditionally took place at New Year when a bowl of spiced ale would be carried from house to house and its contents offered for a small fee. Another ceremony involved pouring the content of the bowl around the roots of fruit trees and firing shots in the air to ward off evil spirits and ensure a good fruit harvest.

Drinking a Toast

Toasting comes from the time when a large ‘Loving Cup’ filled to the brim and, topped with a piece of floating toasted bread was passed around at banquets. After being passed around the host would drain the cup and swallow the toast in honour of his guests. The Jacobites, or Stuart supporters, pledged a toast to ‘The King over the water’. When asked at functions to toast ‘The King’, they would pass their glass over the water bottle or jug, signifying to each other their loyalty to the Stuart King in exile.

Not on Mondays

During WW1, official posters appeared with the message: Don't Take Alcoholic Drinks on Mondays, with the text below explaining, ‘In view of the great sacrifices freely made by our sailors and soldiers, the National organizing Committee feels sure that all who remain at home will willingly help the Country in this way’. It was of course, during WW1 that, under The Defence of the Realm Act, the reduced drinking hours in pubs were introduced, to get the workers back into their places of work, (in a fit state) in the afternoon or on time in the mornings, by not having late drinking nights, especially at the factories engaged in war production work. The hours were designed around the periods of lunch – 12 to 2.40 and supper – 6.30 to 9.30. Although the evening time was altered after the war slightly, to 6 to 10.30, the opening hours laws continued to exist until the first relaxation in the late ‘80s extending the evening time to 11 and then finally being scrapped altogether in 2005. Scotland ran to a different set of rules earlier.



A Beer in any language

Beer has a long history - the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians brewed a beer-like drink, and in the Middle Ages it was the most common beverage in European towns and cities. The word "beer" originally meant simply "The Drink" (it probably derives from Latin *bibere*, to drink). In other languages the word for beer points at the bitterness of the drink, the barley from which it is brewed, or the feasts with which it was associated. Modern, western beer with hops was first brewed in Bavarian monasteries in the 7th century. Through the centuries it has followed the routes of trade, culture and colonialism.

It seems that 'Beer' has 78 language variations – (too many to list here!)

In Europe there are four main words for beer. Strictly speaking, ale is used in the North, beer in the West, cerveza in the South, and pivo in the East.

Beer (bier, bière, birra, bjor, etc) probably derives from Latin *bibere* (to drink) or *biber* (a drink). The word beer is not related to the word brew.

Ale (øl, olut, etc, used in Scandinavia) derives from *alum*. The original meaning is "bitter".

Cerveza (cerveja, sirbisi, sör, cwrw, etc) derives from the old Gaulish word for beer. In Gaul (France) itself it was replaced by *bière* in the 15th century.

Pivo, the word used in most Slavonic languages, derives from the old word *piwwo* (barley).

Oh, and to satisfy those from Wales, the Welsh language word for Beer is 'Cwrw' – the closest I can get to say it is 'cooroooh' – much to the amusement of my Welshie Wife!

Generally though the use of the word 'Beer' with maybe the drinking gesture of the arm will get you by in any part of the world! It seems though that in this technology driven world, you can just download an App for your smart phone with can order in at least 59 different languages so now you don't even have to speak – just point the phone! Understanding what you have to pay for your successful purchase may however still be another matter.

And, as for saying the equivalent of 'Cheers' in another language, well that is a whole new minefield of words and phrases to get to grips with and I won't go there.

As they say in Wales – 'Iechyd da' , in Scotland – 'Slainte Mhath', In Northern Ireland – 'Slainte' (or of course in Zulu – 'Oogy wawa')

Alan House



Chairman's Report

I am pleased to advise the PMA continues its growth with membership is now 354.

Your committee has been active throughout the year and still has its bi-monthly meetings. Sadly during the year we lost the Bar facility at FRSHQ, but we hope still to have events there when the building work has been completed, although there are no bar facilities any more. Sometimes it's good to try other venues.

We have improved procedures for notification and access to support information. The PMA website continues to be a regular source of information for our members. It had become clear however that its design was no longer appropriate for the many and varied viewing platforms now available such as PC's, tablets and mobile phones. Eddie Winter has worked closely with Trudie Smith to modernise the website and make it viewable on all platforms and we are particularly pleased to acknowledge Trudie's contribution in this process and of course Eddie Winter.

You may have also noticed that whilst the site's actual location has changed it is still found searching for www.xhfrs.org.uk, this is achieved by seamlessly forwarding your search to the new location, so there is no need to learn the new address or set it as a new 'favourite' on your computer, the links to HFRS and other useful sites have been maintained.

We also have regular following on both Facebook and Twitter with over a thousand viewers looking at Facebook articles, and over a hundred followers on Twitter from all over the world. Thanks to Kym and Tom Carr for taking this task on.

All of these Medias are used to advertise our events and forthcoming activities; we strive to keep the membership in touch wherever they are.

Unfortunately we still seem to be regularly meeting up at funerals. We do have a number of coffin drapes and can provide some support and advice, when asked, to families in their time of need. Notifications of 'Sad Passings' are made on the basis of 'best endeavour and we are not always told, or told at short notice. If anyone becomes aware a colleague passing, please do not assume that we know already. Advice is also available on the website covering pensions, welfare and links to the Firefighters Charity and Berta and Hector Trust.

The finances of the Association continue to be healthy, the direct debit arrangements and the annual Pension stoppage has worked well and continues to make the Treasurer's job much easier. The PMA financial account has been audited by the external Auditor and has been found to be correct in all respects with appropriate record keeping. We remain mindful of costs and work to keep these as low as possible. The recent increase in postage costs and the possibility that with the changes of facilities at FRSHQ, resulting in us having to hire other facilities for events will be focus our minds on achieving value for money.

Our monthly Prize draw is still in being, the winners for 2015 were – E Taylor, A Sexton, F Harris, T Jones, B Amos, T Batchelor, D Collis, W Lambert, D Green, C Nights, D King.

Treasurer's recommendations;

1. That the AGM accept the Treasurers report.
 2. That the PMA again appoint Mr P Reynolds as Auditor for the coming year.
- (Both items agreed by the AGM)

Thanks are offered to Phil Griffiths for his very efficient Treasurer's work.

The Magazine, normally sent out quarterly continues to keep our members up to date with all the past and present activities. It is an excellent read, well received by the membership and the envy of many retired colleagues from other Brigades. Please notify us of any address or email changes to enable us to keep in contact and please keep the articles and pictures coming in.

Thanks to the Editor, Alan House.

We are still part of the HFRSSA set up and maintain a section link. Throughout the year we have provided a number of participants in golf, cricket, badminton, sailing and dancing classes.

During the past year we have provided a wide range of events for the membership, which have been very well supported. These include London coach trips, a Thames River Cruise with lunch followed by a visit to The Houses of Parliament. Some race evenings with fluffy pigs racing across the Harland Room at FRSHQ, with a good fish and chip supper. A Treasure Hunt around Salisbury, Skittles and lunch at Wellont, afternoon Tea at Southwick House and tour of the 'D' Day map room. A superb Christmas Party at East Horton Golf Club, with nearly 90 attending.



Members attending the AGM listen intently to our Chairman presenting his annual report. That's funny; I thought the room was packed to capacity when he started!

Your committee is now planning this year's events with the first being the London theatre trip on 12 May. Another Treasure Hunt during the summer and a Skittles Lunch in October. In September we have booked a coach to London with lunch in the 4 star Rubens Hotel followed by a tour of Buckingham Palace, which coincides with the Queens clothing exhibition. We are also looking at a possible trip to Prague in late November and are currently trying to arrange an evening supper event during the summer at the Aspire in Southampton.

We are trying to cater for all and are ever mindful of the costs. Any ideas are always gratefully received and will be considered by the committee. We would particularly welcome any suggestions for suitable venues to arrange a lunch.

To conclude I would like to thank all the committee for its support and in particular the Secretary, for his invaluable input and for keeping our membership details up to date, the Treasurer and Webmaster for their individual efforts. Chris Lunn for taking on the sad notifications and Carole Hobbs for her past work with the Bar and for being a good link with FSHQ and for keeping many of our event bookings in order. Carole has now taken on the role of sending out notifications for Events, so you will find these coming in from her email address. It is their hard work throughout the year that makes all the Association run smoothly.

Your Committee will always welcome suggestions for improvement and ideas for events.

Remember: Annual Subscriptions are due each April 1. Anyone who has not paid by October 1 will be deemed to be no longer a member and will not receive the magazine or notifications. It really does help if those members who do not take up the annual pension stoppage, who pay either manually by electronic banks transfer, or who set up an annual standing order. We do of course accept cheque or cash payments but it would be so helpful if these were made promptly each year thus avoiding the work and costs created by having to send out reminders.

Andy Anderson
Chairman



Con-Op to Trucker

Johanna (Jo) Wells joined the Hampshire FRS as a Control Operator, under the watchful eye of Peter Cowmeadow, in 1983. Jo enjoyed her time in Control, participating in Passing Out Parades, bearing medals for presentation by the Guest of Honour. She also joined the 253 Provost Company, Royal Military Police (Reserves). Jo enjoyed the rough-and-tumble and ceremony of the Territorial Army, drove trucks and shot a variety of weapons with enthusiasm. As a Lance Corporal she was nominated 'Soldier of the Year' in 1991; an accolade, which gave her, the honour of bearing the Standard of The Guild of Freemen of the City of London, alongside the golden coach in the Lord Mayor's Show that year. Jo was promoted Corporal in 1995.

Eventually, time moved on, took her to Eurotunnel in 1992, based in Folkestone, where the UK terminal and tunnel was then under construction. Jo trained to staff the control room, learning the intricacies of French signaling systems, train operations, switching 25KV power supplies and was required to become sufficiently proficient in the French language, with a strong leaning towards French railway-speak! The timing of her arrival at Eurotunnel gave her the opportunity to be involved with the application of operating procedures and their proving, once breakthrough in the tunnel construction had been achieved and test trains were run before the introduction of a passenger timetable. It wasn't long before Jo became a Duty Shift Manager overseeing Control Room operations, a position which found her on duty on the day of the first tunnel fire, which tested the emergency systems and the efficiency of the Control staff, and subsequently a Control Centre Manager.

Looking to gain wider experience of railway operations, Jo moved to Network Rail as a Duty Operations Manager in 2002, based in Ashford, where she was responsible for incident management, emergency planning and safety inspections of the track over which Eurostar trains ran to and from London.

At this time, living in Kent, Jo fulfilled a dream to own and become proficient riding a motorbike. Gaining a licence, purchasing a 500cc bike, joining a local bike club, soon saw her achieve Advanced Rider status, a bigger bike and enjoying annual bike club excursions to Italy, France, Ireland and the Pyrenees. Through the Club, Jo met Alan, a fellow biker and lifetime worldwide trucker. Network Rail didn't measure up to her expectations nor ambitions and Alan tempted her to explore the opportunities of a new life in Canada.

Following a brief visit there in 2011 to test the ground and prospects, Jo left Network Rail and they set off for Alberta, Canada. Based near Lethbridge they started work for a trucking company where Jo trained to gain the appropriate HGV licence; then they jointly operated an articulated truck with closed trailer shipping mainly fresh and frozen foods throughout Canada and the USA. Alan became Jo's tutor and mentor and she acquired the necessary skills to handle a big 'artic'. Winter came, snow chains were fitted and Jo found herself negotiating mountain passes through the Rockies. By this stage Jo was probably hankering after an ambition to achieve Ice Road Trucker status!

With confidence, skill and experience growing, Jo and Alan took to driving separate trucks in convoy and finally, worked independently. The truck is literally home-from-home with accommodation, fridge, microwave, etc whilst they are away from the house they have near Lethbridge.

A move to another Canadian trucking company found Jo and Alan each driving a 'flat-deck' artic, shifting oversize, often escorted, loads of tyres, lumber and cable reels on 6,000 mile trips throughout Canada and the USA. The tyres collected from manufacturers near Columbia, South Carolina, USA are 13.3ft in diameter and destined for the mines in Canada where they are fitted to the huge ore trucks. By now, Ice Road Truckers was probably even more enticing. But possibly even that has just about become slightly less of an attraction as both she and Alan recently started work with a specialist trucking company transporting all manner of very large bits and pieces everywhere. Examples of Jo's recent loads with this company were a metal fabrication 15ft wide and nearly 16ft high, and a large pipe which made her 95ft long on the road; pulled by a Volvo tractor unit with a 16 litre engine developing 600 HP, managed by a manual gear box with heaven knows how many gears and ratios. This is Jo's 'stick-truck' that can play a variety of tunes when she is not quite in tune with it herself. She is hopeful for an automatic Freightliner in the near future!

Follow Jo on Facebook

And so ends Jo's story - presented by a proud Dad.

Alan Wells QFSM, FIFireE (Life)
Hampshire, Retained and (Wholetime) 1962-1998
Kent 1988 – 1993
HMFSI 1993-2000

Ed - Little Jo, a trucker? Surely not? What a great story Alan. It is always good to hear of someone making a life for themselves and, achieving BIG ambitions. Jo was also a very good in her role within Hampshire's Control room and was a big loss when she moved on, (but keep that to yourself!)



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.

Alan

I've just spent a couple of hours downloading back issues of Stop Message and then looking through many pages of great interest especially Eric Hounslow's story about Junior Firemen in which I get three mentions; not bad for someone who had a Hampshire Fire Service career measured in months rather than years!

Recently I've been scanning some of my black and white negs and now have them as jpegs although unfortunately many have suffered from advancing age much like myself. Nevertheless I thought that you might find some of the images of interest for Stop Message so I'll send you some shots that might be of use

Starting with a 'D' Division exercise in Burley Lodge on February 2nd 1968, the first shot is of Sub Officer Ralph Gillam, officer in charge at D52 Burley, with Assistant Divisional Officer Don Hunt; next is the crew from D42 Christchurch with their Hampshire-built Bedford S-type water tender - the station officer is Eric Troke; in the third picture I can only identify Harry Law from Burley on the left in the group of four firemen with jets; the last picture shows Ringwood filling up their HCB-built Bedford S-type water tender from open water in Burley - Division Officer Cyril Kendall is just visible on the right and that's his nearly new Vauxhall Victor staff car in the background - nice little Hathaway LPPs. In addition to Burley, Ringwood and Christchurch, Fordingbridge also took part. *Ed - those 'nice little' LPPs could be a pig to start sometimes!*

Some images of the fire at Eling Mill, near Totton on March 31st 1966. The Dennis/Metz TL came from the Southampton Fire Brigade. *Ed - Cyril 'Sam' Kendal, father of PMA member Dave Kendal, can also be seen directing operations in one of these shots.*

A couple of pix taken at the fire at Ringwood Junior School on November 11th 1966. Burley firemen make up their Hampshire-built Bedford TK water tender with Ringwood's Land Rover L4T also prominent. The second picture shows the scene with Burley fireman Dave Bailey, one of the station's Bailey twins.

Simon Rowley



Ringwood Junior School





Eling Mill 1966



Burley Lodge Exercise

Dear Editor

Some early memories of travel and the Hampshire Fire Service (Brigade)

The 1974 movie, 'The Towering Inferno', still gets a regular showing on TV. A star-studded cast, plenty of action and great humour makes this a good film. There is something for everyone. I think it is the best of the disaster movies.

In 1986, during a weekend in San Francisco, I found the 'Firehouse', Station 37, in California Street that was used in the movie. After a mug of tea and a chat, they took me downtown to the Bank of America, which was the main location for the entry scenes to 'The Glass Tower'. This was where the opening tape was cut and where Fire Chief Steve McQueen was told by his Captain, "this is a bad one".

They then took me to the Fire Dept Museum. I saw a genuine old solid-tyred Water Tower. One of the Pumpers on show was destined to be used again in a wildfire season. We can see more of the San Francisco Fire Dept in the 1985 Bond movie, 'A View to a Kill'.

Opposite my hotel in Los Angeles was the Fire Department Academy. I counted 15 Multigyms- one for each candidate. They took me to the downtown Firehouse. I like think that the LAFD gave me send-off; waiting outside the hotel for my bus to the airport along came 3 fire trucks to the building next door. The prettiest fire station I have seen was at Carmel. Perhaps Clint Eastwood was a volunteer here?

In Hong Kong they did not like you taking photographs of their fire stations and told you so with, 'You take no more photo! The 14th of July Bastille Day Parade is worth seeing and the Paris Fire Brigade brings up the rear to much applause.

I went to Surrey Fire Brigade Training School at Wray Park, Reigate in 1967 – a magnificent setting. Our Squad Instructor was Su Officer Whiffen who was ex-London Fire brigade, stationed at A24 Soho. Surrey called the LFB, "that lot up the road"! LFB used water and plenty of it. Sub Officer Whiffen told us that, in the bad old days of the streetwalkers soliciting the streets, they would allow the girls to keep their handbags on the Watchroom floor at Soho.

Not my favourite day was when we went to the top of the Tower by hook ladder I enjoyed when they took us, by lorry, to the then London Salvage Corps in the Barbican. Unbelievably, the LSC came to the Havant Bowling Alley fire in 1973!

I remember we had four different ladders to train on and there was no time, or need for formal physical training. But we did begin each day with 30 minutes of squad drill. One morning on parade, in our lancer tunics, my ex-LFB instructor said; "Wills you have got a Fire Brigade chest". My press-ups had paid off!

As part of our course we did Log-Keeping and Watchroom duties. I remember distinctly when reporting your checks, it was 'checked and correct' or 'tested and in order'.

Station Officer 'Jack' Damant, as the Officer in Charge of A3 Farnborough, in the mid-60s, once threw two retained members firekit into their home gardens when an HMI Inspection was due. It needed cleaning! *(Ed - That would not happen today)!*

In 1968 and 1969, Hughie Green, (he of 'Opportunity Knocks' fame), and 'Boris' (Hampshire's 1936 Dennis Motor Pump), opened the Havant fire station 'Ben Fund' Fetes in Havant Park. He was supported by the 'Opportunity Knocks' staff. The then famous and long time winner of the show, musical muscle man, (Tony Holland), performed to the 'Wheels Cha Cha', as he had done so many times on TV.

The new B17 Fareham fire station, opened in 1972, had a sliding pole that was never used because the pole drop shaft was incorrectly designed, with no step inside of the doors.

B17 Fareham had the first call of the new HFB on April 1 1974, just after midnight. *(Ed – the first makeup, again in the early hours of the day of change, was to the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, directly opposite Lyndhurst fire station and now derelict. I drove the HP from St Marys, White Watch, to the call)*

In the hot 1976 Summer, I attended as No 1 on an AFA call at Nero's night club, opposite South Parade Pier, Southsea and saw an 'artistic' floor act, between nude females. Having previously led a bit of a sheltered life, I had that evening unwittingly attended my first and only Stag Night. Please, no-one say I arranged for a break-glass point to be pressed during that performance. Of course, I investigated that first. It would have been interesting if I had ordered an evacuation!

In 1977, on my Junior Officers course at Moreton, I gave a lecture on ship stability, focusing on centre of gravity. I over ran my allocated 20 mins, but my examiner said, 'Mr Wills, that was very good. There is no-one in this College who could have done any better'. Wow! My College course instructor, was only ADO Malcolm Eastwood!

'A little fire is quickly trodden out which, being suffered, rivers cannot quench' - Shakespeare, Henry VI, 1591.
It could have been adopted as an early Fire Prevention message!

Dennis Wills



Rather than the Editor constructing letters or simply making it up, let's be hearing from you. "As detailed, get to work".

STOP MESSAGE 13



January 1996

Past Times

Focus on Hightown Fire Station D56, C56, Stn 56. Celebrating 20 years.

Discussions by the Southampton Fire Brigade Committee, regarding Fire Cover on the Eastern side of the City first took place in June 1969, when a need for a fire station to cover the 'Netley Lodge and Hightown District' was identified. The Chief Fire Officer highlighted the need for a fire station in the Hightown/Thornhill area, taking into account the proposed building of the Itchen Bridge and that the 1928-built Woolston Fire Station needed rebuilding. In May 1970 a proposal was submitted for a joint Fire and Ambulance station in Botley Road and named 'Thornhill'. In January 1973, a site in Botley Road was purchased but by June, the name had changed to 'Hightown'.

The planning for the amalgamation of Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth, to form the new 'Hampshire Fire Brigade' in 1974, designated the proposed station as 'D57'. In November 1980, notice was given that the Fire Brigade were no longer interested in a joint venture with the Ambulance Service and relinquished their interest in Botley Road. Following years of deliberation and consideration of a 'Fire Cover Review', work began in 1995 to build the new

'Hightown' Fire Station, at its current location, to replace the Woolston Fire Station and the West End Fire Station. The new station was subsequently occupied, with one pump, on 11 January 1996, (becoming fully operational on 17 January) and then formally opened on 11 April 1996. The original brass pole and Foundation Stone from the 1928 - built Woolston Fire Station were both incorporated into the new station, as a link to the past and the station was designated the number 56, as previously used for Woolston. The Hampshire Constabulary now also occupies part of the building.

Fire Protection in the area pre-Hightown Fire Station: St Mary Extra Fire Brigade 1896 -1898; Itchen Urban District Fire Brigade 1898 -1920; Bitterne Fire Brigade 1900 -1921; Southampton Fire Brigade 1920 -1941; National Fire Service 1941 - 1948 (Woolston, Netley, Sholing and Bitterne Fire Stations); Southampton Fire Brigade 1948 -1974 (Woolston); Hampshire Fire Brigade 1974 - 1992 (Woolston Hamble, West End); Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service 1992 - (Woolston Hamble, West End), 1996 - (Hightown).

Hightown Build 1995



Hightown Build 1995



Hightown Build 1995



Hightown Rear of Building



Hightown Opening Day



Hightown Opening Day



Hightown Opening Day



Hightown Opening Day





ETT COURSE

As a member of Southampton Fire Brigade, I became the first member of the Brigade to attend Hampshire's ETT Course (Educational and Technical Training).

I applied to do a Day Release Course and it was only at interview stage that I realised it was a 5-day release course - Doh! Nevertheless I went through the selection process - assault course, basic English and Maths assessment, psychological assessment which I seem to remember took up the majority of the test day. There were at least 500-paired questions and you had to tick boxes against the options stating which was most like you. The statements repeated themselves throughout the document with different combinations and included such things as "I like reading books about sex and violence" and "I like taking orders from my superiors". At the end of the test I saw the "Professor" with an Austrian sounding name put a piece of cardboard with holes onto the test sheet and counted the visible ticks, it seemed that only 30 or so of the answers were relevant.

There were 9 of us on the 1969 course, Jerry Beech, Malcolm Collier, Patrick Anstey, Les Doherty, John Snowden (ex SFB) Tony (I believe) Chase, Barry Green Steve Lucas and me.

At the end of the academic year after studying Building Construction, British Constitution, Chemistry and Physics, Mathematics and English we had the opportunity of visiting a Fire Brigade in a foreign country, we chose Italy.

We spent two weeks staying at the main Milan Fire Station, which left lots of impressions and memories. These include:

Within 2 hours of arrival attending a “during performance” visit to a local Night Club where young ladies insisted on taking their clothes off!

Being overawed by the size of the Fire Station I seem to remember that it was in the form of a rectangle with 20 bays along the front and 10 bays along each side, each bay was double length and as well as holding normal Fire Brigade emergency appliances held a multitude of vehicles for use for major disasters, DUKW's, ambulances with medical gear, large cranes etc. It was very much a military organisation.

The building was, at least three storeys high and, on the upper floors you were often presented with a range of pole drops, one to the next floor down another to two floors below and a third all the way to the appliance room.

We had our meals with the crews on duty which were composed of both whole time and those doing their National Service in the Fire Brigade - this was a plum posting as it enabled them to do their Service close to their home - they did all the domestic cleaning etc. At the end of the two weeks I became very proficient at spaghetti twiddling. They did not have breakfast, as we know it and we had to exist on very strong black coffee first thing in the morning.

The various crews insisted on challenging us to volley ball matches and when we beat the younger guys the old timers took us on and used all sorts of ploys to ensure that we did not win - I remember one instance where Jerry Beech dislocated a finger during the match and one of the older guys said “lets have a look” and with a snap put it back in place which was a real surprise to Jerry.

We all attended a concert at La Scala, we were extremely impressed with the box we were given. At that time during live performances there would be a minimum of 8 whole time firefighters on duty. One of them was positioned inside the very large chandelier, which hung down over the centre of the auditorium.

Each day we were allotted an appliance to ride to incidents with the emergency crews. At that time many of them seemed to involve accidents on the newly opened motorways, particularly on the exit ramps where vehicles regularly overturned. I remember that one of them involved a lorry containing a large quantity of impact adhesive and when the Fire Brigade crane was used to right the lorry the crane crew found it impossible to lift one of the jacks as the impact adhesive had done its job!

The training facilities were equally impressive, full size gymnasium, swimming pool, a medical room and a very large tower at least 3 windows wide for the first 5 floors with a continuing centre section of another 3 or 4 floors.

They used to do hook ladder drills on the tower but for them it was a speed drill in the same way that we used to do escape drills. The 2 man drill consisted of the first man running the ladder and jumping into the window followed by the second man who stood on the cill facing out stabilised by the person in the window holding onto his belt whilst he lifted the ladder and put it into the next floor up window. In this way they alternated and went up the building at a very rapid pace - very impressive.

Whilst there we were invited to visit one of the Volunteer/ Retained Stations to the north of Milan I think alongside Lake Como. They had received very good hospitality when they had visited an English Fire Station a couple of years before and insisted in trying to repay that hospitality. On arrival at the outskirts of the town we were told to get out of our coach and to get into the town fire appliance and the appliance crew got into our coach. We were told that the town had been alerted to our visit and would be waving to us as we did a tour of the town. Unfortunately after a couple of minutes the driver answered the radio and told us we had to go to an incident, so there we are a crew of British Firemen going to an incident in an Italian fire appliance totally ignorant as to its operating systems. In the meantime the coach tried to keep up with us but we had two-tone horns, flashing lights and the coach was rapidly falling behind. We were all glad when the stop message came in and we could resume our tour of the town.

All in all I certainly enjoyed my stay with the Vigili del Fuoco.

Richard Haynes

Ed – Richard left Southampton (Leading Fireman, White Watch ‘Central’ fire station) on promotion to Berks and Reading and completed his career as Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Hereford and Worcester.

5499265 Company Sergeant-Major Thomas Henry Cooke DCM MM

When I was notified of the sad passing of Tom Cooke on 27 March 2015, aged 92, I was curious to know more about my discovery that he had been awarded not one, but two gallantry awards whilst in military service during World War 2.

Tom, as many will know, served for many years as a Fireman at Basingstoke Fire Station, having joined the Hampshire Fire Service, as it was then known, on 18 July 1949. He was very proud of having served at the old Brook Street station as well as at the replacement station in West Ham Close. It was here that he served until 30 September 1976, when he became one of the Brigade Photographers, firstly based at Winchester and then moving to the Headquarters building at Eastleigh. He retired on 21 March 1987.

A very unassuming and polite man, I was vaguely aware that he had been awarded the Military Medal, but on an occasion when I mentioned it, he almost denied having had such recognition and at that point I guess I put the thought out of my head.

Curiosity got the better of me, I decided to search further on one of my regular visits to the 'National Archives' in Kew, (sad person that I am, one of my favourite places to relax and research!)

Knowing that Tom served with The Hampshire Regiment I dug into the records and, in due course, after pouring through several reels of microfilm (and getting sidetracked with unrelated records of interest), there he was – 5499365 Thomas Henry Cooke DCM MM, Warrant Officer Class 2, (Company Sergeant-Major), 5th Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment.

So, what then did Tom do to be recognized and be awarded such prestigious awards?

On 31 March 1944, Tom was granted an 'Immediate' award of the Military Medal (MM), on the recommendation of Major General J Hawkesworth, commanding 46 Division, for his actions during operations on the night of 4/5 February 1944. Countersigned by Lieutenant-General R McCreery commanding 10 Corps and approved by General H R Alexander, Commander in Chief, Allied Control, Mediterranean Force. This was subsequently recorded in The London Gazette on 29 June 1944.

The citation for this award, written by Lt-Colonel J Robinson, the officer commanding the 5th Brigade, The Hampshire Regiment read as follows:

'On the night of 5th/6th February 1944, the Battalion was holding Monte Ornito and point 711 (8603). During the early hours of 6th February, the enemy counter-attacked and succeeded in gaining a foothold, establishing three footholds on the Northern end of Monte Ornito. At daylight these posts became very active against our positions on the lower slopes of the hill.

Two patrols were ordered to deal with them. One of them composed of Serjeant Cooke and four men and, led by him up 300 yards up very steep bare slope under machine gun and grenade fire. Sergeant-Major Cooke personally attacked one of the posts with his rifle and grenades, standing in the open to do so. He killed four of the Germans and took the remaining three prisoners. His personal bravery and determination was outstanding and by his fine example, he encouraged the rest of his patrol to deal successfully with another of the enemy posts.

Sergeant-Major Cooke's fight was an inspiration to a large number of officers and men who witnessed it'.

Almost exactly one year later, Tom was once again recorded in The London Gazette (8 March 1945), when his courage on another occasion was recognised by the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM). The award had, once again, been 'Immediate' and made on 27 October 1944 on the recommendation of Lt General McCreery and endorsed by General H R Alexander. The citation for this second bravery award, for actions under fire, in just 7 months read as follows:



'Early on the morning of 16 September 1944, D Company was attacking Monte-Scudo village, Italy, when they were engaged by heavy machine gun fire, whilst crossing the open ground. As a result, 16 Platoon suffered a number of casualties, including the Platoon Commander and a number of NCOs. On an order from the Company Commander, Company Sergeant-Major Cooke, although under intense machine gun and mortar fire, went forward and reorganized the Platoon. Later in the morning, the whole Company was subject to violent mortar and shell fire and suffered heavy casualties. CSM Cooke personally brought in a number of casualties, completely disregarding his own safety.

By this time, all three Platoon Commanders had been wounded and the Platoons were seriously depleted in numbers. CSM Cooke rallied a number of men and personally led them in a charge into the village of Monte-Scudo which resulted in the enemy withdrawing in the confusion.

Throughout the whole action, CSM Cooke remained steadfast and courageous, under the most intense fire. By his resourceful and disregard of danger, he greatly assisted his Company Commander and was an inspiration to the men and, the success of the action, in which a considerable number of casualties were inflicted on the enemy, owes much to his gallantry.'

The 5th Battalion landed in North Africa as part of Operation Torch and later, in Italy, landing at Salerno and being part of many difficult operations including the major battle at Cassino.

Clearly, CSM Tom Cooke DCM MM was a man of considerable courage and he displayed those levels of leadership and care for the men under his command, at a standard that can only be admired and envied. Recognition of acts of gallantry by the award of a high level decoration was relatively rare, but to be recognized by two such awards is even rarer.

Always a diligent and committed member of the Fire Service, Tom was one of those nice guys that you meet in the course of your career and a pleasure to know.

Rest in peace Tom – we pay tribute to you.

Notes: The 'Military Medal' was Instituted on 25 March 1916, and as a result of the 1993 review of all awards it was replaced by the 'Military Cross'. The 'Distinguished Conduct Medal' was Instituted in 1854 and, from 1916 was rated superior to the 'Military Medal' for acts of gallantry. It too was affected by the 1993 review of awards and was replaced by the newly Instituted 'Conspicuous Gallantry Cross'. This new award then also replaced the 'Distinguished Service Order' and the 'Conspicuous Gallantry Medal'.

Alan House

Scrapbook Memories

Something to remind you of how things were in the past



Breathing Apparatus
Tender, Basingstoke. HFB
Workshops build 1976



Dennis Pump Escape 'No1' on
delivery, 11 May 1950



Royal Victoria Hospital 25th June 1956



Redbridge Escape
Push for Ben
Fund, 1972/3?



White Watch D54 — December 1983



HFRS Happenings

FLEET

The two Land Rover L4P's in build at Emergency One are due to be delivered, allocations are unconfirmed at present. Former Basingstoke L4P HX07 FFC Land Rover TD6/HFRS has been resprayed and refurbished by Fleet Maintenance and reallocated to Burley. Due during April/May is the Iveco 4x4 Wildfire Unit. Work is also in progress on the five Volvo FLL 12 ton Light Rescue Pumps (Intermediate Vehicle) which are due for delivery in June and a pair of Iveco 7 ton First Response Vehicles, one 4x2 and one 4x4 which are due in August. A replacement Rescue Pump (Enhanced Vehicle) for the accident damaged Winchester appliance is also in build

Incidents

The HFRS has had a reasonably quiet period with only one incident over 5 pumps worth reporting:

30 November – Make pumps 6, ALP and WrC required, Williams Garage, Main Road, Otterbourne. Fire involving single storey building used as vehicle workshop and garage 32m x 15m, 80% of building involved in fire, 7 jets, 1 ALP monitor, 36 BA, 1 CAFS jet, PPV in use. Attendance RP and WrT Eastleigh, RP and WrT Winchester, WrL, WrT and ALP St Marys, RP and RSV Redbridge, WrC Fareham, CSV Portchester and ICU Headquarters.

Other News: Work started in November on the demolition of Basingstoke Fire Station. The new station will be built on the same site and should be operational by mid 2017. Due to the building work the Animal Rescue Vehicle has been temporarily moved to Overton and the ALP and SFU to Winchester.

Risk Review: On the 16th February the Risk Review Final Proposals were released. This will see the introduction of three new types of vehicles, which will be located across the county, depending on risk and incident profiles. The three types will be as follows –

First Response Capability (FRV)– The First Response Vehicle will be much smaller than the standard type B pumping appliance, it will be based on a 7 ton Iveco Daily chassis, some will have 4x4 capability. They will be equipped to respond to a range of incident types from small rubbish fires to larger incidents, such as fires in buildings. In addition to RTC cutting equipment these appliances will carry medical equipment in order to provide medical care in the community. Crew numbers will depend on the incident type but will be between two and four.

Intermediate Response Capability (IRC) – The Intermediate Response Vehicle will also be smaller than the current standard WrT. The first five are currently in build and are based on a 3.8m wheelbase 12 ton Volvo chassis. They will have the same inventory as the FRV but in addition have a larger water tank capacity, additional RTC cutting equipment and a selection of larger ladders. Crew numbers will depend on the incident type but will be between two and five.

Enhanced Response Capability (ERC) – This in essence will be the current 'Rescue Pump' fitted with CAFS. Crew numbers will be between four and six.

The disposition of appliances across the county will be as follows –

01 Basingstoke	ERC x 2, IRC, FRV
02 Rushmoor	ERC, IRC, FRV
03 Bordon	IRC
04 Fleet	IRC
05 Alton	ERC, FRV
06 Whitchurch	IRC
07 Grayshott	FRV
08 Hartley Wintney	ERC
09 Kingsclere	FRV
10 Odiham	IRC
11 Overton	IRC
12 Tadley	IRC
28 Portchester	FRV
29 Petersfield	ERC, FRV
30 Winchester	ERC, FRV
31 Andover	ERC, FRV
32 Eastleigh	ERC, IRC
33 Romsey	ERC, FRV
34 Stockbridge	FRV
35 Sutton Scotney	FRV
36 Alresford	IRC
38 Botley	FRV
40 Bishops Waltham	IRC
41 Droxford	FRV
43 Lymington	ERC, FRV
44 Hythe	IRC

13 Liphook	FRV
14 Yateley	IRC
16 Havant	ERC, FRV
17 Fareham	ERC, FRV
18 Gosport	ERC, FRV
19 Waterlooville	ERC, FRV
21 Hayling Island	ERC, FRV
22 Wickham	IRC
23 Cosham	ERC, IRC
24 Southsea	ERC, IRC, FRV
25 Horndean	IRC
26 Emsworth	FRV
45 Ringwood	ERC
46 Totton	IRC
47 Fordingbridge	ERC
48 Lyndhurst	ERC
49 Beaulieu	FRV
50 Brockenhurst	FRV
51 New Milton	IRC, FRV
52 Burley	IRC
53 Redbridge	ERC
54 St Marys	ERC, IRC, FRV
55 Hamble	FRV
56 Hightown	ERC, FRV
58 Hardley	ERC

Disposition of special appliances has not been released yet although some Water Carrier's are reportedly moving stations and the number of Land Rovers will be reduced.

Resulting from the review, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, currently based at Service HQ are relocating to Eastleigh Fire Station. Most of the Prime Movers and Pod's will occupy the garages to the rear of the station. USAR's current facility at SHQ will then be used by Training Centre.

A new 'Activity Based Crewing' ('ABC') model will also be introduced. This will see six levels of crewing at stations depending on number and time of incidents and community risk profiles. The levels are –

ABC Level 1 – Immediate response firefighters will crew the most suitable vehicles throughout all periods of the day and night. In addition, where stations have an RDS establishment, on call fire fighters will also crew the most suitable vehicles both day and night. Stations that will operate this system are – Basingstoke, Fareham, Cosham, Southsea, Eastleigh, Redbridge and St Marys.

ABC Level 2 – Immediate response firefighters will crew the most suitable vehicles throughout all periods of the day (peak activity period). The number of immediate response firefighters can be reduced overnight in order to reflect the lower activity period. In addition, where stations have an RDS establishment, on call firefighters will also crew the most suitable vehicles both day and night. Stations that will operate this system are – Rushmoor and Hightown.

ABC Level 3 – Immediate response firefighters will crew the most suitable vehicles throughout the day. They will also be supported by on call firefighters during the day. Immediate or on call firefighters can then crew the most suitable vehicles over night (during the lower activity period). Stations that will operate this system are – Havant, Gosport, Winchester and Andover

ABC Level 4 – On call firefighters will crew the most suitable vehicles throughout all periods of the day and night. Stations that will operate this system are – Bordon, Fleet, Alton, Whitchurch, Grayshott, Hartley Wintney, Kingsclere, Odiham, Overton, Tadley, Liphook, Yateley, Waterlooville, Hayling Island, Wickham, Horndean, Emsworth, Portchester, Petersfield, Romsey, Stockbridge, Sutton Scotney, Alresford, Botley, Bishops Waltham, Droxford, Lymington, Hythe, Ringwood, Totton, Fordingbridge, Lyndhurst, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, New Milton, Burley, Hamble and Hardley

Colin Carter – Guest Contributor

Ed – in future editions we will give more detail of these new appliance types and how they will be crewed/manned. As Colin indicates, there is still on-going consideration being given to the number and disposition of 'Special'.



Other Happenings

Dorset and Wiltshire became one combined Fire and Rescue Service on 1 April. Other such combinations are, probably, likely as budget pressure increase and new ways of working are considered.

Legislation has been changed to permit Police and Crime Commissioners to take responsibility for the running of both the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire and Rescue Service has now moved back under the responsibility of the Home Office, where of course it was first established, with the enactment of the Fire Brigades Act 1938 and continuing until May 2001 when responsibility of the fire service passed to the DTLR - or Department for Transport, Local Government and Regions. This Department was then broken up, creating the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) which took government responsibility. Then, in May 2006, the ODPM was re-structured creating the Department of Communities and Local Government or DCLG, with responsibilities for fire authorities in England. (Scotland and Wales falling under their respective Devolved Governments). Mike Penning, a former Essex firefighter, has become Minister for Policing, Fire, Criminal Justice and Victims.



All of the UK emergency services will be moved to a new Emergency Services Network to replace the 'Airwave' radio network. Supply contracts have been awarded and transition across to the new system, which is basically based on an enhanced mobile phone network, will provide for a broader and more efficient range of communications including data transfer. Hampshire along with the other services in the South Central region is due to transition over a one year period commencing in January 2018.

The HFRS 'Training Centre is to be developed into 'Learning and Development Academy', with the aim of becoming the central hub for all training within HFRS and greater use of instructional staff and other training venues across the county. Opportunities will be sought to link in with other organisations in the delivery of training and to broaden skillsets, including partnership working for income generation

The use of any communications/information technology whilst driving, including hands-free, is now prohibited under HFRS Service Policy. The only exception being if there is operational necessity to communicate with Control, via hands free, whilst driving, is critical to an on-going incident. (A long way from the use of radio handsets by single crewed vehicles and officers responding to incidents in the past – without the aid of satnav systems!)

Crews are about to begin to widen their approach to Community Safety and will in the future take part in a new initiative called 'Safe and Well' This will see personnel considering risk in the home, other than just fires, and looking for other factors such as risks of fall, winter deaths from cold, factors associated with living alone, physical or mental health issues, , mobility issues, social-economic deprivation, drug and alcohol abuse etc. Crews are already trained to look out for and report cases of abuse or neglect etc, under the well-established 'Safeguarding Scheme'. A visit to anyone's home, for an incident, or otherwise, could identify personal risks to occupants and, working with other agencies, HFRS will aim to reduce such risks, to improve safety in general plus, health and well-being.

The role of the Fire and Rescue Service becomes even broader.

The HFRS Animal Rescue Specialists now carry specially designed oxygen masks to assist with reviving animals affected by the inhalation of smoke at incidents.

Images

Photographed at 'Emergency One' in February are the Volvo chassis and plastic bodywork for the Intermediate Response pumping appliances.

Auschwitz -

Myself and 5 colleagues, who had first met whilst instructors at the Fire Service College Moreton in Marsh 30 years ago, meet up annually to visit places we know our ladies would not be too keen on, such venues include the battlefields of the first World War, the Normandy beaches, Berlin etc. But even the appalling tragedy of the Somme could not prepare us for the horrors of Auschwitz. The camp, (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site), attracts 1.5m visitors a year and the guides hold nothing back in describing what took place, in this account I have tried to remain faithful to what we were told. Make no mistake - this is a horror story but one we should all read and remember.



Infamous gates to Auschwitz Concentration Camp. ARBEIT MACHT FREI- Work makes you free?

On the 1st September 1939 German and Russian forces invaded Poland with the country capitulating on the 27th Sept. Just outside Krakow lay a small Polish Army barracks which after the surrender was commandeered by the Nazis as a death camp with Camp Commandant Rudolf Hoess appointed in 1940. It, and its two principal satellite camps at Birkenau (lies 3kms away) and Manowitz became the largest death camps of the war responsible for the deaths of up to 6 million people (the records of the usually very administratively precise Nazis often did not record details of those sent from the train directly to the gas chamber, only those selected for work were tattooed (Only Auschwitz tattooed its prisoners), photographed and recorded.



People (people just like you) selected for 'relocation' were forced into railway wagons in such numbers that it was impossible for them to sit down, there were no toilets, water or food and inevitably when they arrived at Auschwitz days later many, particularly the elderly were already dead – they didn't know then it but they had been spared much greater horrors. They had been told to bring one suitcase only, the Nazis reasoning that they would choose to bring their most valuable possessions which could then be stolen, but for many their most valuable possessions were photographs of their loved ones. You can still see rooms stacked with spectacles, suitcases and even human hair. Suitcases of prisoners, they had been told to paint their names on them so that they might be returned – all part of the deception.

A visit into mankind's darkest time.



The railway entrance to Birkenau Concentration Camp.

On arrival they were unloaded and immediately put through 'selection'. Doctors with a perfunctory wave of their hand would direct young men capable of work one way, the elderly another.



Selection in progress, - note the Nazi officer pointing the way for the man with the stick – the way to the gas chamber.

The Nazis had no use for young children who couldn't work so women were asked how old their child was, "Is he over 15yrs?". Thinking they were protecting their children they would respond "No he is only 13" such an answer sentenced the child to follow the elderly. Mothers would not leave their children so they too went on their last walk (this is the reason average life expectancy for women (2-3 months) was much less than men who lived an average of 6 months). All the time selection was going on, the Camp orchestra played music, the new arrivals looked about them and saw what they had expected to see, a work camp. Their horrific journey had left them filthy and those not able to work were told they were going for delousing and a shower- it was again what they expected.



Interior of gas chamber - Many thousands died in this room.



Perimeter fence of Auschwitz Concentration Camp

Arriving at the 'delousing chamber' they were told to strip.... their nakedness making them far more compliant to instructions one can only imagine the shame particularly for the women when standing naked. They were herded downstairs towards the 'shower', until now everything had fitted with their expectations. But when up to 2000 people were pushed into a much smaller room than they had undressed in they at last sensed something was wrong. But it was too late, the heavy doors were slammed shut and a trapdoor above them was opened briefly for a gas-masked



soldier to drop a Zyclon B container into the crowded space below.

Hydrogen cyanide gas began to come out of the container and those inside began to scream but then often began to pray or sing their favourite songs – it didn't last long. Within minutes a third of the victims were dead, after 20 minutes the fans were put on and the doors opened, any survivors were shot, the gas was heavier than air so those prisoners clearing the chamber often found the strong lying on top of the weak (or small) as they had attempted to escape the choking fumes. Many thousands died in this room.

The bodies were removed and women had their hair shaved off and gold teeth removed before cremation. Ashes were put into ponds or the River Vistula. It was the disposal of the bodies that became the Nazis biggest problem. They could kill in thousands, even millions, (estimates put the figure at 2000 per hour), but how to dispose of the corpses? Mass burning in open pits became their only option.

Prisoners and those working in the gas chambers put their memories in writing and buried them, many have been found with many more, now excavations have ceased, buried forever.

Those selected for work, (about 25-30% of arrivals), were shaved and tattooed, issued with striped overalls, a cap and shoes and allocated to a barrack block, their nightmare had begun.

The blocks in Auschwitz were quickly overwhelmed by the numbers arriving and the much larger camp at Birkenau was built – it was 25 times larger than Auschwitz and its 300 barrack blocks covering 25 square miles was hastily erected by prisoners. Recycled building materials, poor quality cement and single tier walls means that many of these have now collapsed, but most still remain and show the dreadful conditions the inmates endured.

Three tier bunks filled the blocks with the strong taking the upper levels (to avoid the human filth that dripped on those occupying the lower levels) Ridiculous signs such as 'Hats off in barracks' and 'A louse can kill you' added to the madness. Food rations were provided but at levels well below starvation, the strong only survived by taking the food off the weak. Work began with a roll call at 0600hrs and the inmates were then marched off to their labours, in quarries, carrying out road repairs etc. Returning to the camp meant another roll call which often lasted many hours with the prisoners already exhausted from their days labours required to stand to attention – regardless of the weather conditions.

Some young women were offered 'light' work but those accepting found themselves forced into prostitution. Discipline was very hard with the smallest infraction resulting in a severe beating or even death. Block 11 was the death block where prisoners were sent for 'trial' (trials often lasted less than a couple of minutes) before being either shot on the spot or hustled outside to the yard to the firing wall. Block 25 was allocated to women too sick for work to wait their turn in the gas chamber; they were denied food and water whilst they awaited their fate.

But amongst all this death, what I found most shocking was the needless cruelty inflicted on those that couldn't defend themselves. In a dark airless basement we were shown a small door 18 inches high, 4 or 5 prisoners at a time were put through this door into a brick chamber 2 feet square. They had to stand all night without food or water before being taken out the next morning for work, sometimes returning that night to the same chamber – many died propped upright by

their companions. Others were suspended by their wrists tied up behind their backs for days on end. Mass hangings were common for the smallest of misdemeanors.

One of the most infamous characters at Auschwitz was Dr Josef Mengele. He conducted experiments on inmates, particularly twins and the very few that survived carried the horrific scars of his butchery for the rest of their lives. The camp was liberated by forces of the Soviet Union on the 27th January 1945.

On the 16th April 1947 Camp Commandant Rudolf Hoess was hanged at Auschwitz. He had been captured by the British and at his trial confessed to gassing at least 2,500,000 victims with at least another half a million dying from starvation and disease.



Camp Commandant Rudolf Hoess was executed here in 1947

I would like to finish this dreadful story with the story of human kindness that goes some way to outshine the cruelty and suffering.

It is the story of Maximillian Kolb. Max Kolb was a Franciscan friar who was sent to Auschwitz in May 1941. In July of that year 3 prisoners disappeared and the Deputy Camp Commandant, to dissuade further escapes, ordered 10 men to be starved to death in an underground bunker, one of those chosen Franciszek Gagowniczek, cried out pitifully for his wife and children. Kolb seeing his distress immediately stepped forward and took his place. After two weeks of starvation and dehydration only Kolb remained alive in the cellar. He was given a lethal injection of carbolic acid. In 1982 Pope John Paul II canonized Kolb as a Saint.

Franciszek Gagowniczek, the man whose place Kolb had taken, survived the war.

Philip Webb

Ed – Phil, quite clearly was affected by his visit and as he says, it is a story that must never be forgotten.



Uncle Albert's Dock Tales

After signing off John Biscoe in July 1968 I joined J& E Hall air conditioning and refrigeration engineers. They were known as the Rolls Royce of refrigeration worldwide with their equipment installed in very many merchant and Royal Navy vessels across the world and including many large breweries.

In 1969 Cunard found that the ships air conditioning was undersized by some 1800 horse power and commissioned Halls to augment the shortfall. The installation was programmed with her annual dry docking and would take 3 weeks to install and commission. A right work up!

QE2 docked in number No 7 dry dock, also known as the King George V Graving Dock. Opened in 1933 it was the largest graving dock in the world for nearly 30 years. Some 1200ft long 135ft wide and 50ft deep it was built to take the then Queen Mary. The caisson door weighed 4000 tons and the dock held 58,000,000 gallons. The adjacent pump house had 4 pumps and could empty the dock in just over 4 hours. In 1942 the dock was used for training the commandos who were to take place in the raid on the French port of St Nazaire and successfully put their dry dock out of use for the rest of the war. No 7 dry dock and pump house now have listed building status even though the caisson was destroyed some years ago.

Came the day, QE2 entered the dry dock and we duly started the installation at once. There had been a lot of preparation over a period she was alongside. The installation was complicated because access was required through the forward cargo hatch and bonded store to the newly created machinery space. There were three 600 horse power compressors to be lowered down the hatch and pulled through the bonded store with a tractor.

The bonded store was emptied into the starboard side of the hold with two customs officers guarding the contents. There were hundreds of cases of wines spirits and liqueurs and cigarettes of great value.

The compressors were lowered one at a time and towed through the bonded store into the machinery space. The customs men were fascinated and watched intensely with the ship's superintendant explaining every detail. What they had failed to notice that there was a bulkhead ladder out of their sight which terminated two decks above in the working alleyway with the hatch only having a padlock on it. No problem to the chain gang. Suffice to say that some fifty cases of liqueurs, spirits and cigarettes disappeared up the ladder never to be seen again. It was nicknamed the Great Escape.

This thieving was known by all shipping companies as slippage and was to continue until containerisation came into being in the early 1970's. Nothing was ever recovered. The whisky was delicious.

We started working nights, and were known as 'ghosters', to keep the job on schedule. It was then that I noticed regular visits by the appliance from the Docks Fire Station three nights in succession, arriving at about eight and leaving at ten. They were obviously concerned that the crew bar could be compromised by any work going on and made absolutely certain that the crew were safe while drinking! I think in those

days the driver could only have three pints with the rest of the riders at the discretion of the OiC!

Maxi, one of our fitter's mates had sailed as a steward on Queen Mary before she was sold, so most of his shipmates were now ensconced on QE2. We ate like kings, dining on lobster, fillet steaks and assorted wines. Maxi was a Belfast Paddy and the funniest man I ever met. More slippage for Cunard.

During those days ships catering staff banked their wages and lived on tips even down to the lad that peeled the potatoes and removed any eyes. He was known as the ship's optician and would get a severe 'bollocking' if the chef found any eyes in the spuds.

Another one of our gang was Micky who had been The Veranda Grill chef on Queen Mary. The late night restaurants were very lucrative for chefs and first class wingers [waiters] some of whom were what were commonly termed in those days as 'poofs' or 'queens'. No such word as 'gay' then, and political correctness did not figure in everyday conversations, as it does today. They were named after their winged collars and were a good bunch.

On one trip on Queen Mary the kosher chef went sick two hours before sailing with appendicitis. Mick was summoned to take his place and was interviewed by the ship's Rabbi. Mick was asked, what would he do if he made a mistake and cooked the wrong food in a saucepan? He answered, 'throw the pan over the side'. The Rabbi patted him on the back and gave him twenty dollars. A good tip in those days.

Anyway, I digress; the work was progressing slowly as the unions were trying to hold the ship to ransom, as usual, waving the demarcation card ie no flexibility between trades which eventually caused the demise of the British shipbuilding and repair industry a few years later.

At nine o'clock every night Maxi would disappear for half an hour and return with a delicious tray of food. That night he had met his old mate Eddie, known as Zorba because he was Greek. Maxi returned with an assorted tray of Greek food which we all got stuck into. It was delicious. We had our next tea break at midnight and were sat down complimenting Maxi on the great food. It was only then that when he disclosed that when he met Zorba in the crew pantry, he was forming the rissoles by putting the mixture under his armpit and squeezing them into shape. After all, Maxi said, they were cooked in hot oil, so what? Some of the gang disappeared up top to chuck up.

Our pipe fitters had to install, with the aid of the chain gang, two fourteen inch pipes, each over eighty yards long to the forward fridge flat. Each length of pipe was 20feet long and weighed over half a ton and would be welded in situ and insulated. They were to carry glycol the cooling medium for the air conditioning.

These again had to be shipped through the bonded store. This time the customs were ready, sealed and guarded every access in the hold and bonded store. Unfortunately they had forgotten the new consignment which had arrived on the quayside. There was more slippage.

Slowly the job progressed and the Dry Dock was cleared and flooded. We carried out commissioning trials for 2 days with dozens of electric heaters acting as dummy loads for the new installation. The job was accepted and signed off. Three days later QE2 sailed on a world cruise.

The gang moved on to our next ship for routine maintenance, the SS Oriana. The slippage continued courtesy of P&O. We had been befriended by the stevedore ganger, who had informed us that they would be loading boxes of fillet steaks. There were 36 in box. The fridge flat was situated off the forward working alleyway directly on the route the steaks were to be loaded in the main freezers. In the fridge machinery space was the vap room, holding the evaporators and at a temperature of minus eighteen degrees centigrade, cooling the freezers.

The boxes of steaks were duly dropped down the stairway and some of the gang stored them in the vap room to be removed later. Also, a couple of 5 gallon drums of nectarine juice appeared; delicious and was soon consumed by most of the gang. The steaks were removed on the late shift and distributed to one and all the following day. I arrived back on board the following morning at 7.30 to find the fridge flat deserted. All the gang bar me were in the dockside toilets suffering from the 'two bob bits'. The nectarine juice had taken its toll! Sweet revenge for P&O.

Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent. Regards Uncle Albert.

Ed – and it only allegedly happened – right, Uncle Albert? Funny how the Docks Fire station always ate well and had a good supply of fresh fruit!

Photo - The 'Oriana' sailing into Southampton water, on fire and having only left one hour earlier en-route to Australia, 11 August 1970. Boiler Room fire resulting in SFB crews being on scene for 15 hours.

Snippets

New Online Book of Remembrance



After some four years of work, I have finally completed an online 'Book of Remembrance', as part of my role as Trustee and Trust Archivist for The Firefighters Memorial Trust, dedicated to all those members of the Fire Service who have died in the course of their duties.

As well as including all of the names of those recorded on The Firefighters Memorial, (2300 and rising), close to St Pauls Cathedral, in London, the book includes the names of the 509 Fire Watchers and the 1269 Fire Guards who are known to have died during WW2 and who have never been recorded as a group before. Additionally, there are chapters dedicated to all those members of the Fire service who died as a result of their military duties during The Boer War, WW1 and WW2, having either been called back as Reservists, recruited as Volunteers or having been Conscripted, 'called up'.

The Book gives details of the individuals, date of death, location of death etc and, in the case of the names on the Memorial, the opportunity for family and friends to add personal tributes. For all names, there is the opportunity to submit additional or corrected information. It is hoped that the Book will not only serve as a place of tribute and remembrance but also provide a useful source of information for family history and Fire Service history researchers.

PMA members may recall the article I placed in the January 2015 edition of Stop Message, highlighting the search for names of those who died in Military Service. To date, research has revealed 7 from The Boer War, 583 from WW1 and 57 from WW2. It is very likely that more have yet to be discovered. None have so far been identified from the post-WW2 years, but the possibility still remains with the period of 'National Service, that continued from the end the end of the War through to 1963, plus of course the periods of Territorial or Reserve Force duties.

The research continues and readers of 'Stop Message' can still help with this process. There is no central source of information. These members of the Fire Service are listed only in local records, memorials located in fire stations, town halls, churches, places of work etc, or in family histories. Most are of course recorded on local War Memorials but only by name plus, perhaps, the Military unit in which they served. Linking back to any connection with the Fire Service is where the research time can be very time consuming and somewhat frustrating.

You can support the work of the Trust. Just £1 per month would help the ongoing work to identify names and pay tribute by means of memorials and Book of Remembrance. Just £1 per month.

Memorial Trust website: www.firefightersmemorial.org.uk

Alan House

Travel Insurance – Paying too much??

My request for any recommendations regarding good (or even reasonable) deals for Travel insurance did not meet with a huge response. However a couple worth considering have been offered:

The Nationwide FlexPlus Account includes travel insurance, which seems to offer a good deal. You do have to pay a

monthly fee for the account, but on offer is a range of other benefits and the overall annual costs can work out less costly than the ever-rising cost of travel insurance alone.

Another one offered is JD Travel on 020 89203865, www.jdtravelinsurance.co.uk

Many of you are still travelling the world and must be happy with your travel insurance deals, so come on, how about telling us so others may benefit.

A potential early combination-scheme spotted by Phil Griffiths in a recent edition of the Fair Oak Horton Heath Parish Newsletter. The Fair Oak Parish Council was established in 1894 during, the premiership of William Ewart Gladstone. The following is an extract from the Parish Minute Book:

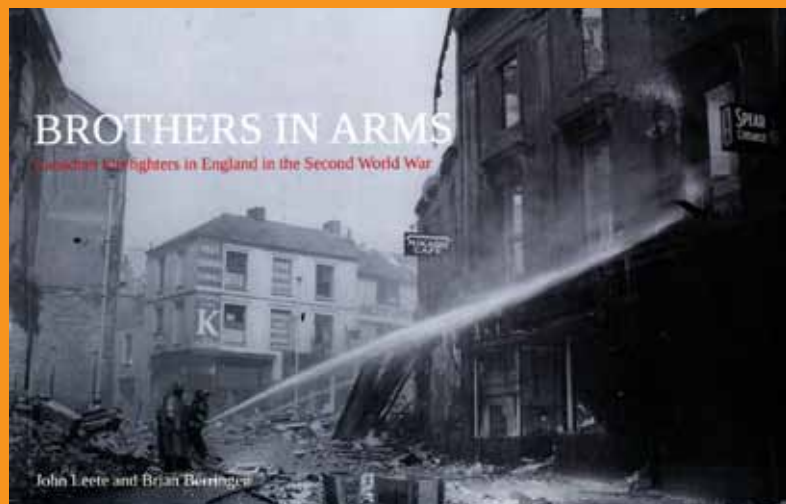
Tuesday July 19th 1898

A letter was read from West End Parish Council inviting this council to appoint a small committee to discuss with representatives of neighbouring parishes the feasibility of combining to provide a fire engine for the use of the surrounding district. After a slight discussion the letter was left on the table, it being considered that a fire engine would be of little service to the parish owing to the inadequate supply of water.

Ed – West End now, of course, covered by Hightown, and Fair Oak covered by Eastleigh.

New Book

Brothers in Arms is the relatively forgotten story of the 406 Canadian Firefighters who came to England in 1942 to fight fires alongside the Firemen of the National Fire Service. Stationed at locations in Southampton, Portsmouth, Bristol and Plymouth, these volunteers made the sometimes perilous transatlantic crossing under continuous threat from the patrolling German U Boats. Written by John Leete and Brian Berringer, it is published by Amberley Publishing. www.amberley-book.com ISBN 978-1-4456-4825-5



PMA ties and Lapel Pins

PMA ties and Lapel Pins are now available for purchase from Alan House.
Tie: Cost £2.00 plus 75p for postage
Lapel Pins: Cost £1.00 plus 55p for postage.



Many of our members, I suspect, after a working life putting out fires, take some pleasure in retirement in lighting a good fire and watch the flames burning safely in their fireplace or wood burner. For them, the poem below might strike a cord:



The Firewood Poem

Beechwood fires are bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year,
Chestnut's only good they say,
If for logs 'tis laid away.
Make a fire of elder tree,
Death within your house will be;
But ash new or ash old,
Is fit for a queen with crown of gold

Birch and fir logs burn too fast
Blaze up bright but do not last,
It is by the Irish said
Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread.
Elm wood burns like church yard mould
E'en the very flames are cold
But ash green or ash brown
Is fit for a queen with golden crown

Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke,
Apple wood will scent your room
Pear wood smells like flowers in bloom
Oaken logs, if dry and old
Keep away the winters cold
But ash wet or ash dry
A king shall warm his slippers by.

By Lady Celia Congreve
Published in the Times: March 2nd 1930

Moving on to Pastures New

Patrick Butler

26/10/2015
Firefighter
Wickham
10 years 8 months

Wayne Parsons

31/10/2015
Watch Manager
Workforce Development
22 years 4 months

Malcolm Lucas

01/11/2015
Fire Safety Enforcement Support
Headquarters
17 years (Previous Retirement – Station officer)

Christopher Harris

08/11/2015
Firefighter
Cosham
12 years 10 months

Jim Wilson

18/11/2015
Admin Staff
Community Safety
11 years 2 months (Previous Retirement – Wholetime Firefighter)

Martyn Long

21/11/2015
Contingency Planning Officer
Headquarters
13 years 2 months (Previous Retirement – Senior Divisional Officer)

Colin Partridge

21/11/2015
Contingency Planning Officer
Headquarters
13 years 4 months (Previous Retirement – Station Officer)

Anthony Green

27/11/2015
Firefighter
Kingsclere
10 years 2 months

Nancy Collett

01/12/2015
Admin Support Supervisor
Headquarters
14 years 5 months

Barry Stray

01/01/2016
Firefighter
Havant
33 years 2 months

Marion Carter

01/01/2016
Operational Support Admin
Headquarters
9 years 10 months

Gregory Cooper

01/01/2016
Firefighter
Whitchurch
10 years 1 month

Felecia Miceli-Hyde

01/01/2016
Admin Staff
Headquarters
11 years 6 months

Helen Robinson

01/01/2016
Firefighter (Control)
Fire Control
10 years 4 months

Carol Blackler

04/01/2016
Admin Staff
Hightown
12 years 11 months

Stephen Worsnop

08/01/2016
Firefighter
Andover
13 years

Linda Salero

08/01/2016
Firefighter
Havant
13 years 7 months

Ann-Marie Bishton

09/01/2016
Central Support Services Supervisor
Headquarters
16 years 1 month

Gary Young

16/01/2016
Watch Manager
Eastleigh
31 years 6 months

Jon Gibbons

18/01/2016
Operational Communications
Technician
Headquarters
15 years

Stephen Cross

18/01/2016
Firefighter
Hayling Island
15 years 3 months

Nigel Mottashed

19/01/2016
Station Manager
Headquarters
30 years 9 months

Kevin Lloyd-Spencer

01/02/2016
Station Manager
Headquarters
28 years 7 months

Malcolm Blunden

08/02/2016
Firefighter
Kingsclere
14 years 10 months

**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:

Steve Smith

On 5 September 2015

Aged 64

Steve joined the Southampton Fire Brigade in April 1972 and served at Redbridge, from where he transferred to Avon Fire Brigade in October 1977, serving at Avonmouth, Patchway and Temple fire stations. He retired from Avon in October 1999.

Stanislaw (Steve) Ryterski

On 21 November 2015

Aged 88

Steve served as a Leading Fireman at Hythe from 1955, until his retirement in January 1970

Tony Batchelor

On 9 December 2015

Aged 85

Tony joined the Southampton Fire Brigade in 1958 and served all of his time in the City, apart from a brief spell at Hampshire Headquarters. He retired as a Station Officer in September 1983.

Howard Shergold

On 12 December 2015

Aged 84

Howard served as a Fireman at West End from 1957 until November 1975

Laurie Cook

On 18 December 2015

Aged 67

Laurie served as a Fireman at Totton from May 1981 until September 2001

Eric Goffin

On 7 January 2016

Eric served as a Retained Fireman at Fareham, from November 1958 until June 1984

Ernest 'Jim' Witchard

On 10 January 2016

Aged 79

Jim served as a Fireman at Alresford from August 1966 until August 1991

Kenny Bond

On 6 March 2016

Aged 66

Kenny served as a Firefighter at Overton, until he left the Service in April 2005

Jeff Carpenter

On 10 March 2016

Aged 66

Jeff served at Brockenhurst from 1986 until November 2010.



Lest we forget



They don't give tokens of appreciation like they used to.



These pages of skilled calligraphy are extracts from a wonderful presentation book given to the Second Officer of the Alton Fire Brigade by members of the old Brigade.

By this date, Alton had become part of the National Fire Service with town falling under No 14 Fire Force, with two stations – 14A2Z, High Street and 14A2Y, Old Town Hall.