



RETIRED MEMBERS EVENING FRIDAY 15 JULY 2011



As reported in the last edition of the RMA Newsletter, arrangements are in hand to hold the Retired Members Evening on 15 July 2011 at Longfield from 1830.

The format for the evening will be slightly different in that I feel this should be an informal gathering where you can all catch up with past colleagues without the interruption of a formal speech from me. There will also not be any formal "meeting and greeting". Otherwise the evening will run as before with a small buffet and a bar.

In an effort to keep costs down, I do not intend to send individual invitations to all retired members personally

and would ask that if you know of a retired member who does not receive the RMA Newsletter, please let them know of the event.

As my children are of an age now where annual holidays have to be fixed around their schools/universities etc, I am afraid I will not be there on 15th as I will be on annual leave but I hope you all have a very enjoyable evening.

It would also be helpful for catering purposes if you could let June Moss know by e-mail at june.moss@hertsc.gov.uk, by telephone 01992 507501 or using the tear off slip below, by 4 July if you will be attending.

Whilst writing to you on this subject I would like to propose that in future years this event is organised by yourselves, possibly via the RMA. We are more than happy for you to continue to use Longfield as the venue and provide a small buffet if required.

My best wishes to you all and I hope you have a really good evening catching up with your past colleagues.

**Roy Wilsher
Chief Fire Officer**

In response to your 'open letter' to the Retired Members Association I submit the following comments.

I accept that the 'State of the Union' address' could well be replaced by something shorter and less formal. However I feel that many of our members look forward to hearing 'from the horses mouth' of the progress and changes that are being made in their former Brigade. As to the clash with your personal arrangements, I am sure a change of date would be acceptable to our membership for future years and on this, or any other, occasion we would understand if your deputy had to represent you due your inability to attend whatever the reason.

Whilst we are all aware of the present constraints affecting all Local Authority budgets I know that most retired members feel that a personal invitation from the Brigade makes them feel valued and helps to maintain the sense of brotherhood that has always existed amongst firefighters. I feel that your proposal that the RMA should take over entirely the organisation of these 'Reunions' is rather harsh as we already have a significant workload in producing the regular newsletters and circulating to all members details of deaths and funeral arrangements of former colleagues.

In the past serving and retired members have always considered themselves as part of one family and I sincerely hope that this relationship is not being eroded in the name of greater efficiency.

**My best wishes,
John Potipher, Editor.**



Announcements

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THOSE WHO HAVE DIED



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

Former Cook Christine (Chris) Hoffmann, who died on Tuesday the 29th March 2011, aged 82.

Chris, took over the catering at the new Hertford Station and Headquarters, upon the retirement of Jessie Hummerston in 1964/65, had, prior to that, been working at County

Hall where she had kept the Fire & Ambulance hierarchy at Leahoe House well tanked up with beverages and cheese rolls.

She will also be remembered for those wonderful *dining in* occasions for the HMI etc. at London Road, when she recruited her daughter, Denise and other members of the family to help.

Chris's funeral took place at the Roman Catholic Church of The Immaculate Conception and St Joseph, 23 St John's Street, Hertford, SG14 1RX, at 12.15 p.m. on Friday 15th April 2011.

Donations to Chris's memory can be made to The Garden House Hospice, Gillison Close, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 1QU.

Brian (Sid) Gifford

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

All copy for the September Newsletter to be with me by **Monday 1st August 2011**

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.



Former Senior Fire Prevention Officer (ACO) John Gray, who died on Monday 2nd May 2011, in the Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, following a long illness. He was aged 77.

John joined the Middlesex Fire Brigade in 1958, before transferring to the Hertfordshire

Fire and Ambulance Brigade at Welwyn Garden City in the early 1960's. He served most of his career at Service Headquarters, Hertford, becoming the Senior Fire Prevention Officer in the rank of Assistant Chief Officer.

Following retirement in 1988, John and his wife June moved to Cambridgeshire to live.

John's funeral took place at 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday 17th May 2011 at All Saints Church, Church Lane, Milton, Cambridgeshire, followed by committal at Cambridge Crematorium.

John leaves a wife June and three sons.

Donations to John's memory can be made to Cancer Research.

Former Retained Fireman Fred Doughton who died on Tuesday 1st March 2011, aged 86.

He retired from the Hertfordshire Fire Brigade in 1974. His funeral took place some time in mid March 2011.

I have no further details.

PRIZE DRAW

The results for the March 2011 draw are as follows:

Names	Stn/Dept	Prize.
Bygrave	SHQ	£5383.80
C. Black	St Albans	£852.44
I. McKenzie	EH&B	£403.79
H. Stanton	CFS	£403.79
N. Lennox	Garston	£403.79
A Hopcraft	Watford	£403.79

Margaret Nolan - Treasurer



Letters to the Editor

200
Spilsby - Lincolnshire
May 2011
Dear Editor.

Faces from the Past

I dunno whether you can see this picture very well Ed. I came across it today in all my ancient junk.



It's the High Street station Watford back in about 1956. L to R. Ken Wells. Len Davis?. Pete Warren and George Mealing. I think they have all popped their clogs!

June and I have set a target date for my demise... It's called planning ahead... May 11th 2014 at which date I shall be 90. kindly note this in your calendar.

[Thanks for that date Fred, with my chaplains hat on, I can finally put a firm date in my diary. Don't worry, If I get there before I'll hang on! Ed].

Dialysis by Fred

To all my friends in the kidney club, both known and unknown I give you greetings. My name is Fred Caldwell, I am 86 and counting,

I have led a varied and active life. In the army for 7 years from 1942 to 1949, served in the Paratroopers and the SAS, while operating in Germany in April 1945. A month before the end of hostilities my jeep ran over an anti-tank mine which some unfriendly German carelessly left lying around. By the time I came out of hospital the war in Europe had ended.

I subsequently joined the Fire Brigade and didn't suffer any real problems apart from minor bits and bobs.

I was 80 before I met Doc Little who kindly informed that my kidneys were on

the last lap and dialysis was indicated and that was when I entered the Renal world and met some wonderful caring nurses I have to admit that the initial period was traumatic, specially the long journeys back and forth to Leicester.

Kidney failure is a life changing experience as you all well know. I started on manual dialysis but due to a hernia problem I switched to automatic dialysis, which is the regime I am on now.

Well Folks. You don't need me to tell you what wonderful dedicated people the renal nurses are at Lincoln, led by the stalwart Doctor Little. I am only familiar with the sisters and nurses on the peritoneal side of the business but I have no doubt that the nurses dealing with the haemodialysis patients are equally dedicated and friendly.

Julie is my home care nurse, we have become so fond of her that my Wife and I thought of adopting her. but she wouldn't fit in the pram.

At my age I am not in line for a transplant but it doesn't bother me, I'm already in God's waiting room. I believe that kidney's should be given to those people who have a good few years to go.

I would love to meet you all but my mobility is strictly limited. To those of you feeling low, take heart, enjoy each day as June and I do and remember - laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone.

I shall write again when I reach 90.

Love and best wishes to you all,

Fred Caldwell

Having known Fred for almost 50 years, I have to tell you that, supported by his dear wife June, he is a remarkable character. I have never once, in the past 5 years he has been on daily dialysis, heard a single complaint about his illness and situation, he really is an example to many sick people he comes into contact with, as is evident by the tenor of his previous letter.

Best wishes for your 90th Birthday Fred. Ed.

Perth - Weston Australia

May 2011

Dear Editor,

Don't blame me, I just send ém!



There was a Scottish painter named Smokey Macgregor who was very interested in making a penny where he could, so he often thinned down his paint to make it go a wee bit further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but eventually the Baptist Church decided to do a big restoration job on the outside of one of their biggest buildings.

Smokey put in a bid, and, because his price was so low, he got the job.

So he set about erecting the scaffolding and setting up the planks, and buying the paint and, yes, I am sorry to say, thinning it down with water.

Well, Smokey was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly completed, when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder, the sky opened, and the rain poured down washing the thinned paint from all over the church and knocking Smokey clear off the scaffold to land on the lawn among the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.



Smokey was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he got down on his knees and cried:

"Oh, God, Oh God, forgive me; what should I do?"

And from the thunder, a mighty voice spoke. (you're going to love this!)

"Repaint! Repaint! And thin no more!"

You can't beat the old ones. Ed.



Round Up

ONLY THE BRITISH COULD HAVE INVENTED THIS LANGUAGE

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,
Then shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

Let's face it - English is a crazy language.
There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;
neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
English muffins weren't invented in England ..

We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes,
we find that quicksand can work slowly,
boxing rings are square,
and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing,
grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?
Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one
amend.

If you have a bunch of odds and ends
and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?
Sometimes I think all the folks who grew up speaking English
should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane.

In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a
recital?

We ship by truck but send cargo by ship.
We have noses that run and feet that smell.

Regards, Danny Rickett

THE HOSE CART - FRED CALDWELL

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the March Issue of the RMA Newsletter. In the Photo of Roger Middleton outside of the new museum, I noted in the right background a hose cart.

I obtained this hose cart from Leavesden Mental hospital in (I think) the late 1970s. It was in a very dilapidated condition and I spent many months restoring it to its original condition.

When it was completed I thought it should really be in a museum. The Brigade, at that time, didn't have a museum and, as a local artifact, I thought it should remain in town so I presented it to the Watford public museum, where it resided for a number of years till they presented it to the fire brigade museum.

I was delighted to see that it at last arrived in the perfect place.

Best regards, Fred Caldwell

ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW

Blair Castle

Dear Editor,

Reading Mick Hodgkins article about the Antique Roadshow in the March RMA, made me think of when it came to Blair Castle this summer. They advertised in the village for volunteers to marshal the event and I thought that would be good fun. I ended up being in charge of the queue for paintings. Yes it was a great day with hundreds of people queuing for hours, in fact so many people that one episode from there has been broadcast and there may be at least two more to follow.

I saw some wonderful paintings and only one incident in the queue that was worth repeating (apart from getting to chat with Fiona Bruce that is). A couple came with two decent pictures, took ages unwrapping them and the expert told them that each was worth between £2000 & £3000. Overjoyed they went to the side to re wrap them and promptly dropped one onto the corner of one of the planters around the lawn and made a rip about 4" through the painting. The couple were totally devastated and you wouldn't believe how quick the local press were there taking photos.

The only problem with the day as far as I was concerned was the purple sash us marshals had to wear.

P.S. only managed 3 appearances on the telly in the first showing, maybe I will be spotted in the next show.

Regards, Dave Miller



British Red Cross in Hertfordshire Seeks Volunteers for Fire and Emergency Support Service (FESS)

The British Red Cross is looking for volunteers to join its Fire and Emergency Support Service (FESS) in Hertfordshire, now that a new agreement has been signed to work closely with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Full training will be provided by the Red Cross, but volunteers will need to be able to communicate effectively with people of different ages, physical and psychological needs and varying backgrounds who are faced with a difficult and stressful situation.

Red Cross FESS volunteers can be called out by the fire service at any time of the day or night to the scene of a fire, or another crisis such as an evacuation, industrial accident or flood. They offer comfort and practical help to the victims of the incident, often with

the help of a FESS vehicle, which is equipped with a shower, spare clothes, blankets, hygiene packs, food and drink, first aid kits and other emergency supplies.

Volunteers may support people who suddenly find themselves in crisis by helping to arrange temporary accommodation, advising them on other organisations and agencies which can help, and providing emotional support to help them cope with the situation.

Richard Stacey became a FESS volunteer last year, and recently attended his first callout to the scene of a fire in a block of flats in Letchworth. He and fellow volunteer Rhiannon joined police colleagues at a temporary rest centre, to attend to the wellbeing of the evacuees. He said; "When we arrived at the rest centre, we found about 30 residents of the block looking pretty shell-shocked and subdued. They had been turfed out of bed at 1 a.m. so understandably they were tired.

Red Cross FESS volunteers are trained to provide practical and compassionate support in these situations, so we immediately checked on the physical and emotional wellbeing of everybody at the centre.

"We handed round several blankets, as most people were in nightclothes or half-dressed because they'd fled in a hurry. We soon came across an elderly lady who was feeling very confused, tired and disorientated. Fortunately our response vehicle is kitted out for all kinds of emergencies and has comfortable seating areas, so we brought the lady over to our vehicle and she slept in there for three or four hours.

"Rhiannon stayed with the lady while she slept, and I went back and for to the rest centre to check on the evacuees. One lady had a small baby so we offered her some baby milk, although fortunately she didn't need it. We even monitored a dog and two guinea pigs!

"We were stood down at about 6.30am, so we brought the lady we'd

been looking after back over to the community centre, where her friends and neighbours were very pleased to see her looking rested.

"I enjoyed playing my part in responding to this emergency. The Red Cross role is to support the victims while the emergency services tackle the crisis, and it was great to be a part of this.

Next time I'll be even better prepared to help!"

Are you Interested?

To find out more about volunteering for the Hertford FESS service, **please contact Frances Durbin on 01992 585956 / 07734 811785 or furbin@redcross.org.uk**

Ed.





The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers

It all started in 1900. George Herbert Bridges Ward put an advertisement in the Sheffield Clarion, a socialist workers newspaper, inviting like minded people to meet him on Sunday 2nd September at the railway station in Sheffield to do a walk in the Peak District. A total of fourteen people turned up, and led by Ward commenced a walk of over 20 miles around Kinder Scout, the highest part of the Peaks. Along the way they sang songs stopped for lunch at a pub, swam naked in a pool, presumably the ladies turned their backs. They called in at the Snake Inn on the Snake Pass for scones and tea, and then made their way to the railway station at the village of Hope for their return to Sheffield. The Walk was necessarily around Kinder Scout because the top of the mountain was trespass land, land set aside for the wealthy to have days shooting grouse, so the public were not allowed. On that first day it was decided that they should meet again for another walk in a few weeks time, this was the birth of the Clarion Ramblers Walking club, the first formal working man's walking club in the country.



First photograph of Clarion Ramblers, in Cranberry Clough - May 1901, taken by the late Charles White.

Following the first walk, Ward did a short summary describing the route they had walked the names of the people who had accompanied him, he wrote about the weather and so it began, as walk followed walk, Ward developed the details of their sojourns and started to prepare details of future walks for members of the group. Over a period of months the detail increased, eventually evolving into the book I now collect. It's clear that Ward, a very driven man who saw himself as the leader, a man on a mission. He disliked the land owners who denied access to his beloved countryside; this set him on the path of reform.

Ward went to Spain during the civil war and wrote about what he saw, becoming fluent in Spanish, he translated books about the war, he involved himself in politics, helping to change the laws regarding the cleanliness of milk, he was instrumental in the formation of the Ramblers Association and the campaign for access to land, he formed the Hallamshire footpaths association, he was eventually invited to London to advise the government on access to the countryside and footpaths.

Ward's life was devoted to the Peak District, he spent almost every waking hour researching the history of its landscape, years spent in the Sheffield library pouring over legislation and rights of way, the history of every field footpath and bridleway, so much of what is now known of the history and archaeology of the area came from Ward's research.



Mick with just two of Ward's books from his large collection.

As time passed the books that Ward produced, (one each year) developed, they all contained upwards of 150 pages and measured 5 inches by 3 inches, the front of each book along with a picture of a Peak scene contained two of Ward's favourite sayings "A rambler made is a man improved" and "The man who was never lost, never went very far"

The contents of these books were and still are the definitive guide to the Peak District. The first half of each book describes a walk for each week of the year, this would describe in great detail the walk. The length of the walk, the heights achieved, interesting landmarks along the way, the time the train or bus left Sheffield and what the fare would be, the time the train left back to Sheffield, where they would stop for tea and how much it would cost and who the leader would be. Each leader would have specific instructions, "The walk will take place come wet or fine, the leader must follow the printed route. He will wear a distinctive badge and, he has full charge of the day and is expected to write in advance and make provisions for tea employ a whipper in, he will ensure that gates are closed behind them and that no orange peel or waste paper is left behind to defile either field or moorland and he will give a reading or information on place names etc. from the book and sing songs along the way"

The second part of each book is devoted to information on the Peak, the fruits of his research passed on to each Clarion member. The history of a great house that no longer exists, a stone on the moor, called the Hurling stone with initials carved on it, who were these men? Why this stone? What did it all mean? Ward researched and found the answers. Where is the missing cross? Why is it missing? Ward worked it out, found the cross and wrote about it. The books contained poetry and songs many of which would be recited or sung along the way. He was tireless and did this for the whole of the Peak District.





The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Continued

- continued from page 6 -

At the back of each book there is a detailed map of a particular area of the Peak, often hand drawn by Ward, giving ancient names of perhaps a hollow in the ground or the location of a long lost bridleway, they are a fascinating look back at the landscape as it was before modern maps were made, giving detail that would not otherwise exist.

Throughout his life Ward was a thorn in the side of gamekeepers and landowners. He was involved in the mass trespass onto Kinder Scout in the 30s which resulted in the imprisonment of several of the protesters, but began the process which ultimately gave the public the right of access to the land



Clarion Ramblers in Manners Wood Haddon 30th June 1912 -
Photo taken by G Wainer

Ward died in 1957, his final words were typical of the man "Keep the Clarion flag flying" It is still flying. The club celebrated its 100th anniversary in the year 2000 and still has over a hundred members, many who walk every Sunday of the year. Almost always using public transport so there is no necessity to finish where you started.

After his death the committee tried to continue his work of producing the annual guide but found it almost impossible, initially using material that Ward had researched and then doing their own research, but found the task too onerous, so sadly the last book was produced in 1964.

On the 8th April 1945 1000 people attended a ceremony on the summit of Lose Hill. The 55 acres of the summit had been purchased by ramblers and was given to Ward and his wife as a gift for his work for ramblers, he promptly gave it to the national trust, who will preserve it in perpetuity. The top of the mountain is now called Wards Piece.

It is interesting to note that Ward took his turn at leading walks, and was taking the rambles of twenty miles plus in his late seventies.

In the years since I began collecting these books they have become very scarce and more expensive. I have collected them all from 1916 to 1964, the early ones are becoming almost impossible to find, if one does come on the market there is so much interest from other collectors that there is only a slim chance you'll get it. Of course most people have heard of Wainwright the famous Lakeland Rambler, he was excellent and produced many brilliant books, but for me he lacked the personal touch, he was quite introverted and did what he did for the most part for himself. Ward however did what he did as a means of public service, so my vote would always go to Bert Ward, The King of Ramblers.



I took the above photograph on a walk I did at three Shires Head, which is set to the west of Buxton, South of Wildboar Clough and is at the confluence of two rivers, hence the packhorse bridge, it also coincides with three packhorse trails and the five rivers which rise in that area. The three shires are Derbyshire Cheshire and Staffordshire, not too far from where Peter Dartford lives.

Regards, Mick Hodgkins

A FEW ADVERTISING SLOGANS SPOTTED ACROSS AMERICA TO ATTRACT WORSHIPPERS

You may party in Hell but you will be the barbeque!
Don't give up! Moses was once a basket case!
Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church!
Forbidden fruit creates many jams.
Exposure to the sun may prevent burning
Be as good a person as your pet believes you are.
Jesus is the rock that doesn't roll.
If you don't like the way you were born - try being born again.
A narrow mind is usually accompanied by a wide mouth.
Seven days without prayer makes one weak.
Give your troubles to God. He'll be up all night anyway.
Redemption - God's recycling plan.
Good Friday - a bad day to bury Good News.
Families are like fudge ... mostly sweet with a few nuts!

Sent in by Alan Pottle



An Appeal

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

To help operate THORNEY

Volunteers are needed to help operate "Thorney" a 1908 Shand Mason Horse Drawn Steam Fire Engine, one of only five we believe still operating in the country.



What's involved! We meet at Biggleswade on a Monday evening to carry out cleaning and maintenance duties, during the summer months we attend various shows around the country, usually on a Saturday and Sunday, however because of distances we sometimes leave on a Friday. We sleep in a tent at the show ground and all that is required by a volunteer is to bring a sleeping bag.

Check out the website: www.thorneysteamer.co.uk

For further
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