



All Change at the RMA!



After nearly eleven years as the founder member of the Retired Members Association, and Editor of the RMA Newsletter, I will be standing down on the 31st of August this year.

I have worked for and been associated with the Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Brigade (HFB), as was, for the past 48 years, serving with, or for, all six Chief Fire Officers this Brigade has had since 1948.

I joined the HFB at Boreham Wood in 1963 and have served in all Divisions and departments, with the exception of Training. Yes, I have even been a retained Fireman to. For the last 29 years I have had the privilege to serve as a Brigade Chaplain, and have been in contact with many of you and your families throughout that time.

I will still be available for you as a chaplain for the next six years at least, God willing, should you have need of my services. You can contact me at jmbpot@ntlworld.com and 01707 886953 & 07985 055632.

This has all been made possible by the generosity of three former colleagues who have agreed to take over the running of the RMA Network, the Editorship of the RMA Newsletter and the organisation of RMA Biennial Reunion, The three people will all be well known to you and I commend them to you. I trust you will give them the same encouragement and support you have given me over the past eleven years.

Their names and responsibilities are Mark Cheshire - The Network. Danny Rickett - The Newsletter, both of who retired in 2010, and June Moss, the CFO's PA - The Biennial Reunion, who has just retired this August.

You will be aware that Mark has been operating the Network since the 1st January 2011 in what has been a seamless transition, due to his diligent work.

Danny takes over from the 1st September 2011. I know him well enough to know that he will rise to the challenge and changes, that are bound to follow..



June has been doing the arrangements for the Biennial Reunion for the past 20 years so it will be business as usual.

The final member of the team is our Webmaster Brian Hayes, who goes quietly and diligently about his business providing and maintaining the RMA Website. The website can be found at <http://www.hfrsrma.co.uk>



I would like to thank Brian for all his support and hard work setting up and maintaining the website over the last 5/6 years. There is plenty of capacity on the website available to you.



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Announcements

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1 Changes at the Retired Members Association
 Page 2 Announcements
 Page 3 Letters to the Editor
 Page 4 The Fire Fighters Charity
 Page 5 The Vindicatrix
 Page 6 The Worshipful Company of Firefighters
 Page 7 Five Go Back to Normandy
 Page 8 An Update from France

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

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

Former Retained Fireman Gerald (Gerry) Jones - who died on Saturday 25th June 2011 in Stoke Mandeville Hospital following a short illness. He was aged 98.

Gerry Served at Berkhamsted fire Station from 1938 to 1974 and was a regular visitor to the Station up until his death.

Gerry's funeral took place on Friday 8th July 2011 at Amersham Crematorium Buckinghamshire. His coffin was borne by six of his former colleagues



Former Wholetime Leading Fireman Mick Barnaby, who died at home on Thursday 14th July 2011, following a long illness. He was aged 56.

Mick joined the Fire Brigade aged 18 in 1973 and received his LSGC medal in 1993. He served at Potters Bar, Hitchin and Stevenage Fire Stations,

the major part of his career being on Blue Watch Stevenage.

Mick's funeral took place on Friday 29th July 2011 at St Nicholas' Church, Rectory Lane, Stevenage, and was attended by 400/500 people.

Mick leaves a wife Heather and four children.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

All copy for the December Newsletter to be with Danny Rickett by **Monday 7th November 2011**

My preferences:

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



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

Donation to the memory of Mick to: Macmillan Cancer Support or Cancer Research U.K. or The Garden House Hospice Letchworth.

JUNE PRIZE DRAW

The results for the 30th June 2011 are as follows

Names	Stn/Dept	Prize.
A Hounsell	SHQ	£5553.96
M Nolan	SNH	£895.80
J Batchelor	HH	£403.11
L Bishop	B&L	£403.11
N Bull	Stevenage	£403.11
A McMenamin	Watford	£403.11

Margaret Nolan - Treasurer

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 son 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!



Letters to the Editor

HFRS Lends a helping hand to the Fire Fighters Charity Textile Recycling Project



Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Firefighters Charity have teamed up with Robinson's Resource in an effort to recycle unwanted clothes and shoes. All the proceeds will go to the charity's efforts to provide care and recuperation facilities for injured firefighters across the United Kingdom.

John Print, the Service Coordinator for the Charity says his aim is to site a bin at every suitable location in Hertfordshire. "The more of these bins we can place around the County the more we will be able to raise for our Charity, which helps our colleagues when they most need it"

"The public of Hertfordshire have always been very supportive of the Fire and Rescue Service and this is another way they can show that support, whilst at the same time clearing their cupboards of unwanted clothing and shoes"

The textile recycling scheme for The Fire Fighters Charity has been a very successful fundraising initiative nationally, generating an income of over £15,000 on average per month, and this is growing with every FRS that joins in with the scheme.

For more details of the work of your Charity please visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk



Royal Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

The Fire Fighters Charity is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 4480058. Charity Reg. No.1093387. Charity Registered in Scotland No. SC040096.. Registered Office: Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG.

From: Frances Durbin
Tuesday, July 05, 2011 11:26 AM
Subject: Re: Fire and Emergency Support

Dear Editor,
CORRECTION OF E-MAIL ADDRESS

Thank you for placing the article regarding Emergency Support in the June RMA. It has been brought to my attention that the email address for myself was missing a letter.

Would we be able to put out a correction on the next publication, in case someone would like to contact me. All the telephone numbers were correct.

The email address should have been FDurbin@redcross.org.uk

All the very best
Frances Durbin
Service Co-ordinator.
Fire and Emergency Support, Hertfordshire.

British Red Cross
Baker Street
Hertford
Herts SG13 7HT



There was insufficient space in the June Newsletter to publish the above picture of the late Chris Hoffmann doing what she loved and did best, looking after the crews and Hertford Fire Station.

Also I did not want to miss the opportunity of reprising for you this picture of four young men in their prime!

L to R Vic Reynolds, Athur Goldsmith, Dick Izzard & Fred Smith. Ed



The Fire Fighters Charity



Greetings to all Retired Members, just to introduce myself, my name is John Print and I am the Hertfordshire Service Coordinator for the Fire Fighters Charity. I took over from Jon Smith who is now the Regional Coordinator.

Although the Charity has gone through some major changes, with its re-branding from the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund, and adjustments to its structure and the way that it is run, it is still our charity and in today's busy world, it is a fantastic achievement that the Charity is still rapidly developing in order to meet the needs of serving and retired fire service personnel. Since its foundation in 1943, the support of the fire service-



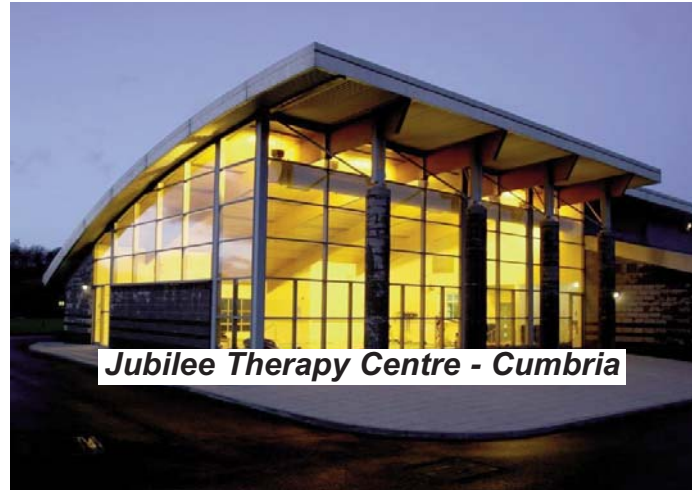
Harcombe House - Devon

community has helped shape an organisation which now currently helps over 17,000 people every year. In fact, very few UK charities assist as many people as we do, and this is largely thanks to the hundreds of highly committed volunteers nationwide, who support the Charity's fundraising efforts and beneficiary support initiatives.

I would like to remind you that, although you may be retired, the charity is still there for you when you need it, and that all of our Services are now accessed easily by ringing one simple freephone number: 0800 389 8820. Don't be shy about it, we have all raised funds for the

Charity in the past and it rather defeats the object if we refuse to access the help it can give us when we need it.

You can also assist, by making regular contributions, joining the National Fire Fighters Lottery or helping out as a volunteer at various fundraising events. (If you don't already!)



Jubilee Therapy Centre - Cumbria

I am also looking for volunteers to become Social Visitors, to maintain contact with sick or elderly retired fire fighters, widow(er)s and dependants within the area that you live in.

Please Contact me if you are interested.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Charity, and their contribution towards helping less fortunate members of the fire services community is highly valued.

If you would like to know more about the charity, please visit: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk
Or don't hesitate to contact me on: **07796997382** or by e-mail: john.print@hertsc.gov.uk



Old Fire Station Hertford - 1922

The Appliance was presented to the Borough of Hertford by Sir Edward Pearson of Brickendonbury on 25th July 1922.

Standing on the appliance, top left, is Dick Izzards uncle, Cyril Izzard, who later was to join the Ambulance Service. He was appointed a Messenger on 4th February 1925, aged 16. Ed



The Vindicatrix

The Vindicatrix

The Vindi as she was popularly known was for trainees for the Merchant Navy, based permanently on the Bristol Canal at Sharpness Gloucestershire, within sight of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. It consisted of the shore base, a number of 'Nissen' huts and the Vindi, a three masted schooner which was captured from the Germans in the World War 1.

Entrants

Thousands of youths aged between fifteen to sixteen trained there, including Fred Smith, Bill Burke and myself (on consecutive years). Our training was similar but varied with each intake. Courses were for 12 weeks duration, and for stewards, 8 weeks. Most of the lads received 'Dear John Letters' after about two weeks, mine came after five days! It must have told me something.

Travelling to the Vindi

On a cold October night in 1945 I caught a train from Paddington bound for Sharpness, arriving late at night at Bristol, there I and a number of other trainees's were met by an officer, loaded onto a truck and driven to the Vindi. Arriving there the sight must have chilled us all, a solitary light swinging in the wind lit up a number of 'Nissen' huts situated inside a high chain link fence. We were shown into one of the huts, met by a chap in a white coat and told to strip to the waist and line up, We were inoculated very quickly. White coat was not a doctor as we had called him, he turned out to be a medic. Following this we entered another hut where we filled a mattress with straw, issued with a single blanket, given a bunk and tried to sleep, dis-

turbed by the constant weeping. This then was home' for the next six weeks. The Vindi itself we would see tomorrow. At least the first day was over.



The Vindi

Well past her best in 1945. Her Mess Deck could accommodate 2 to 3 hundred. The Galley, manned by stewards, prepared our food, food being a very loose description of what was dished up. Breakfast, porridge cooked in two large iron pots, one for seamen, one for stewards, who generously donated as many cockroaches (swept from the bulkheads) as they could into the seamen's pot. Lunch was two slices of toast spread thinly with jam. Dinner was soup, at least that was what they called it! Supper was stale bread (never had a fresh slice of bread all the time I was there) spread with lard with aid of a large brush. If you were not quick enough with your knife you missed out. Reveille was at 5.30 a.m., each of us with a bucket in hand went down to the canal to fill our buckets with icy water, then back to the Mess Deck to be issued with a Holy Stone (pumice block) lined up, then down on our knees to

scrub the deck which wasn't dirty at all. The next chore to row old timber lifeboats down and back from Gloucestershire Docks, our thin uniforms did not provide much warmth from the bitterly cold winds. The rest of the day was spent on general seamanship, including how to box the compass, which I can still do, although I find it difficult to navigate my way out of the road I live in.

The Seaman's Mission

Each Friday night we were down to the Mission with our 4s/6d unemployment pay to gorge ourselves on cream cakes until it was all gone, and then to sing the sea shanty about the Vindi. The people of Sharpness gained from this and they always showed us a great deal of kindness.

Home

After finishing the course we were off home for a spot of leave and then off to sea. My two years there were eventful but I packed it in thinking it would exempt me from National Service, how wrong was that! My call up papers arrived for the Army (much to the relief of the Royal Navy & RAF). My Army service was a doddle in comparison to the Vindi, so in the end it worked out for me.

At the end of this long litany I know most of you would have tears in your eyes, cheer up, worse things happen at sea. Some of you will be pleased to know I am still coping with the five vowels, not so lucky with the Bowels.

Regards, Ron Ambrose

The 'Faulkner' Escape



Well part of the 'old girl' is back - I said that it wouldn't 'escape' us totally. It does need quite a bit of work having been in the open

for at least eighteen months and there's some accident damage to sort out.

Luckily the fellow who bought the appliance already had an escape ladder from his previous vehicle and was hoping to use that ladder on W.619, meaning 'The Faulkner' would become spare. Obviously we immediately said, 'Give us first option when

your wife wants to know when the ladder is going to leave the garden', after we

explained the importance of the ladder to Herts F.B. (and particularly CFO Faulkner). He, luckily, readily agreed to let us know when he would be able to bring it back to us - and on 18th June he duly arrived with it on a trailer, all the way from Gloucester, and it's ours to keep!

Yes, I think it would be a good idea to do a short note with photos for the Newsletter, to show that museum work is always going on (not necessarily always hitting the headlines), keeping the history and heritage of H.F.R.S. alive.

Regards, Roger Middleton

What a bit of good fortune Roger. But no more than you and Ian and the Museum deserve! Ed.



The Worshipful Company of Firefighters



Peter Cowland has recently been appointed Master of the

Worshipful Company of Firefighters and will serve in office for one year.

The Worshipful Company of Firefighters was created as a Guild in 1988 and received livery status from the Court of Aldermen in October 2001. There are presently 108 Livery Companies in the City and



each elects a Master annually to manage its' affairs and preside over their

"Court of Assistants" (effectively a board of directors). There is a very historical and much prized order of precedence of Companies. The Firefighters, being a Modern Livery Company are numbered at 103.

Charity is in the heart of every firefighter and so the Companies Charitable Trust oversees the disbursement of funds to a number of organisations. Since 2005 over £60,000 has been donated to worthy causes.

The Company promotes fire safety initiatives generally and has recently supported a Community Fire Cadet Scheme where disadvantaged young people were put through their paces to earn a valued BTEC qualification in fire discipline. Peter is keen to see this type of support develop nationally if possible.

The advantages of being a member of the Company, apart from the natural fellowship and trust which develops between individuals, is the ability to visit and perhaps dine at some superb venues not generally available to members of the public. These have recently included, The Mansion House, Guildhall, Lambeth Palace, HMS Belfast and even onboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth!

Peter, who is currently the Managing Director of Fire Training & Consulting Ltd, a company he set up in 2002, was previously a professional firefighter for more than 32 years serving in Middlesex, London and Hertfordshire. He retired in 1996, moving into commerce and industry in 1997.

In 2007 he rode a 2,200 mile round trip to New York with the Chicago Fire Department on a rented Harley Davidson motorcycle to commemorate the "9/11" attacks on the USA. He liked the bike so much that when he got home, he bought one! He hopes to repeat that pilgrimage with another 32 UK Firefighters in September

2011, this to help mark the tenth anniversary of that tragic event.



Peter has been married to Lesley for 43 years. They have two married daughters and two grand children.

Peter Richard Cowland
Master Firefighter

From Peter Brown
Perth
Western Australia

Never hide in a culvert during a cyclone warning - **Especially in WA**
The water corp. crew, who were putting in lines for an addition to the Millstream Pipeline, found the following in a culvert they were using.



The crocodile is/was 18' 2" long.



The snake roundup totalled 87.

We thank the Water Corporation for sharing these pictures.

Nice one Peter, keep them down under.



Five Go Back to Normandy

I realise that these little stories about the adventures of the 'Old Gits' (Peter Scott, John Bell, Dave Wilson, Peter Hazeldine and Yours Truly) seem to come around with monotonous regularity but it really is a year since our last trip! Doesn't time fly when you are getting old?

This year our travels took us back to the Normandy Landing Beaches and Battlefields. We stayed at Stalag 23 (old Watford boys will know what I mean) which was a B&B run by a charming couple in the centre of Bayeux. Manoir Guerin de la Houssaye www.bandb-bayeux.com but beware of Draconian rules, for example:

...we regret that we are no longer able to absorb the cost of unusual, time consuming and, in most cases, futile cleaning of expensive bedding due to the use of body oils, lotions, alcohol and food in beds. Bedding will be examined following guest departure and damages charged to guest.

Nevertheless it was an excellent base from which to explore and thankfully local hostelries were plenty. A word of caution however about costs. In his usual expansive and over generous way, Scotty managed to put another 40 euros on our dinner bill by ordering Calvados for all. Thankfully we only had one each.

Following some research by our intrepid historian Wils, we visited the recently uncovered German gun emplacement at Grand Camp Maisey. It's discovery is now thought to be one of the reasons why there were so many US troops killed on Omaha Beach. It also featured on

'Timewatch' a while back. www.maisybattery.com

It was then onwards to Pegasus Beach for yet another awful cup of coffee at the restaurant there (we too are getting forgetful as the years pass) and then to the Merville Battery. www.batterie-merville.com .



This was a particularly well set out visitor attraction and clearly much money had been spent preserving this WW 1 stronghold and in telling the story of the part it played both



during and following D Day. The rest of our time was spent indulging in the normal 'p' taking, swinging the lamp and raising a glass to the memory of colleagues lost



I see old habits die hard! Ed.

since our last gathering. The sadness eased with funny stories of those former workmates.

On a lighter note, the social side and merry making whilst no less typical of previous trips, did have one or two special moments. For instance when one evening either due to the effect, or the cost of the Calvados, Scotty threw himself down a flight of concrete steps. It was just as well he only hit his head because his so called mates' response was befitting their skills and professionalism. Hazel took the p (a skill he has developed well!!!) and admired the stars. JB went to bed and remained unconscious for 12

hours and Wils watched on - astonished but motionless. I at least was concerned, if only because a hospital visit would have been a slurred stretch of my French language skills and we would probably have ended up having Scotty put down. Thankfully he only hit his head!! (Must do risk assessments in future).

Also the bedrooms at the B&B were arranged around a spiral turret style staircase with a bedroom door on each half landing. For 5 ageing firefighters this proved to be far too

confusing.com and we lost hours going in and out of the wrong room and getting giddy. I'm not sure how much longer these trips will continue but at least they feel like new experiences despite us doing them for over 20 years. As well as time flying as we get older I also note that people also keep repeating themselves and get forgetful. I hope I don't get old!!

**Regards
Mick Howell**

[Nice one Mick Keep up the good work. Ed.]



An Update from France

This is my 2nd article on my involvement with the French Fire Service here in Deux-Sevres. Well it's been a funny old year. Last April (2010) I attended my first annual reunion come conference, as you would expect there was lots of reports about fund raising, items for discussion with the Chief Fire Officer! and changes to their committee.

This event was attended by the present Chief Officer and his deputy, Area chief of Police, Area Gendameri Commander and the Deputy Regional and Local Councillors!

Then came the shock!! The order of dress for the day was full uniform with medals. Well fortunately I still had rank markings, trousers that still fitted Yipee! and my cap. So duly dressed with Nato pullover I seemed to fit in. Lots of questions as to what the Hart on the badge was about. The fact that the queens head was on the back of the LSGC medal bemused them. Anyway, following all the admin matters we all went outside of the meeting hall in the village and marched off with a band playing awful music to the local war memorial!

Speeches were given, wreaths laid and off we went back to the hall. This had been re-arranged in our absence into a large dining room ready for a 4 course lunch, in true French style it started at 13.30 and finished around 5pm!

During the year there have been a number of activities that I was asked to participate in. Over the years in the UK there were major changes to the approach on Fire Safety, one of course was the campaign for domestic smoke alarms. Education for schools etc. This is virtually un-heard of in this part of France, in fact when I came here you could not buy smoke detectors anywhere. They are now beginning to appear. A new law has been enacted where certain types of domestic property must have one, being France it will not be effective until 2015, So lots of time to prepare themselves.

One of the things I was asked to do was attend an exhibition where the Service had a display, you know usual things, appliances and equipment etc, but I was surprised to find that the only mention of Fire Safety was by 2 ladies from a local insurance office, they had a limited number of leaflets and the sample detector had no battery in it, and in any case no one including, firefighters present, had a clue where the detector it should go. So

with the help of the Retired Association the next day we set up a display. I used some of the films I still had, to show them.

Other things the Retired Association were involved in was a visit to the General Assembly to meet with the minister and again, in true French style, a



slap-up lunch with members of the parliament. A sports day for the Young Firefighters was supported by Retired Members with refreshments.

One other event which I would like to mention is a lecture given by the Fire Service Chief Medical Officer who is in fact a member of the Retired Association as Colonel Jean-Claude Vignon. His subject was 'Well Being in Retirement' I



don't confess to understand everything he spoke about, but I did pick up some things which I thought may be of interest to you. I have included them at the end of the article.

Following the success of the smoke alarm effort I was asked to do a trial run with some school students. Off I went in late March this year with films, alarm, blacked out glasses, and lots of leaflets off the internet, including some that had been kindly sent to me by Roger Middleton. I was disappointed to find that the Hertfordshire Fire Service web site was sadly lacking in information. I was given lots of help by Hampshire Fire

Service who have an excellent site called **Kids Zone**.

Anyway the presentation seemed to have gone down well with more schools being brought on board later this year. The next step is for a presentation to members of the Retired Association and the cadet force, with the aim of getting out into the community and spreading the message. Some of us think that we should lose the word Retired.

As the year progressed I realised that in France the Association of Retired Firefighters has got a bit of clout, both at local and National level. It was amusing for me to listen to some of the demands being made to the Colonel in Chief of the service. Use of service transport, increase in uniform issue to include polo shirts and the use of service radio during service events such as walking outings.

At this year's conference it was announced that there is to be pension changes by the French Government, for Retired Firefighters. Up to this year there were 3 grades. **1** .For fully retired members over 65yrs. **2**.For fully retired members over 55 but under 65 and not working. **3**. For retired members who work over 15hrs per week. As of this year there is one rate for all, apparently a very good result for the Fire Service much to the envy of the police etc. It seems it is aimed at getting volunteer recruitment up. You wouldn't think the country is in much the same mess as the UK.

OK now to the advice given by Colonel Dr. Avignon. If you follow this advice you will feel better in retirement! Keep in touch with ex-colleagues. If there is an association for retired members join it. Try to get out of the house 3 times a week... even just for shopping! Eat lots of green beans. (A very french thing). Have a medical check once a year. Make friends and keep them. Do mild exercise. Talk about your work in the Fire Service and reminisce about old times, particularly with ex-colleagues, it's good for the memory.

So now you are fully armed. I imagine that most of you do most of these things already? We should say a huge Thank You to John Potipher, as through him we achieve most of this good advice.

Regards, John Hoyland

[My thanks to John Hoyland for another informative article from France. Ed]

