



THE ROUND THREADS

ISSUE No 3
SUMMER 2007

NEWS LETTER OF THE LFB RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION
WWW.LFBRMA.ORG.UK
PRESIDENT KEN KNIGHT CBE QFSM COMMISSIONER, LONDON FIRE BRIGADE





THE ROUND THREADS

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Design and Production

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Unit 7 Blackall Industrial Estate
Hamberts Road
South Woodham Ferrers
Essex CM3 5UW
Tel 01245 323130

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The LFBRMA reserves the right to edit articles or emails submitted for inclusion to the magazine.

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MILTON COURT, BARBICAN REDEVELOPMENT

For all you ex Barbican members out there, I have found out that an Application was made in December last year; to demolish Milton Court including the old Fire Station. If approved, the new proposed building will contain a 650 seat concert hall, 200 seat training theatre a studio theatre plus rooms for teaching office and support services. A Guildhall school of music news letter article stated; that a detailed study was undertaken in March 2001 to see if they could adapt the redundant fire station and morgue to meet their requirements, but no amount of re-modelling could provide the large volumes needed for a concert hall and theatre. Only a new purpose built facility on that site would give them the necessary facilities within reasonable reach of the main school,

Timeline for project.

Dec 2006 Plans submitted. **March 2007** Planning decision announced.
Summer 2007 Demolition. **Winter 2007** Laying foundation stone.
Spring 2010 Topping out. **September 2010** Open for business.





THE ROUNDTHEADS



THE CHAIRMAN WRITES

At a time of rising uncertainty and ever increasing rises in the cost of living, life is always full of challenges. I find it heart breaking to think that many people in industry or commerce have planned for their future and regularly put their hard earned contributions into what they thought would be their pension provision, only to find that they now have nothing. Unlike some sectors of industry and commerce, we as retired firefighters are at least assured of our pension provision. Furthermore we have the London Pensions Authority, who is there to assist us with this important aspect of our financial lives.

Our Association is also there to assist and care about the well being of its Members. The Association remains sound, well managed and above all else has the volunteers to look after our colleagues in the various branches. Whilst the Association cannot have all the answers to all our members' problems, we can at least point them in the right direction. We work with all the other Agencies so that we can use their strengths and expertise to assist our members wherever possible. The Association is always seeking new members. I believe that however you may feel about retirement from the Brigade it is a good and wise thing to join the Retired Members Association, thereby retaining a link with an area that has been a significant part of your working life. As one gets older and perhaps less physically or mentally able it is just good to know that you can at least talk to some one who has shared a similar working background. We are always pleased to hear of or read about the continuing work of the Fire Service on behalf of the various communities. Sadly from time to time we are all too graphically reminded of the dangerous nature of the work. Having previously shared the dangers of an operational career, it always strikes a very real note of deep sadness to learn of the death of an operational firefighter. Our condolences go out to the families and loved ones of those who have so tragically suffered such a loss in recent months.

Turning to happier matters, the AGM and reunion took place on Wednesday the 23rd May 2007 and I enjoyed seeing many old faces on what is always a very pleasant occasion. Any retired members, who are not in the Association, that want to come along next year, can contact the General Secretary who can easily sign you up and secure a ticket for you. Our General Secretary is Barry Sargent who can be contacted by telephone/fax on 01268 692675 or by email on bazzambe@supanet.com

You may also wish to know that the UK Firefighters Memorial Trust will hold its Annual Service of Remembrance at the Church of St Mary Le Bow in Cheapside on Sunday the 9th September 2007. There will be a march to the Firefighters Memorial by St Paul's Cathedral for the laying of wreaths. Later this year the Memorial Trust will be placing a Commemorative Marble Stone Monument on the Fire Service plot at the National Arboretum in recognition of the work that the UK Fire Service does in serving their various communities.

Finally may I take this opportunity to publicly thank all our Branch Secretaries and our Officers for the sterling work they do throughout the year on behalf of our Members. May I also wish everyone a healthy and happy forthcoming summer.

G. D. Clarkson CBE, QFSM, BA (Hons)

MEMBERS LETTERS

Dear Keith,

Firstly can I say "muchas gracious" for the mag and the Diary. Secondly I disagreed with the comments on the contents of issue 1 Volume 1 Spring 2006, penned by a Ken Wheatley. For myself I thought that a Combination magazine was simply superb and the person responsible should be congratulated for his ingenuity and financial foresight.

Very best regards
Peter Bambridge

Dear Keith,

I am responding to the latest RMA circular asking for articles for inclusion in the Roundthreads section of the Welfare Fund Magazine I hope I am not being too presumptuous. But I would like to inform members of a book I have written, Called Underfire. It is published and available from www.jeremymillspublishing.co.uk and costs £14.99. Far too expensive if you ask me, but it does include some big words and a few pictures! When I retired in 2003 after a 35 year association with the Brigade the last thing on my mind was to write a book. During my whole life I had never written anything longer than two pages of a Form10! Anyway, due to an incident too embarrassing to describe on these pages, after 5 months of retirement I had to spend 3 months on my back recovering from an accident. With a lot of time on my hands and a lot of time to reflect the process began. Just prior to my reaching the dreaded 55 years my Watch managed to get me onto a radio programme and in the letter they wrote to the presenter they stated; "He has dealt with fires and incidents in every street, square and alley on Soho's ground and perhaps one day he will put all down in writing. It will make a fabulous story. So that is what I did. I started by making notes and when I could get out of bed and sit at a chair I began the not unpleasurable task of converting my scribbling into something I could not actually call a book. But it was a diary of my fire brigade life from Training School to the handing in of the uniform. It reached a stage where I either did something with it or I bundled it up and left it to the grandkids. Some people, far cleverer than I, read it and said it was good and that I should try to get it published. Some more clever and creative people turned the diary into a book. I wanted to call it 'Ray the Fireman' because that was how I had become known. But I finally gave into good sense and it became 'Underfire – The Dramatic Life of a London Fireman.' The response so far has been great especially from firemen.

Regards
Ray Chilton



THE ROUNDTHEADS

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE CONTROL ROOM – DOCKLANDS

Brigade Control covers an area of 620 Sq Miles (1547 Sq Km).
Our boundaries coincide with those of the Police and LAS.
Resident Population 7.2 million
Up to 2 Million commuters and visitors daily

The Brigade is now borough based.
(33 boroughs including city of London)

London Fire Cover

Fire stations - including one river station = 112
Emergency response vehicles = 236
(Other purpose vehicles =30)
New appliances Incident response units = 10
Urban search and rescue = 2
FRU = 10
6000 fire fighters (300 officers)
110 Control Officers
1200 Support Staff



Control facts

There are currently 46 fire brigade controls in the England and London is the busiest handling 25% of all fire brigade emergency calls. London Fire Brigade Control is believed to be the busiest in Europe and the 2nd busiest in the world (Tokyo busiest). Next busiest in UK Strathclyde, West Midlands, Greater Manchester handling approx 100,000 calls each per annum. London Fire Control handles in excess of 300,000 emergency calls per annum.

New Control Room

In April 2004 newly refurbished, ergonomically designed Primary and Fall-back Control Rooms at Greenwich View Place Docklands and Stratford were placed into operational service.

The mobilising system (ProCAD Professional computer aided despatch) has been designed to enable the Brigade's Control Officers to process emergency calls. To ensure the Authority can cope with future demands, the mobilising system has been scaled to handle 1 million calls per year and is capable of handling peak loads of over 600 calls per hour. Whilst the previous mobilising system served the Brigade well, it was technically Obsolete and could not easily communicate with other computer systems or take advantage of other new and emerging technologies. The purpose of the new mobilising system is to take and process the growing number of emergency calls as quickly and efficiently as possible, while having the inbuilt ability and flexibility for improvement and expansion, in line with future developments. To assist in the whole process control staff have various useful aids. CLI (caller line identifier) Telephone number from where the call was made. EISEC (Enhanced information service for emergency calls) Name and address of person who pays the phone bill. GIS (Graphical information system) Computerised mapping system. Which automatically centres on the selected address and shows the surrounding area. These aids are used to build up confidence between the operator and the caller in some instances callers will agree to anything.

Control Room Wallboard

Key map – shows fire stations and distribution of frontline appliances
Current Incident list usually displayed
Heli Telly (live pictures from incidents courtesy of Scotland Yard)
Can be switched off if not appropriate for LFB viewing.
Satellite TV – Sky news, CNN, BBC
Scope for connection to transport for London cameras
(Police already have access)
Scope for pictures to be delivered from our own cameras on the fireground
This will be relayed from Command Unit to Control via satellite link.



Regionalisation and the Future

The fire and rescue service has been under review in recent years. A wide scale programme of reform and modernisation is taking place throughout the whole service. Currently there are 46 Fire Control Rooms in England. The national fire control project plan is for 9 new amalgamated regional control centres All regional control centres will have the same organisational structure and offer a common national response capability. (at present existing controls – disparity in management and organisation) Fallback and Networking Should any regional control centre (RCC) cease to be operational, a resilient network will provide fallback support.

Article by Jeff Powell
Principal Controller
Operational Response



THE ROUNDTHEADS

When life changes



My reason for writing this article is the front cover photo on the first Round Threads magazine. You know the one showing a fireman on a hook ladder. Well that was John (Jack) Wyatt, my husband. He served almost thirty years at Hammersmith. When he retired I thought no more fighting fires and being in danger in the line of duty. Indeed we settled into the next eighteen years as a proper Darby & Joan. Then my cosy existence shattered, Jack passed away suddenly one evening, my reason for living had gone. I was on my own after fifty three years. I still had the memories of stories my husband Jack told me, like when he and the rest of his crew were issued with new leather fire boots, the bells went down and they spent most of the night out of the station. When they got back and had done all of the station chores, Jack said "these damn boots are killing me" I don't wonder at it said one of his mates, you've got them on the wrong feet. The stories made me smile but they weren't the same as having Jack there with me. Within three months I moved from Epsom in Surrey to Chester in Cheshire to be with my family. Unfortunately things went pear shaped with said family after six months and once again I was on my own in a strange county. I decided I would find some voluntary work to do and ended up working at my local hospital. Now although Jack had travelled a lot in his life, having been in the Royal Navy & the Merchant Navy, I had never been abroad and had never felt the need to. But after I lost Jack I began to have an idea, would I be brave enough to travel to some of the places Jack had been to and which he had told me about. The only way I would find out was to go for it. A few months later I boarded an aircraft for Cyprus to start a tour of the Mediterranean. I had never been on a plane in my life, but as soon as the engine started I knew I had no fear of flying, I loved it. Since that first flight I have been to most of the places Jack told me about, the Canary Islands the Caribbean, Norway, New York, I even flew to Australia for three months. I now only need to visit Canada and I can rest in peace, that is unless the travel bug bites me again. The point of this story? To prove that there is still plenty to do after you are left alone; life goes on, not in the same old way, but still with hope in your heart for what a new day and place may hold for you.

Article by Betty Wyatt

Book written by Ray Chilton

Underfire is a gritty tale of passion and professionalism and is essential reading for anyone wanting to learn what it is really like to be a True London Fireman.

Written by former London Fireman, Ray Chilton, **Underfire** is an extraordinary real life story of friendship, humour, danger and heartache. Author, Ray Chilton, was a London Fireman for over 30 years serving at Battersea, Westminster, Manchester Square, Paddington and as Station Officer at Soho; one of the busiest, and most exciting fire Stations in the world.

Underfire describes exactly what it was like to work in the heart of London's West End. In the book, the author recalls the many serious incidents that he was in charge of, including the Oxford Circus Tube fire for which he was commended, the Aldwych bus bomb, a serious fire at The Royal Academy of Art, and incidents on every street, alley and avenue in the West End. Above all, **Underfire** is a remarkable account of the Exceptional work carried out each and every day by London's fire crews.

ORDERING INFORMATION –

The book is illustrated, paperback, 240 x 170mm, 304 pages.

ISBN - 1-905217-18-8. The book is priced at £14.99

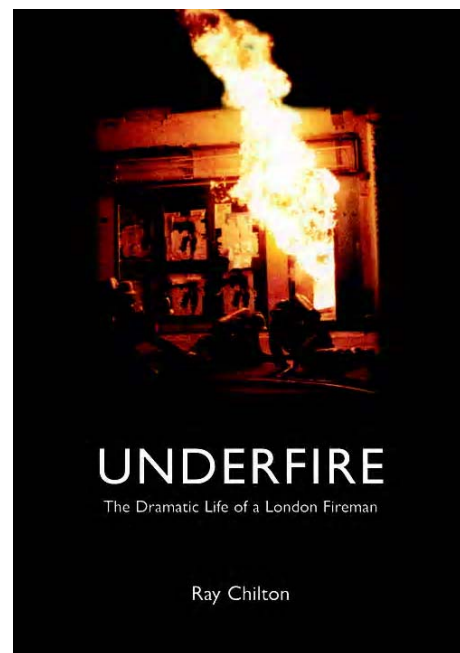
(plus postage and packing of £3.50).

Orders can be sent by **post** to: Jeremy Mills Publishing Ltd,

The Red House, 22 Occupation Road, Lindley, Huddersfield, HD3 3BD

by **fax** to 01484 421696 by **telephone** to 01484 421674

or placed securely **online** at www.jeremymillspublishing.co.uk



AGM 2007

The Associations AGM & Reunion was held at Southwark on the 23rd May and was a great success. The AGM which was held in the Sir Frederick Delves Suite was attended by some 140 members who had the pleasure of hearing an update on the Brigade's future and the work that they have undertaken over the past year from the Deputy Commissioner Roy Bishop who gave the Presidential Address on behalf of the Commissioner Sir Ken Knight. The Committee was installed for another year and an amendment to the Constitution was accepted by the meeting. Arthur Howell and John Bryant were installed as LVP with John being presented with a small token of our appreciation by Roy Bishop following his retirement as the East Anglian Branch Secretary. The Reunion which was held in a marquee in the yard, was attended by many more members, and ended at 2100 hours after many old stories had been retold over many pints of ale and plates of food, supplied by Elizabeth who looks after the catering in the canteen. I should like to convey my thanks to everyone who helped make the day a success and I look forward to next years event which, will, with the permission of the Brigade take place at Southwark on the 21st May.

Barry Sargent

Secretary



THE ROUNDTHEADS

Trading Items

New to our stock, the RMA Blazer Badge as pictured. Priced at £15.00 +pp
You can view all the items for sale on the RMA web site at www.lfbrma.org.uk
You can also order the items from Eric Crichton on 020 8597 5862 or Email erikcrichton@aol.com

Blazer Badge
£15.00



Ladies Head Scarf
£10.00



Cuff Links
£7.00



RMA Tie
£10.00



Jacket – Black £25.00

(Windproof, water resistant, full zip, two pockets)
Postage and packing £2.50
Sizes M. L. XL. XXL.



Fleece Jacket – Black £22.00

(Full zip, two pockets)
Postage & packing £3.00
Sizes M. L. XL. XXL.

Polo Shirts – Black £12.00

Postage & packing £1.50
Sizes M. L. XL.



**All items are embroidered with the NEW LFB RMA Badge.
Order time may be up to 28 days, especially if not in stock.**

For orders email me at lfbrmatrading@aol.com or telephone with the order to, Eric Crichton on 020 8597 5862. Cheques with order made out to **LFB-RMA**.



THE ROUNDTHEADS

From AFS to RMA Standard Bearer

The editor asked me to write a brief account of my life from AFS to one of your Standard Bearers. Well here goes.

After a few months with the post war AFS, I joined the full time brigade at East Ham in 1959. I trained at Dagenham and when I transferred to the LFB in 1962 I had to go into training again, this time it was at Southwark. On completion of my training I was sent to B25 Bow as all of you will know it was hard work and a lot different from the health and safety that covers the brigade today. By the time I retired from the brigade in 1988, I had served on seventeen stations in the B F & L divisions getting around meant I went to the Sun Flour mills explosion, the Ronan Point collapse. Moorgate and Kings Cross incidents and quite a few ship fires. I went on to join the team of eight Fire Prevention Officers for the Metropolitan Police and stayed nearly seven years. This was an interesting and varied job which entailed advising on precautions in several proposed new police stations and at Balmoral,

Norman Paulding



Norman and Brenda by the model `Endeavour` he made for Eton College, Natural History Museum. The Albert Case was made for the Great Exhibition of 1815.

WEFARE FUND LOTTERY WINNER

Congratulations to Alan Brown, of Essex RMA Branch, Who won second prize in the March draw. His cheque for £5,000 was presented to him by Barry Sargent and Norman Paulding



The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) is looking for Fire Officers to work on a part time basis in various places of entertainment across London.

Got a little spare time on your hands?

For more information and an application form please contact Bob Manser by any of the following;

E-Mail : bob.fextra@btopenworld.com Mobile: 07801 756462 Home: 01296 425494

Ground Zero New York November 2006

In November 2006, we decided to take a short break in New York. Amongst the many ideas of what to do, a visit to Ground Zero was important. 5 years after that horrific day in 2001, it seemed appropriate that the RMA should pay tribute to the Firemen who did not return to their Stations. A poppy wreath was Supplied and delivered to our hotel in New York. Obviously, we couldn't just turn up and leave our wreath at the memorial, (New York's Police are understandably not very happy about people leaving things at the side of a public building and walking away). I made contact with FDNY headquarters who replied almost immediately offering their cooperation. The main 9/11 memorial is on the side of Liberty St. Firehouse and it has to be seen in situ to be fully appreciated. It is massive and brings home the size of the disaster that befell FDNY on that day. Liberty St is the home of Ladder 10 & Engine 10 who lost 5 of their number. Their appliances carry the names of all of those who died, together with the sort of slogans and artwork that would drive the politicians controlling the LFB mad. I couldn't help but draw a comparison between their station and Barbican (My last station) It is in the centre of the financial district, surrounded with tall buildings, and was regarded, by some as a quiet station where not much happened. However, its firemen are proud, professional and thoroughly committed to their trade. They are also quite reserved. Having lived the past 5 years in a sort of goldfish bowl, with constant streams of visitors (one tour company even included the station in its tour of the area) and people photographing them whenever the doors are opened, they are now somewhat reticent to welcome all-comers. However, prove that you are an ex fireman and they change completely. I was at pains to express that my visit was one of tribute and not a sight seeing trip, and I left the wreath at their memorial with no ceremony. Ground zero is a thoroughly sobering experience when you remember that this is a place of such disaster and tragedy.

Jim Geoghegan
Membership Secretary RMA

Holiday or Short Break

Ever fancied a short break or holiday on a 60ft narrow boat? Well now you can try it out. One of our members has a narrow bout for hire. It is moored on the Grand Union Canal at Gayton, Northamptonshire. The Merryweather was built in 2001; its facilities include 6 berths, fully equipped galley, lounge, TV, central heating, shower / WC. Enjoy the countryside, pubs, places of interest or just the peace & quiet.

Price £600 per week

For more details contact

Ray Eldridge 24 Michell Close Dartford Kent DA1 1PJ or Phone 01322 272134



Last word

Finally; we have our own standalone news letter. At present I am looking at producing two editions per year. Subject to cost, the amount of articles and what type of response we get to this new venture; I may ask the committee to look at increasing my funding, to provide three or four editions per year; so it all depends on you the members. I would like to thank all the contributors of this edition and I look forward to receiving more articles and letters from you for the December issue. You can email your articles/letters to me at keith.sefton@bopenworld.com **Bye for now, ED.**

