

FLASHPOINT



ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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Cover Picture

Our late Honorary President, Air Marshal Sir John Sutton.



From the Editor, by Adey Tearle

It is with some sadness I am writing this editorial as I have just been told of the death of Sir John Sutton our Honorary President and latterly our Patron. Unfortunately I only met him once but felt he was a kind, honest gentleman who I am sure will be sadly missed by others who knew him better than I.

This sad news reached me after, what seems like only a few days, I was on parade at the Cenotaph with others from the Association who attended to honour the memory of those that fell in the service of our country.

It was the first time I had attended this event and I find it hard to express in words the pride I felt at that parade. Surrounded by veterans from all the services, some unable to walk and being supported in wheelchairs, but determined to take part nonetheless. There is that same camaraderie that you thought you would only ever experience whilst still in the service.

Despite the sombre nature of this event everyone on parade was in good humour and there was some really good banter being shared around and I recall with a smile the RAF Police veterans being roundly booed on their return to Horseguards after the parade.

Also, I will not forget the Light Infantry, who speed marched down Whitehall and straight into the back of the group in front, their column being so long they didn't all hear the command to HALT!! The fact that they did this right next to the waiting Royal Marines and Parachute Regiment contingents just added to the sheer joy of witnessing the spectacle.

Not since 1988 had I seen Kev Pateman, yet he and I were first to arrive on parade and as we introduced ourselves to each other the years fell away immediately and it was like we had only just seen each other yesterday. A picture of us together at the parade appears with this editorial.

Some of our number chose to seek liquid refreshment after our travails of the morning and dismissed ourselves from Horseguards in search of an appropriate hostelry. In previous years apparently a pub just off Northumberland Avenue had benefitted from our presence, so we strode off manfully in search of said hostelry.



The Editor with Kev Pateman on Parade in Horseguards

The passing years and failing memory had taken their toll and none was sure of the exact location so we asked two Traffic Cops at Trafalgar Square if they could direct us to THE Sherlock Holmes, honest, that was the name of the pub. Sadly the cops were clueless so we soldiered on (I promise, no more bad jokes)

On arrival the pub was rammed, the unit most in evidence were the highly decorated veterans of the Airborne Signals. We did manage to get beer and then the lamps really were swung. Sadly after only a couple I had to leave to get my train back to the Lakes, but next year I intend to make a full weekend of it.

In October I attended my first reunion since 2007 and I thoroughly enjoyed it, much to my surprise. I say much to my surprise because the other one did not have a particularly pleasant atmosphere. By contrast, I did not know many people at

this one, but to a man and woman everyone made my wife and I feel most welcome.

The only other person there I had served with was Ray Wood and it was really good to see him and his wife again after so many years (nearly 30!) But I knew plenty of people that other people there knew. It was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and would commend it to you all, I will certainly be going again.

I would like to thank members for their response to members for items for inclusion in the magazine however this is an ongoing need. I am sure you all enjoy reading Flashpoint but without stuff from you it is not a viable proposition. If each member submitted one article it would guarantee the content for a number of years, so please, send something in.

Dear Editor

I would just like to thank Jack Lemon for his information about his 'On the Job Training' as an Aero Fireman at RAF Hullavington and confirming that he never attending the Fire School. Although a few people have responded I am still keen to receive more examples of RAF Fireman going to other Stations to get their training or like Jack if they did training on their own station. This is to build up information for the Museum and the history of the trade.

My contact details are on 'Who to Contact' page. Thanks again Jack.

Kind regards Steve Harrison

CALLING ON ASSOCIATION MEMBERS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

When I gave up the Flashpoint co-editors role I thought I would volunteer as a co-ordinator just for Lincolnshire as previously the county was only part of a large area represented. I had envisaged of getting hold of you as individuals as well as a group. But at the recent AGM the Committee said they have been advised that under the Data Protection Act, co-ordinators are not allowed to hold personal details of members. It is highly frustrating as companies and the government sell off information about us all the time and like many of you I signed The Official Secrets Act but we cannot not be trusted with these details.

Despite the Data Protection Act my contact details are on page 2 of the Flashpoint magazine!!! So please contact me if you wish on any matter. For instance if any members living in Lincolnshire cannot get to re-unions because of illness or hardship reasons or cannot drive anymore then maybe I can help. If your only contact is through Flashpoint as I know a lot of members do not use the internet, I could just come for a chat. Also if you would like to have a day out at the Museum of RAF Fire-fighting at RAF Scampton then again maybe I can be of assistance as I am a volunteer there. Also if any member



knows of anyone that is going through illness then I can send them a card or visit if it is agreeable to them? (If I know their address!!) I don't wish to start a one man social service there are far more service and civilian organisations that are better equipped to deal with issues than me but if you want an ex RAF fire fighter to have a chat with I can do that.

Finally, all I can say is that I wish you well and have a Happy Christmas and may the New Year bring you good health and happiness and maybe a win on the Lottery!

Steve Harrison.

Departed

It is with great sadness I must report the passing of the following colleagues since the last issue of Flashpoint.

Brian Bennett

Raymond Bond

Joe (Gordon) Childs

William Harris

Brian Harrison

Mick Hayward

Don Wright

Our thoughts and condolences are with their families and friends.

You are clear to stand down now lads.

Obituary

Air Marshal Sir John Matthias Dobson Sutton KCB (9 July 1932 - 21 November 2014) was Honorary President of our Association from 2009 until his sudden death on Friday 21st November.

He was educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Alford, Lincolnshire and joined the Royal Air Force in 1950. He was appointed OC 249 Squadron in 1964 and then became Assistant Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee at the MoD in 1966.

He then went on to command 14

Squadron before being appointed Assistant Chief of Staff (Plans & Policy) at Headquarters 2ATAF in 1971 and Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Policy) in 1977.[1] He then became Deputy Commander of RAFG in 1980, Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Commitments) in 1982 and Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Overseas) in 1985. He became Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief at Support Command in 1986 and retired in 1989.

During his career Sir John flew Meteors, Canberras and Phantoms. After his

retirement Sir John was appointed Lieutenant Governor of the States of Jersey from 1990 – 1995.

After agreeing to become our Honorary President Sir John took an active interest in our activities and regularly attended our AGM's. He was well liked by the members who knew him and we would like to extend our sincere condolences to his family, especially Lady Angela who attended our events with Sir John.

Wootton “Basseteers” Reunion from Brian Ford

On Wednesday twenty fourth of September the so called “Basseteers” met at a coffee house in Wootton Bassett to say farewell to Colin Farmer who had spent a holiday in “Blighty” from his home in Australia.

Colin was a Sutton trained Fireman and served on various stations during his twenty two years, including Church Lawford, Bassingbourne, Tangmere, Kuala Lumpur, Hullavington, Catterick (as an instructor) Sharjah, Fairford and Laarbruch.

The “lamp” was well and truly “swung” during a very pleasant afternoon and at the end Colin presented us with a magnificent donation of two hundred Australian dollars as a donation to the Fire Memorial at the National Arboretum.

Note

The “Basseteers” are Association members who, for four years stood at the memorial in Wootton Bassett to pay their respects to the fallen service personnel from Afghanistan. (Colin is now an honorary Member)



The “Basseteers” are – Left to Right Alan Gilchrist, Robert (Dan) Gurney, Mike Clapton, Brian Ford, Colin Farmer; Ron Brown



Here is a picture for you to contemplate. Two fire fighters in ‘Fearnought’ suits and steel helmets, face mask and capes. Sergeant instructor with RAF Regiment flashes. Also what looks like 4in hose (Mk5/5A/Mk6) it has to be 1959 and before the new blue crash suits came into service.

NUMBERS

Some time back my good friend Neal Moss submitted a poem called Numbers to Flashpoint. I thought this caption taken from a book 'Servicing Hints and Information on Common Defect on Alvis Fire Crash Tenders' would remind you all of some of the numbers associated with the POL's and AP's we used to use, how's is your memory?

Steve Harrison

RADIATOR	
Investigation	Rectification
Check for leaks.	Rectify and replenish system.
Check for cracks or incorrect type.	Fit new correct type.
Check tension, check for wear.	Adjust or renew if necessary.

Also-essential to your well being!

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FLUID FLYWHEEL	
Investigation	Rectification
Check level.	Replenish and carry out slip test.
Check for evidence of oil leaks, and over heating.	If seals are leaking remove engine and replace seals.
Check for tightness and serviceability of sealing washers.	Tighten and replace faulty washers.

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Member John Goupillot has submitted this poem which commemorates his first casualty as a Firefighter whilst serving with Middlesbrough Fire Brigade 1957

I'M THE KITTEN THAT LIVED TO TELL THIS TALE

We lived in the attic four floors up with mum, sis and brother we kittens snuggled up. The old lady, was a beggar and had no electric light she had candles for heating and to give us some light.

One day I remember the candle fell down and set fire to the rags that were laid all around the flames, they got higher the smoke was so thick the door it was bolted so we couldn't get out quick.

The firemen they came and 'broke down the door they cursed and they swore till the fire was no more they took the old lady and gave her some air; they got her to breathe with much expert care.

Then, they came back and there they found me with my dead mummy who died saving me, my brother and sister they died as well the heat and the smoke had been living hell

They found me under my mummy's hot fur were I could keep breathing a bit of fresh air the fireman, he put me inside of his mask; he coughed and he spluttered but he did the task

The next day they were standing on morning parade ; the officer told them saving the lady had failed they stood there in sorrow with tears nearly shed but they all smiled a little when they heard that I was not dead.

Remembrance Parade 2014 by Ron Brown



Once again we were blessed with some excellent weather this year, we have been very lucky for the last two or three years regarding weather. The day started early for me, up at 04:15 to catch the coach leaving from Swindon at 05:50.

I met up with Dan Gurney and Ray Preston at the bus stop. On arrival at Victoria we met up with Brian Ford and made our way via the free taxi service to Westminster (Thank you and well done to the London taxi drivers who provide this service.)

On arrival on Horse Guards Parade we met up with several other members who were already there, gradually participants began to arrive until, by 09:30, all our contingent were on parade, we had several new marchers this year, welcome to you and I hope you will join us again next year.

We had 27 on parade this year which is normal, we are allocated 30 tickets but we have never had 30 members turn up. This year we had 29 tickets taken up but unfortunately Bill Bailey had health problems and couldn't make it. Hope you are OK for next year Bill.

We were in the first column to march off so we didn't have to stand around for too long, I think there were even more people than usual lining the route despite the threat of terrorist action. Led this year by Gordon Smith who did an excellent job all orders were loud and clear. I think this was the best performance regarding marching that we have ever done.

Partly thanks to Brian Jones who kept all in step by calling out the time and also the efforts of all marchers I couldn't believe that firemen could perform so well. The support the parade received from the crowds was unbelievable their hands must have been sore from all the clapping.

Then it was back on Horse Guards Parade for the final dismissal, I would like to finish by thanking all members who turn up to represent our association, it makes me feel very proud to march with you all and I hope to see you all there again next year.

Members on parade this year were Ron Brown, Brian Ford, Dan Gurney, Trevor Hayes, Howard Harper, Victor Golding, Mark Jones, Martin Napthine, Ken Slade, Brian Jones, David Frost, Gordon Smith, Garry Hatchell, Neil Slade, Ian Langley, Ray Preston, Mick Durrant, Paul Murray, Bob Feather, Ron Gaunt, David Hanley, John Goupillot, John Dicks, Nigel Bell, Kevin Pateman, Adey Tearle, and Pat Hayes who came with us to push Trevors wheelchair.



A Dream Come True by John Woodward

On September 23rd 1958 I boarded a train to RAF Cardington to fulfil my dream of joining the Royal Air Force as a Fireman. From Cardington I went to Bridgnorth to do my square bashing and then on to Sutton on Hull for trade training.

En route to Sutton on the train past Goole and down the Humber estuary in winter I remember thinking "What have I let myself in for?". It was cold and foggy and icy at Sutton, a hard place to do drills. But at 17½ nothing was a problem, it was easy after Bridgnorth!

I finished top of my course and was rewarded with a gold and silver blazer badge which I still have. Next it was on to Blackpool for driver training and then the first posting at RAF Bovington, near Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire, with the Americans.

I was now an SAC driver and Dan Dare was our WO, it was a quiet posting with not much going on. After only 5 months I was posted to RAF Aird Uig in the Outer Hebrides to serve at Isle of Lewis Early Warning Radar, as a Corporal, not bad for a year of service!

We had a Bedford Domestic and there was myself, Sgt Fitzgerald and 4 other SAC's. I spent 2 years here before being posted to 7FTS at Church Fenton as I/C C Crew under Sgt Dixon.

He was an easy going bloke and our time was spent between Church Fenton and a satellite station about 10 miles away at Elvington. Half the aircraft operated at one and the other half at the other. I am pleased

to say nothing untoward happened during this posting.

However we did host the Leeds Air Show on 11th June 1962 as Leeds was shut for development. I was NCO I/C Crew and saw a lot of new and unusual aircraft that day, with fingers crossed that nothing would go wrong, and was pleased all went well.

I left the RAF in September 1963 and joined a small building firm to drive their trucks around. One job we had was at a small old ambulance station in Chelmsley Woods a new town just outside Birmingham.

I got chatting to the Superintendent and said I quite fancied being an Ambulance driver, he turned out to be ex RAF Regiment and said he would always welcome any ex RAF on his station. He called the Chief Officer who was an ex RAF Pilot who loved Firemen, and the job was mine!

For the next 25 years I had a fulfilling and rewarding career on the front line, on leaving the NHS I worked for a privet



John at RAF Bovington 1959 with DP 1 24AG25

company for another 15 years, finally retiring after 40 years ambulance service, in 2011.

Editors note: On retirement from the NHS John was awarded the Queen's Silver Medal in recognition of his service in the NHS, well done John.

Wooton Bassetteers

A group of our colleagues were regular route liners for the return of bodies as they travelled through Royal Wooton Bassett and on the 11th November this year they attended the Armistice Day commemoration there. Pictured below from left to right Brian Ford Allan, Gilchrist, Ron Brown, Dan Gurney. Thanks to Ron Brown for the info and picture.



A Temporary spell with the Fleet Air Arm?

It was during my first posting (after trade training) at RAF West Raynham in the early 1970's that I had to make a rare visit to the Station Medical centre with a very disturbing condition. I had noticed that on some occasions my lower lip and tongue would become swollen during mid morning, subsiding later in the afternoon. As I had only experienced this while in Norfolk, I thought that maybe something local could be the cause, like the hard water supply which was common throughout the region, or some other unknown allergy.

The SMO had a good look at me, but couldn't give a diagnosis and being concerned that it may not improve, referred me to the Dermatologist at RAF Ely military hospital. A few days later and I left, bound for Ely in the daily mini bus, together with a few other "walking wounded"! At the hospital I was shown into see the Consultant dermatologist (Group Capt.) who while examining me closely, asking a series of questions about my lifestyle and eating habits, which didn't really help to shed any light on why my face was only affected in this way. For some reason, he seemed to be focused on the area of skin under my chin, and asked me to accompany him to a nearby "dark room" where he focused a special ultra violet lamp on my face. He then proceeded to examine my chin area with what looked like a large magnifying glass. By this stage I was thinking the worst, "would this be the sudden end to a new career"?

However, back in his consulting room, he did come up with a diagnosis, and reassured me that it was not anything serious to worry about. It seemed that I was blessed with very tight curly facial hair, which could grow back into my skin, and when I used my wet razor, this left tiny cuts causing a skin infection, leading to the swelling lip and tongue! He said I must ditch my Wilkinson razor, and purchase a

Philishave electric shaver which was less harsh on my skin, but must rest the affected areas by growing a beard for a period of around 12 weeks.

Smiling, he stated I was fit for normal duties, and handing me a "medical-excused" chit which I would need to carry around while in uniform, so that my facial appearance was officially authorised. The SMO would be informed, and he would monitor my recovery, deciding when I would be able to resort to being clean shaven once again.

On return to West Raynham, I decided it might be a good idea to call into to the Guardroom and inform them of my condition, luckily the SWO happened to be there and reading my chit, shook his head, saying it would be well thumbed during the next few weeks, as I would be frequently challenged in regards to my "scruffy" appearance until those in authority became familiar with my appearance!

My SNCO i/c. back at the Fire Section, said the same, as he reckoned I would be "observed" around the station while I continued on with servicing/replacing all the fire extinguishers. This task was to keep me occupied while I awaited my special security clearance to enable me to be part of the duty crew on the Bloodhound SAM site at the far side of the airfield.

During the first couple of weeks, when my chin was mainly stubbly in appearance, I did get stopped and questioned, but the "chit" did its job and no further action taken. Then as my beard grew and I was able to keep it trimmed with scissors, the challenges became less frequent as the Station became used to my unusual growth of facial hair. I did however, become the butt of several jokes, the most popular one suggesting I have a temporary detachment to the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm, where I would easily blend in with the matelots!

As the weeks went by, another problem faced me, concerning my facial growth, which was my approaching marriage to my first wife, Barbara. It was our intention that I would be married in uniform, together with a traditional guard of honour, and my concern was that permission may be refused due to my appearance. However, after a visit to the SWO, he didn't see any problem providing that I and the guard of honour were correctly attired for the occasion, as there would be photographs in the local news paper.

He handed me a memo listing what was deemed appropriate attire (No. 1's, white belt, white shirt, etc.) and seemed quite content that two crew corporals from my section would be part of the honour guard! Obviously he considered that with two JNCO's in attendance there would not be any problems with dress and conduct! The happy day came and went without a hitch, subsequently spending our honeymoon on the Norfolk Broads. I often pondered if I was perhaps the only RAF airman to be married (in uniform) sporting a beard, could it have been a first?

The twelve weeks soon passed, and after seeing the SMO, he gave the go ahead to remove my beard, which I had become quite fond of! So after much careful cutting back with scissors and a finish off with my new electric shaver, my chin was laid bare to the world! It did feel very strange at first, but soon became acclimatised, and there was no return of the swelling or infection. In fact since my RAF days, have avoided wet razors, not wishing to take any risks!

Andy Gaskell (328)

What makes an RAF Firefighter? By David Hughes

Well in my case it was impulse. Back in late 1969 I suddenly decided to give up my career in the hotel industry and join the RAF. Parents were a bit gobsmacked (though the phrase hadn't been invented in Ireland at that time or probably anywhere else for that matter.) David being his usual self had gone bonkers so it seemed.

Why on earth would you want to join the forces? Didn't have a rational answer to that one. Uncle Charles had been in the Cameron Highlanders in WW2 and I had been in the equivalent of the TA Military police in the Irish republic whilst serving my time as a chef in Dublin. That was as close as anyone came to Her Majesty's armed forces since the ancestors came over with a certain Oliver several generations ago. Seems to have been the case according to family history records dug out by my Mum.

Off I goes to Belfast (during the troubles too be Jaysus) but managed to find the CIO and presented myself for interview.

"What trade do you want to go into?" said the recruiting sergeant.

"MT mechanic please" I said. Thinking at least I would be able to learn to strip down an engine and actually put it back together again as I was into motorbikes in a big way at the time and I quite fancied the idea of it for some time.

"No courses for months. Any other choice?"

Pause. Flicked through the careers book again and said "How about fireman?"

"Yes, ok sign here"

Then we had the medical with an all clear so signed on the dotted line and swore my allegiance to Her Majesty. Never thought to mention the education that my parents had spent money on leaving me with the equivalent of 9 "O levels" which theoretically might have got me in at a slightly higher pay scale via Cranwell but never mind.

Usually I have no problem opening my mouth but that time for some reason I must have been too naïve to realise it might have done me some good for once.

1st April 1970 I made my trip via sunny Belfast over to the great Lincolnshire leisure resort of RAF Swinderby. Dream on! England's green and pleasant land made its debut into the life of AC Hughes D F (one for the use of!) All 10 and a half stone of innocent ex grammar school rugby player was transformed into a highly efficient 11 and a quarter stone of rippling muscle and a dab hand at drill and the use of an SLR.

Now there's a piece of kit I would like to be able to use again. The daily routine for six weeks was some kind of a culture shock to us lads but we made the most of it. Unfortunately, six weeks later I think my parents were still reeling from the shock and didn't come to my passing out parade which has got to have been one of the proud moments in my life.

Who would ever think when I was working in the kitchens of a couple of Dublin's best hotels a few months previous that my shoes and boots would ever be that deep in spit and polish. And as for running round the perimeter track with 50 others !!! Dublin's High School rugby pitch was nowhere near that long and I was not as fit as three years before but it soon came back and more besides.

Having been subjected to the delightful Corporal Green and his RAF Regiment oppo who did most of the drill with us at Swinderby, it was considerably better at RAF Catterick and the Fire Fighting and Special Services Squadron where Sgt Tom Sellars in his wisdom made me senior man of the course.

So now I could do the shouting! Much better! Not everyone thought so though. One LAC Phil Pinder (he had remustered from MT driver) on the course thought he should have been Senior man as he had been in the RAF longer. 14 months if I remember correctly.

Phil Pinder was not a happy bunny as Paddy got the job. He wasn't a bad bloke actually and came from Sheffield. Anyone know him? He got posted to Marham if I remember. The others on that course that I remember and would love to meet up with again were Lyndval Namee (came from Jamaica and ended up at Northolt) Dave

Raines from Southend (went to Abingdon) and Geordie Illingworth. My unforgettable memories of Catterick were the practice crashes and the night that the Montanas were playing in the Naafi.

Someone on our course went up to them and mentioned that there was an Irishman on the course who played drums and could he do a number with them. Probably thought I would get caught out but I managed to compose myself and did several numbers and then got left on my own to do a drum solo which I hastily cobbled together. I think some of the lads saw me in a different light after that (mind you it was dark in the Naafi)!!!

Well we got through the basic fire training and Mike Penfold, Alan Burgess and myself even managed over 80% and as some of you may remember that gave us sufficient brownie points to warrant a third prop on the sleeve automatically after twelve months.

Next was our first postings. Mike, Alan and I all got Brize Norton. Where the heck was that?. Oxfordshire beckoned and we duly packed our kitbags, went on leave and a short while later arrived at this huge metropolis (and I thought Swinderby was quite big) on the edge of one of what I was to discover was the beautiful Cotswolds.

We settled in the new firemans block (separate rooms WOW!) . After 19 years as an only child sharing my bedroom with 22 others at Swinderby was a bit of a culture shock but I am sure it was for many of the others too. The firemans block had for some strange reason some kind of attraction for the WRAF which developed into a bit of a reputation. Can't for the life of me understand why. But then a naïve relatively innocent young Irish lad had a hell of a lot to learn about life.

Three weeks later (and any of you who know Brize Norton know that that is only just about enough time to learn how to get to the mess, NAAFI, and Crash bays) all three of us get detached to RAF Fairford (WHERE?) OH ok.

Enter Sgt Ken Bowden into my life, the fire

Continued over

section admin sergeant at the old Domestic section where we were each allocated to one of the three Concorde crash crews with a MK6 and a DP1 which BAC had kindly converted to the new magical Light Water. Was this the stuff that Tom Sellars spent precious time teaching us was 10lb a gallon etc etc.

What do you take me for “an eejit” give us a break. We’re intelligent firemen! We got over 80% in trade training. Apparently it was so good and so expensive that we couldn’t even do practice fires with it and I think it weighed the same as any other H₂O but I wasn’t allowed to check. My main memory of C crew was Stan Rawlinson and his snoring.

I even learnt to sleep on the hose rack in the bays and across the seats and foam console in the MK6. It was quieter than the crew room on many nights. One night when I couldn’t sleep because of Stan I took myself off out into the bays and discovered a large German Shepherd tied up by the doors.

We shared the building with the RAF Police section and they used to tie the dogs (Fairford was one of the few camps left with a dog section) in the crash bays while they skived off to watch our telly or have a cuppa. Thinking it was my mates dog Shadow, as I had seen Alan on duty earlier, I casually walked over and started stroking him. I thought to myself “his coats got a bit shaggy” and afterwards went back into our crew room to find Alan.

No sign of him but Taff (one of the other dog handlers) was there. “where’s Alan?” I said. He finished at ten. “so whose is the dog in the bays?” “That’s Prince, I should keep away from him, he can be a bit nasty” “Bit late for that I said, we have already made friends” and promptly thought Oh S**T!

That was an interesting experience at Fairford. Getting up in the middle of the night because when BAC wanted to take the fuel out of Concorde required the attention of the crew in the hangar every time. The daft thing was they insisted on shutting the doors behind us (what would have happened in the event of a fire does not bear thinking about).

Well at least we had guided tours around Concorde 002 long before it ended up at RNAS Yeovilton Air Museum. For any of those of you who have visited there, Concorde 002 is just the same inside apart from the computers having been removed. We also had 47 and 30 squadron there with the C-130 Hercules before their departure for RAF Lyneham.

Lots of other aircraft visited from time to time to do circuits and bumps etc. Unfortunately all my photos mysteriously disappeared when I sent them off through the NAAFI for developing and at that age I hadn’t learned that you need to kick up stink and shout at people when something like that happens. With hindsight one of the best people I met was actually Sgt Colin Farmer.

He had a sideline selling endowment policies and I decided it wasn’t a bad idea to have one. 44 years and several trips to OZ and NZ later I can see the wisdom of that decision. The first trip was a month after the thing matured in 1996 with a part of the proceeds. My Aunt was very pleased to see me and she is still going strong now at 98 so the air out there must be good.

During my time at RAF Fairford some of us had the pleasure of a detachment to RAF Odiham when the runways at Fairford were being resurfaced. I now live and work in Hampshire just 30 miles from there so I went back when Steve Bowden was there and viewed the new section and saw the old crash bays full of boats and caravans.

Next was an exchange posting to RAF Finningley to be closer to my girlfriend in Nottingham who was the sister of my senior man at Swindon. We met at the passing out parade and married a year later. We fell out with the Mother in Law (Well I wasn’t to know what that meant in those days!!!) C’mon . So married quarters provided a new home and another year down the line my son Michael was born at Sheffield hospital.

Demob came in 1973 having met some great guys such as Jack Hunter, Kenny Muldown, Sgt Bill Morris, Alan Buttle, Mike King and of course Chiefy Joe Beale. That was the time when my interest in tropical fish began and I am still keeping

them having gone through breeding, showing, judging and even radio shows during the last 44 years. Great hobby!

Chubb Fire/Pyrene was an obvious port of call in Dublin when myself and my young family returned there and so began a long career in the Fire industry. I had an interesting incident one day when I had to take some fire alarm equipment up to the branch in Belfast and was stopped at the army checkpoint at the border.

This squaddie asked me to open the van up and his face was a picture when he looked at all the equipment and wires etc in the back of the van. Must have thought he had caught a terrorist. He asked for my driving licence and I surprised him by saying “no problem so long as you don’t mind the fact that it was issued at RAF St Athan “He waved me through and wished me good luck after that, realising that I was probably NOT an IRA bomber in disguise.

My long career in the fire industry was only broken by 12 years working my way up through the ranks of the bus industry in Derbyshire from one of my best ever jobs as a bus conductor through to Sales manager with National Express. Two marriages and four boys later I even had a chance to put out a fire again when a coach I was travelling behind on the M1 had a brake fire.

I passed by in my National Express liveried car and flagged the driver over to the hard shoulder before getting his BCF (before it was made illegal) extinguishers and tackling the rear nearside wheel which was nicely red by this stage and smoking well. During this time I married again and had three more wonderful boys who have grown up now and make me proud. Whilst living in Derbyshire my eldest son still remembers the day we went to a scrapyard in Alfreton and he had a chance to sit in a MK6 that was there with several others. Oh how I wish I could have saved them then.

Next was the American Adventure Theme park in Derbyshire as the attraction of a management position and company car five minutes from home was an improvement on a 99 mile drive from Heanor to Dunstable every morning.

Result was a great job made redundant 11 months later.

Next came my re-entry into the fire industry and it is still going although the attraction of retirement grows ever greater as the months go by. 1997 saw the creation of ABC Fire and we now have a company employing 8 people. Hopefully the kids will take over the management of it in due course and allow Christine and I to take some long breaks with her daughter in New Zealand.

Apart from marrying Christine in July, ABC Fire & Safety has been the best thing I ever did along with joining the RAF Fire Service 44 years ago. It has kept me employed and solvent for over 17 years now and I would recommend the trade to any serving firefighters looking to enter

it on demob. I know Sgt Bob Johnson at RAF Northholt is planning just that and some others have already done the same.

One of the greatest pleasures I have had since joining the Association (having gone to Fairford Air Tattoo and met up with Roger Brookes in 2003) was the chance to start the original RAF Fire Service Museum at Halfpenny green (Wolverhampton Business Airport) in 2003/2004. I was lucky enough to be given free the use of a building which we spent six months renovating with the help of Wilf Longmire, Alan Brooke, Dennis McCann and others.

We scoured the country for old RAF Fire vehicles and lots of my scrap fire extinguishers contributed to the funds we badly needed. Unfortunately, some of

you will know what happened and sadly it had to close a few months after the great opening at Easter 2004. The vehicles we had collected together were dispersed to Barkston Heath and then to RAF Scampton to the fire museum there. Those were exciting days when we found the DP2 on a pea farm, the MK7 & 8 in a scrapyard at Gateshead and I had the MK 6 in my front garden. I still have the ACRT which I am slowly restoring and now I have almost built my double garage work will begin again. I have parted with my TACR1 and TACR 2 but landrovers have remained a passion and I am on my 15th now with a Discovery 4 for best and a Defender for work and tip runs plus towing an old trailer pump.

Face in the crowd from Steve Harrison

Nice photograph of Instruction taking place on Mk5A at RAF Catterick in 1963. Does anyone know the faces?



REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON SUNDAY 8th NOVEMBER -2015



Attendance at the Parade is by ticket only and you must be a fully paid up Association member and complete a ticket application and *send to Ron Brown without delay.

All ticket applications should be sent to me as soon as possible and no later than mid-late September 2015

Surname: First name: Membership number:

Address:

.....Postcode:.....

Tel No:.....

Signed:..... Date.....2015

To avoid damaging your copy of Flashpoint, photocopy it, or print the details clearly on a separate sheet of paper. "Please enclose an SAE with your application for the return of your ticket and assembly details etc.

Send to: Ron Brown.
38 Sedgebrook , Liden, Swindon,
Wiltshire SN3 6EY
Tel: 01793 496 307
or email: brown026@virginmedia.com

Note: Tickets will be dispatched as soon as I receive them from the Royal British Legion or at the October reunion.

Late applications: Anyone **not** applying for a ticket immediately but finding later, that they may be able to attend the Parade on the day after all, can ring me direct as I **may** have a spare ticket available, but don't leave it too late!

Note: Travel and accommodation are your responsibility, but the following might be helpful:-

The Union Jack Club,
Sandell Street.
London
Tel. 020 7928 481

Victory Services Club,
63179 Seymour Street,
London W2 2HF
Tel: 020 7616 8302
Fax: 020 7616 8344
email: mem@vsc.co.u k

It is in your interest to check prices before booking.

Dress: On this special occasion - Blazer & Badge, Tie, Medals, Veteran's Badge and Beret with RAF or Crash Fire Rescue Badge please .**

1}** It helps to show up the badge on Parade by placing a circle of red material behind it.

Important Note: Mobile phones must be switched off before entering Horse Guards Parade.

Please make every effort to attend. Thank you.

An experience never to be forgotten!

A Profile of Michael Goupillot

As a teenager he served with the St John Ambulance Brigade and attended a number of serious incidents mainly in Northern Ireland whilst living with our family in married quarters. He was responsible for the upkeep of the RAF Bishops Court St John Ambulance.

He served for ten years in the RAF Fire Service 1976 to 1986 and served in Londonderry during the 1977 civil fire service strike as part of the breathing apparatus team with the Black Watch providing crews for the Green Goddess vehicles.

Two years on the Helicopter Support Section of The Queens' Flight at RAF Benson

A tour in the Falklands in 1984 serving at port Stanley and at Kelly's garden at Port San Carlos.

He was on the rescue truck for the Victor Tanker that was lost to fire at RAF Marham and assisted the aircrew to safety.

Two years instructional duties at the fire school at RAF Catterick as a Corporal.

Demobbed in 1986 and joined the Bedford Fire Service for the next 14 years to retirement.

Created a Fire Risk Assessment Consultancy Company with his wife Sue a retired senior Fire Controller with Bedford Fire and Rescue Service after 35 years service.

It seems sad that he felt the need to write his poem after such a distinguished career in the fire services that he enjoyed so much, a service that seems no longer appreciated by the public and even less by the government and where the officers of brigades seem hell bent on making life unpleasant for the fire-fighters.

John Goupillot 358 His proud Dad

Michael wrote this at a time when he was enjoying his work as a specialist rescue fire-fighter with the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. He was heavily involved with the design specification and procurement of the Specialist Rescue Vehicle (SRV) which became the Brigade instructor for the vehicle and created the operating instructions needed for this very specialised fire appliance.

When on duty he was the crew commander and as such responded to incidents that required the SRV and the skills of the specially trained crews to incidents in Bedfordshire and neighbouring counties.

A Fireman by Michael Goupillot

"What do you do for a living?" a stranger will say. "I'm a Fireman" I reply as they walk away.

Are they bothered, should they care? They pay their taxes to them that's so unfair. Fireman you play snooker all day and sleep all night, while the rest of us work, that doesn't seem right.

With a clench of my fists and a gritting of teeth I will try to explain the truth that lies beneath.

I work day, night and bank holiday, while you and your family's are at rest I beaver away.

I'm led from behind, by a man with a pen finding fault with my efforts time and again.

I've seen the sun come up and the sun go down, the sky obliterated by smoke.

I've tendered the injured and dealt with the dead but still you think it's all a big joke. I've been spat at, attacked, shot at and more, they now set booby traps as I walk through the door.

I've endured the crowds, I've faced the mob but I'm a man, not unlike you, trying to do my job.

I've been gassed, blown up and burnt, but still I go back with the lessons I've learnt. While the likes of you are on your way out, I pass you going the other way, to us a normal working day.

Searing heat, choking fumes, falling beams, the shouts cries and screams, you think my job is easy or so it seems.

Among many there are such as, the Gavin, Tony, Steve, John and Dave, not normal men; these are Firemen all of them brave.

I've carried my mates out on my back and stood over the graves of those not coming back.

With a call from Control we stop what we're doing, we're up and away, clear the road we are on our way.

I've been to all types of crashes from car to plane, and ripped through the wreckage again and again.

I've been to fires too big to begin, but somehow with these men beside me I know we will win.

With the hiss of the water, blast of steam one hell of a din, no thought for the dangers we plunge right in.

We kick down the door and crawl on the floor to search every room, hang on kids we will get to you soon. Chemical leaks, the odd terror attack or two, I've scaled the heights and broke through the ice to rescue the likes of you.

Animals, the rich and poor, whatever the call we will get them for sure, hours of study prevention not cure.

I've spent hours on visits to the public at work homes and schools, some very nice people with some of them fools.

Those in the job never know what's coming their way, staying safe, being careful, and striving to go home at the end of the fray.

So to you my friend I have to say, you go to work and have your usual boring monotonous day.

But remember this as I turn and walk away, I'm a Fireman, I risk my health and life, I know I earn my pay.

Having recently returned from the October 2014 association reunion and AGM, I would like to put on record my appreciation to the Association committee for organising and over seeing what was in my opinion an excellent reunion weekend .The venue was excellent, hotel staff were very polite and extremely helpful.

Shirley Winn was as ever fussing over members and their guests, making sure all was going well and ensuring they were receiving the best possible service. The actual AGM went very well made all that more entertaining and interesting by the lively and informative presentation given by our new Flashpoint editor Adrian Tearle, who outlined his plans for developing flashpoint even further.

As it is, Flashpoint is generally acknowledged to be one of the finest ex Service Association magazines but I'm sure Ade can take it even further. It was also great to hear from Ron Brown the association Cenotaph coordinator. Ron informed all present that he has managed to allocate all thirty of this years Cenotaph parade tickets; a first for Ron and for the association.

Very well done to Ron for all what he has done organising our association involvement in this very prestigious

national event. I am sure his late great mate Alan Alsop would be delighted to think that what he started all those years ago has now developed into an annual event for the association.

Trevor the Treasurer also gave those present at the AGM a breakdown of the Association accounts which really are in a very health state. Although Allan and Marilyn Brooke have stood down after many years sterling and committed service managing the association shop Dave Hughes and Neil Slade volunteered to take on responsibility for running the shop.

The Association therefore appears to be in very good state of health in fact the Association experienced a bit of a renaissance this year with some lapsed members returning to the fold and participating once more in reunions. In addition we have attracted some new members and I can't fail to mention that one new member just happens to be an Air Marshal.

Sir Roger Austin very kindly offered to take on the role of Association Honorary President and without further ado he paid his subs and is now a fully paid up member of the Association and proudly wears his association tie at our functions.

As principal guest at the Gala Dinner Sir Roger was invited to say a few after dinner words and what an inspiring and very entertaining speech it was.

He recalled an incident when he was returning from an operational sortie flying a Hawker Hunter in Borneo and was touching down at Labuan runway, when he encountered a RAF fire truck half way down the runway! Fortunately neither party was injured or held to blame but Sir Roger did close his speech by asking all present to stand and raise a toast to the wonderful men of the RAF Fire and Crash Rescue service.

The RAF Fire and Defence Fire Service Association has come a long way since those early pioneers like John Arthur and others set up this wonderful Association. Nowadays we have widows and sons of deceased members attending reunions thereby keeping alive the memory of their loved ones.

Let us all strive to encourage all lapsed members to return to the fold at the same time let's see if we can attract new members to what is after all probably one of the best ex-service Associations.

George Edwards BEM

Those were the days!

Leyland FE2 (1921) Pump/Ladder Fire Engine

4 cyl. Petrol engine (55HP)

Reese Roturbo 4 stage pump (500gpm)

40 gal FA water tank

35ft Ladder

180ft Hose reel

The vehicle was previously operated by Leyland Motors-Works Fire Service and at the time of the photo, under private ownership.

The Fire Officer (standing –extreme left) was Frank Allen (my uncle) and at the time, was Chief Fire & Security officer for Leyland Motors Ltd., Leyland, Lancashire.

The vehicle was appearing in a Classic Leyland vehicle event on the test track at Leyland Motors (Centurion Works, Farington, Leyland) in 1956.

I am the young boy in short trousers, standing alongside my cousin!

Andy Gaskell (328)



Strange but true... by Adey Tearle

Wildenrath, between 1977-79, I was working on days for Bob Burns and Eddie Mc Caffery was the WO, I also remember the Fire Officer, Flt Lt Gregory, who was known universally as Captain Pugwash because he looked exactly like Pugwash (Younger readers may wish to know Pugwash was a pirate in a childrens cartoon which also featured Master Bates, Seaman Staines and Roger the Cabin Boy)

Anyway, as I recall, it had been a fairly uneventful day and the afternoon was drawing to a close. Bob had sent me to MT Control for some reason, can't remember now, and MT Control was just across the road from the old Fire Section on the main drag. Whilst I was waiting for the MT Cpl to do something useful (yes I know, likely to be a long wait) the Station Crash alarm sounded on the Tannoy. "Crash, crash, crash, F104 Starfighter has crashed on the main runway all emergency services to respond"

We had a squadron of F104's from the Dutch Air Force based at Wildenrath as part of a NATO exercise. These aircraft had a chequered history and were known variously as Flying Coffins and Widowmakers. I recall the leading edge of the wing being razor sharp and capable of taking your head off.

Being much younger and fitter in those days I was out the door of MT and on my way back to the section before the word crash had come out for the third time. As I arrived at the section the Erics were just pulling out in the Angus Domestic so I stopped them and jumped on.

We pulled a bit further forward and Eddie Mc Caffery appeared, he told me to get out and get the Bedford CF van we used and follow him in the Angus, so I did. He chose to deploy the Angus to the Foam Strip Layer sheds on the edge of the taxiway. I had no radio in the CF so didn't have a clue what was happening.

From the FSL sheds I could see, there was an F104 halfway down the runway with a collapsed nose wheel, the 2 Mk 9'S had deployed on it, but I couldn't see Crash1 anywhere so I got out to see where it was. I was able to see Crash 1 on the overshoot threshold deployed on a stationary F104, so I asked Mr Mc Caffery what was

happening. He said ATC were calling the aircraft on the threshold but could not get a response so Crash 1 had been sent to investigate. We had been told to stay where we were and wait out.

John Rowe and Black watch were duty crew that day and initially they had all deployed on the aircraft on the runway, as you would, as that was the only one that appeared broken. Because ATC were trying to clear the one off the threshold they sent Crash 1 to marshal it off.

When Crash 1 arrived they parked alongside and about 30 metres from the aircraft and could see the pilot sitting in the cockpit. They got out and started waving their arms around to try and get his attention, but got no response.

They decided to try from the other side, and it was then they discovered that the canopy on that side had gone, as had half the pilot's head.

It turned out these aircraft were the last of a 4 ship to land and had been told to land in pairs, one in the slow lane and one in the fast lane. The first of the pair had landed in the slow lane and a few seconds later the second landed in the fast lane. As the second passed the first the nose wheel on the first collapsed and the aircraft went into a spin.

Apparently the wing of the first sliced the canopy on the second but ATC weren't aware of what had happened and assumed

all was well as the second continued to taxi and stop on the threshold.

The aircraft with the broken canopy was repaired fairly quickly and immediately flown back to its home base which I think was Leeuwarden. However the one with the nose wheel collapse needed major surgery so it had been parked in a HAS for repair.

Once it had been repaired the Dutch, with absolutely no sense of irony, sent the original pilot to fetch it and fly it back home. So he got in the cockpit and did whatever pilots do prior to flight and then hit the start button. Apparently as the engine winds up to 60% power on a 104 the hydraulics kick in, which they did on this occasion, unfortunately the pilot had, for whatever reason, selected gear up in the cockpit.

Inevitably the gear started to retract, the pilot realised what was happening and pulled the crash bar for an immediate shut down. Unfortunately the undercarriage was beyond its tipping point and the whole lot collapsed. At which point the Dutch decided to cut their losses.

Arrangements were made to recover the jet by road. So the next day a low loader arrived to transport it back home. This next part of the story I cannot be sure of, apparently on the way home the low loader overturned and the truck driver was killed.



F104 Flying Coffin Dutch Air Force

Kinloss Reunion by Tom Mc Crorie

What happened at Kinloss on the 1st November this year, a group of the lads met up at the Hunters bar, the old NAAFI for a couple of pints and a talk about old times. Then transport was laid on to go up to the Fire Section at Kinloss.

The duty crew were there for the boys arriving and we had a cup of coffee and a chat. About 35 guys had turned up. There are 2 memorial cairns at the rear of the section, 1 to Michael Spratley who was

knocked down on the road from Forres to Kinloss late at night by an RAF Bus, the other cairn is to Jim Barron who was killed in a road accident.

The fireman's prayer was said and a few poppy crosses were laid up at the cairns. After that we all went to Kinloss Abbey graveyard, there are 3 fireman's graves there, a wreath was put on Kevin Cooks grave and the fireman's prayer said again and poppy crosses were also laid here, the

other 2 graves are Joe Smart and Ted Bunt.

Around 4-15 pm we all went over to the Abbey bar in Kinloss village for a few pints and talked about old times and left around 6-30 pm for the British Legion Forres where the rest of the evening was spent.

Thanks should go to Neil Fraser who organised most of reunion. I think it was so successful they may go for it again next year. Hope so.



At the Fire Section from left to right Tom Mc Crorie, Neil Fraser, Mel Wardlaw, Jeff Moore, Bill Lorrimer and Bob Evans



From left to right Jeff (Geordie) Moore, Bob Evans, Jim Thomson, Tom Mc Crorie, Dave Air and Bill Lorrimer in the Abbey Bar

Reunion weekend 10th-13th October 2014

Mickleover Hotel, Derby: by our President, Dennis McCann.

Once again it was an excellent weekend during which we welcomed our new Patron Sir Roger Austin KCB. Sir Roger joined us on the Committee table for the AGM which went well. Sir Roger was presented with one of our ties and an RAF poppy badge which he put on there and then settled in as one of the lads.

The days went well in the bar with old friends having a pint and a laugh together which was great having the time to "catch up". After the meeting some members relaxed in the hotel using its many facilities others explored Derby or took the Coach trip around the Dales to Buxton and Bakewell and covered some really beautiful scenery in that area.

Saturday night dinner was a really enjoyable occasion after which Sir Roger made a very good speech relating his contact with The Fire Service. He made

presentations to Geoff Varley, accepted by Howard Harper, and to Sir John Sutton, accepted by Chairman Neil Slade to commemorate their contribution towards the Association.

The ladies gift this year was a fine embroidered handkerchief which went down very well with the ladies. There was a raffle, auction, collection and donations resulting in £400 being raised for The Museum at Scampton and £337.40 for The Memorial Fund. Paul Murray and Ron Gaunt won free hotel rooms. After dinner we were entertained by an excellent singer/comedienne.

On Sunday morning some members went home whilst many of us went on the Coach Trip to The National Arboretum. This was of special interest as there was a large Parade of National Servicemen. The train tour was especially helpful for those of

us less agile and we enjoyed a nice lunch at the restaurant. After another sociable evening at the Hotel we returned home on Monday morning.

My thanks go out to all the hard working members of the Committee and to Shirley Winn of Isle Of Wight Tours for making this another great weekend.

-Since writing this it is with great sadness that we learn that Sir John Sutton has died suddenly. On behalf of The Association I would like to send out our condolences to Lady Angela and her family-our thoughts are with you at this very sad time.

Pauline and I would like to wish you all well for the Festive Season and a Good New Year. Remember that next year our Association is 20 years old so let's make it a good one.

Museum of RAF Firefighting from WO Steve Bowden

The past few months have seen us as busy as ever. Despite the fact that the show season is over the normal day to day maintenance of the Museum, exhibits and vehicles has seen us all put in an enormous amount of hours keeping things moving forward. Our efforts are obviously being recognised.

In November we were informed that we had been awarded a grant from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme. This award was the culmination of two years work behind the scenes as the amount of admin worked required is immense. We failed the first time around, but, were encouraged to resubmit our application by our local team at Lincolnshire County Council with a few alterations.

It worked and we shall look forward to purchasing new items which will enhance the overall presentation of the Museum and its exhibits. Regretfully, we cannot use any of the grant towards the restoration of the vehicle fleet, but thanks to the generosity of the family of the late David Stevenson and members of the association who took part in the raffle at the AGM, more work will be carried out on the ever expanding fleet.

Believe me, every penny helps and we are immensely grateful to all of you who support our efforts at Scampton. We now have over 18,000 hits on the Museum web Site, 700+ members on our facebook page and at the time of writing are rated the number one tourist attraction in Lincoln on Trip Adviser!

The Austin K6 Gas Truck is now a runner thanks to the efforts of our team. A faulty water pump proved to be a nightmare as it was thought the original had been damaged beyond repair. Fortunately, a specialist company was found who were able to rebuild it. It is always impossible to name everyone involved in these tasks but you know who you are.

To bring a vehicle back to life that hasn't been driven for nearly 20 years is an amazing achievement and I thank you all for your perseverance. We all look forward to the next step in her restoration.

The RAF Fire Service has now finally withdrawn from Afghanistan after 13 years of operations. During the withdrawal, a conscious effort was made to recover some items that should be preserved for



Cpl Jim Millington with sign from Bastion

posterity. With that in mind, the signs from the Domestic Fire Section, The Crash Bays and the Fire Safety Office have been recovered to the UK and transported to the Museum at Scampton for preservation.

Modern history is just as important as our past so a real effort is now being made to capture images, stories and artefacts from this important period of our history. All serving RAF personnel will have a point of contact at their unit for onward transmission of such things but if you're retired and have something to contribute then please get in touch. This should also act as a timely reminder of all the other conflicts and troubles that we've been involved in over the years. It is vital that

we try and collate all of these stories and record our proud past.

In November, I was very pleased to welcome the Head of Branch, Air Commodore Millington to the Museum. Accompanied by the Station Commander, Wing Commander Harrop, the Air/Cdr was keen to find out more about our history and how the trade had evolved over the years. They spent 2 hours looking around the collection and I think it's safe to say she was amazed at the amount of material on display.

Back with the day job at RAF Coningsby, it was very gratifying to know that one of the newly constructed accommodation blocks has been named after an RAF Firefighter. Murphy Block is named after A/Cpl Brian Murphy who received a George Medal for his actions during the 1950's. A copy of his citation reads as follows:-

G.M. London Gazette 4.10.1957 2452756
Acting Corporal Brian Murphy, Royal Air Force, 'On 5th April, 1957, a Canberra aircraft caught fire in a servicing hangar at the Royal Air Force Station, Coningsby. Corporal Murphy was in charge of the Duty Fire Crew which was called upon to deal with the fire. One of the aircraft's fuel tanks was alight and apart from the risk of this tank exploding the presence of 800 gallons of volatile fuel in the adjoining tanks made the situation extremely dangerous. Corporal Murphy, however, unhesitatingly led his crew into the confined space of the aircraft's bomb bay, from which, had there



Harold Cook



I am grateful to member 475 Dutchy Holland who has sent in these pictures of Harold Cook who passed away in May this year. Dutchy describes Harold as a good all round sportsman and perfect gentleman who is sorely missed. The pictures were taken at RAF Thorney Island 1956-58



Harold 2nd from left

been an explosion, escape would have been virtually impossible. While operating in this dangerous situation, Corporal Murphy and his crew were subjected to further hazard by the explosion of powerful starter cartridges stored a few feet away, which blasted a hole in the fuselage and so caused the fire to spread rapidly in all directions. Despite this, and the increased risk of the fuel tanks exploding, Corporal Murphy remained at his post, though his overalls and uniform were charred by intense heat. Corporal Murphy displayed courage and extreme devotion to duty, and by sustained effort in the face of great danger he and his crew succeeded in localising and controlling the fire while adjacent aircraft and equipment were removed from the vicinity.'



In front of a Mk 5

The Station has tried to contact Brian or any of his relatives but to no avail. If you have any details about him or his family then please get in touch. Regretfully, his medals were sold at auction which may lead us to presume that he is sadly no longer with us. I would love to be corrected! It is hoped to have a display in the foyer of the block and also at Scampton.

The continued support of our volunteers and supporters has ensured another successful year. Let us hope that we continue onwards and upwards for 2015 and may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

WO Steve Shirley MBE



This picture features an entertainer who many mature members may recall, the late "Professor" Jimmy Edwards, enjoying some refreshment in a Fire Section bar; Dutchy promises a donation to Association funds if any member can identify which section

A Trip to India by Adey Tearle



In 2009 I was working in Saudi for BAE based in Riyadh and decided to take a holiday in India. As I haven't got enough material to fill this edition I decided to share the diary I kept of this trip. So this is the first instalment, further instalments will appear in subsequent editions when I don't have enough material to fill the magazine, you have been warned!

Thursday 9th April 2009

I was checking in at the airport when a young Scotsman approached me, he had a ticket for the same flight as me but no visa for India. He asked me if you could get them on arrival, I told him no you had to apply in person at the embassy at least 2 weeks before the flight.

His mate was also travelling, but with Saudia, I wondered if his mate had a ticket? Then he asked if he could get a refund on the ticket, I said I didn't think it was likely on the day of the flight.

This is one of the main problems with airports in Saudi, there aren't any airline helpdesks like you find in other world airports, nor is there an information desk, you are entirely dependent on the kindness of strangers. Also there are no duty free shops, and only one currency exchange place.

It is always interesting watching the

Indians and Pakistanis at check in, they all seem to have huge boxes tied with string, and giant laundry bags packed with stuff, massive suitcases as big as them. Quite often they will also have rolls of carpet and items of furniture!

Inevitably they delay everyone's check in by arguing about their excess baggage and pleading to be allowed to take it without

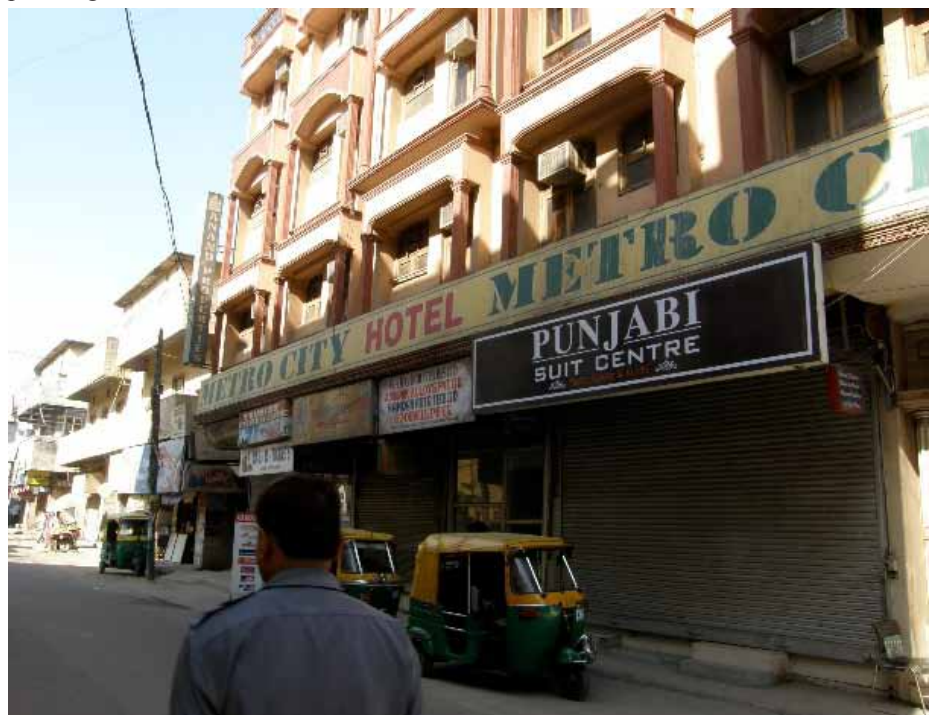
paying the excess. One thing they didn't learn from the British was the ability to queue. It is always bedlam and they stand so close its un-nerving, I always wonder what they are afraid they might miss.

But it is the same when you go to board the plane, everyone has a ticket and is guaranteed a seat, but they still jostle and push and shove to get on first.

Saudi civil servants are world leaders in terms of their indifference to the public they are supposed to serve. They are arrogant as a people anyway, but this arrogance increases in direct relation to their seniority within the civil service. Body language can be hazardous too, raise even an eyebrow and they mentally place you at the back of the queue.

There is a Business lounge at Riyadh, but as a westerner you are allowed in if you pay 100 Saudi Riyals, I was going Business anyway so still got in. Generally its just a few business people and occasionally small family groups. But even with western women, Saudi culture still pervades, they walk around with downcast eyes, and will not under any circumstances exchange eye contact with a man.

Two firsts, I am upgraded to First Class and get to go upstairs in a Jumbo for the first time ever, result! So free newspaper, free orange juice, and a refreshing hot towel. Both the steward and stewardess were "mature", late 40's probably and definitely



This was the hotel, for only one night

not employed for their good looks, so well done Air India for such an enlightened egalitarian approach to recruitment.

Lunch is served, I am offered Chicken curry or "Meat" curry, the very fact they call it "Meat" puts me off, it means they are not sure what it is themselves! So I order chicken, then the steward comes to say they have a special meal for me, prawn curry, I am not sure what is going on now as I never indicated special dietary requirements, and do I really want to eat recooked prawns on an Air India flight?

However I didn't have any choice so prawn curry it was, it looked ok when it arrived and tasted alright. Only time will tell whether or not I enjoyed it !

I got a pre-paid taxi from the airport in Delhi as advised in Lonely Planet. Mine was actually a small mini-bus and I sat in the back, it wasn't long before I discovered it had no suspension and Indian roads are crap. Every time we went over a bump my head hit the plastic roof, and the first time I discovered there was also a steel anti-roll bar directly above my head!

Traffic here is worse than Saudi, mainly because there are also huge numbers of motor bikes and scooters, auto-rickshaws(tuk-tuks) cycle rickshaws, and ordinary cycles. They also use bicycles with trailers to move goods around, often loads considerably larger than bike and trailer.

On arrival at the hotel in Reception it seemed ok, but the room itself, although with A/C was very very basic. All the fabric that should have been white was actually grey. But the bed was comfortable and that's all I wanted.

Once I had checked in and unpacked I went in search of some comfortable shoes. I bought some very nice casual Indian style shoes made from camel leather. The salesman assures me they will last two years but I have my reservations, we shall see. The streets were packed with shoppers, and every few yards a hawker would try and sell you a belt, or sunglasses, or jewellery, or a toy of some description.

After shopping I got an auto rickshaw to take me to GB Road to see the Delhi red light area and it is just this one street. The girls operate out of flats above a row of shops. There were police everywhere and the place had a definite air of menace. It was very dark and scary with rough



sleepers everywhere as well, although I was to become accustomed to the rough sleepers, you see them everywhere in India.

The working girls I saw were definitely physically and cosmetically challenged and my driver said the going rate was 500 rupees (less than a tenner) but you have to also give them 100 for each child to keep the children away, and also apparently you have to tip them afterwards (the hookers, not the kids)

My first encounter with the poverty of India came here, beautiful unwashed, uncared for children, begging in the streets. Absolutely heartbreaking, you are discouraged from giving them money, but it is very hard not to.

Finished off the evening with dinner at a restaurant called Qba, because the bar is the shape of a Q. 3 course meal and a couple of beers was a shade under 30 quid.

Friday 10th April

Went down for breakfast, which it turns out



is served in your room, so I just ordered coffee. After breakfast I need to try and find someone to fix the Mac, tried to switch it on this morning and nothing happened.

Following breakfast I set off for Nehru Place, which apparently is the largest computer spares place in Asia, in the hope someone can fix the Mac. There is also a street market here which it seemed to me was selling very dodgy gear. Dropped off the laptop with a charming guy who asked me to call back at 3.

After that I got a tuk-tuk to take me to find a new hotel. Found one ok and it is a great improvement on the last so will probably book it for when I return to Delhi. Once I had unpacked I went back to check on the Mac.

While I was back at Nehru Place I got a local sim card for the iPhone, it is working for calls and I am waiting for net activation. Sadly the laptop is still not fixed, if he can do it today he will return it to the hotel later. Failing that I have to go back tomorrow. Must confess I am not entirely confident about his ability to deliver as it is 6pm already, maybe tomorrow.....

Decided to look at the Red Fort but had to be quick as the tuk-tuk couldn't park, so it was a quick in and out and a few pics, I will try and get back another day.

On the way back to the hotel I got him to stop at some music instrument shops I had seen on the way to the fort. I bought an Indian Saxophone for 60 quid!! Now I just have to learn to play it! Also while I was out this morning I bought the bus ticket for Dharamsala, bus leaves at 5pm tomorrow and it is a 13 hour journey.

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

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No personal callers please.

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

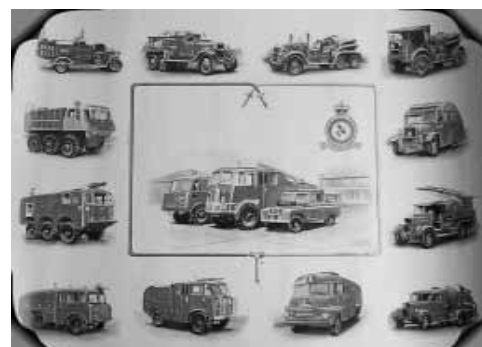
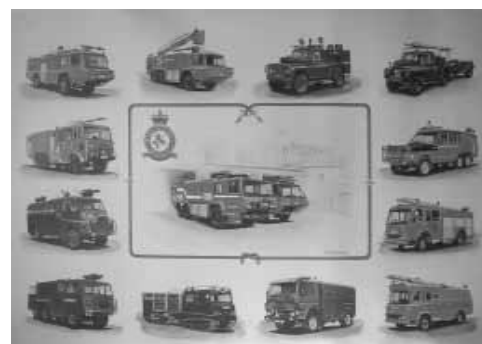
Note:- For Mail Order - All items will be subject to postage and packaging, which will be calculated per individual order. A customer will be informed of the cost and, when payment is received, the order will be despatched.

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 KEYRING	£3.50
CLOTH KEYRING	£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	





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It speaks for itself