



95th Birthday! Raymond (Ray) Hughes MBE



It gives me great pleasure to announce the 95th Birthday of Ray Hughes on the 18th February 2009.

Due to an unforeseen oversight, on my part, the announcement is sadly somewhat belated. I therefore, owe Ray an apology for failing to announce his Birthday in the March edition of the Newsletter.

Following service in the National Fire Service Ray served the Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Brigade (HFB) for 26 years, from its inception in 1948 until his retirement in 1974, as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

At one of the very early meetings of the of the Fire and Public Protection Committee, following the formation of the HFB in 1948, the new CFO, G V Blackstone, advised the committee that the brigade had a formidable building programme before it. Up until 1948 the Hertfordshire County Council had never been a Fire Authority, and therefore, had no idea of what it was to fund and operate a Fire Brigade in peacetime, starting out with a motley collection of buildings, appliances and equipment.

When Ray joined the HFB he took up the post of Divisional Commander 'West'. In 1956 he succeeded ACO Frame as ACO and Deputy Chief Officer.

G V Blackstone charged Ray with the single most important responsibility at that time, namely the acquisition of property and land to build fire stations on.

Due to severe government restrictions after the war, his predecessor had only managed to get three new stations built, one wholetime and two retained.

Over the next 18 years Ray managed to achieve the building, rebuilding and alterations of some 16 new and re-modeled fire stations, including a new headquarters at Hertford in 1964. With the exception of St Albans, and by the end of this year Watford, all those buildings still stand today as testimony to his stewardship and fulfilment of GVB's charge to him.

All of Ray's hard work and efforts were rewarded, when in 1966, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire, Member (MBE) which was presented to him by Her Majesty the Queen.

Towards the end of 2003 Ray suffered a stroke, which initially was quite debilitating for him, however, with six weeks of intensive rehabilitation and his own determination he has made a remarkable recovery.

Ray lives on his own in Knebworth, having lost his dear wife Cherry in 2001. Due to age and ill health Ray has had to give up driving in recent years and his love of playing organ music, particularly organ music in church.

In spite of his ailments, Ray has a remarkable spirit and is still very agile in body and mind. It was no effort for him to make me coffee and keep me entertained for a couple of hours recently.

In my own capacity of chaplain to the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, it has been my privilege over the years to share a number of church services with Ray.

[On behalf of the members of the RMA I send Ray our very best wishes. Ed]



Announcements

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1 Ray Hughes 95th Birthday
 Page 2 Announcements
 Page 3 Letters to the Editor
 Page 4 Letters to the Editor
 Page 5 Some Tales of GVB
 Page 6 Round Up & I Did it My Way Update
 Page 7 Round Up & The Verney's of Berkhamsted
 Page 8 Invitations and Results

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

I have to announce the deaths of three former colleagues . . .



Former Wholetime Fireman Brian Strutt Died on Friday 13th February 2009, at the Isabel Hospice Welwyn Garden City, following a courageous fight against cancer. He was aged 73.

Brian transferred from the Middlesex Fire Brigade into the Hertfordshire Fire Brigade in 1958, serving initially at the old Cheshunt station before moving to the new Cheshunt station in College Road when it opened in 1959. He retired in 1991.

Brian's funeral took place at 11.45 a.m. on Tuesday 3rd March 2009 at Enfield Crematorium.

Brian leaves a wife Angela and one daughter.

Former Wholetime Station Officer Hugh (Mac) McLean Died on Wednesday 25th February 2009, at the Tenterden House Hospice, Bricket Wood, St Albans, following a long illness. He was aged 83.

Hugh transferred from Bedfordshire Fire Brigade into the Hertfordshire Fire Brigade at St Albans Fire Station, Harpenden Road. He served most of his career at St Albans and Garston. He retired in 1981.

For most of his career Hugh was also an official and representative of the Fire Brigades Union.

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

All copy for the September Newsletter to be with me by **Monday 3rd August 2009**

My preferences:

- a) E-mail attachment.
jmbpot@ntlworld.com
- b) Floppy disk.
- c) Typewritten.
- e) Handwritten.



My thanks to all who have contributed to the Newsletter this quarter. Ed.

His funeral took place at 1.20 p.m. on Monday 9th March 2009 at West Herts Crematorium Garston.

Hugh leaves a wife Joy, a Son (Andy who has just retired from in the HFRS) and a Daughter.

Carol Coard Died peacefully in her sleep on Saturday 14th March 2009, following a valiant battle against cancer, for the past 3 to 4 years. Carol was aged 64. Her funeral took place at 2.45 p.m. on Monday 30 March 2009 at Harwood Park Crematorium, Stevenage.

Carol worked in the Accounts Section at SHQ for a number of years, retiring in 2005.

Carol leaves a husband Peter and a son and daughter.

I have been passed the following ongoing information and update from John Parker regarding the possible changes to some Fire Service pensions. [Editor]

I've just picked this up from the FBU website, Which I am sure will be of interest to the RMA readers

John Parker

JUDICIAL REVIEW - EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGED POLICE PENSION COMMUTATION FACTORS

March 2009

Members will be aware that the FBU has been progressing a challenge to the commencement date of increased commutation factors for members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

Members will also be aware that a similar challenge has been lodged by the Police Federation on the same matter on behalf of their members.

We have been awaiting the outcome of the judicial review lodged by the Police Federation, which has just been announced. The Police Federation has succeeded in ensuring that the effective date of the increase to commutation factors will be backdated to 1 December 2006

We are now considering the wording of the findings of the judicial review, and considering the implications for the FBU challenge. I will write to you shortly to provide you with a further update.

Best wishes.

Matt Wrack

General Secretary

STOP PRESS

Retired Members 12th Biennial Reunion
Longfield Stevenage

Friday 10th July 2009

We look forward to seeing you there



Letters to the Editor

Spilsby - Lincolnshire

May 2009

Dear Editor

The Late Tom Price

In the early 1960's Tom Price was a familiar figure at Garston Fire Station, he usually popped in about 9.a.m. for a cup of tea and to collect any newsworthy information over the previous 24 hours. He got on with everyone.

On one particular morning my watch was going off duty and we happened to discuss golf with Roger Lain. I had got interested and in pursuit of which we had purchased some clubs from a second hand shop in Queens Road Watford. They were wooden shafted with worn leather grips and came complete with a canvas golf bag, to say they were tatty would be to compliment them, but to us at the time they were state of the art.

Tom wasn't married and lived with his mum. They had recently moved to Little Gaddesden, where his mum had bought a cottage. Tom mentioned that there was 9 hole golf course near by, the upshot was that we decided to go and see if we could get a game, we pointed out that we only had the clubs, no spiked golf shoes, no glove, in fact none of the essential paraphernalia of the true golfer, Tom said it wasn't that kind of course and we'd be ok in our fire brigade shoes, trousers and shirts.

We stopped of at the cottage to pick up Tom's gear which was not much better than ours, which encouraged us. It was one of the most hilarious games I've ever played, the course was as tatty as our equipment (I wonder if its still there) The club house was a shed where the golf fee was collected.

After the game Tom invited us to his home for a cup of coffee, so off we went, his mum happened to be out, during our chat Tom mentioned that he had come across a wooden crate in a falling down shed at the bottom of the garden which contained about a dozen bottles of what looked like wine, so down to the shed the four of us trooped (There was a fourth person but memory fails) and peered suspiciously at the mouldering labels, but we needed a drink other than coffee and it didn't taste all that bad and the more we drank the better it tasted,(in these days when we are brain washed into believing that all consumables

have to be sterilised, hydrolysed and paralysed we might have backed off (but only slightly). When we left Tom's we were all three sheets to the wind and a sense of pleasant paralysis was creeping in. Thanks for the memory of Tom.

Regards Fred Caldwell

Saham Toney - Norfolk

April 2009

Dear Editor,

The Late Gerry Brooker

It was sad to hear of the death of Gerry Brooker. We joined as recruits at the old Watford High Street fire station in 1959 - from there we both attended the Middlesex Fire Brigade Training School at Finchley. As Gerry was the only one with a car he transported three of us there and back, we all chipped in for the petrol, however on a few occasions we had to get out and push the car to the nearest garage, Gerry always thought he had more miles in his tank!

Following our training we were both posted to the same watch at Watford. Gerry and his family were part of my brigade life, we attended so many functions together. He was also a great practical joker, many incidents too numerous to mention. For instance he never liked being pump operator and at one large country house roof fire, whilst I was waiting for him to foot the ladder, he distracted my attention, pointing to something off the fireground and he scaled the ladder, shouting "look after the pump Tom", I did not fall for that trick again.

Gerry was also a great weight lifter and used to run a small club at Watford Fire Station. There was one occasion when his strength came in handy, we went to a pre-arranged Special Service call at Rickmansworth Council Offices, we had been asked to rig a cable with christmas lights from a pine tree to a 35 foot flag pole. Sub Officer Freddie Coates was in charge, we attached the cable to the pine tree from the wheeled escape, but the Chairman of the Council did not want us to use the escape ladder on the manicured lawn where the flag pole was sited, so we used the extension ladder. Being the lightest member of the crew I scaled the ladder with the cable over my shoulder, unfortunately the higher I went the heavier the cable became, insomuch that, when I

was about 5 foot from the top of the ladder the flagpole snapped at it's centre, Gerry wrapped his arms around the ajax ladder holding it for a few vital seconds, allowing me to turn and leap onto a nearby fir tree, although I slid down the trunk of the tree the branches broke my fall.

Unfortunately, I was not aware of Gerry's illness and completely unaware of his death - He was one friend that I would have liked to pay my last respects to.

My belated condolences go to Gerry's wife Kath and family.

Regards, Tom Carter

Dear Editor.

It was also nice to read about Fred Caldwell recollections, which appear quite regularly in the newsletter. Whilst I was a recruit at Watford fire station, awaiting my training school course, I did regular days for eleven weeks so was a comparative seasoned fireman before I started at Finchley Training School.

Fred was on blue watch and he took me under his wing on a few occasions, teaching me the ropes. After day duty, on the way home, he also introduced me to the 'Coachmakers Public House', I still remember his stories about Canada, he mentioned that a lot of the Watford firemen and their families frequented the pub on a number of evenings. Unfortunately, although I enjoyed a pint with Fred, I could not afford the invitation so had to pass, but the memories linger on.

My best wishes to Fred and June.

Tom Carter.

[From the above two letters that refer to Fred Caldwell, it's good to read that his drinking habits were consistent throughout his career!]

On a more serious note, Fred is none too well at the moment suffering from kidney failure, which necessitates him having to undergo nightly dialysis at home. He has not lost any of his humour and is very stoic about life and his current situation, being wonderfully cared for by his wife June.

On the 11th May this year Fred celebrated his 85th Birthday. On behalf of members of the RMA I send Fred our congratulations on reaching his 85th year, and best wishes to him and June for the future. Not bad for an old SAS man.Ed]



Letters to the Editor

Hemel Hempstead

May 2009

Dear Editor

DRIVING LICENCE'S

Are you one of the 25 million UK holders of the photo card type driving licence issued by the DVLA? If you are, then take heed that these licence's need to be renewed after 10 years but this has not been made clear by the issuing authority. The small print on the licence is difficult to read and not easy to interpret the words when you have found a magnifying glass good enough to facilitate the wording being read.

This style of licence was first issued in 1998. There were just over 16,000 issued in that year and they have all expired in 2008. However, only 11,500 drivers due for renewal have applied and so 4,500 must be driving around with expired licence's putting them at risk of prosecution and a heavy fine with subsequent possible complications with motor insurance. Driving unlicensed can invalidate your motor insurance policy.

Just to rub salt in the wound, to renew one of the photo card licence's will cost you £17.50. This will earn the Treasury an estimated £437m over 25 years. This has been dubbed yet another stealth tax.

The Automobile Association has blamed the Government for not doing enough to warn motorists that the new licence's only have a ten-year life.

Andrew Russell

[Thank you Andrew for the timely warning. Ed.]

Parthenay FRANCE.

April 2009

Dear Editor

The RMA

The RMA has I suspect, brought much satisfaction to all members, I have this on a personal note!

It was through the RMA that both John Graham and Joe Bibracher made contact with us here in France, we have continued with this friendship over a number of years now.

In the near future, Maureen my wife, has to go into hospital for a major operation to remove some intestine due to long term

medication damage.

Although this is not new situation, other occasions have been through emergency admissions so on this occasion we have had time to dwell on things, so its been a bit tough!

However, John and Jenny Graham have been so supportive and kind, it has really touched us.

So I would want to pass onto any member that keeping in touch can have so many rewards, we have all made many good long term friends through the job, but this proves that the Fire Service family is just that.

Regards, John Hoyland

Moreton in Marsh Gloucestershire

May 2009

Dear Editor,

The Tempest

I am sorry that it has taken me so long to write to you, I do not know where the time has gone. I said at the last Reunion Meeting at Stevenage that I would do another write up of the Tempest and I see that is now 18 months ago. Still working does not help, I am still rushing around the country, including Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Isle of Man and Jersey doing Fire Risk Assessments and Health & Safety Risk Assessments, even Water and Disability Risk Assessments. Who would have thought all of that would start with Petroleum in the early 70's.

I have decided to retire in August this year being nearly 68, I think I have done my bit now. There is a lot that I want to do before it is too late. I want to make big changes to the Tempest, (see my article on pages 6 & 7 of the newsletter). Also I want make a working model steam engine and then a new Austin 7. So plenty there for me, to keep me out of mischief, and that is without the allotment!

Keep up the good work with the RMA magazine, it is great even though it does bring tears to the old eyes when reading things like Peter Scott and his hip

operation. (Peter you are a bigger hero than I thought you were, I am afraid that I would need to be put out.) [Me to. Ed]

Also seeing Dennis Robins, there are many stories there but not now.

My best wishes Dave Price.

Lakelands

Western Australia

5th May 2009

Dear Editor,

Just a few lines to keep in touch, thank you for the last copy of the RMA its sad to see so many old friends departing, but then we are of that age.

I keep in regular touch with Kath and Pete Brown and Sylvia Lain, in fact we spent today at Pete's place, with lots of "do you remember". My daughter got married on the 14th Feb, the marriage ceremony was on a boat and a lovely day was had by all (see picture below). At this rate we will need the Australian branch of the RMA, Ha! Ha! Also this year I had a visit from Martin and



L to R - Kath and Pete Brown, Sylvia Lain and Bill Ratty

Kay Petch, and later this year George and Chris Webster are going to pop in for a week, (I am clearly not charging enough).

We have been very lucky in Western Australia, having not been affected by extreme wet weather in the north and the severe bush fires in the east. Our pleasant weather continues.

All the best, Bill Ratty.

My thanks to all friends and colleagues who have found time to write a letter or pen an article for the Newsletter this quarter. It is you who have helped to make the newsletter so successful. Ed.



Some Tales of GVB

Following on from Sid Gifford's article in the March Newsletter, encouraging us to share any tales/stories we may know or have heard about GV Blackstone. Below are the first batch to have surfaced. Ed.

Bridport Road Dorchester
21st March 2009

Dear Editor

Brigade Report 1989

Further to your article in the March edition I can give the names of three former members of Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Brigade who later in service became Chief Fire Officers.

Jack Warden, Station Officer at Hemel Hempstead. CFO Lancashire, Tom Ingram, ADO Fire Prevention. CFO Berks and Reading, and me Basil Roberts Station Officer Watford 1959 to 1963. CFO Dorset.

I well recall the day of my appointment since the post advertised was that of Station Officer Borehamwood with a modern three bed roomed house. Immediately after the interviews were over GV Blackstone told me that I was not going to Borehamwood but to Watford and to a very dirty Flat over the Engine House in the High Street.

He then said "If you do a good job you will expect a pat on the back -you won't get it-that's what you are paid for. And if you make a lash up of things you will get a kick up the backside. Now do you know where you stand?"

I was not impressed.

Some months later when a new station at Garston was about to be opened DO Ayres, then Senior Staff Officer. Came to see me at Watford and told me that I was to be promoted to ADO the following week. A week later he again saw me and told me that I was not going to be promoted as ADO John Maxwell had been to see GVB and told him that there was not enough work on the Division and that if I were promoted there would be nothing for him to do. Blackstone then changed his mind and I was not promoted.

I was not impressed.

I once remarked that the Brigade did not have a Turntable Ladder. Oh no, I was told, we fight our fires from the inside. Then a fire occurred at British Moulded Hose Watford. Garston were there when I

arrived and after a quick check I told the Garston Station Officer that I was going to Make Pumps 8. TL required. The DO arrived with John Maxwell and pumps were increased to 10 and 3 Turntable Ladders.

A few days later Arthur Johnstone. CFO Surrey whom I knew, met G V Blackstone at the College at Wootton and said to him "I hear that Middlesex, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire had a good fire in Watford the other day" Each had sent a Turntable Ladder. Blackstone was not amused.

I was impressed.

All success to the RMA. **Basil Roberts**

Whilst en route to Hertford's annual dinner & dance at the Mayflower Place, Hertingfordbury, the Chief resplendent in bow tie and dinner jacket first called into the Hertford Station in Mill Road to pick up the all important kitchen waste for his pigs.

In the kitchen we had just finished preparing the evening meal and the peelings etc were still on the worktop. A couple of sweeps with his arm and the Chief had our debris in the bowl together with the waste from earlier in the day. After a cursory brush to his sleeve to tidy himself up, the bowl was passed to me to take to his Rover.

The boot of the car being full with his fire kit etc and with Mrs Blackstone sitting in the front passenger seat, I had to put the bowl with its contents on the back seat.

At Dassels, with the sow in season and no boar available, the plan had to be artificial insemination. Chalky White, the Chief's driver, could relate in great detail and humour his part in the operation of having to sit astride the sow to keep her still whilst the Chief, with the instruments and sample, carried out the delicate procedure at the hind quarters end.

Les Ives

(As Les said in his letter, both these stories illustrates the Chief's wonderful down to earth approach to life. Sid Gifford)

Hertford Station Catering c 1948.

At this time, HQ's senior officers had a main meal at 11 Mill Road, Hertford in the house attached to the fire station. On this particular occasion, Alfie Watkins was emerging from the kitchen with a dinner comprising rissoles, and when turning to go up the stairs the rissoles slipped off the plate onto the floor. Picking them up a familiar voice from a person coming in the

front door said "Give 'em to Chambers". Not being willing to disobey an order from the Chief, he did. Ted Chambers was, of course, the senior FPO, a big man in the job!

For ACO Alec Frame, his supper was sometimes prepared for cooking and on other times left for him to heat up, with rissoles and kippers often on the menu. After one late evening at the County Cinema, the kippers he ate thinking them to have been cooked, were in fact raw. On another occasion, his rissoles were inadvertently spiked with scouring powder in lieu of salt.

Dick Izzard

Dick, about that gritty story when the ACO went to the cinema, which of the forty pubs in Hertford did he go to - all of them?

A Different Story.

A cold wet night in the 70's, as OIC of the crew at Hertford, we were ordered to attend girls' school near Bishops Stortford where a male intruder on the roof of the building was refusing to give himself up to the police. Whilst manoeuvring the wheeled escape into the building, the intruder chose to throw the heavy slates at us, any of which could have resulted in a serious injury. After two or three hours the individual was apprehended and thrown into the back of the police van with the alsation dogs.

Later that morning when going over the details with Uncle George (DO East), the fact that the intruder was put into the police vehicle with the dogs sent him into a rage.

Was this genuine concern over the treatment of the individual or Uncle George's opportunity in having a go at the police following the Noddy-bike incident?

"Smithy" he said, "come upstairs and tell the Chief your story". Protesting that I did not want to make an issue of this, I was marched up to the Chief's office. In relating the incident to the Chief, I also mentioned that had I make contact with the individual, I could well have given him a good hiding.

Having listened to the detail, the Chief thought for a moment and said "Smith, I think I would have behaved in the same manner as you, and like you, I think it wise we take it no further".

Chief Officer Geoffrey Blackstone was a wonderful man. A credit to the Brigade and respected by all.

Fred Smith

Stories like these are Priceless. Ed!



Round Up

National Memorial Arboretum

At the end of February we went to Birmingham for a sixties weekend with Dave and Chris Price, we had Saturday free until the evening so we decided to go to the National Memorial Arboretum which



is located in between Lichfield and Burton-Upon-Trent and was about 25 miles away.

The memorial is a stunning piece of architecture designed by Liam O'Connor. It consists of a large 6 metre high earth mound, reducing from 100 metres wide at the base to just 50 metres wide at the top. The spiralling walkway up the grassy, tree planted slopes provides accessibility to people of all ages and mobility.

At the top of the mound stands a 43 metre diameter stone structure with two curved walls and two straight walls, constructed of 200,000 bricks faced with Portland stone panels. The panels contain the names of those honoured by the memorial. In the centre of this structure is a bronze wreath, flanked by two evocative bronze sculptures.

The memorial was constructed to provide recognition of the men and women of our Armed and Merchant Services who have lost their lives in conflict as a result of terrorist action or training exercises since the end of the Second World War. Unlike the World War memorials in towns and villages across the nation, there is nowhere that records the names of those

who have been killed on duty since 1945. During this period the men and women of the Armed and Merchant Services have taken part in more than 50 operations and conflicts across the world, often as part of the United Nations, NATO or other internal coalitions. These actions have ranged from

hot war to peace keeping: from humanitarian assistance to fighting terrorism: from the jungles of Malaysia to the storms of the South Atlantic; from the streets of Aden to the streets of Northern Ireland.



It is not just Service men and women who have made sacrifices. Behind every name on the Memorial there are wives, husbands, partners, parents, children and colleagues who loved them and who live with the pain every day. To see all of these names carved in stone is so moving there are thousands but more provocative of all is that there is as much blank space again waiting to be filled. Please God it never happens.

The area was donated by Lefarge Aggregates and not so very long ago it was a massive gravel pit. Now it is a huge area of stunning beauty and tranquillity with individual dedicated gardens all around, one of which is maintained for The Fire Service which of course we visited. Attached are some photographs of Alan and Dave admiring it.

Interestingly the name Peter Cowland (Charity Officer) from Hertfordshire is among those engraved on the tablet at the entrance to the garden.

It is a huge area, think of the Eden Project only much bigger, it would take the whole magazine to describe it all. The good news is that a little train does go round the site and there are also disabled facilities as well as a reasonably priced café and a shop.



At the moment entrance is free but they do ask for donations as a lot of the work is done by volunteers, how long this will be for I don't know, but even if when it is more established they charge it will be well worth a visit.

It made us feel proud, humble, thankful and at times tearful when we saw the sacrifices that people have made in the name of freedom.

Margaret Wallace

I DID IT MY WAY UPDATE



It is a while since I have written about my car the Tempest. The last you heard I had made some changes to the exhaust, inlet manifold,

camshaft and a heavier flywheel to improve low rev power and torque. That was in 2006 whilst I was in the middle of my Chemo Therapy treatment.

The Chemo treatment has gone now, as

has the tumour and associated cancer. I cannot believe that three years has passed, I am now into my 4th. year check up with it unlikely to return, another two years and the doctor said that it will not return.

I managed to get the car back together running and some trials completed in 2006. The changes had the desired effect and the car will now climb serious hills at 1000rpm without stalling. The heavy flywheel keeps the engine turning over and the camshaft provides the power at low revs. I am now able to keep up with the

dreaded Marlins with their six cylinder engines with bags of torque.

Graham and I attempted a full year of trials in 2007 but ran into Electronic Ignition problems. We retired on our first trial half way through without any sparks at the Spark Plugs. Returning our ignition system to the manufacturers for tests showed nothing wrong. To make sure they provided me with a new system. The next trial resulted in the same problem and it appeared to be when the engine was hot. This time I took a spare distributor with





Round Up

points fitted which got the engine running again. The manufacturers assured me that being hot should not stop the Electronic Ignition operating. The next trial resulted in the same and during the rest of 2007 we tried several cures. New spark plugs, new and different coils, Ballast Resistors fitted and without but with the same results. We did not resolve the Electronic Ignition problem and now run on the old points system. So much for stronger sparks and greater reliability from the electronic system.

When the car was running we were climbing the hills quite well, sometimes beating the dreaded Marlins and sometimes not, all good fun.

We entered the National Car Trial Championship for 2008 but for mainly weather reasons it was not a good year, but at least we ended up on the championship table with some points.



This year we are making up for it by entering for the championship early and starting at the beginning of the season.

There are 12 trials in the championship season and you count the 9 best results. Thinking it would be safe to enter late and do 9 during the summer caught me out last year. This year our first trial was last week but it was cancelled due to the site being water logged. So that does not work either.

At the end of the season I will be stripping the car down again to make some major changes, I am determined to beat those dammed Marlins, it needs a re-spray anyway. I shall be fitting an 1275 MG Midget engine coupled to a five speed Sierra gearbox. I have the gearbox already to fit to the engine with a modified bell housing, just the engine to do now.

I will let you know the results of this years trials and the modifications next year.

Regards, Dave Price

The Verney's of Berkhamsted

It's the end of an era at Berkhamsted Fire Station as 48 years of the Verney family at the retained station came to an end.



L to R. Alan, Mark, Brian, Clive and Paul Verney

Five members of the Verney family have carried out a total of 104 years service between them over the last 48 years, and from 1988 to 1989 all five members were working at the station at the same time.

It was Paul's father Alan, who started the family tradition back in 1960, and his uncle Clive soon followed in his brother's footsteps when he joined the Service in 1961.

It was 1986 before the next member of the Verney family got the bug, and this time it was Paul's brother Mark. Cousin Brian joined shortly afterwards in 1988 and later that same year, Paul joined the Service.

Paul was the last of the family to leave the Service, when he left at the end of November 2008.

Paul said: "I will be ending an era of the Verney's in the Fire Service, especially at Berkhamsted Fire Station, which spans 48 years.

I would like to thank everyone for all the help and support I've been given during my time at Berkhamsted and wish the Service all the best for the future"



L to R. Alan, Mark, Brian, Clive and Paul Verney

Paul Verney on behalf of Alan, Clive, Mark and Brian Verney

The Way We Were

Way back in the 1950s peasants did not possess telephones.

Business people and those who could afford it and could prove a need were provided with a telephone line and even then would probably have to share it with some stranger.

The Fire Brigades, in general, did not have radios on the appliances. In my Brigade, Lancashire County, on receipt of a fire call, the driver had three jobs, drive the appliance, operate the pump and he was also the messenger.

When the officer in charge wished to send a message whether it be a 'stop' informative' or a 'make up', he wrote it on a

pad and gave it to the driver, who reached into the cab, opened a small tin box full of pennies and took tuppence, he then steamed off in the direction he thought the nearest telephone box was located, in the middle of the night this could pose a problem as you can imagine.

Having located the box he inserted the tuppence and **-continued on page 8 -**



Invitations and Results

A "Shout" for all Ex-AFS Personnel!

The Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) was mobilised on 1st September 1939, so this year is your 70th Birthday!

If you are an ex- AFS member (or know someone who is) we would love to hear from you.

Please send contact details, and if possible, where and when you served to :

Peter Cowland
(Memorials and Cenotaph Director)
UK Firefighters Memorial Trust
55 Chestnut Drive, St Albans, Herts AL4 0ER
e-mail:pcowland@hotmail.com

Tel : 07775 673491

We look forward to hearing from you . . .
Oh, and "Happy Birthday!"

Why not have look at our website, which is
www.firefightersmemorial.co.uk



9th to 16th September 2009



- Day 1 - Fly to Chicago and collect rental bikes.
- Day 2 - Tour of Chicago with Chicago Fire and Police.
- Day 3 - Memorial Ride 09:11hrs - to Youngstown Ohio.
- Day 4 - Flight 93 crash site & overnight stay in Gettysburg.
- Day 5 - Ride to Schoch's Harley Davidson in Stroudsburg.
- Day 6 - Escorted ride into New York City.
- Day 7 - Elvis Run - 40 mile police escorted ride.
- Days 8 & 9 - Return to Chicago & fly home.

For more information contact Tony Smith on 07967 715 143



PRIZE DRAW

The quarterly draw took place at Baldock Fire Station on 31st March 2009
The winners were.

| Name | Station/Dept. | Prize |
|------------|-------------------|----------|
| A Pomroy | Garston | £5470.26 |
| D Jordan | Retired Member | £882.30 |
| N Reynolds | Potters Bar | £397.04 |
| D Hare | Cheshunt | £397.04 |
| M Gifford | Hatfield | £397.04 |
| M Graham | Bishops Stortford | £397.04 |

Margaret Nowlan -Treasurer

- continued from page 7 -

and waited for the operator to answer, when she did he pushed button 'A' and gave her the number of FBHQs and duly passed the message.

By todays standards it seems hardly believable.

I came to Hertfordshire Brigade in about 1955, *I can't remember what system we had at that time.

If we could persuade the telephone operator to put the call through for nothing, we pocketed the tuppence.

Regards, Fred Caldwell

**Fred, If it was the same system that existed when I joined in 1963, I believe it may have been called System 'K'. Ed.*

