



The Branch

May 2013



Newsletter of **Wiltshire Retired Firefighters Association**

TWELVE FIREFIGHTERS KILLED IN TEXAS FACTORY BLAST

President Obama has led the American nation in saluting and mourning the twelve firefighters that were killed trying to contain a blaze involving anhydrous ammonia at a fertiliser factory in the town of West, Texas. The fire caused a massive explosion that claimed a total of fourteen lives and injured hundreds. Many firefighters were counted among those injured and still in hospital.

The first response to the fire on 17th April was made by the West Volunteer Fire Department that has only 33 personnel on its strength. Mutual aid crews from the Abbott Volunteer Fire Department were supporting the local crews when the explosion occurred. Seven of the fallen firefighters came from the West VFD and five from the Abbott VFD.

President Obama attended a memorial service for the fallen heroes held at Baylor University campus in Waco. 10,000 mourners, including 4,000 fire service personnel, attended the service. A procession of 300 fire appliances formed part of the paying of respects.

President Obama said that no words can adequately describe the courage of **those who died. He went on to say,** *“What I can do is offer the love and support and prayers of the nation. We need people who so love their neighbours as themselves that people are willing to lay down their lives for them. America needs towns like West.”*



Speaking at the same memorial service, the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, said *“First responders know better than anyone that there’s no such thing as a routine emergency, but it didn’t slow them down as they raced towards that factory.”*

“We need people who so love their neighbours as themselves that they are prepared to lay down their lives for them.”

President Barack Obama

The lethal explosion left a crater 100 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Dozens of homes were destroyed by the blast and severe damage was caused to many other types of buildings in the area.

The deaths and injuries sustained by the West Volunteer Fire Department meant that it was temporarily unable to provide the usual level of fire cover. Other fire departments in Texas rallied to the aid of the town and the stricken fire department by providing appliances and crews to cover the town of West.

A full investigation into the cause of the fire is being conducted by State Fire Marshal, Kelly Kistner.

ABOUT ANHYDROUS AMMONIA

Anhydrous means without water and anhydrous ammonia is a colourless, highly irritating gas with a pungent odour. The ammonia sold for domestic use is ammonia in solution. Anhydrous ammonia used commercially as a fertiliser has to be stored under high pressure. Ammonia is flammable and has even been used as a rocket engine fuel as in the X-15 experimental supersonic aircraft. Humans exposed to ammonia may die from inhaling the gas because damage is caused to the lungs and throat resulting in swelling that closes off the air passages.

SUNDAY LUNCH IN SALISBURY—APRIL 2013



The Association held another very successful lunch on Sunday April 21st 2013 at the Grasmere House Hotel in Harnham, Salisbury that was attended by 59 members and guests. The party included six members of our sister association in Hampshire led by their chairman, Andy Anderson. The four-course meal was to a very high standard and this is an event we hope to repeat in the autumn. The photo above shows the table at which the “South Division All Stars” were dining. Photo by John Craig

ROY'S NEW ZEALAND TRIP

Roy Harris has returned from his holiday watching the test cricket in New Zealand

Roy is pictured here with Jess Calvin who served in Wiltshire Fire Brigade at Swindon and emigrated to NZ in 1974. Jess is still serving in New Zealand National Fire Service at the age of 66. The legislation in New Zealand allows him to continue to work providing he passes two yearly medical checks. Jess (centre) is pictured here with Roy and his son, Noel (left) watching the cricket at Eden Park, Auckland. Roy also watched the test matches held in Dunedin and Wellington. Welcome home, Roy.



ON STAGE

Devizes Musical Theatre production of **'Oklahoma'** was attended in April by several WRFA members. The picture shows WRFA secretary, John Craig, in grey waistcoat playing the role of the Federal Marshal, Cord Elam and about to apply his first aid skills to the stabbed victim on the floor. The casualty was in fact Hereward Newton-Edwards, a retained fire fighter serving at Malmesbury. He played the role of Jud Fry who comes to grief when he falls on his own knife during a dramatic fight sequence with the hero. Margaret Craig, John's wife, also appeared in this production as a lady of the chorus.



NEWS OF BERNARD & CAROL OUR WELSH CONTINGENT



It's a pleasure to bring members up to date on what has been happening in the life of BERNARD HUMPHRIES since he moved to New Quay in Wales and established an outpost of this Association there. Bernard is now married to Carol and after settling into their new home Bernard, wishing to extend his career in life saving, volunteered to join as a member of the RNLI Lifeboat crew. However, he was too old, the age limit being set at 50 for those riding the boat. So, Bernard and Carol looked for other ways to support the Lifeboat. However, Carol's efforts to find employment were hampered by her inability to speak Welsh. Through perseverance, Carol & Bernard eventually gained positions as volunteers running the RNLI gift shop attached to the New Quay Lifeboat station. In 2011, Carol was appointed to manage the shop. Bernard was invited to become a Lifeboat visits officer and in preparation for such duties he attended a two-day course at the RNLI College in Poole, Dorset. (This college is open to the public as a four-star hotel). So, Bernard is back in uniform.



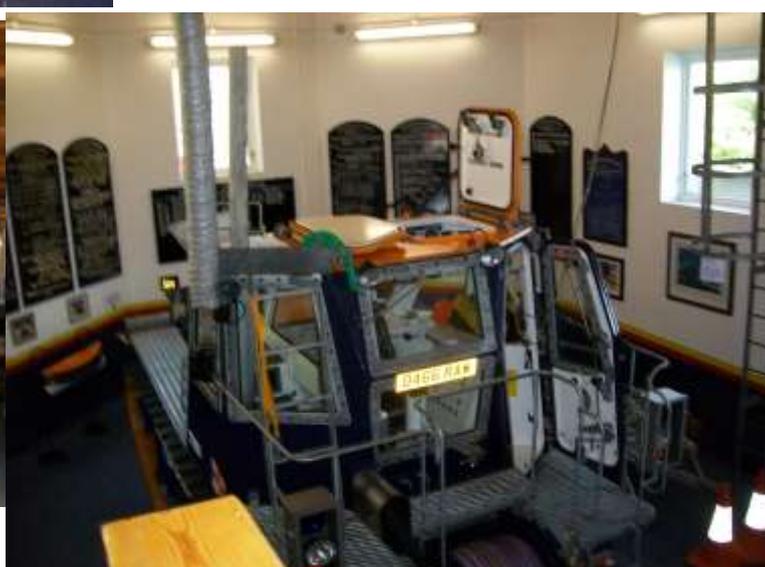
Bernard's duties for the RNLI include giving talks to outside organisations and schools. He also provides support to the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme and conducts tours of the Lifeboat and the station.

The Lifeboat station is the equivalent of a one-pump fire station, with a Mersey class all weather boat and a D class inshore boat. Recently a rescue was carried out of a man swept out to sea, who was then airlifted from the boat to hospital by helicopter flown from the RAF base to which Prince William is posted.

Bernard reports that the representative bodies would never approve of the "retirement duty system" because you never get a day off!



The New Quay Lifeboat recovered onto Talus tractor & carriage



Inside the Boathouse

New Quay is the Welsh village on which Dylan Thomas based 'Under Milkwood'. The inshore boat allocated to New Quay was donated by the late Mrs Lawson Johnson, the last survivor of the sinking of the *RMS Lusitania* by a German U-boat in May, 1915.



Health Matters

News of members coping with ill health



GLENN FOREMAN

Glenn has recently had a follow-up check with his heart surgeon following the latest of his major operations. The results of the surgery have not produced the improvement in heart function that was hoped for but there has been some slight progress. Glenn has accepted that he must now adapt his life style to fit in with the limits imposed by his heart condition.

ANGELA FOREMAN

Angela has recently had an operation at Salisbury District Hospital to remove a troublesome piece of bone in her forearm. Her recovery is going to plan and Glenn is being called upon to do more domestic chores than usual but is coping. Despite both of them being in recovery mode from surgery, Glenn and Angela were able to attend the WRFA Sunday Lunch held on 21st April.

GEORGE JOHNSON B.E.M

George Johnson recently had a hernia corrected by surgery at the GWH, Swindon. He is making an excellent recovery after only having to stay in hospital for a short time. He is now home in Marlborough after convalescing with family for a short period.

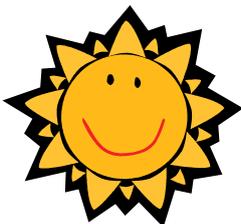
VI SMITH

Vi Smith is home in West Tytherley after undergoing surgery recently. Vi has been made aware of the recuperation facilities available to her provided by the Fire Fighters Charity. Vi has said that she may take up this offer after further consultations with her surgeon.

SUNSHINE

Helps lower blood pressure

After years of telling us to limit carefully any exposure to strong sunshine, the latest research indicates that up to 20 minutes of sun bathing lowers blood pressure and helps reduce the risk of strokes and heart attacks. The sunshine releases nitric oxide into the body that has the beneficial effects.



WALKING FOR HEALTH

The WRFA Walking Club

Next Walks on

22nd May

19th June

For details phone Phil on

07801723625



OBITUARIES

April 11th was a day of great sadness in the history of our association. We lost two stalwart members who answered the last call on that same day.



ROY WILTSHIRE B.E.M.

Roy collapsed and died suddenly at his home in Pewsey. His death has come as a great shock to his wife Ruth, the other **family members, and to Roy's many friends. Roy was born on 7th May 1937.** He served in the Royal Air Force at a time when the UK was becoming a nuclear power and he was posted to Christmas Island where nuclear weapons were being tested. On leaving the RAF, Roy trained as a furniture maker and was employed over the next few years by a number of local firms before setting up his own business in the flooring industry. Alongside his fulltime work commitments, Roy joined the Wiltshire Fire Brigade as a retained member at Pewsey. He rose to

eventually take charge of the station. His long, loyal and efficient service as a retained officer was **recognised by the award of the British Empire Medal. Roy's funeral took place at the parish church of St John on 23rd April.** The church was filled with mourners, giving testimony to the way that Roy had touched the life of so many others that had come to pay their last respects to a man so obviously held in affection and high regard. The service was conducted by Rev. Jennifer Totney. The wake was held at the Scout Hall in Pewsey.

Rest in peace, Roy.

KEITH HARVEY MAGGS

Keith passed away on 11th April in Salisbury District Hospital. He was born on 20th May 1946. The circumstances of his death were made all the more painful for family and friends by the fact that he appeared to be making a splendid recovery from a period in intensive care suffering from pneumonia and was on a general ward with the doctors forecasting his **discharge in the near future. However, Keith's condition deteriorated suddenly and unexpectedly due to a perforated bowel.** Keith has suffered with poor health for a number of years and was forced to retire early by ill health. He was a qualified and very skilled butcher but left the meat trade after many years to start a new career as a fire fighter at Boscombe Down.



The Boscombe Down air base fire section was his place of fulltime employment for some years. He was promoted to become a sub officer before he retired. In parallel with his fulltime service as a fire fighter, Keith joined the Wiltshire Fire Brigade at Amesbury and held the rank of **retained leading fireman in the latter part of his service. Keith's heart condition eventually led to him having to have both legs amputated and he was confined to a wheelchair.** However, Keith and Liz attended as many functions of this Association as possible and he was a much valued and popular member. His funeral service took place on 24th April at the Abbey Church of St Mary and St Melor in Amesbury. The church was filled to capacity with mourners and this massive attendance said much about the way that Keith was loved and respected. Paul Jaycock delivered a **very moving eulogy and John Craig, secretary of the WRFA, read 'The Fireman's Prayer'.** The wake was held at the Boscombe Down Recreation Centre.

Rest in peace, Keith.

FIRE & RESCUE NEWS

Updates on FRS
At home and abroad



BANGLADESH FACTORY COLLAPSE

On 24th April 2013, an eight storey garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed after cracks appeared in its walls the day before the disaster. Hundreds of workers were trapped and over 900 are known to have been killed, making this incident the worst garment factory accident ever.

The emergency services were faced with an incredibly difficult task and it could be seen from news film of the incident that they were poorly equipped and badly controlled and co-ordinated. Overseas help was offered because several nations, including the UK, have teams of specialists that are trained, equipped and very experienced in rescue work of this kind. However, the Bangladesh government refused to accept rescue teams but said that they would accept heavy rescue equipment being sent. The head of the Bangladesh fire service then stated that the loan of the equipment would serve no purpose because by the time his personnel had been trained to use it, all those trapped would be dead.

The government explained their refusal to accept rescue teams from overseas as being due to the need to save the nation's face. Thus, it could be said that face saving was given a higher priority than life saving.

CLAPHAM FIRE ; PROSECUTIONS

A 70-year old woman narrowly escaped death when fire broke out at a holistic health centre in London. She was floating in an isolation tank and was wearing headphones during a "forget your cares and float away" session costing £45.00. Even though other clients and staff heard the fire alarm activating and either jumped from windows or ran from the building, the lady in the tank was oblivious to the fire until she became aware of smoke cutting off her means of escape. The London Fire Brigade rescued the lady from the top floor of the premises.

The director of the centre was prosecuted and admitted breaching a number of fire safety regulations. He was given a four-month prison sentence suspended for one year and was ordered to pay £30,000. His company admitted four further counts of safety regulation violations and was fined a further £13,978.

The fire originated in a sunbed that produced large quantities of dense and acrid smoke when alight.



FBU SPONSORS FILM PREMIERE ABOUT DETROIT FD

The FIRE BRIGADES UNION paid for the premiere of the film '**BURN**' that took place in Shaftesbury Avenue, London on 1st May. The film is a documentary that resulted from a film crew being embedded with Engine Company 50 in Detroit, USA. This company is said to be one of the busiest in America.

Since the 1950s, Detroit has been a city in decline and the impact on its fire department has been severe. There are an estimated 80,000 abandoned buildings in the city that the fire fighters refer to as "kindling". Arson attacks are an everyday occurrence and in 2008, a fire fighter with 17-years service, was killed tackling one of these. The film was made partly as a tribute to him and partly to raise awareness of the parlous state of the equipment on issue to Detroit fire fighters as a result of budget restrictions over several years. Also, the pay and conditions applied to the city's fire fighters are very poor in comparison. A Detroit FD fire fighter has a starting salary of only \$30,000 which is very low in comparison with equivalent departments.

Recognising the familiar picture of budget cuts beginning to erode fire & rescue service capabilities, the FBU saw an opportunity to link its campaigning against such cuts by sponsoring the film about Detroit FD. Said FBU General Secretary, Matt Wrack, "*Just like their colleagues in Detroit, the men and women of the British fire service are underpaid, under valued and vital to the survival of our towns and cities.*"

FIRE NEWS (continued)

NEW RETAINED CONTRACTS WORKING WELL

A radical change to the way that retained personnel are contracted is being piloted on ten stations in Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. The pilot commenced on 1st April 2013. The new contracts guarantee a salary to the retained member in return for a commitment to respond within the contractual conditions and terms. This new system replaces the turnout and attendance fees method of payment that has operated since the Second World War.

The new system is regarded as being more appropriate to the modern social structure **and recognises that changes in society have made the old "T & A" system ineffective.** Statistics clearly proved that with a 24 hours, the period when retained cover was at its worst coincided with the time slot within which the most emergency calls were received.

Although at a very early stage, CFO Routh-Jones has declared that the experiment with the new contracts is showing great promise in the increased availability of appliances and



CFO Routh-Jones

he is pleased with its success so far. The improvements in retained cover will significantly improve the Service's response to incidents, with far fewer occasions when retained pumps will go off the run due to lack of riders.

FIRE FIGHTER RUN OVER BY FIRE APPLIANCE IN CARNIVAL PROCESSION

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service suffered an embarrassing incident on Saturday 4th May when a retained firefighter was injured by being in collision with the Torrington fire appliance that was taking part in the town's carnival procession. **The casualty was dressed as Blaze Bear and was walking by the fire truck as it proceeded slowly along in the carnival procession. As the appliance turned into a traffic island, the fire fighter's leg and foot came into contact with a front wheel of the machine.** The fire fighter sustained a fractured leg and foot injuries.

DEVON & SOMERSET FRS WIN ROSPA SAFETY AWARD

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service has won a top health and safety award for cutting staff injuries. The award was made by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The honour is in recognition of the service having cut staff injuries by 40%.



FIRE AUTHORITIES FACE £600m FUNDING GAP

The stark reality of what the economic crisis means to the fire & rescue service has been made clear by the Local Government Association that represents 46 of the UK fire authorities. The LGA claims that the FRS will have a funding gap of £600m in the years immediately ahead. In order to offer some protection to the reactive elements of the service, the proactive areas of community protection may have to suffer. This means stopping or reducing work on public education in fire safety, fitting smoke alarms etc. The LGA claims that major reforms are going to be necessary on top of the cuts that

the fire & rescue service has already implemented. These budget cuts are already at an unprecedented level but more are sure to be necessary.

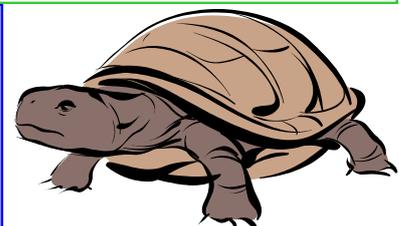


AVON FRS USING ELECTRIC CARS

Avon Fire & Rescue Service is experimenting with two electrically powered cars. They are Citroen C Zero models and they are said to have a range of at least 60 miles.

MATING TORTOISES START BLAZE

In his anxiety to copulate with his friend, Alice, Henry the tortoise is believed to have knocked over a heater that started a serious house fire in Stockton-on-Tees. The fire badly damaged a conservatory and then spread to involve the garage and a car. Henry and Alice were the pets of pensioners, Alf and Gaynor Clayton. Sadly, both Henry and Alice died in the fire.





DENTAL TOURISM

Dave Churchill

gives an insight into getting 'teggies' fixed abroad and saving lots of money by doing so.



I think it is fair to say that NHS dentistry provision has been for some time mainly aimed at pain relief and repairs. Finding an NHS dentist can be a lottery and getting accepted as a patient can be difficult with many lists full. Like most people, for me the cost of fully private dentistry is prohibitive, but also, like most people, I want a better than basic level of prompt treatment. Having moved to Swindon I had no NHS dentist, but needed check ups and also some work to be done. I recalled an item I had heard on BBC Radio 4's *Excess Baggage* programme some years earlier about 'dental tourism'. It featured a man from "up North" who had been going regularly to Hungary for dental treatment, even for routine check-ups. He was enthusiastic and very satisfied with the treatment.

So, I did some internet research to find the company and pretty much decided that I would give it a try. Better still, when I mentioned it to two separate friends, one said that his friend had used that company and was more than satisfied. Likewise, the other said that a colleague had also been delighted. With those recommendations behind me I began the process. Firstly, an appointment with their London surgery, where I was examined, panoramic X-rays taken and a treatment plan drawn up, along with comparative prices (UK v Hungary) printed off for me to consider. This was no hurried appointment but a calm and considered discussion.

The treatment was to be six implants with associated crown and bridge replacements for dodgy molars. This needed extractions which were duly done in Budapest in December as part of a three-day stay, including the Christmas Market. I was very impressed with the clinic, more like a modern out-of-town small hospital, rather than the converted terrace house we are used to in the UK. In the treatment room there were the dentist, the nurse and two assistants. In the waiting area, I had access to endless coffee, British magazines (up to date) and access to a PC and WiFi.

After the extractions all medications were handed to me in a 'goody bag' and I had a 24/7 telephone number in case of problems. They insisted I didn't fly home until I was comfortable. I flew home as planned.

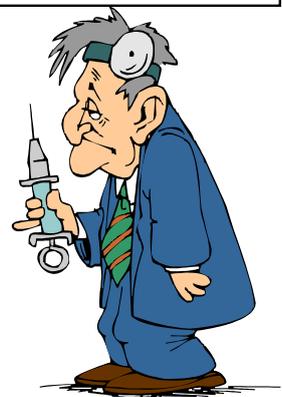
Three months later I returned for the implants to be screwed in and impressions to be taken. This was followed three months later by the fitting of the crowns. All these procedures went as planned and I had eight new gnashers, all at a cost, including flights and three short holidays with hotels etc, for far less than it would have cost in the UK. To contact me to discuss this further, John Craig has my details. The company may be contacted via

www.vitaleurope.com

OUT OF HOURS GP COVER STILL IN DISARRAY

Have you ever fallen ill recently at a time that your general practice surgery was not open for business? Anyone who has done so will probably have had a bad experience of trying to get medical advice and attention. This will have raised anxiety and may even have put health under threat to the point of it being a danger to life. Indeed, investigations are now in progress into a number of deaths that are probably due to the inefficiency of the new 1-1-1 service the NHS was supposed to have activated nationwide on 1st April but which has been forced to delay national roll-out due to serious problems.

So, what has gone so wrong that our beloved NHS has allowed the population to be put at risk through a failure to provide proper GP care around the clock? The rot set in when the last Labour Government, listening to the protestations of the British Medical Association about the hard life being lived by doctors in general practice, negotiated a new contract for GPs through the BMA. Even a casual glance at the terms of this new contract makes it clear



that the priority was upon getting a good deal for the doctors and the patients came way down the pecking order. GPs got a generous boost in salary for providing preventative services and by surrendering only 6% of salary they could walk away from the responsibility of providing out-of-hours cover for their patients. This has thrown a massive strain on the A & E departments of hospitals and the ambulance service. JOHN CRAIG



CAPITAL PEOPLE

Continuing some snippets about serving in the
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

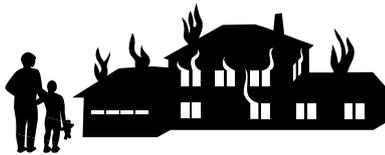
MARGARET TOWNLEY

My connection with the LFB was being married to Jeffrey Townley for 30 years. Jeffrey retired in January 1986 after 30 years service. He had reached the rank of Acting D.O.1 at Brigade HQ, Lambeth. He served at Soho in 1956, Perry Vale, Forest Hill and was Station Officer when the new station opened in Old Kent Road. Later, he was a station officer at Dock Head where the TV series *London's Burning* was filmed. **The station was given the title 'Blackwall' for the series. I can remember Jeffrey saying it was his office that was shown but he had moved on before the filming began.**

When Jeffrey was at Lambeth, he received a phone call from Kent Fire Brigade asking him to return to our house in Chatham because it was involved in fire. The fire originated in the house next to ours and spread to ours. Jeffrey picked me up from Marks and Spencers in Catford and all speed limits were broken on the M2 to get home. We arrived home to find our home invaded by Kent firefighters.



The late JEFFREY TOWNLEY



We retired to Wiltshire in 1986. Sadly Jeffrey died in 2007. I keep myself busy doing church flowers, gardening, and being involved in various clubs in North Bradley. Margaret

DAVE BERRY

(After joining the fire service, first as a retained member at Ramsbury in Wiltshire and then as wholetime at Swindon, having just failed a promotion interview for a sub officer post in WFB, Dave applied to join the LFB.)

By a strange quirk of fate, London Fire Brigade was advertising for sub officers, so off I went for interview at Shoreditch (if you could find your way through the maze into the station yard to park your car, you got the job!) A medical at County Hall and then...wait and...wait and ...wait. I never did get a letter from LFB telling me when I was appointed. I got a letter from Wiltshire Fire Brigade telling me when my last day of service was!

This was a time of contemplation for me. Had I done the right thing? Would I fail on hook ladders? Where would I be posted? All these questions were simply

answered by a short letter from D Division HQ, Marion House. I was to report for a two-week induction before being posted to D25 Chiswick. Two weeks to learn all you needed to know about London Fire Brigade: its radio procedures, its endless (mindless) trail of paperwork, typewriters and carbon paper! Had they not heard of computers or word processors? A portent of what was to come.

D25 Chiswick, a Middlesex pattern station (they all had the same, right down to the red, plastic sleeve on the stairway banister rail) was, in London terms, a sleepy hollow; 1,300-1,500 calls a year, mainly to back up the surrounding stations of Acton, Hammersmith, Isleworth and, over the river, one-pump station Richmond.

Blue Watch at Chiswick was no different from any watch in London. Nobody lived anywhere near the station and, like me, they all travelled long distances to get to work. There was an air of disquiet on all watches that I put down to the recent ban on alcohol on stations, but it was deeper than that. I liked the blokes and they were proficient in their tasks but motivation was difficult and time consuming. Everything required so much effort to get sanctioned and **everyone seemed on tenterhooks awaiting the dreaded 'one bell' of a visiting officer.**

Without having done extensive research, and relying on hearsay and some reading of publications, I had joined D25 Chiswick under the impression that I was to become a member of the BEST brigade in the world. Oh how disappointed one can be! My introduction to the watch was nothing different to any other parade at change of shift **throughout the whole country. I detailed the "runners and riders" and as I was to be in charge for the night that the** Leading Fireman would be doing the routine admin. Once the vehicles and BA checks were completed, I took the opportunity to grab the two probationary firefighters (note the change in terminology) and get them to show me

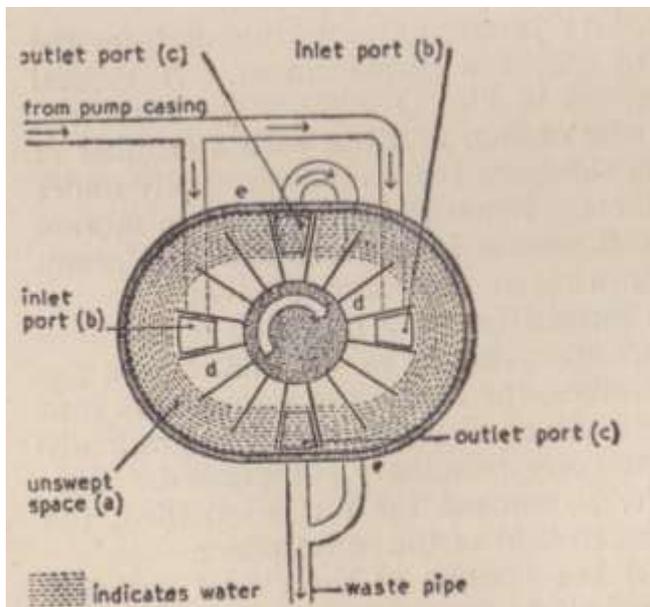


Dave Berry

CAPITAL PEOPLE—continued from page 9 (Dave Berry)

around the appliances. Plainly they were embarrassed when locker after locker was opened to reveal a rack of stinking, mildew infested Dutch rolled hose, paint chipped and rusty implements that had probably never been used. The **probationers professed to know that every item was tested on a predetermined schedule, but couldn't state that they had ever been involved with these tests!**

Then we came to the pump bay where, lo, an artefact from a museum festered in a sea of chalky corrosion you find



A diagram of a water ring primer

on aluminium.; a reciprocating primer—its D handle daring you to place a well positioned boot against the bulkhead and pull. Yes, just like the one on the 1950 Wiltshire F12 that I had looked after for several years.

My heart sank! What had I done? I recalled George **Clarke's introductory lecture all those years ago back at Ramsbury—**"*Wiltshire Fire Brigade is currently at the bottom of the league of Fire Brigades—fortunately, the only way to go is up*". Now here I was in a Brigade professing to be the **world's best and it was by far the worst I had encountered.** I was ashamed.

I knew the Brigade Engineer. He had supplied me with various components for the Wiltshire F12. I pestered him for information on when LFB was going to get water ring primers but as he was about to retire shortly he was in no position to change things.

I had greater priorities on the station to address. However, I took every opportunity to get something done about the standard specifications of LFB pumping appliances.

The final straw came when the Brigade was

'persuaded' to purchase a large, cancelled, Middle Eastern order for a lot of Dodge G15 pumps. They looked good; they went OK, they stopped and they pumped all OK. The big problem was their abysmal turning circle. From memory, this was 75ft when the JCDD spec called for 55ft. Not wishing to bore the pants off you, I ended up in front of the new Brigade Engineer asking why we had to use appliances that failed to comply with JCDD specification **(that are basic specs and in need of bettering wherever possible) to be told that it was "politics and the FBU had agreed."** Thanking me for my concerns, he ignored any suggestion of getting water ring primers added to the specifications.

Eighteen months at Chiswick flew by (aided by a couple of spells of sick leave) when the weekly bulletin landed on my desk with a vacancy advertised in it for a Station Officer on the Appliances and Equipment reference at Brigade HQ. **I didn't read the job description, I just phoned for an application form and completed it.**

Diary Dates

May 22nd : Walking Club Meets

July 14th : Sunday Lunch & AGM

17th August ; Paella Evening (Hampshire)

8th Sept. : Emergency Services Event

29th September: Sunday Lunch, Salisbury



PANTOMIME ; 'ROBINSON CRUSOE'

Serious consideration is being given to booking for a party to attend the pantomime 'Robinson Crusoe' starring Brian Conley and Lesley Joseph in Southampton on Saturday 11th January 2014 at 2.00pm. A coach would pick-up from Swindon, Royal Wootton Bassett, Calne, Potterne and Salisbury. All in price would be about £40.00 per head. Before booking, an indication of numbers interested is needed. Please ring me if you are likely to book. John Craig 01380 726343



SOCIAL LIFE

Forthcoming events



SUNDAY LUNCH

14th July 2013

An excellent

Three-course Lunch

Only £12.50



Cumberwell Park Golf Club (near Box)

A short business meeting taking the form of our AGM will follow the luncheon.

Booking form circulated with this newsletter or by email.



Saturday 17th August 2013

6.30pm to 10.30pm

PAELLA EVENING & Live Band (no seafood)

Hampshire FRS Headquarters,
Leigh Road, Eastleigh

£11.00

Booking form from John Craig
01380 726343



The WRFA is a member
Of AGE UK
Wiltshire



In need of TRAVEL INSURANCE?
For a specialist service for the over 50s



Call free for a quote

0800 032 9421

Helpline

Number

0800 389 8820



The
Fire Fighters
Charity

Fire Engine Money Boxes Available



Thanks to the generosity of Dan and Janet Gurney, the WRFA has available a number of collectable money boxes in the Juliana range. They are in the design of a fire engine with coin slot in the cab roof. These come boxed. To obtain one, a donation of at least £10.00 is requested. All monies donated will be passed to the Fire Fighters Charity. Contact John Craig 01380 726343.



NEW LAPEL PINS

To mark the 70th anniversary of the Fire Fighters Charity, new lapel pins are available. These may be obtained for a donation of not less than £1.00 from JOHN CRAIG.

Hurry while stocks last!

The Regular Giver Scheme

Our charity, the Fire Fighters Charity, receives one of its most useful and dependable income streams from the REGULAR GIVER SCHEME. It is a very simple method for those that want to give financial support to the charity on a regular basis to do so without fuss or bother. All that is needed is a few minutes to fill in a form and once the charity has received this and processed it, your bank will pay the amount you have stipulated to the charity every month. If you are a tax payer, it is possible to gift aid your giving so that the charity can claim an additional sum but from the Government in the form of tax relief on your donation.

You may already be a regular giver; in which case, please be assured of the gratitude of the charity for the support that you have already given. As to the future, may I ask when you last reviewed the amount that you donate? Since you first signed up to the scheme, I venture to suggest that inflation has put a dent in the value of your donation and perhaps you are in a position to review your giving and make an appropriate adjustment.

If you require a form to start becoming a regular giver or to adjust you donation, give me a call.

JOHN CRAIG Life Patron

Tel: 01380 726343

FROM THE 'BIG APPLE'



Ted Rohlfing, secretary & treasurer of the Staff Chief's Association of the City of New York Fire Department, recently wrote to John Craig giving a moving account of how a fire fighter's daughter finally got closure. Ted was guest of honour at a dinner held by our Association at Bowood in May 2008 and so met several of our members. Ted has written the following....

Last week, the Firehouse in the Bronx in which I was a Lieutenant had its 100th anniversary and celebrated with a luncheon in the quarters of Ladder 44. In those quarters are four brass plaques dedicated to four Firemen who made the supreme sacrifice while on duty with Ladder 44.

Fast forward to a few years ago when I took a golf partner in a league in Pennsylvania. Bill Hilgert was born and raised in the Bronx and, not surprisingly, married a girl from the Bronx. That girl, Chris, it turns out is the daughter of Arthur G. Hanson for whom one of the four plaques is reverently dedicated. Chris was nine when she lost her father and never really came to terms with **her loss. One problem seems to have been the reluctance, on everyone's part, to discuss the** very painful subject. Her mother and sister have been to the Firehouse and seen the plaque but Chris, for whatever reason, never visited those quarters until she was invited to the 100th anniversary. While there, a retired member who worked with her father, showed her pictures of him and told some typical Firehouse stories involving him. As you can imagine, Chris was overwhelmed by the honour done for her father, her family, including herself. Bill tells me that she finally feels some measure of closure and thereby relief that a little girl and later a grown woman has been denied all these years.

Another story illustrating our claim to THE GREATEST JOB ON EARTH.

ABOUT TED ROHLFING

After service in the US Navy, Ted joined the fire department in the City of New York (FDNY) in January 1964. After basic training, he was posted to Engine Company 27 in downtown Manhattan. After nine years, he was promoted to Lieutenant and assigned to Ladder Company 44 in the notorious South Bronx. While there, Ladder 44 was allocated one of the new Tower Ladders the department was introducing. The exceptional level of operational activity in the Bronx is unlikely to ever be surpassed in the city. Ted recalls many occasions when all resources were committed to fires and more working jobs were being called in. Promotion to Captain meant another move for Ted and he was assigned to Engine 280 in Brooklyn. This too was an extremely busy unit. In 1984, further promotion brought Ted to the rank of Battalion Chief in a firehouse in the Broadway area of Manhattan. His career continued to progress by leaps and bounds until he eventually became Assistant Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Fire Prevention. This **post brought with it the responsibility to fill a place on a roster as "City Wide Fire Duty Chief" that meant being on call to take charge of all fires reaching a Third Alarm status.** He worked this duty for five years and reports that there was not one tour when he was not required to respond. Ted was forced into an ill health retirement in 1998 by a heart attack. He lives with his wife Lorraine on Long Island.

Dib-Dib-Dobbing All The Way to the Fire! By John Craig

I love browsing through second hand book shops and stalls. Only a few days ago I stumbled across a book published in 1926 with the title *What Scouts Can Do—more yarns* by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, Bt. Most readers will know that Baden-Powell is the man credited with starting the Boy Scouts movement that is still going strong worldwide.

The book is well-thumbed and, being only a paperback, it is showing signs of hard use over many years but I am delighted to have it, not least because it contains a chapter on firemanship as seen through the eyes of the great man himself.

From studying this chapter, it becomes clear that Baden-Powell fancied himself as a fire fighter and made clear to his readers that he expected scouts to do their utmost to fight fires and to be supportive to the fire brigade in every possible way. Baden-Powell obviously considered it the duty of every Boy Scout to be alert to the danger of fire. The example he wished to be followed can be understood from these words of his.



You are bound to be in a fire some day, so BE PREPARED for it. Learn all you can about fire fighting and life saving while you have the chance as a Scout, and keep up the practice of it whenever you can get the opportunity.

When I was a boy I lived in London and kept a look-out for the glow of a fire every night, and whenever I saw it, or whenever I heard the fire engines going, I made my way there. In this way, I attended a great number of fires, and I got to be on such good terms with the firemen that I was allowed to lend a hand on several occasions. Did I enjoy it!



The Rovers in many parts of the country have taken up Firemanship as part of their training, and in many country towns and villages are looked upon as the local Fire Brigade. I want a really good display from troops that take this up, so they can, when required, get up a really good show of fire fighting and rescue work, such as will give a real thrill to onlookers and at the same time show what they are made of for that kind of job.

LOOKING BACK!



Carry down drill on a 50foot wheeled escape & not an everest device in sight!



Instruction in street fire alarms. Who remembers these? Photo taken in Leicester circa 1950.

DISCLAIMER

Views and opinions published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Wiltshire Retired Firefighters Association or the Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.

EDITOR : John Craig, 12a Gaisford Chase, WORTON SN10 5RX