

FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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The co-ordinator areas are being
reassessed by Howard Harper
more information will follow in the
spring issue of Flashpoint

Front Page

This photo was taken down
the Falklands in 1985 the
silhouetted figure is one of
the stalwarts of our trade,
Chic Bebb



All the staff at

focus4print

would like to wish all Members of the
RAF & Defence Fire Service Association
and their families a
Very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year!



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Flashpoint Editorial Autumn 2013

Welcome to your third and final edition of Flashpoint for 2013. This year has been a special year for National remembrance; Operation Chastise (the Dam Busters) the battle of the Atlantic the forgotten War (Korea) and many more conflicts that involved huge loss of life. One significant and tragic loss of life that I always remember at this time of year is the disaster that befell Nimrod XV 230 flying on a reconnaissance mission over Afghanistan. On the 22 of September 2006 the aircraft caught fire as a result of either an electrical fault or hot air leaking from a heating pipe. Shortly after reporting the fire the pilot tried to reach Kandahar air base but first a wing exploded and seconds later the rest of the aircraft exploded with the loss of the fourteen military personnel on board. One of the crew was a young Liverpool man named John Langton. John was a former member of 7(F) 1st City of Liverpool Air Cadets and I remember well the night when John then aged 14 called at the Squadron requesting information about joining the squadron I was the squadron CO at the time and I remember interviewing John and thought

then what a fine young man he was. John subsequently joined the squadron and went on to be an outstanding Air Cadet; a talented sports person academically gifted and a great credit to the Squadron his family and himself. After a very successful Air Cadet career John joined the RAF initially as a RAF Regiment Gunner; he and his younger brother Steven also a 7F cadet were at one time both serving in the same RAF Regiment squadron. John subsequently applied for NCO Aircrew and was accepted and satisfactory completed NCO Aircrew training. I had provided John with a character reference when he applied for RAF Service and was pleased for him when I found out he had been accepted. It goes without saying that I was very upset to hear of the fate that befell him. John was a young man raised in allegedly one of the worst areas in Liverpool; he had witnessed drug and alcohol abuse gang warfare civil unrest and many social ills but like many he rose above it all to become a good citizen and a credit to his nation sadly making the ultimate sacrifice in the service of his country. When this terrible tragedy

struck and it ended a promising RAF career, I really believe John Langton could well have gone on to achieve his ultimate ambition in life to be a Pilot in the RAF never the less his spirit lives on. Johns name is included on the National Arboretum roll of Honour. If you ever manage to visit the arboretum please take a few moments to seek out Johns name then pause awhile to honour his name and all those who were killed with him on the 22 September 2006 in the line of duty

(George Flashpoint co editor).

As we come to the end of another year George and I would like to thank all those people who have submitted articles for inclusion in Flashpoint we would also like to send out a request for more articles and finally Christmas will soon be upon us so to all our readers. Wishing you a merry Christmas and good health and happiness in the New Year. Special thoughts go out to our serving members who may be spending the festive season way from home you take care guys and gals

Best wishes Steve and George

The Section Bike!

Do you remember the days of 'Section Bike'? No not that sort, keep your minds right lads. I was reading a book 'Wheels of the RAF' and believe or not there was a section on Bicycles. It reads as follows:

Bicycles

Do not despise the bicycle, for it was the most widely used RAF vehicle and particularly so in the Second World War, when domestic sites were often miles from technical sites or aircraft dispersal. The RFC classed bicycles in two types; standard pattern army bicycles which in the RAF became known as 'Service Pattern' bicycles and those bought locally, known collectively as 'Trade Pattern' bicycles. This distinction was made because spares for the former were supplied by No1 Stores Depot at Kidbrooke and for the latter by local purchase. An allowance per bicycle, per annum, was laid down by the RAF in 1918 as: 1 pint general service lubricating oil, 1lb tallow, 1 oz cotton wool (for replenishing lamps) 1 bicycle brush, 1½ lbs of old linen, and 1 quart of paraffin for cleaning and replenishing lamps and wicks as necessary.

There was a rigid economy in the supply of bicycles between the wars, ending in 1940 with the need for wide dispersal. By then there was a further classification by sex. 'Bicycles Male' and 'Bicycles Female', as the WAAF had occasion to use bicycles officially. Bicycles were normally issued to sections of a base, rather than to individuals, and so were often marked with flight or other details on their mudguards; additionally, of course many private bicycles were used and their use was encouraged.

Note: The rear mudguards were painted for 6ins in white in accordance with the civil road regulations during the blackout period.

I seem to remember that the bikes I saw in my early days still had that white painted mudguard.

During my first tour of Masirah, I borrowed Flt Sgt Ditchfield's bike and was riding around in front of the section



making patterns in the sand (too much sun!!) unbeknown to me he was watching me and I just said "just making sure it's safe to ride boss" he just laughed and shook his head. I thought I was in for a 'roasting'

Steve H

Letters to the Editor

It is always pleasing to get feedback about items in Flashpoint, as well as letters obviously these days emails as well comments on Facebook pages.

Facebook comment from Gareth Jordan

A success story from my article in the magazine. Steve (Harrison) was contacted by an ex colleague of my father's today who appears in the Malta photo's. I spoke to him tonight, he has a lot of memories and photo's to share and we are getting together soon. The world is so small he lives just 5 miles from my mum! I can't wait to see the finished magazine.

Editor's note: The person who contacted me was Terry Wright, thanks Terry you made Gareth's day.

Gareth has now visited Terry. This was a pleasing result and highlights what the association is all about.

Letter from Mike Trayner

George / Steve just back from a Holiday and I have only recently read the summer 2013 edition of Flashpoint. Your reference to Ken Dodds in the editorial certainly brought back some happy memories, I had a lot of time for Ken he was a great guy and a good keen manager, where has the time gone? It must be all of 40 years since I was in Aden! Ken was a corporal then but I met him again in Wildenrath when he was a Flt Lt, didn't he do well! Still a nice guy .Please give him my kind regards next time you speak. I don't think I have any photos of the team but it was a good side. Later in my service I went on to play for command, RAF Germany and combined services in Singapore. Water under the bridge now but it was exciting at the time.

Kind Regards Mike Trayner.

Thanks for that Mike and I will certainly pass on your kind regards to Ken. Seems like Mike really was a talented footballer but was he the most capped RAF Fireman footballer? I would be interested to know if there was any RAF Fireman who was more capped than Mike. I played for quite a few station teams but never for command or Combined Services. The best RAF Fireman footballer I come across in my RAF foot ball days was that no nonsense hard tackling centre half-Tom Sawyer' Just glad I never played against Tom but it was great to be in the same side as him. (Ge Co Ed)

Letter from John (Duggie King)

Back in 1950 as a 17year old I joined the Fleet Air Arm and did a Fire & Rescue course at HMS Siskin, Gosport Hants. Seeing the cover page of the Flashpoint magazine took my memory back to 1954. About April I passed my driving course and was drafted to Paisley, just outside Glasgow and the first truck they gave me was a WOT1. Seeing it on the front page refurbished in glorious condition was great.

Remember you lads of today, you will notice the WOT1 had no doors or windscreen, and I operated it during some nasty weather. Anyway good luck to you, things had to get better. It was bloody freezing!

John (Duggie) King

E mail from Colin Hall

My Flashpoint arrived yesterday and of course was immediately read from cover to cover. It is indeed a tribute to you both a comment I may well have made before but is well worth repeating!

In the subject article mention is made of Sqn Ldr Les Munro, the last surviving Dambusters pilot, who of course is New Zealander. Some 1850 Kiwis died in Bomber Command, a number which was out of all proportion to the population of New Zealand at that time, which was around 1 million!

Check out this link; www.3news.co.nz/Kiwi-pilot-remembers-dambuster-raids/tabid/423/articleID/298108/Default.aspx

Yours etc Colin Hall

Email from Ian Lisseman

Hi,

Jim Guy's "Five Good Years" caused "goose pimples"! I am a member of the Martlesham Heath Aviation Society and we have a museum in the preserved Control Tower of the base RAF Martlesham Heath. After I joined I got a lot of stick because of my interest in, as they put it "Fire Engines". I've taken on the task of trying to put together information on the Fire Crews of the base. It gets complicated because it was a research site prior to WW2, then became a fighter base for RAF and was then handed over to the USAAF when they

came on board. The base then went back to research and that was when Jim Guy was stationed here.

I have the USAAF War Diary available and am researching that - mostly "routine duties". or - "tender and crew off (or on) drome". We are not even sure where the Fire Crew Base was/is? It should all have been "similar" when Jim was here.

Ian Lisseman

Email from Geoff Varley

Yet again, you have both excelled yourselves with the latest edition of "Flashpoint" that has just dropped through my letterbox. How you both do it time after time, one can only wonder.

One of the stories in this issue from Shaun Boland, caught my eye and brought back memories of that sad day. Having then been out of the RAF for 17 years and now working on the management team at the Marshall Group at Cambridge I can clearly remember this tragic crash on the Oxmore at Huntingdon.

Having lived (Hazel and my first home), only a few miles away from Huntingdon in my home town of St.Ives (just a short distance from the end of RAF Wyton's main runway), it hit home a bit.

Some years later I was serving as the Squadron Adj., at our local ATC unit at Cambridge, when our then Squadron CO., (Chaz, a serving Police Officer), knowing that I was an ex RAF Fireman, brought in (very unofficially), some photos that he thought I might find of interest, but did not warn me what they contained.

These horrendous photos where some of the official Police photos taken of the crash scene just after it had happened. They showed clearly the devastation (and in one the remains of one of A/C's crew). This is what must have confronted Shaun and the rest of the Crash Crew when they arrived on the scene that tragic day, and it is no wonder that Shaun had to shed a tear on his return to his room at RAF Wyton, as just looking at these horrendous photos, even brought tears to the eyes of a very old RAF Fireman.

Well done again with "Flashpoint"

Geoff Varley

Mickleover Hotel-Derby-Reunion-Friday 11th-Mon 14th October 2013

We had a great reunion weekend at this top quality Hotel which is featured in The Superbreaks travel magazine. It was chosen by the Committee but organised by Isle of Wight Tours-Shirley Winn: who negotiated a good price for us. The Hotel has a central atrium comparable to a cruise ship with a glass lift, bars on the ground and first floor and plenty of seating which is so important at reunions. The food and friendly service was the best we have had with the Friday night and Sunday night meals and service being as good as the Saturday evening meal.

The AGM was held on Saturday morning and Allan and Marilyn Brooke were awarded a Certificate to honour their hard work running the Association shop.

After the AGM coaches were organised to The National Arboretum but were not fully taken up due to the weather being grey and drizzly. For those of us who did go along it was very enjoyable and the one hour train tour was excellent and made viewing easier. The Chairman laid a wreath by our tree whilst we were there.

On Saturday evening John Savage was our M.C for the night so we were well organised. We were joined by our honorary President Air Marshal Sir John Sutton who after our meal told one of his very interesting and entertaining stories. He then presented Certificates to George Edwards and Steve Harrison for their services producing Flashpoint and to Warrant Officers Steve Bowden and Steve Hollis for acts of bravery whilst in service (accepted on their behalf by Steve Harrison and George Edwards who will present the certificates to the two Steves later this year). Also Ron Brown received a Certificate and plaque for organising The RAFDFSA parade at the Cenotaph. There

was a big Thank You to Shirley Winn of IOW Tours for her organising our weekend and a surprise Toast to myself to celebrate my 80th Birthday; The Champagne being organised and provided by my wife as she wanted me to have a drink with all my friends. The raffle raised £400 and is to be shared between the Memorial Fund and The Museum. Another raffle of a picture of a Lightning was held and raised £250. The value of 3 rooms at the Hotel were given as prizes with everyone being given a ticket in the Dining Room. Our Entertainer for the evening was Juliana who provided Singing from the Opera, Top London Shows and Popular Music also light humour. We first met her at our small informal gathering in Huddersfield in March. It was nice once again to see so many people stay in the Dining room to listen to her and to have a full dance floor.

On Sunday after breakfast some members went home but a coach to Cosford was organised for anyone interested-again Sir John joined us. We had an enjoyable visit marred only by one of our members falling ill and requiring an ambulance to hospital.

Shirley Winn followed the ambulance in her car and after extensive tests our friend was discharged-Shirley then drove him home to Redditch to be looked after by his daughter in law and brought his son back to the hotel so he could drive the members wife and car back home. All's well that ends well but proved to us what an asset Shirley Winn is to our Association-we are all getting older and these things can happen. None of us had a car with us out at Cosford. Our Thanks go out to everyone who helped with this episode.

Sunday evening meal and the service was as good as the Friday and those of us left had a quieter evening to socialise. After breakfast Monday morning we were on our way home and looking forward to the next Reunion.

Thank you to Sir John Sutton, The Mickleover Hotel, IOW Tours and all the hard working members of the Committee and to all the members for participating so well and for making this a good weekend.

*Dennis McCann BEM
Association President*

Stop Press

Important information from the AGM. Steve Harrison & George Edwards have stood down as co editors of Flashpoint but not before obtaining a replacement editor. Our new Flashpoint editor is now Dave Stevenson contact details on page 2 of Flashpoint. We wish Dave Stevenson every success in his new post and will endeavour to help him in any way we can

(GE & SH former Flashpoint editors.)

Please note Steve and George have taken on new roles within the Association; Steve is now the area coordinator for the Lincolnshire area and George is now the area coordinator for the Merseyside Greater Manchester and North Wales area. Additionally both Steve and George have agreed to take on joint roles as Association publicity Officers Dave Stevenson has also offered his services as Co coordinator for Cornwall Devon Somerset and the whole of the West Country. All new appointments have been approved by the committee

OBITUARIES

Ernie Fisher passed away 9th August 2013 following a long illness with heart disease.

Bernard Ellis passed away March 2013 served at Cranage (Cheshire) and at Luqa (Malta)

Tommy Robertson passed away 1st September; Tommy served at Gibraltar, Gutersloh and Wyton

Bob Massie passed away 14th September; following a heart attack.

It is with great sadness that I have to inform of the death of **Ken Steel** (Ex FS Regt) who was with the Fire Section RAF Gutersloh 1973-93. He died aged 80 on 14 Nov

FLASHPOINT PRODUCTION

Although we are giving up the editorship for Flashpoint we thought we would go ahead and publish this article just to show what went on behind the scenes. We have to say we have enjoyed our tenure and we would like to express our thanks to you all who have supported and encouraged us throughout this time. We would also like to thank all the staff at Focus4Print for their help, they are a great bunch. Dave Stevenson who is your new editor is looking forward to the challenge and we will help him as much as we can. No doubt Dave will bring his own style and we wish him all the best of luck and hope that he gets as much support as we did. The distribution will still be carried on by Trevor Hayes and Emlyn Parry and good luck to them.

Thanks again George and Steve

Here's a little piece explaining how Flashpoint arrives through your letterbox. Planning and preparation of Flashpoint begins usually a few months before the deadline day. With three editions of Flashpoint each year; Spring Summer and Autumn no sooner is one edition completed than work starts on the next edition. Basically Steve and I communicate ideas and suggestions then set about drafting articles typing up letters received and those articles received in manuscript. This can at times be a bit laborious and after a few attempts at completing the article one tends to get a bit word blind and its time then to move on to our own articles most of which come from our own memorabilia personal recollections or snippets of stories picked up from magazines that we stumble across. As we finish an article we will discuss the finished article before agreeing it's ready to go to print. Despite the fact we have been editing Flashpoint for a few years now we always



Steve Harrison at the Flashpoint office in Louth Lincolnshire, unfortunately I have no technical assistant. Bertie the cat is useless because he is always sleeping and he complains that I haven't got a mouse! Liz my wife is a 'Technophobe' bless her, but she is very supportive. So it's all down to me!

come to an amicable conclusion and I can't remember us disagreeing on any of the material we have each produced. We will however always sound each other out about any article. The train photograph pictured on the front cover of the spring 2013 edition was a classic example it was something new and we were a bit unsure how it would be received but we decided to go for it and it appears it was well received. We are constantly looking for new and interesting material and have steered away from repetitive type tales i.e. joined up in 1965 went to Swinderby then Catterick etc in favour of the more human interest stories. However will always include all articles submitted to Flashpoint and never change the content other than any obvious grammatical errors. The two recent tales life as a Fireman's son one written by David McCann the other by Lloyd Harrison were both something different but none the less very interesting stories. Oh how we would welcome a story life as a Fireman's wife so any volunteers please get in touch. Steve and I communicate on a regular basis and as the deadline day draws near communication can be almost daily. Steve and I have a very similar sense of humour and to brighten our communications we keep coming up with different names for each other names like wingman Danny boy Broadsword Maverick and Goose not forgetting those two old favourites Scouse Git and Yorkshire pudding. Once we have checked over all our material both for content and grammar we will send off the first draft to the printers (Focus for Print based in York). Previous Flashpoint editors have used 'Focus for Print' and like Steve and I they have nothing but the highest praise for the staff there that's the two Jill's and Tim the owner They are all extremely helpful patient and remain cheerful even when we may request a last minute alteration.

After a few days formatting the magazine the first draft copy will come back to us



Flashpoint North West office based in St Helens, Lancashire, pictured 13 year old William Edwards (technical advisor to the co editor George Edwards) busily at work preparing their contribution for the autumn 2013 edition. Once our contribution is completed it is despatched to Flashpoint head office over at Louth, Lincolnshire for final scrutiny before dispatch to the printers

for checking and after we complete our pre production checks its back to the printers for final formatting. Shortly after that we will get the final draft and then in slow time we will proof read and then its back to the printers and 550 copies will be printed off ready for distribution That's it for Steve and I our work is complete on that edition and we can sit back and wait the finished article which is always a joy to receive. What started off a few months earlier as a few notes scribbled on note paper and a few ideas tossed around has now been transformed into a high quality ex Service Magazine. Although Steve and I have completed our bit another dedicated team now swings into action and that's your flashpoint distribution team led by Trevor Hayes. This team will arrange for Flashpoints to be delivered to Trevor's home once they have arrived Trevor and his team will get to work inserting any additional information sheets sorting out postage and then the big and final action posting off Flashpoint to our 550 members scattered far and wide and a few other locations museums etc. Trevor and his team clearly do a good job and as you can see Flashpoint is quite a developing business involving many people. Steve and I never lose sight of the work of the earlier Flashpoint editors who in some cases had no access to a computer and printers they simply worked long hours typing up articles maybe stapling pages together and then sorting out postage and distribution. They really did a marvellous job

While George and Steve are putting the final touches to the printing of the next issue and dealing with the printers, my input begins. I go through my payment accounts and note all members who have paid up and make a list of those members-435 for the last issue. This list is then forwarded to Brian Ford our Membership Secretary. When Brian receives this list he then compares it to his address list of members and makes any necessary adjustments. Brian then prints a full list onto address labels and this is forwarded to me. I already have a list of about 30 RAF stations that also receive 2 copies each. This is an awareness exercise for future members. I then print the 450 return labels. In the meantime I make a trip to Staples and purchase envelopes, paper, printing ink and address labels for the back of the envelopes for returns (not all members inform us when they move). A trip to the local Costco and the village post office for the stamps, 500 large @90p, 500 @20p and 500 @10p (£1.20p for each Flashpoint posted) That's the easy bit. Address and return labels plus 3 stamps makes 5 items

for each envelope, that's 2,315 in all. Fortunately we do not have to lick any of them! When the printers, Focus4print, based in York, are ready to forward the 550 copies of Flashpoint, they e-mail me and I arrange delivery with TNT for the next day. This involves downloading delivery labels and e mailing them to Focus4print, then checking to make sure that they have been received. So then all is ready for the arrival of the magazines. In the weeks before I receive the Flashpoints, I compile the treasurer's report and print 2 per sheet (220 sheets) which have to be guillotined, plus put together any other inserts.



Emlyn, carrying out his distribution task.

At this point I must add that I have a great deal of help from my friend, Emlyn Parry, a retired RAF engineer/pilot and Wings Co-ordinator for our local RAFA branch (hence the raffle tickets in the last issue). Emlyn does everything. A few days before the magazines arrive, he attaches all the stamps and labels to each envelope,(and if you ever look at the stamps and labels on your envelope you would think he had used a spirit level!!) He guillotines the inserts and then, when the Flashpoints arrive Emlyn sits and places all the inserts into the magazines, then into the envelopes and seals them down. This takes him about a day. The next day we take 5 heavy bags of envelopes to the local Post Office for collection and despatch. The summer issues were posted on 9th August and within 5 days I had received 4 envelopes marked "Return to Sender". I then have to try to trace these members to resend to the correct addresses, which is why it is very important for members to keep Brian Ford informed if they move house. In 3 months' time, we start all over again... It's a simple task, but time consuming.

Mark Sutton

Flashpoint readers may be aware of the tragic death of Stuntman Mark Sutton but few will be aware that Mark was the son of our Association Honorary President Air Marshal Sir John Sutton. On hearing the sad news Officers of our Association committee sent Sir John and Lady Angela an Association Condolence Card. A thank you card has been received by our Membership Secretary Brian Ford from Sir John and Lady Angela which reads as follows;



Brian We were very touched to receive the condolence card from the chairman Committee and members of the Association we cannot write to them all but perhaps you would pass on our thanks to those and any others

We were of course devastated to hear the news the but the many tributes paid to him and the many messages such as yours – have made it a little easier to bear.

Mark was a wonderful son brother and partner of Victoria. He will be greatly missed. He was very talented and until this tragic accident had always been hugely successful in meeting his many challenges – in the Army in the city and in the air. But he was also unassuming and very modest indeed as others have said, and

we found the incredible media interest coverage and comment has shown us that he had given us little idea of what he had achieved and the immense respect in which he was held by so many people

Proximity wing suit flying is perhaps the most dangerous of all the extreme sports. But Mark was never happier than when in the mountains and if

he had to go early would have chosen to take his last breath there.

As a result of the level of press coverage of the accident we plan to have a small private funeral but especially as Mark had so many friends world wide we plan to hold a memorial service in London later in the year

John and Angela Sutton



Mark Sutton, centre, the daredevil who amazed the world when he parachuted into the London 2012 Olympics opening ceremony dressed as James Bond Mark is Picture with Gary Connery, the skydiving 'Queen'

The Importance of Numbers

Arriving in the afternoon to Darlington and greeted by only blustery wind, grey skies and rain, my journey to RAF Catterick was soon to be completed. At least my head had cleared, last night I had said farewells to a group of pals at RAF Cosford, where I had left a bunch of craft apprentices 226 entry. The decision to leave the apprenticeship was taken after much talking to my Dad, and probably helped by the fact that I learned that firefighter training would be in Yorkshire, my home county.

Soon joining with my fellow course members in the block, where I was amazed to learn that they did not have wooden floors to hand buff and their shirts had collars attached. All this made the leaving Cosford much easier now. The next day would bring my first contact with the Fire School hangar close to the A1, seems very nostalgic now but perhaps back in 1972, it possibly did not look very appealing. Morning parade, orders screamed, shuffling feet, thoughts of what lay ahead and the many new faces. Soon seated in our classroom, and confronted by Sgt Jack Lamb and Cpl Harry Halford, and then shortly introduced to the inspiring and motivating WO Shearn. So here we were, at the very beginning, lesson after lesson, PE and of course drills. Endless numbering, from the right number, in teams of four number, then number ones one pace forward. Then interspersed with leggings, and chafed wrists from endless hose running, they began to give more sodding numbers, discharge rates, jet throws, nozzle sizes and the odd mention of AP 957.

Never mind, pay parade was imminent, and those were the numbers I was looking forward too, memory fails to recall what was handed over after the salute, but I do remember more numbers from Harry H, the numbers of raffle tickets we were obliged to buy, did anyone ever win, was there a bloody prize?

The hours, passed into days and then weeks before we were remembering and recalling the final numbers of the Mk 5 and 5A etc, and I do recall being told that you will not see them on the stations now. The final part were drills, no sweat now, we had repeatedly rehearsed 2,3 etc so that they were ingrained on our brains. The dour looking chaps from Standards disappeared, and at length we were informed of the outcomes and soon BF10 were to be set free to the real world.

Upon my arrival at St Mawgan I was more than a little taken aback to find a

Mk 5 on the run, never mind no more raffle tickets. The numbers we still there though, two sugars, one white, yes, tea boy for 13 was no fun and supervised by Cpls Dick Duncan and Jan Metters was fun to say the list, and occasionally we saw Sgt Jim Hutchinson, complete with a copy of the Daily Mirror. He led once again with numbers, but these were just the odds at the bookies. Numbers and complex calculations were now beginning to feature, no, not fireground formula, but rapid scoring at 501.

I did acquire some direct trade numbers, HGV 2, and runway numbers, Mawgan 13 near the sea. Soon the joys of an overseas tour called and off to Laarbruch, new crew and even more numbers, and to top it all they were in another language, Drei beer bitte!

It was here I really became acquainted with a new set of numbers, mainly from 1-6, and I was beginning to join a new team. 2.43

featured predominately and new terms of five one, four two, two and a half. Then the realisation of all this attention to numbers since joining the trade, yes, for the game of volleyball and yet more drills. Our crew players, Steve Sewell, Al Cannon, Jon Gauntlett (Jon and I were later to play for STC together), Charlie Singh and of course Steve Harrison.

As a footnote, I am sure that is down to PAM(Air) 383 that helped to hone my positional skills at volleyball... and just halfway through my tour, a certain Harry Halford arrived, I am sure he was still selling raffle tickets.

Dig, set, spike.

Neal Moss

Thanks Neal a clever piece of writing it will jog a few memories and will have us thinking about other numbers

Reading through Shaun Bolands very interesting article in the last edition of Flashpoint Shaun makes reference to his visit to his local RAF recruiting office and while sat about waiting for test results he noticed a poster of two RAF fireman standing side by side one had his crash helmet on with the visor up the other had his crash helmet under his arm. This poster it appears was the inspiration to convince Shaun that he should apply to be a RAF fireman and what a good RAF fireman he turned out to be. I can say that with some conviction as Shaun and I were crewmates at RAF Stanley Fire section in the early 1980's. The photo graph pictured below was taken at RAF Church Fenton in 1968 and yours truly is the man in the mask. I remember

the late Sergeant Ian Priestley calling me into his office and informing me he had a job for me to do nothing unusual in that but then he said lets have a look at your teeth. I came over all bewildered till Ian explained the job he had in mind. The photographic section had been tasked by he RAF Careers service to provide a photograph of an RAF Fireman wearing a crash helmet with the visor up and one of the stipulations was that the fireman had to have a good set of nashers. After looking at my nashers Ian gave me a new crash helmet and crash jacket and sent me on my way to the photographic section. After the photo the photographer informed me that the photo would be displayed in RAF Careers Office's as part of a recruiting drive for a trade that was then woefully undersubscribed how different these days I am reliably informed that the trade of RAF fire fighter is the most over subscribed of all the RAF trades. I have inkling that the photo below could have been one of the photos that Shaun was looking at as he sat in the Careers Office.



Was this the face that launched a thousand ships, and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? Or simply a photograph of a young Senior Aircraftman obeying an Order. (PS the teeth are still my own and in good working order unfortunately the rest of the body hasn't stood the test of time so well) George (co editor)

RAF Fire Service Apprentices

RAF Fire Service Apprentices Inspire a New Generation



In action apprentices from the Royal Air Force Fire & Rescue Service, the Defence Fire Training & Development Centre at Manston in Kent

In March 2013 it was National Apprenticeship Week here is a press release about RAF Fire-fighters.

Thank you to Stan Woodward (member 113) for bringing it to our attention.

This week is National Apprenticeship Week and to celebrate the good work of the Apprentices from the Royal Air Force Fire & Rescue Service, the Defence Fire Training & Development Centre at Manston in Kent, home of all Fire-fighter training across Defence, opened its doors to local colleges.

The students had opportunities to engage with the newly qualified Apprentices who were demonstrating the various capabilities of a military Firefighter in the RAF Fire & Rescue Service. The students watched the Apprentices respond to a simulated aircraft fire. During the event Apprenticeship Certificates were presented to the most recently qualified Airmen. Students also previewed a newly developed Apprenticeship film which has been following 2 apprentices throughout their training at RAF Halton, DFTDC Manston and now filming on their operational units, RAF Northolt and RAF Waddington. Richard Rearden, Canterbury College Lecturer said: 'The value of apprenticeships cannot be underestimated, a point highlighted by the RAF Fire &

Rescue Service Apprentices at DFTDC Manston today. There is no doubt these apprenticeships bring considerable benefits to individuals in today's economy.'

The RAF Fire & Rescue Service provides an Intermediate Apprenticeship in Aviation Operations on the Ground for all service personnel entering RAF Firefighting. This coming year the RAF Fire & Rescue Service will provide a further 100 apprenticeships to new trainee fire-fighters passing through DFTDC Manston.

Sgt Simon Watson, Apprenticeship Manager said: 'We are entering a new era of Apprenticeships in the RAF, offering valuable and transferable qualifications for entrants which on completion will provide opportunities for financial reward. Our Apprentices in the RAF Fire & Rescue Service face challenging learning environments around the world and they will always rise to the challenge to deliver a professional Apprenticeship'.

The RAF Fire & Rescue Service Apprentices are unique as they deploy on Military operations worldwide whilst carrying out their Apprenticeship. To ensure the highest levels of support to the Apprentices, whether in the UK or on operations, a number of the NCO level RAF Firefighters are qualified as assessors and maintain the Apprenticeship scheme.



A recruit Fire-fighter carrying out fire training on the simulator at DFTDC Manston

Ernest Fisher Forces Career 1955-1978

It is our sad duty to notify members of the death of ex RAF Fireman Ernie Fisher who passed away on the 9th August 2013. Some years ago Ernie provided this article for inclusion in the proposed new book the article now serves as a tribute to Ernie and reflects a very varied and fulfilling life. I served at Sharjah at the same time as Ernie and remember him as one of the RAF Fire Services finest characters a true gentleman an outstanding RAF Fire fighter and a Senior NCO of the highest calibre. Our sincere condolences go out to Ernie's wife Doreen his family and his many friends may he rest in peace (GE co Editor). Ernie's funeral took place at Peterborough Crematorium on the 22 August

I was born in "Kingston-Upon-Hull" East Yorkshire 30th June 1937. Due to World War two we moved to what was then the village of Hedon where I was brought up in the farming industry and attended Witherensea High School on the East Coast. On leaving school at the age of 15, I took up full time employment in farming; at the time farming personnel were exempt from National Service. But I decided to join up as a regular and went to Cardington and then on to Bridgenorth for my square bashing, this was late 1955. On passing out in 1956, I went to the Fire Fighting School at Sutton-On-Hull and completed the aerodrome fireman's course after which I was immediately posted on active service to the Far East Air force at Kuala Lumpur Malaya. After completing my tour I left for the UK in late 1958 with a posting to RAF Abingdon. Due to Abingdon being the No1 Parachute School in those days, I was allowed to do the Para course which I really enjoyed. After nearly two years looking after the Beverly aircraft squadron I completed my five years and left the service, only to find out that after six month's civvy street was not for me and I rejoined without loss of rank.

My first posting after rejoining was RAF Innsworth a cushy domestic station and helpful with contacts in the record's office which was just down

the road. During my stay at Innsworth I attended the Gunner/Fireman's course and became an advanced tradesman, this was until the MOD decided to do away with the advanced trade and I reverted back to fireman. Also during this period of time I qualified as a marksman and represented the RAF at Biseley. My move was to Akrotiri (The big "A") in Cyprus, some more active service due to the troubles out there. I can say that during this tour I gained more experience than anywhere else, dealing with all types of fires including: bush fires, ship fires, and oil refinery fires. This put me in good stead for promotion and in 1968 after my posting back to the UK; I went to RAF Faldingworth (a nuclear bomb dump). I was promoted to Sergeant and posted to RAF Strubby in Lincolnshire. I served there up to 1970 and once again on the move, overseas to RAF Sharjah in the Persian Gulf. It should have been only for a year's tour but I had a call from record's office to ask if I would stay on and help close the fire section, this I did. In 1971 due to my help record office gave me a choice of posting; I opted to go back to Strubby. That didn't last long because it was due to close, so in 1972 I closed down RAF Strubby and went to the college of Air Warfare at RAF Manby and would you believe it, in 1973, Manby had also to be



Photograph of Sgt Ernie Fisher (complete wit that familiar handle bar moustache) seen escorting the AOC at RAF Sharjah circa 1971 also in the photograph SAC Phil Southern that's Phil the tall dark and handsome youth berating the AOC for keeping him and the rest of the lads waiting over three hours in the 50 degree heat. And in those stifling fearnought suits.

closed down, So that was three Fire Sections on the trot that I closed down. Must be some kind of a record? My next posting was to RAF Binbrook and the place I fell in love with the Lightning aircraft, two squadrons 5& 11 during this tour I was given the chance to learn to fly the Lightning. I had a friend who ran the simulator and he offered to train me when he had free slots, this I did successfully and learnt to fly the aircraft, although only in the assimilator and not in the air. 1976 Back to Akrotiri Cyprus once again, but this was my last tour as I had applied to leave the service and was duly dined out of the Sergeants Mess in 1978 after 23 years of service.

CIVVY STREET CAREER

My life after leaving the service took a different turn and with my bar experience I ended up managing the Louth Hotel in Mablethorpe Lincolnshire. I then took my own pub in Market Deeping and became the Landlord of the Vine Inn. This change only lasted a few years and due to the recession, the long hours and a divorce to boot I decided to go back to

what I knew best, and took up a post in London with British Railways. As a Fire Prevention Officer. **I joined the Institute of Fire Prevention Officers** and ended up being Chairman for two years. In 1998 I was offered redundancy by British Rail, which I accepted. After many requests from previous departments, I started working for myself and became a member of the Federation of small business and once again became chairman for two years. Running my own company and being self employed I formed Fire Safety Training & Fire Risk Management Company, this was a successful venture but I had to bring it to an end after six years due to health problems. Last but not least, my other spare time activity was singing, and I helped form the first Barber Shop Chorus in Peterborough, called "Hereward Harmony" this time I ended up being the first editor, that was 20 years ago, I don't sing for them anymore, but I was invited to the recent 20th Anniversary bash which brought back many happy memories. Overall I spent almost 42 years involved in Fire Safety

One More Ticked Off!

From Bob Feather

It was with sadness that I learned of the passing of Ernie Fisher (Sgt) who I served with back in 1970/71 along with George Edwards when we were at RAF Sharjah. I remember Ernie well and being very keen at his job, which most SNCO's in those days were.

I recall one hot practice crash he organised out on the burning area when he gave me a rather large telling off. Not knowing what it was for I asked him why he was bollocking me and he said he had observed me whilst backing up the MK6 with water during its foam production that I had not been running between vehicles and accused me of not taking it seriously. I didn't agree with him but as he was bigger than me and had a rather quick temper I didn't argue with him. He was quite alright after the practice crash.

After leaving Sharjah in November 1971 I lost touch with Ernie and it was sometime in the late 90's I think when our paths crossed once again. It was when I was the Association Membership Secretary and carrying out a recruiting drive when an application form came to me with the name Ernie Fisher. I remember being rather excited at having found someone I had served with and hadn't seen for the best part of 30 years. I rang Ernie and spoke to as I did with all new members and had a rather long conversation with him. It wasn't long before I met him again at a reunion and had the usual discussion and got out the photo's which was great.

Later on I had the pleasure of working with Ernie when he eventually came on the committee. Goods times. I shall remember Ernie Fisher with affection. It is sad that another character has left us. R.I.P Ernie.

Bob Feather

One of the presents my wife gave to me for my 80th Birthday present was an hour's flight in a Tiger Moth across the Peak District and to follow the Dambusters route with a low level flight across the Derwent Dams which was the Dambusters practice area. Being the 70th Anniversary of the historic Dambusters mission made it especially relevant.

Like most of us I have always been fascinated by how these young lads flew these heavy bombers at 60 feet at 260 miles per hour through the hills and such a short run over the dam with such basic equipment; two lamps giving the height and two pieces of wood giving the width of the dam.

If any of you have it on your Bucket List to do -don't wait just do it.

It was a lovely sunny day when we arrived at a small airfield near Worksop and I was introduced to the Pilot Chris Black and supporting staff. I was helped into the authentic flying gear and climbed aboard a nice looking Tiger Moth and after the photographs we started up. A camera on



'Biggles McCann' ready for takeoff- Chocks Away, Tally ho

the wing recorded the whole experience for a DVD. We coughed our way around the airfield only to stop and have the spark plugs changed then off we went on a trip of a lifetime. Naturally I had a spell at the controls and it was a feeling of real flying over beautiful countryside. After an hour following the original route we returned to our airfield and had a glass of champagne much to the relief of my wife who had witnessed the temperamental takeoff. On the ground there was 1940's music and a tent and deckchairs for the families to observe: it was a good social occasion with other folks there

for their own particular reasons and celebrations. (A flight in a Spitfire is the next thing on my list!)

Dennis McCann



Just to tempt you here some information reference the flights

Below are a couple of extracts from a rare MOD booklet dated 1968.

'SERVICING HINTS AND INFORMATION ON COMMON DEFECTS OF ALVIS FIRE CRASH TENDERS'

Cartoons were often used in several books and it is common of the period then I think it was deemed unprofessional to use them!



Warrant Officer Steve Bowden QGM

Warrant Officer Steve Bowden QGM retires this November after a 38 year RAF Fire Service career. As mentioned in the summer 2013 edition of Flashpoint your Flashpoint editorial team felt it appropriate to include a tribute to Steve in the current edition of Flashpoint and here it is

Steve Bowden History

Steve was born at RAF Hospital Nocton Hall, Lincolnshire on the 27th Mar 1959. His dad ex RAF Sergeant Fireman Ken Bowden was serving at RAF Swinderby at the time; His Mum was also in the RAF as a Stewardess. Steve was enlisted into the RAF at the Joint Armed Forces Career Centre in the Hereward Arcade Peterborough on the 18th November 1975. Completed basic training at RAF Swinderby trade training at RAF Catterick where he finished Top of his course.

His first posting was RAF Wittering and from there it was, RAF Machrihanish, RAF Binbrook, RAF St.Athan x2, RAF St.Mawgan, RAF Coningsby x2, and RAF Odiham. Steve has completed detachments to the Falklands, Belize, Denmark, Germany, France, Egypt, Kuwait, Afghanistan n and Cyprus and he has attended many training courses including, Driver Instructor, Special Safety Officer, Fire Safety, First Aid, Breathing Apparatus Servicing, Instructor Technique Course, Critical Incident Stress Management, Numerous Managerial and Environmental courses.

Highlights of my time served would be the whole 38 years and the meeting of some wonderful people and having a damn good laugh and times along the way. There has been some very special occasions and gaining the rank of Warrant Officer has to be up there, of course the visit to Buckingham Palace was an extremely special event for not only me, but also my family and all of us as I wear the award graciously given to me by our Sovereign for all RAF Fire-fighters, past and present.

I have met many RAF Fire Service characters during my service : Far too many to mention and I would upset someone if I didn't mention them, so suffice to say I have met many great people and even the few bad ones were not that bad!! I have enjoyed meeting everyone and sharing many long hours on

a crash line with them all.

Steve is the proud holder of the following medals;

- Queens Gallantry Medal
- Afghan Campaign Medal
- General Service Medal (Air Ops Iraq)
- Diamond Jubilee Medal
- Golden Jubilee Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and Clasp
- Commendations include one from the AOC 1 Group, Commander Joint Helicopter Command.

Steve states that he really has enjoyed his time in the RAF, like so many others and it's been a privilege to have met so many wonderful people along the way. Whilst the Royal Air Force Fire Service, like the Royal Air Force is ever evolving to meet difficult economic and world situations, it is still a career (if wanted) worth pursuing, the boys and girls just have to work at it a little harder these days. I would most certainly do it again, it's been a blast and thanks to everyone that has made it so.

Tributes to Steve

From Trevor Wilson

I don't remember ever meeting Mr Bowden when I was in the job. But my congratulations on a long and illustrious career, in the best job in the world. As WO Gibbons was fond of saying to every course of new recruits at Catterick. "We are first among equals and second to none"

From Jonathan James

I was to have with Steve as my crew commander at RAF St Mawgan 89-91

From Dennis McCann

I am delighted to take this opportunity congratulate Steve Bowden on completion of his 38 years RAF Fire Service career a truly magnificent achievement Although we have never served together I know of Steve's reputation as a top class fire-fighter and dedicated NCO latterly a WO. The award of the Queens Gallantry Medal is a truly magnificent achievement. I send you every good wish on your retirement.

*Denis McCann BEM Warrant Officer
RAF Fire Service 1950-1980 and
President of the RAF Fire Service
Association 1995 to present.*

From Steve Hollis

With regards to Stevie B I would like to say the following: WO Steve Bowden is indeed highly respected by all RAF fire fighters both past and present. A distinguished career spanning 38 years. I first met Steve in 1984, in the Falkland Islands and spent an interesting 2 weeks with him as part of the fire over at Kelly's Garden. He was a highly respected Corporal back then and obviously went from strength to strength over the years. Apparently he leaves the Service a wealthier man than most mainly due to the fact he has only had 3 haircuts during his 38 year career! Further to this I would like to dispel rumours and clarify that Steve is not leaving the Service due to a bad back injury sustained through carrying far too many medals on his No1 uniform. Steve is a magnificent all round individual, holder of the Queens Gallantry Medal and an excellent role model for all fire fighters and he will be sorely missed by the trade and in particular RAF Coningsby Fire Service I send Steve, his wife Mel and his family all our love & best wishes for the future. Some humorous comments however reiterating what a great character Steve is.

*Warrant Officer Steve Hollis
RAF Coningsby Fire Section*

Michael Fotherby's Tribute To Steve Bowden

I was happy to hear of your intentions to honour Steve Bowden and in response to your request for past stories with regard to Steve, I thought you might be interested in the night I tried to kill Steve Bowden!!!

I would like to say I am not proud of this story, but it does speak volumes of the kind of man Steve is. To be honest I'm not sure of the year, it was either summer 1988 or 1989. Steve was my Crew Commander at RAF St Mawgan and I was his 2i/c. The night in question was a beautiful sunny night when I arrived for evening shift and as usual I read out the role call on parade, and to be honest that when things started to wrong.

Right or wrong I had managed for months to avoid driving at work and as 2i/c I would normally take charge of the domestic truck and if the truth be told I felt as no one knew I had started wearing glasses for driving, it might be best not to drive on the crash line. Anyway due to (I believe) someone calling in 'sick' we finished up a driver



Martin Trafford, Steve Harrison & Stevie 'B': RAF Stanley 1984

short, hence I finished up driving Crash 1 which was also manned with Steve as Crew Commander.

As the sun went down, the night, with no moon turned really black. Then round about midnight the bells 'went down' and we had to respond to the 'Yank Bomb Dump' so off we went, Crash 1 out in front with yours truly driving. I wasn't exactly blind, I had reasonable vision or so I thought, and I did say it was dark and I know that is no defence, but I am pretty I don't cannot remember the moveable barbed wire barricade strewn across the grass which is the short cut I always took as it saved time instead of following the taxiway. However I do remember that I didn't see the said barricade prior to missing it. So the question is how did I miss it? By pure instinct and a very calm but high pitched shout which came from Steve. To be honest I cannot remember what he shouted, all I know he saved both of our lives.

That night, having avoided that obstacle I do remember thinking 'oh flip' or words to that effect. Steve just uttered in amazement "Didn't you see it?" I can understand why he asked me, it must have been 50ft long and I could only answer honestly and say No! Shortly after we arrived at the incident Steve looked at me and told me to sit down realising I must have been in shock. Fortunately the incident proved to be a false alarm, typical! Steve told the Crash Combine to stand down and return to base and no surprise Steve drove Crash

1 back to the Section! It was on the way back that I really noticed the barricade and boy were we lucky. I can only guess by Steve's reaction at the time how close we were. But I am sure if you asked him he would be able to tell you better than me.

On the way back to the section I remember thinking I'm in the s..to here, but I do like to think I am an honest guy, so when Steve asked me why I didn't see it I asked if this would be a good time to mention "I wear glasses for driving" to which he responded "So why the hell wasn't you wearing them?" to which I then referred to firemen wearing glasses policy. He then gave me a direct order, saying "That I was never to drive another vehicle without my glasses." Other than the fact he never let me forget the night I tried to kill him; he never said another word on the subject of me wearing glasses.

That is why I have the utmost respect for the man and I know when I say this that I was lucky to work with Steve and that many more will feel the same way and that he deserves this honour.

Michael Fotherby (592)

From Steve Harrison

It was in 1984 at RAF Stanley that I met 'Stevie B' who was one my corporals for a good part of my tour, back then I thought "I've got a good lad here" (among others) During that short tour which was full of activity you have no time to mould a crew and you welcome lads like Steve. What

I liked about Steve was that he didn't do 'rash decisions' his calm approach to events and his quiet self assurance impressed me alongside his fire-fighter qualities. Those and other qualities have served him well and it was no surprise to me that he attained the rank of Warrant Officer and received his Queens Gallantry medal and a great deal of respect within and outside of the trade.

Although he seems to be a serious individual he has a great sense of humour, I remember Steve and I used to perform a duo (much to the crews disgust) whenever the song by Stevie Wonder 'I Just Called to Say I Love You' came over the radio. I still smile when I hear it played.

And would you ever think that Steve would be in the 'S..t! No! Well, wrong, ask him about when he reversed a Mk9 into a buried 'Argie' cesspit! That took some living down.

Unfortunately I never worked with Steve again which is a pity as I would have liked the opportunity. I have though, through the grapevine monitored his progress and have caught up with him now and again at the Association re-unions.

In his retirement from the RAF there is no doubt whatever he takes on, someone will be benefiting from his skills and have a genuine guy, all I can add: "He's a bloody good lad"

Steve Harrison

From Bob Feather

Over the years Steve has been a staunch supporter of the Association and recruited a very, large number of people, many of who were serving in the RAF Fire Service at the time. Countless numbers of them are still members and had it not been for Steve they would not have joined. I think most of them had aching arms when he twisted them in getting their subs from them.

On many, occasions when the Association wanted to have a visit or arrange a function all it took was a phone call and he was there ready willing and

able. Always amenable and no was never a word he would use. Continually helpful and supportive when help and support was needed.

A couple of years ago Steve and I collaborated in creating the Association calendar. It was Steve who whilst serving in Afghanistan and having a very hectic tour talked his lads and lasses into being models for a day to provide the magnificent photo's which formed the foundation of the calendar. Although we didn't sell the numbers like the Calendar Girls we still sold enough and made several hundred pounds for the Association and The RAF Memorial. After the calendars were printed I had the pleasure of having a very nice day with Steve and Mel when I took down to Steve's home what seemed like a van load of calendars that he had sold inside the RAF Fire Service.

On a personnel note I would like to thank Steve for being a friend and for all his help and support he has given to me and especially to the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Service Association. I look forward also to having many more late nights at the bar.

Steve have a great retirement and really enjoy yourself, you deserve it.



Bob Feather

To Steve;

William James Owen and Olivia the grand kids of George & Anne Edwards wish you a very happy retirement we will always remember that wonderful day we spent with you at your Fire Section in August last year you and your fire fighters made us so welcome.

George Edwards

On the 21st November Steve Bowden's retirement function took place at RAF Cranwell Sergeants Mess. Over one hundred of Steve's friends and family attended the function I am delighted to report that your two Flashpoint editors and their wives (Liz and Anne) were invited to attend the function, your Association Treasurer and his wife Pat also attended the function.

The event was without doubt a resounding success credit must go to Steve Hollis for organizing the event and to Martin Trafford who was led the tributes to Steve. A big thank you must also go to all the staff at RAF Cranwell Sergeants Mess who made the event so special for Steve and all his guests. The food was wonderful and the entertainment provided by the RAF Fire Service pop band (the String vests) was very good.

It was indeed a privilege to be in the company of so many RAF fire fighters (young and old) and to join in the tributes to Steve. Listening to the tributes and chatting to current serving RAF Fire fighters it soon became clear the trade of RAF Fire fighter is a much more professional and technical trade than the one George and I joined forty years ago never the less that spirit of camaraderie remains the same. Not only was the event a wonderful social occasion but it was also a great and fitting retirement party for Steve.

Although no longer a RAF Fireman we all hope that Steve will find time to join us at future Association reunions but in the meantime we wish him well in his retirement.

Steve and George

Anne and I also send you all the very best for your retirement enjoy it Steve you certainly deserve it.

George & Anne Edwards

I don't know whether to thank you Steve or blame you for sowing the seed for my grandkids to start talking about a career in the RAF. Since that wonderful day we spent at RAF Coningsby Fire Section and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight - which you very kindly organised- all four have expressed an interest in the RAF as a career but Will James and William still be able to play for Liverpool FC if they join up?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) - A True Story of a Lost Airman

As a Welfare Officer for the Royal Air Forces Association, I have had many requests for medical equipment, respite breaks, financial assistance and general “tea and sympathy” visits from a variety of Veterans, but I faced my ultimate challenge in January 2010 when I met “David” an ex airman who was suffering with multiple physical problems and whose needs were many fold. David had served in the Falklands, Northern Ireland and the first Gulf war to name but a few. He served for just over 22 years, and in that time had been through some rather nasty experiences. David had retired from the Royal Air Force in 1999. He was divorced, lived alone, and had no contact with any of his family members. He had no friends living nearby. David had almost totally withdrawn from Society and I was convinced was the author of the book “A thousand excuses to avoid going out”. It became apparent to me that as well as physical problems, there may also be some psychological problems, but, David denied that he was suffering from any form of mental trauma resulting from his RAF service. He said there had been “incidents” but the memory of them had been buried many years before. Being quite concerned about David’s well being, and not liking to see what had once been a very active, intelligent and capable man slipping away into a very dark place, I sought help from Combat Stress and was advised to print off some information from the Combat Stress website and ask David to read them when he had a spare moment or two. He agreed to do this and, after a year of building trust, giving lots of emotional support and understanding, David opened up to me and admitted that he was having nightmares and flashbacks from the past and that he needed help. I think that this was a very brave step as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is not a comfortable bedfellow, it is “the invisible wound” that no-one can see, unlike a broken arm or a cut on the forehead. David agreed that I could contact Combat Stress on his behalf and start the ball rolling to get him some treatment. He was assessed in his home by a Welfare Officer (ex military) and then by a psychiatric nurse. Further assessments were carried out by a psychiatrist, followed by a one week residential assessment at the Combat Stress Treatment Centre at Tyrwhitt House in Leatherhead Surrey. After being diagnosed with PTSD during these assessments, David

was then offered, a six week residential treatment course at Tyrwhitt House which he attended and followed to the letter with great enthusiasm. He was with other veterans who had similar experiences, but each one had his or her own problems. The symptoms of PTSD are many and varied. There can be nightmares, flashbacks, anger and resentment, depression, feelings of guilt, difficulty in forming or maintaining relationships, violence, alcohol and drug dependency, tendency to self harm, suicidal thoughts, feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy and even turning to crime. This is not a comprehensive list; there are many forms of PTSD. At Combat Stress, veterans are given group therapy sessions, one to one sessions with a psychiatrist and/ or psychologist, relaxation therapy and are generally given 100% support to ease them back in to everyday life by exorcising their demons and learning to cope with whatever life throws at them. There is no cure for PTSD, but the veteran is taught to be in control and to cope with the dark days and troublesome symptoms. There is a 24 hour helpline available for anyone who needs to talk to someone who understands and cares.

David is now a new man since completing his course at Combat Stress. He has a totally different outlook on life, is motivated, confident and happy. He has thrown himself into charity work with

the Royal Air Forces Association and is helping others like himself. Combat Stress are always there for the Veteran and also, equally importantly, for the family and loved ones of the Veteran. There are many other success stories like David’s.

The purpose of my writing this article is to encourage anyone who may be suffering from stress related symptoms, or who knows someone else who is, to speak to their GP, Welfare Worker, or directly to Combat Stress to get help. It is not a sign of weakness, and nothing to be ashamed of, we are all human. The Armed Forces teach you to be strong and tough. It is so hard to admit to mental difficulties- even to yourself. It can take, on average, up to 14 years for PTSD to manifest itself after an incident. With all that is going on today, there are many that will suffer, now and in the future. I urge anyone in this situation to get help. I am so pleased that David did. He is my success story and I am so proud of him. He is living again thanks to Combat Stress.

If anyone would like further information and would like to talk to me, or David, to discuss his story, please feel free to ring me on 07760 224992, in confidence.

*Pat Hayes
Honorary Welfare Officer
Royal Air Forces Association
Abbots and Kings Langley Branch*

RAF Sutton-On-Hull



This Photograph shows the Fire School permanent staff soccer XI who were inter section league winners 1949-1950 the officer is Sqn Ldr J.K.Milne. M.B.E. who was the commanding Officer from November 1947 to February 1951. Is there a possibility that any of our members from the Sutton days can name any of them or are you on the photo?

KEVIN (SMILER) MEESON TALES FROM A DESERT ISLAND

Leave thine own home O youth,
seek distant shores! Over there in
Arabia the untroubled lands watch
and see strange men behold the setting sun
fall down and rise greatly be thou as one
who disembarks fearless on alien sands
Thirteenth century Arabic verse.

While serving at RAF Coningsby in the early 1960's I was informed that I was posted to Masirah which I was told was somewhere in the Persian Gulf, sounded romantic especially to o an eighteen year old Leeds ad 'magic carpets, Sinbad the Sailor exotic belly dancers etc., but when you are recently married with a new born son it was hard to take in the fact that I was going away from my family for twelve months. We had many tears that weekend and when the time came to get on the train at Leeds Central Station. I felt like an old soldier going to war. Looking out of the old style carriage door watching my wife Linda holding in her arms our six month old son Ian.

I arrived at Masirah in June 1967 after a never to be forgotten journey via Cyprus and Aden. First person I met was Taffy Catterson who I knew from trade training. Taff took me across to my room and home for the next twelve months a four man room with a big ceiling fan, each of the four men in residence had a corner to themselves with lockers giving us a little bit of privacy Wasn't long before I was taken over to the fire section to meet my boss and the rest of the lads. Introductions over I felt quite pleased so far with what I had seen and heard and was told to meet up that night in the Turtle club for a Marsalam (leaving do)the fireman I was replacing was returning home and it was tradition that all lads attend his leaving do.

I was not a big drinker also I was not on the same pay, as the rest of the lads because I was under twenty-one, and did not get the separation allowance, so most of my money was sent home to my wife Linda. The marsalam had a good friendly atmosphere with lots of drinking high jinks and singing. Was to attend many Marsalams before it was my marsalam. One of my first duties was a night shift with Steve Harrison when early in the shift we got a shout, to go to the MPBW building stating it was on fire. We got there ready to get to work when a civilian MPBW workman came over to say it was not a fire, I have let a smoke bomb off inside the building to kill all the insects. By this time



all the off duty lads had called to assist. We all had a good laugh and then stood down. Another night on duty fireman, in came our Flight Sergeant, shouting why are you not up at the fire? What fire are you on about Flight? Well there wasn't a fire at all; our Flight Sergeant was a bit deaf, and heard a song on the station radio part of which had the sound of emergency sirens in it, it was a song called 'Call the Fire Brigade, being performed. One day not long after arriving at Masirah as I was in Air traffic control visiting my mate Storkey Tasker when , I saw a large tin of Nescafe coffee (catering size) I asked Storkey where he got the coffee from?; he told me SATCO gets it from the officer's mess. So Smiler big gob went to see SATCO and as he was also our Fire Officer, I asked please can you get some coffee for us Sir. No only for my section was his reply, but sir you are our officer too, Sorry Smiler, (yes most officers and other ranks knew my nick name). I can't remember where I got the nick name from, but I think it was Cpl Fairs at Catterick who gave it to me, because every time he gave me a telling off, I could only smile at him! So Sir, (SATCO) are there any other officers who don't have a section of their own? "No there are only nine officers on the camp and they all have their own section, all except the C.O (squadron leader RJ Spears). Well say no more. I went back to the section rang the adjutant to and asked see the C.O. Why said the adjutant? It's private Sir.

A later in the week a call from SHQ SAC Meeson report to the C.O's office. Off I went, called at the adjutant's door, SAC Meeson reporting sir, OK stand there, as

he contacted the C.O. On his squawk box. Yes said the C.O., I have SAC Meeson to see you sir. OK bring him in. He marched me into the C. O.s office, a quick salute to the C.O. And from the C.O. He said "Yes Smiler what can I do for you". The adjutants face dropped as he was instructed to leave the room then I told the CO about the large tins of coffee available for other sections but we at the fire section ad more staff and more visitors than any other section and were on duty 24 hours a day and we had to buy our own and it cost us a lot of cash for small jars from the NAAFI. "What can I do he said", well sir you are the only officer that doesn't have a section of your own so can you get us the catering tins from the officers mess and we will pay you. Of course he said, he rang for the adj and told him to get the coffee for his firemen, from the C.O.s mess bill, we will pick it up and pay for it. Off I went back to the section I told my corporals who didn't believe me.

Then a call from the Flight Sergeant, into my office," how dare you go and ask the C.O. For coffee? You don't go over my head. To the chief, I said, I've done it and the coffee is on its way. The C.O. obviously thought a lot of his firemen as he was a pilot himself and knew how important we all were, One day during a CO's inspection of our accommodation the CO asked me where I got my aircraft models from, as he had never seen any in the NAAFI. So I told him "my wife sends them out to me. Can she get some for me as my wife quote is bloody hopeless) unquote, yes sir I will. Do that you want the cash now? No sir you can pay me

when the models arrive well he said I only want Bi Planes, you know those with two wings. Yes sir.

When they arrived I would take them up to S H. Q. and when he finished them he called me up to his room to see them. Oh yes a rumour started that I was the C. O.'s bum boy, definitely not true.

At Masirah Fire section we had a section cleaner a local Arab known to all and sundry as Sambo. One day Sambo invited me to come and visit it him at his home for tea with him and his family., my Cpl, Pete Rodgers a funny little guy told me it's an insult if I don't go, well I was not happy but went. I got to the end of the camp were the Black Pillar Boxes were looking at me (that's women with their heads covered). It was scary asking one Arab where Sambo lived but this local man knew Sambo and said he would take me to Sambo's but not before I had a cuppa with h him. I went to his makeshift home and had tea made with Carnation milk, which I have always detested, Whilst at his home I saw on his wall a .303 rifle Oh shit, I was shaking; but things were fine after the cuppa they took me to see Sambo, he was so happy to see me and sat me on a large carpet, it was of great colours, then out come his two wives who, put down silver plates with all sorts of butties on, then a tray of fruit, he then said do I want Fruit and cream? So I said yes please, out he came with a large silver cup with tinned fruit and Carnation milk. And I thought I had currants or raisins. No, no they were figs big figs, he put them into his mouth and then took the figs out and gave them to me. Yuk When I said I had done he got three of his mates to sit and eat, then it was their prayer time, off they went to a corner and started to pray, only then did the women and kids come out and eat what we had left

On return to the camp Cpl Rodgers sent me to the SHQ for a decoke of my stomach, but Sambo was pleased and we became quite good friends over the next twelve months. A few months passed and one day I noticed Sambo was in a bad mood I tapped him on his shoulder, he turned so quick it startled me Smiler Mushtamam = no good) What's up Sambo, he replied that now all bad Arabs were to go to jail in Muscat so no extra cash for me when I cut off their (head), As well as being the fire section cleaner sambo was also the executioner for the local villains no more public executions meant he was going to

lose another source of income

One of our firemen had built a beautiful aviary in our accommodation garden and we had obtained some budgies from Aden, He had also tried and succeeded in obtaining soil for plants but we had no plants. So me big gob again said I had seen some nice plants on my trips to the Officers Mess that was it we hatched a plan and formed a raiding party and after a few beers one night a few of us set off on what we considered to be a SAS type raid on the Officers Mess garden and removed some of their garden plants. The next morning I opened my locker to find it full of plants (shit what have we done?)! Later that day I had a call from the C.O. "Smiler bring back my plants we were all watching you take them, glad you're RAF Firemen and not SAS as, you would all be dead". I took them back, no charges just a serious telling off. Another night in the NAAFI another big party most of us were inebriated when me one said lets go for a coffee in the Army Signals room, as they were on duty 24/. on arrival one of our group pointed out that \Phil Sinnnot was missing! Where can he be?, then in he came covered in concrete bits, what have you done?, then we remembered on the way back to the billet, we passed the site of the new aircraft pan that was being built and a giant cement mixer was positioned there, someone had dared us to climb into it, OK, we messed about for a while then went home to our billets. But Phil had fallen asleep inside the mixer! On our camp we used to get the locals donkeys wandering about, so if we caught them we used to take them to the RAF Police Corporal, and when the Arabs wanted them back they had to pay up for their return. One day when me and three other lads were walking to the hill beside the camp, when we saw a donkey loose. I then heard a funny noise pass my ear, I saw the other lads running away, so I ran after them. When I caught up with them I said "what's wrong" "didn't ya see him" "who I said"? "The Fxxxing Arab with his rifle shooting at us," that was the funny sound I heard a bullet passing my ear! So we went to report it to the police at the guardroom, the snowdrop called the Sergeant Snowdrop, who said he saw it all from his room, as we were out of bounds and chasing the Arabs donkey 'nowt' could be done. What you mean out of bounds, there's no fence or 'owt' Oh yes those piles of white stones mark out our little England, this was never pointed out

to us, Lucky or What! Now then there was a fireman whose name escapes me but he was a strange bloke and was in fact casualty evacuated home having cracked up. Before being shipped home he went berserk with one of the large crash axes off one of the vehicles. I heard this commotion coming from my good friend Paul McGhee's room. I walked in not knowing what to expect and there was this lunatic swinging the axe no sign of Paul and in those few seconds I thought were is Paul who did what he thought was right and dived into his locker thinking he was out of harms way but poor lad the maniac was now thrashing the axe through Paul's wardrobe door it was scary for me but ten times worse for Paul as he watched the axe getting ever closer to him. I was able to stop the assault on Paul and before long the snowdrops and medical officer arrived and life resumed to normal in the fireman's accommodation block

One day a brand new fire truck arrived a MK7, Wow what a machine, I was given it to drive, on my crew, and I was over the moon. We used to drive down to the jetty with power steering to refuel. One day I was on my way back to the section and as this machine was the first vehicle I have driven with power steering, I decided to see what it was like with normal steering. As I was getting to a cross roads and needed to turn left to return to the section the wheel hardly moved, I went over the white painted breeze blocks that we had round junctions, over I went heading onwards towards the Pakistani mess, where they were having breakfast, 'O yes' first time I ever saw white faces on Pakistani workers. I did stop put back the lever and replaced the breeze blocks to their normal positions and went back to the section never to tell anyone. I got on well with the Pakistani labour force, as I used to play Hockey at Conningsby, so I formed hockey team at Masirah made up of firemen and several other tradesmen including a few officers. I reckon we had three games against those men and lost like a 100-2, they were great players. I made a pal of one, who six months of the year was a joiner at Masirah and the other six months was a film star in Pakistan. He invited me to their mess for a curry, never ever had one before but as I sat down for a melon curry, I asked for a knife and fork. "No, No we don't eat it like you" on came a plate of curry and then a plate of rice. He then tore into the apatite into the curry

and last of all into my mouth. Hell Fire! It was hot, I drank three jugs of water, and I remember him saying “no good water makes it worse” yes it did, but from then on I look to curries. During my Masirah tour I was one of the RAF Fire crew who attended the MV Daphne ship Fire on the 28th August 1968. Operational and technical details of this major RAF Fire Service incident are well documented on the RAF Fire Service Association website at www.RAF&DFSA but without going into great details suffice to say Smiler left his mark with the captain of the Daphne. On completion of the exhausting and highly dangerous fire fighting operation we all relaxed on board the Daphne and awaited transport back to Masirah. For some reason the ships captain invited me into his cabin and offered me an alcoholic drink which I duly accepted. After a while the captain said he would have to leave me alone while he checked on some ship business his parting words were help yourself to what ever drink you want . I could understand his kind gesture we relatively few RAF Firemen had saved his ship with little to no help from the ships crew. I made myself comfortable and thought that as he has not asked any other of the RAF lads for a drink I may as well have a drink on their behalf as well as my own drink. About an hour later the captain returned and in his naive tongue Greek started shouting at me. \apparently in his absence I had consumed all his prized wines and whiskeys that he had accumulated on his world travels. I woke up the next morning back on camp



Fire Section away day Smiler front row left second back also in photo Willy Adams Ian Easter George Edwards Mick Condy Paul McGhee Taff Pritchard John Will Pete Mitchell Storkey Tasker (Air traffic)

with the mother of all hangovers and fairly exhausted after the Daphne ordeal The Daphne Fire was a real and unique fire fighting experience for me and all those who took part. I was only sorry the rest of the lads couldn't join me for a drink in the captains' cabin but to a man the lads all had a good laugh when I told them what I got up to; Smiler strikes again. On return home now stationed at RAF Church Fenton I was summoned to SHQ what for now I thought but good news this time I had received an extra £19 in my weekly pay packet this money I was informed was my share of the salvage money that must have been paid to the RAF for the saving of the ship.

My Masirah tour turned out to be a wonderful experience for me yes I obviously missed my wife and young son but I made many friends(Arab Indian and Brits) several of them I am in regular contact with forty years after we first met; we have grown old together and each of us to varying degrees carry the scars of old age but when we met up those memories of our time together on our own desert island that was RAF Masirah always come flooding back bring a smile and evoke fond memories of those halcyon days of our youth .

RAF & DFSA SHOP REPORT 2013



We have finally managed to send our stock details together with photographs to our Web Master who has very kindly put it on our Website. We hope that everyone has enjoyed looking at the Webpage and been impressed with the variety of stock we hold.

Our sales have increased slightly but we were hoping that the Webpage would generate much more business. Trading is steady but the AGM is our biggest money earner, so it would be nice to see the mail order sales increase next year and overtake it.

We really enjoyed the North Humberside Rescue Day at 7 Lakes and as you can see, there were some famous personalities

including Sally Traffic and Stig (who had his photograph taken with a much more famous person (Me - Big Al!).

Our new lines this year include scarves of which one type has a zip pocket and cuddly teddies wearing T-Shirts displaying our logo but we have now run out of wooden aeroplanes.

Our ordering system is working efficiently but we are concerned that occasionally members ask for items (which entail us taking them to the post office to get a price for post and packaging, and contacting the customer). The customer sometimes



doesn't respond or worse - they agree to the order and then just don't send the payment - so it sits on my shelf gathering dust until I put it back in stock. Please can members let us know if the item isn't required?

We do enjoy running our little shop, and we hope that members enjoy the range and quality and price of our stock, so look us up and get buying! There isn't much profit and if we can sell more, we shall be able to purchase an even bigger range.

*Thank you for your support.
Allan and Marilyn Brooke*

'An Unexpected Shout'

I remember it was a nice sunny day, possibly September, the location Raf Swinderby in 1988 I believe. As a corporal at Swinderby you could alternate between crew commander and teaching recruits. I was on crew this particular day with two SAC's and a TACR2 as our vehicle, our responsibility was the Chipmunk aircraft as Swinderby which was also a flying school.

It must have midday when Air Traffic Control (ATC) buzzed us and informed us that they could see a large smoke cloud just off the airfield "would we like to respond?" as there was a lull in flying. With a positive response I pressed the 'domestic alarm' and along with another SAC who was on 'days'

we pulled out of the bays in Crash 1 with blue lights flashing heading for crash gate 2 which came out on to the A46 to Newark.

Our first real grasp of the situation was when we reached the crash gate and we could clearly see the black smoke and what was causing it, in a farmyard in the distance, perhaps half a mile away there seemed to be a number of artic trailers the large continental ones on fire. My immediate problem was how to get there as no direct route seemed to present itself. It was 50,50 to go right on the A46 or left, when suddenly SAC Mark Howard said he knew the farm and it was quickest to go left. Great result and great team work. A few minutes later after going down a

maze of lanes we arrived, thanks to Mark, without that local knowledge I believe we would have had problems. Especially when we kept seeing the Civvy brigade in the distance going backwards and forwards down the A46 trying very hard to find us.

On arrival we were met by half a dozen people. Taking in the situation, the smoke was blowing towards the gate, so downwind was not ideal and to make matters worse downwind of the flames was a very old blue tanker with no HAZCEM signs and what looked like rusty liquid seeping out. About ten yards beyond that three giant tankers one which was fully ablaze, another had just caught and was leaning into the other; the third was unaffected and standing solid. On questioning the locals who seemed more 'Gob Smacked' at our attire than at the fire and I had to explain we were specialist fire-fighters from Swinderby and would you like our help which seemed only polite to ask! The main character, probably the owner said "Yes please". It turned out that he had been doing some welding in the one that caught fire then tried to move the other two trailers with a tractor and toppled the nearest one on to the first.

My main concern at this point as no one was in danger or trapped was what was in the blue truck? The guy explained that it was that old he wasn't sure. I set about tackling the problem; first we needed to drive past that tanker and past the one on

fire. Although it was a narrow lane I knew without BA's the black smoke would be a killer and I still didn't know what was in the old tanker. So I told Mark to put his foot down and get beyond the fire. Once safely in position I gave the order to SAC Graham Bennett to deploy a line and attack the 2nd truck first, as the 1st truck was wrecked and then work back to the 1st truck. I then ordered one of the other SAC's (whose name I cannot remember) to put a seal on the other tanker to prevent it igniting. What you have to remember that all we had was 'Light Water', so to say that three minutes later we had both fires out, we felt proud of our actions.

By the time the civilian brigade turned up, we were making up, and the senior fire officer thanked us for a great job. The farmer was ecstatic and pushed £20 in my hand, which I said I was grateful for but could not take it. He insisted the boys had a drink on him as the two tankers we had saved were brand new and worth a lot of money. So it would be rude not to! We agreed to put it in the tea fund so everyone at the section could benefit. As for the leaking tanker it was just rusty water, but who was to know?

From getting the call to 'knocking off' was just 12 minutes, I was proud of the lads for a job well done. ***So cheers lads where ever you are.***

Michael Fotherby

Museum Musings

8th of July was another milestone for the museum as two trailer pumps a Mk8 and TACR2 came up from Manston museum to swell the ever growing Scampton museum fleet courtesy of Bloom Transport. The weekend 10th 11th of August was a busy weekend for the volunteers in all, starting with than unfortunate oil pipe split on the Austin K4 Turntable ladder. This was quickly repaired by Alf and she was soon running again.

Martyn had arranged a vintage British Army AEC Militant wrecker to come along and help re-fit the engine cover on the Mk11 during the morning, a small team effort to complete this ensured smooth completion. Our thanks go out to the operator for providing this service. The Mk11 is starting to take shape once again, the doors are still away being refurbished and mechanically she drives well and sounds great. The TACR 1 had the trailer pump attached for the Lincoln Fire Station open day on Friday. A visit to the museum in the afternoon went down a treat and stories told from times past told. Sunday arrived and two vehicles were out attending shows. Chris Perkins taking his Green Goddess to RAF Cranwell for their annual Fly in, and Gareth went out to Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre Woodhall Spa for their emergency services day. Attendance at Thorpe camp was in depth with Police, Ambulance, RAF Bomb Disposal, RNLI, Fire Service and others displaying. Gary Gareth's son Gary managed to get in on the action with the Lincoln Fire Cadets who he impressed with the knowledge he has learnt at the museum, this education really works!



The Museum was also involved with Lincoln Fire Station open day on South Common. Four of five machines were delivered to the station on the Thursday evening and a fifth bringing us across on the Friday. With the kind loan of Lincolnshire's Operational Support trailer we were also able to get the Victorian hand pump (Ex Lincs) across for showing and a selection of other suitable memorabilia for a display indoors. The public were impressed by the museums presence



complimenting the machines on show from Lincolnshire making an impressive line up. A small hiccup with the Dennis D type (out for the first time in over a year) was quickly rectified in situ for the return journey. Friday evening presented us with a Logistical challenge getting 5 appliances and the static display back to Scampton and the Lincolnshire showground for our next event. This was the Lincolnshire Steam Fair and the first event for our Austin K4 Turntable which when conditions allowed elevated its ladder to the enjoyment of the public.

Tuesday dawned with another trip out, this time over to Coningsby for the BBMF BBQ. This time the Volvo was requested for display allowing hands on experience for the friends and families of BBMF. All got into the spirit of things with both children and adults dressing up in fire kit and having a go.

Another two big events on the horizon meant no rest for the volunteers, to come was the Scampton Families day which is a great day and again we were blessed with good weather and the hosting of the AGM of the Fire Heritage Network UK over the weekend of 26th October

Fire Heritage Network UK (FHNUK) brings together representatives of most of the major Fire Museums in the Country. Members travelled to Scampton from places as far afield as Devonport and Scotland. The weekend began with a meet and greet at the Holiday Inn Express in Lincoln where most of the delegates were staying. Over 70 people attended the conference and were able to take advantage of a special discount

rate provided by the hotel. After some food and a few drinks people settled down for the night, in anticipation of the weekend ahead.

Ex RAF Fire-fighter Dave Grant now works for Stagecoach and they kindly donated the use of a double-decker for the weekend.



Delegates were transported to Scampton for the day whilst some of the ladies ventured into Lincoln for sight-seeing and shopping. At Scampton the conference was held in the 1 Air Control Centre briefing room which offered superb facilities. Tea and coffee was provided by the combined mess courtesy of ISS the on-site catering supplier. Once everyone was booked in, they were greeted by the Station Commander, Wing Commander Richard Turner who welcomed everyone to the Unit before explaining how the Fire museum had become an integral part of RAF Scampton and its associated history. Steve Shirley thanked the CO for his support in establishing the Museum at Scampton and presented him with a gift to show the appreciation of all the Museum Volunteers. He was handed a framed limited edition print specially commissioned for the event and signed by the artist John Hunter depicting RAF

Fire Vehicles outside the Museum Hanger being over flown by the BBMF Lancaster bomber. The CO was clearly moved and even had a tear in his eye as he gratefully accepted this special gift.

The conference then got underway with Steve giving everyone a presentation on the history of the RAF Fire Service which was then swiftly followed by guest speaker Mr Phil Bonner who is Chairman of Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire. Phil spoke about the history of AHL and its success in bringing together aviation related Museums. Recently, the Director of the RAF Museum Hendon, Air Marshall Peter Dye had commented "aviation heritage isn't just about aircraft" and these words couldn't describe better how AHL recognises and supports the Fire Museum at Scampton.

An excellent buffet lunch was provided in the Combined Mess before the afternoon continued with another two speakers giving presentations and then finally the AGM itself.

In the evening, everyone returned to the mess where a fantastic formal dinner had been provided by ISS. In the finest traditions of the RAF, the mess staff had prepared the dining room to reflect the splendour of our proud service. All the tables were decorated to a high standard and the mess silver was proudly on display at every table. Place cards and menus had been prepared by Andrea Shirley and the whole setting looked fantastic. For many

of the delegates, this was their first time in a service mess and I think the look on their faces said it all. After a superb meal, our after dinner speaker began her talk. Lady Helen Nall kindly spoke about her activities in recording the fate of two Lancaster bomber crews who were killed whilst flying over her farm during the Second World War. You could hear a pin drop in the room as Helen gave a whole different perspective to a sad tale of loss and sacrifice. Her research led to the publication of an excellent book, *The Courage of the Small Hours*. Money from the sale of this book has been donated to the Bomber Command Memorial in London. A smaller but no less poignant memorial has been erected on her land to honour those brave young men who lost their lives whilst flying on ops.

After a standing ovation, the rest of the evening was spent enjoying the music of the Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Concert Band who kept us entertained with their "Last Night of the Proms". The excellent prices behind the bar ensured everyone had a night to remember!

The next day, everyone once again returned to Scampton for a tour of the Museum of RAF Firefighting and the Station Heritage Centre. There is so much to see at Scampton that you really need a whole day to do it justice. Everyone was not only impressed, but I would also say amazed at the amount of material on display. One member commented that he thought this might even



be the biggest display of fire vehicles in Europe! Praise indeed.

After lunch, delegates posed for a photograph beside the Red Arrows Memorial aircraft and paid their respects to the two pilots who had lost their lives in 2011.

The whole weekend was a complete success and proved that Scampton could indeed be an excellent venue for group visits and even perhaps our own AGM in the future. As always, no one saw the work involved leading up to and following the event and it's through this article that I must pay thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who make the continued existence and success of the Museum possible.

Finally a big thank you to the RAF & DFS Association for a generous donation from the monies made from the raffle at the gala evening of the re-union. This was well received by Steve and all volunteers at the museum as there has been a lot of work required of late on the Dennis F12 and the Mk10. Hopefully next year it is hoped to see more of the association members make a visit and see the work going on to preserve your history.

Reliving Their Life's



Ex RAF Fire-Fighter Tony Hurd who visited the Museum of RAF Fire Fighting was amazed when he came across museum volunteer Eddie Munro. They served together at RAF Finningley in 1960 and had not seen each other since then.



Another visitor to the Museum was Ex RAF Fire-Fighter Tony Carr who had a good time along with his grandchildren who can now relate to all the things he has talked about in his former life.

60 years of The Flaming Sword



Station Commander Wing Commander Eyres admires the badge.

On this page there are some photographs in regard to the presentation of the RAF Fire Service badge. Our history records that a parade took place on Wednesday 2nd December 1953 at which on behalf of the Air Officer Commanding, Air Vice Marshall, J. G. Franks CBE presented a unit badge to the RAF School of Firefighting and Rescue at RAF Sutton on Hull.



The AOC in C takes the salute with AVM J. G. Franks CBE



The march past.

A funny story from Mal Ray while at Saxa Vord

During a Taceval exercise about 1980 we received a call for a practice fire up at the radar heads. We ran up there to the trailer pump which was located at the heads. A young flying officer with a clip board stood there and he approached me to tell me where the fire was located. As the fire was not near the EWS tank I decided to set the pump up for soft suction from a hydrant. We were wearing cold weather gear and not fire gear. As we were setting up I saw the F/O approaching with a strange look in his eyes. The conversation went something like this:-

F/O F/Wit. "You're doing that wrong Cpl"

Me. "How's that sir"

F/O F/Wit. "Do you see those big black hoses on the side of the pump?"

Me. "Err, yes sir"

F/O F/Wit. "Well they're called suction hoses and you attach them to that thing at the rear of the pump (he actually pointed at the suction eye) and you suck water from it and get it onto the fire with those hoses. (Points to delivery hose)

Me. "We're nowhere near a EWS tank sir, this will be quicker"

F/O F/Wit. "No Cpl I've just done the 3 weeks officer training course at RAF Catterick and that's the method you should be using"

Me. "This is called soft suction sir and it's an alternative method which in this

case will get water to the fire much quicker"

F/O F/Wit. "Who on earth told you that Cpl?"

Me. "I learned it from 6 weeks basic training at Catterick sir followed by 14 years in the RAF Fire service"

F/O F/Wit. "Ah you're a Fireman then"

Me. "Yes sir"

F/O F/Wit. "So tell me again about this soft suction thing Cpl"

Me. "Certainly sir" (GAME SET AND MATCH SON WOOOOO, WOOOOOOOO) Last sentence to myself obviously. Great days!

RAFDFSA Shop

Those of you unable to attend reunions should be aware that we have a range of RAFDFSA and CRASH goods for sale, which are also available by mail order via us and the Association website shown at the bottom of each page. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the reunions.

Regards and best wishes Allan and Marilyn

Contact details: - Allan and Marilyn Brooke
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Tel: 01636 688 680

No personal callers please.

Email: allana.brooke@ntlworld.com or marilyn.brooke@ntlworld.com

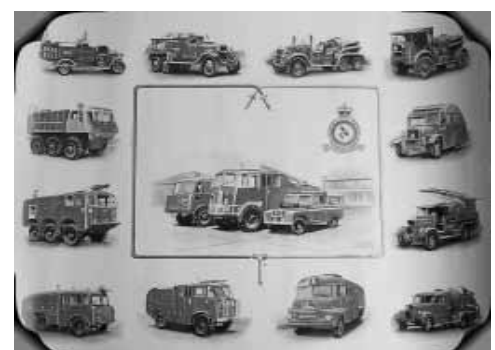
Note:- For Mail Order - All items will be subject to postage and packaging, which will be calculated per individual order. A customer will be informed of the cost and, when payment is received, the order will be despatched.

Cheques & Postal Orders made payable to RAF&DFSA Shop Account.

AMENDMENTS FOR AUTUMN 2012 FLASHPOINT

RAF & DFSA SHOP PRICE LIST 1.10.12

BASE BALL CAP	£10.00
KNITTED HAT	£10.00
KNITTED HAT (LG BADGE)	£10.00
FLEECE HAT	£10.00
RUGBY SHIRT	£21.00
SHORT SLEEVE POLO SHIRT	£14.50
LONG SLEEVE POLO SHIRT	£17.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT	£6.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE)	£11.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT	£10.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE)	£13.00
WHITE SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT	£15.00
SWEATSHIRT	£16.50
HOODED SWEATSHIRT	£17.50
FLEECE JACKET	£23.00
FLEECE BODY WARMER	£21.00
ASSOCIATION TIE	£9.00
ASSOCIATION SHIELD	£29.50
BLAZER BADGE	£13.00
PATCH BADGE	£3.50
CAP BADGE	£8.00
LAPEL BADGE – ALL TYPES	£3.00
FIREMAN KEYSRING	£3.50
CLOTH KEYSRING	£3.50
RED ARROW FRIDGE MAGNET	£3.00
LEATHER BOOK MARK	£1.00
PRESENTATION PEN	£3.50
PRESENTATION PAPER KNIFE	£2.50
CUFF LINKS	£5.50
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (INSIDE WINDOW)	£1.00
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW)	£1.00
FIRE SCHOOL STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW)	£0.50
JUTE BAG WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO	£7.50
DOCUMENT BAG	£8.50
NYLON BAG	£6.50
SPORTS BAG	£17.50
WASH BAG	£11.50
HAND TOWEL WITH LOGO	£10.00
BUTCHER'S APRON WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO	£14.00
RIPPER WALLET	£8.50
ASSOCIATION MUG	£4.00
FIRE ENGINE COASTER	£1.50
RAF FIRE CARDS	£2.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES ONE	£5.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES TWO	£5.00
FIREMAN PRINT	£3.50
NOVELTY TOYS PIN BADGES AND WHITE METAL MODELS AS PRICED	
ASSOCIATION SHIELDS AS PRICED	



Two unusual photographs of a MK5A and a MK6 in green livery

(Photographs by courtesy of Peter Ashpool and Wayne Gilmore from Ray Hill's collection)

