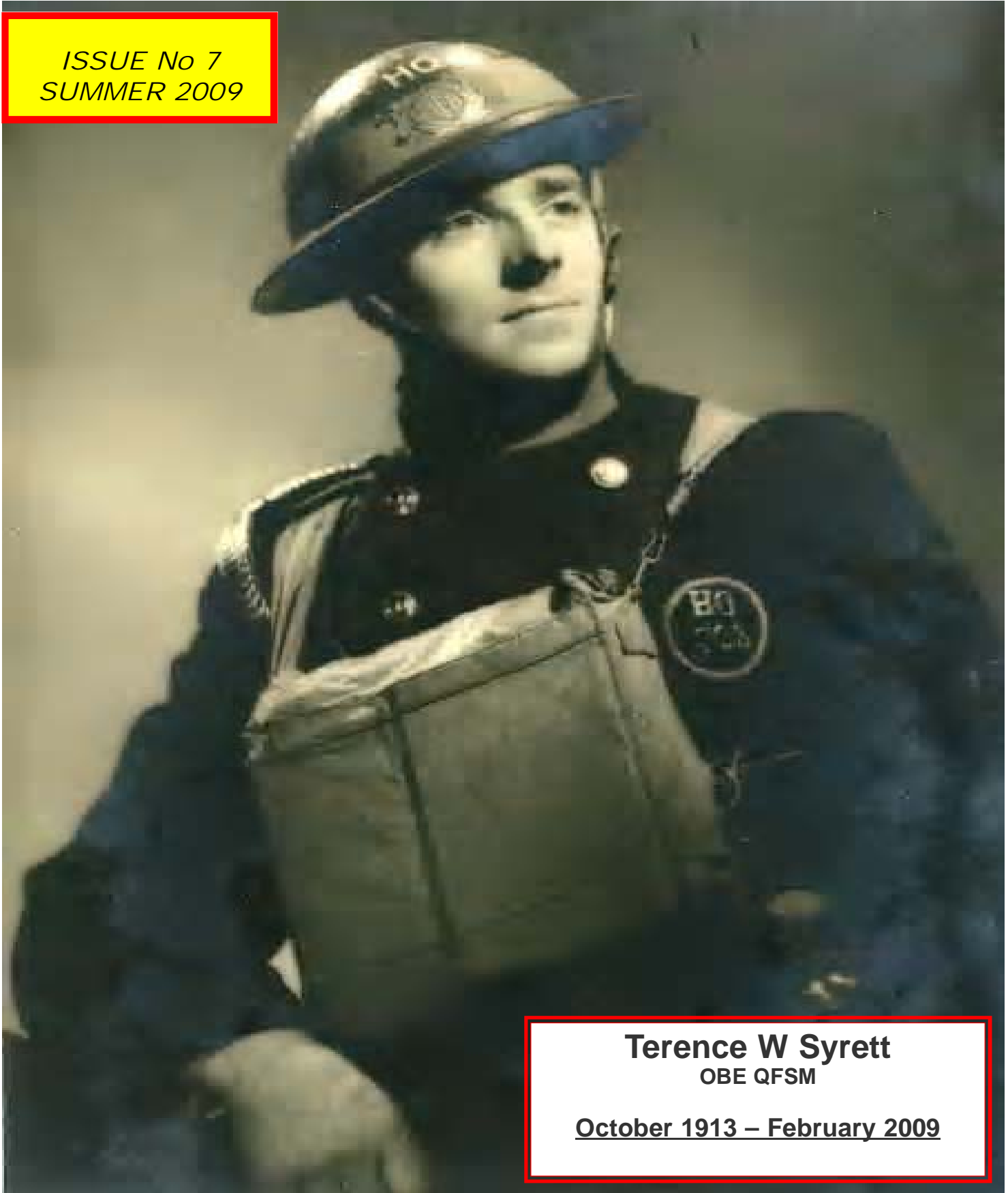




# *THE ROUNDTHEADS*

NEWS LETTER OF THE LFB RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION  
PRESIDENT RON DOBSON QFSM      [WWW.LFBRMA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.LFBRMA.ORG.UK)

*ISSUE No 7  
SUMMER 2009*



**Terence W Syrett**  
OBE QFSM

October 1913 – February 2009

## THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

I am delighted to have been asked to submit a regular column to the *Roundthreads* newsletter. For so many of us the London Fire Brigade is a way of life as well as a job so it comes as no surprise to me that anybody reading this newsletter will see the compassion, tradition and opinion that are a feature of the Brigade reflected in the articles written by its retired members. In this and future issues of the newsletter I hope to give you a brief snapshot of life in the London Fire Brigade from the Commissioner's viewpoint. In a society where social, cultural and technological developments are driving a seemingly ever-increasing rate of change it is not unsurprising that the way the London Fire Brigade works is changing too. We continue to reap the benefits of new research and technology by introducing safer equipment and procedures for our operational staff. For instance, new structural personal protective fire kit is being introduced early next year and this will be followed by the introduction of the next generation of respiratory protective equipment. A shift change from a reactive to a community-based fire service is paying dividends in fewer fire deaths. And practices which were once considered social norms are evolving and disappearing as we contemplate the effect they have on our health and well-being and those of others. I know that an issue that has been discussed a lot by retired members recently is the arrangements for this year's AGM and Reunion and I'd like to take this opportunity to set the record straight about this. In January 2008 the Brigade introduced an alcohol and drugs policy in which staff will normally be subject to disciplinary procedures if they consume alcohol on Authority premises whether on or off duty. There are occasions when permission is granted to drink alcohol on Brigade premises, at medal ceremonies for example, but these events are all carefully managed by Brigade staff and take place in a controlled environment. So when I gave permission earlier this year for the RMA to hold both their AGM and reunion at Southwark Training Centre it was on the understanding that consumption of alcohol from a pay bar would not be permitted. There are a number of external venues close to the Training Centre, not least of which is a pub next door that is owned by the LFB Welfare Fund, and I am sure would they would have been delighted to have received the retired members' business!! I am disappointed that the RMA has subsequently decided to change venue this year but I do hope you understand the reasons for my decision. We have recently invested a lot of time in publicising our new alcohol and drugs policy to staff and I do not want to send a confusing message about what is – and what isn't – acceptable. **Ron Dobson Commissioner**



## THE CHAIRMAN WRITES

As I start to write this article, it is a warm March day, which to me is saying goodbye to the winter and I look forward to a pleasant spring. Our Association continues to flourish and since my last article, there is little doubt that our Branch Secretaries will have been networking with their members to provide advice and assistance wherever possible. Clearly we are now in a very serious economic recession within which we all have to live. It is however very important that any member of the Association that finds any area of difficulty should not hesitate to contact their Branch Secretary. I am also conscious that our retired Firefighters pensions have not kept up with inflation over the years and I was pleased to see that the rise this year is 5%. Firefighters' widows who may be on the half pension arrangements, will not find things easy especially with the enormous rise in energy costs. Do bear in mind that Firefighters widows are entitled to join the LFB Retired Members Association. Our Annual Dinner Dance in November at No 1 Whitehall Place was another huge success and provided an opportunity to meet many old friends and colleagues. The venue for this event is very special and I never fail to marvel at the splendour of the wonderful marble staircase. I know that the General secretary has arranged for another cruise on the River Thames, which was so well supported last year. In addition there is another visit arranged for LFB RMA Battlefield Tour to the Somme from the 14th to the 16th November 2009. As we move into the spring I am saddened to have to report that, after a great many years of support for our retired members by our former employers, the Commissioner has decided that the Fire Authority's Drugs & Alcohol Policy precludes us from having our reunion in our Marquee in the yard at Southwark Training Centre. The Reunion has been held at the Training Centre for many years and there has never ever been the slightest criticism regarding the reasonable consumption of alcohol. This is perhaps not surprising given that these attending are mature and reasonable people. The Commissioner did helpfully suggest that we could always use the Public House next door, but I pointed out that it would be most unsuitable firstly because of the health and safety issues with the sheer numbers involved (250 to 300). Secondly our reception has always been strictly supervised to create an atmosphere for our Association's Members and their distinguished guests, which includes our President and the Chairman of the Authority, which sets the right tone and has the dignity of the occasion. The Reunion does not get under way until about 4 p.m. and we are actually clearing the Marquee by about 8 pm at the latest. In addition we pay a considerable sum every year for a very large Marquee in the yard, so that we do not have to occupy the Authority buildings for the Reunion. What makes this even more remarkable is the fact that the Chairman of the Authority Councillor Brian Coleman assured me personally of his support for our continued use of these facilities. I have written to both the Commissioner and the Chairman expressing our sadness and regret at their decision, which still seems difficult to understand. Notwithstanding the above we have to respect their decision and the last thing I want is for our Retired Members to think that this is in any way directed solely at us. We have to realise that this policy, which bans the consumption of alcohol on all Fire Authority premises will clearly be applied to all other functions and receptions so we are not alone. I have accordingly asked the Commissioner to confirm that my understanding is correct, because as you know we all hold the London Fire Brigade and the Fire Authority in the highest esteem and would wish to do nothing to tarnish its good name and reputation. I am pleased to say that we have been able via the good offices of our General Secretary to find and secure alternative premises at the Barbican. I would just like to tell you that the Firefighters Memorial Charitable Trust in coming up to their 20th Anniversary and are making an application to Her Majesty for a Royal Charter. They are offering free Membership to all serving and retired Firefighters so if you have not yet enrolled please do so, it does demonstrate our support for the Trust. Check the website [www.firefightersmemorial.co.uk](http://www.firefightersmemorial.co.uk) and enrol on line. I can also say that the 1st September 2009 is the 70th Anniversary of the mobilisation of the Auxiliary Fire Service and it is hoped to have an event to commemorate the occasion. If you have served in the AFS or know some one please pass the details to our General Secretary Barry Sargent. Finally I would like to thank all our Branch Secretaries and our Committee Members who do so much for our organisation and keep in touch with our members. I know just how hard they all work. As I have said before it is good to keep in touch with the Service to which we have all given so much of our working lives. I would urge all those who have retired or are about to retire, or know of any retired London Firefighters not in our organisation to join the Association. I wish you all well for the forthcoming summer.



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

# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## Obituary of Terence W Syrett

### OBE QFSM

(October 1913 – February 2009)



It is with deep regret that I have to report the death of a celebrated founder member of the RMA, Terence (Jim) Syrett on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009. A Thanksgiving Service was held to celebrate his life at The Lilywhite Chapel, Barnham, West Sussex on 13

February 2009. The Reverend A.R. Brant conducted the Service. The coffin was placed at the front of the Chapel and bedecked with the family flowers surrounding a black old style fireman's helmet. Joining the family, friends and neighbours at the Chapel were uniformed representatives from the London and West Sussex Fire Brigades. Norman Paulding and Dave Bradbury with the RMA Standard were in attendance, providing a comforting and welcoming uniformed presence at the request of the family. Looking resplendent in the uniform of a Royal Naval Commander was Jim's grandson Matthew, presently serving as Captain on HMS Roebuck. In the Order of Service Tony, Jim's son, rose to give his thoughts and memories of a happy childhood with his parents who had met at the age of sixteen, fell in love, and lived a devoted life together much of which was spent in the fire service community. Tony spoke with great pride of his wonderful father, his role as a devoted grandfather and great grandfather, and of his passion for public service, travel and foreign languages. Many of these fine attributes had been passed down to him and the grandchildren along with many cherished memories and photographs. Tony is presently a diplomat representing the United States of America. Matthew his grandson is a Commander in the Royal Navy while his granddaughter Tamsin is a teacher and speaks fluent French and German. George Perrin, in his tribute to Jim spoke warmly of his early work with organising and administering the needs of the pensioners of the day. In 1934 Jim was tasked by the then Chief Officer to set up a structured establishment of retired fireman pensioners. George spoke of the hard work and energy that Jim must have expended in collating and administering for the pensioners without modern communication aids and from a non-existent database. The dedication, integrity and tireless endeavours of Jim Syrett in getting a fair deal for pensioners remained with him all his service life, and later into retirement. It was only in the latter few years of his life did he ease up on his total commitment to the needs of retired members. Jim's exemplary service career began when he took up a position of junior clerk in the LFB headquarters at Southwark in May 1931 at the age of eighteen. His job primarily entailed the compilation of reports, records and statistics. For 'practical experience' he was sent on to the Bishops Wharf fire in March 1932 where the freezing weather caused huge icicles to form on the many hoses leading into the building. RMA members may remember the Christmas card sent out a few years ago depicting the scene? Jim sent me a note to say that he was sent to the incident to gain experience! Jim joined the AFS on its establishment in 1937 and moved to regular LFB operational firefighting in wartime Britain in 1940. In September 1940 Jim was promoted to Station Officer and put in charge of an NFS column with the mobility and ability to fight fires almost anywhere in the country. The fire fighting column would be ordered to move to areas other than London, that was suffering enemy attacks such as Portsmouth, Coventry and Liverpool. On return of the fire service to Local Authority control in 1948, Jim joined the Middlesex Fire and Ambulance Service in Harrow as a Station Officer. He was promoted to Assistant Divisional Officer in May 1952 and to Divisional Officer in 1954 with a posting to Ealing. A further promotion was earned in 1963 to that of Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and a move to Wembley Headquarters where he remained until the formation of the Greater London Council in 1965. Jim was appointed Assistant Chief Fire Officer in the enlarged Brigade and placed in charge of Northern Command at Wembley where he served until his retirement in June 1968. For recognition of his long and devoted service to the Fire Brigade and people of London, Jim was honoured with the awards of the Order of The British Empire (OBE), and The Queens Fire Service Medal (QFSM). Jim and Eileen enjoyed a long and happy retirement in West Sussex spending their time in travel, visiting family and friends. Living in a glorious part of the country, Jim took up photography, and both Eileen and Jim found a common love of gardening and took great delight in creating a fabulous garden at their home in Eastergate. Eileen would like to thank everyone who came to Jim's Thanksgiving Service, and was overwhelmed by the many cards, letters of condolences and donations from the people who shared in her grief. All the donations will go to The Firefighters Charity in accordance with the wishes of the family and a fitting end to a long and happy association of more than seventy years with the fire service community that he served so well. Jim's remains will be cremated at a later date with only members of the family present at the ceremony.

**Mel Dix**

# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## DEAR EDITOR

### Dear Editor

Thank you for your letter enclosing some copies of the ROUNDTHEADS Magazine, which included some interesting articles as well as the centre page report on my father George Osbourne. I was disappointed to read of the potential closure / relocation of the London Fire Brigade Museum. As you know my father's George Cross is on loan to the Museum (to be formally bequeathed to them in my will) and I had hoped it would stay in the same location forever. Winchester House is a magnificent building and, it seems to me, a most appropriate place for keeping and displaying elements of our heritage. Regarding your question as to what happened to the original painting or the copy by Ernie Monk, I regret that I am not certain as to the present location of either. I have a newspaper cutting (I regret I do not know which newspaper - possibly the Wembley Observer), dated 15 January 1987 which states that a copy painted by Ernie Monk was presented to Cllr Len Snow who received it on behalf of the Grange Museum. I also have a copy of a letter from The Secretary of the Fire Service Research and Training Trust, date 9 September 1959, which refers to the painting in Willesden being a second, slightly smaller version of the original (but painted by the same artist). This letter also refers to 40 reproductions being made with the intention of hanging one in every fire station in Middlesex. I thought that the version originally in Willesden was transferred to the "Middlesex Museum", but I regret that my memory is hazy. The very first original painted by Reginald Mills is still in the London Fire Brigade Museum. **With best wishes**

**Doreen and Stephen Osbourne**

### Request for information

I have had a request for help from Mr David East, for information about his Grandfather. The LFB Records / Information Management Division have looked into it for us, but because the person served in the NFS, records of service are sketchy and they cannot find any details that help.

**So can anyone help with tracing some history on the name shown below?**

**Name;** Walter George Alfred Leech

**Born;** 12<sup>th</sup> July 1911

**Died;** 11<sup>th</sup> November 1973

I understand he served in the Fire Brigade during WWII in some capacity. I know he lived at 3 Russell Gardens, Ley Street in 1946 as listed on my mother's birth certificate and she tells me he was based at Ley Street Fire Station around that time. The only other address I have for him is 69 Emmott Avenue in Barkingside where he lived until his death in 1973.

David looks forward to hearing from you and hope you can help.

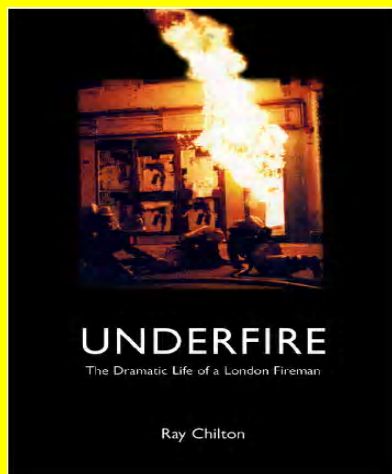
**Please email;** [davideast@sky.com](mailto:davideast@sky.com)

### Request for Information on Mr J F Dunlop

I am trying to find out about my fathers service in the AFS during the 2nd World War. Ms Forson of the LFEPFA has kindly sent me his service card, but I wondered if any of your members could give me any further information on him, before I begin to trawl the libraries of the suggested London Councils. My father joined the brigade (AFS) on the 24th of Feb, 1939. He was a full time member of staff and was based at Brixton in South London. He was appointed Leading Auxiliary Fireman on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, 1941. He was later posted to Wandsworth Fire Station but there's no date recorded on his card to say when this happened. I'm afraid that's all I know at this time, so if anyone has any information, please let me know. You can contact me at [fire\\_blader46@bigfoot.com](mailto:fire_blader46@bigfoot.com) **Michael Dunlop**

**DEAR EDITOR** Having read the Summer No5 edition of the excellent RMA Newsletter, I was drawn to the article regarding the New Fire Brigade Headquarters and it prompted me to query a certain paragraph. I hope readers will excuse my preamble building up to my final point. I left one disciplined service (Royal Marines) in 1954 and more or less straight away joined another disciplined service the old LCC London Fire Brigade. I was in the old "A" Division Westminster, Brompton and Manchester Square. Each Division was run by a DO plus 3 and they lived above each Divisional Station. They managed to run a tight ship and knew each fireman etc by name (I am referring mainly to "Grandad Smith" at A1 Man Sq). Discipline was kept within Divisional limits and indiscretions dealt with by the DO in question. There was a reasonably staffed admin service at Lambeth HQ, i.e clothes and stores and efficient maintenance workshops for maintaining appliances etc. It was a common occurrence to see two brown coated maintenance men, Paddy Geoghan and his big mate turn up to perform running repairs to our appliances, they didn't need a book of words or adviser standing over them. We were frequently understaffed on appliances with machines regularly taken off the run. We all managed and the job was done in spite of the short fall. Then came the 1965 upheaval. The London Fire Brigade was massively increased from our 50 odd stations to over treble in size due to the influx of all these extra constituent fire brigades being embraced into the Greater London Fire Brigade. We all ended up in chaos. There were more admirals than lower deck ratings. There were so many Chief Officers they had difficulty giving them jobs. Then into the 70's and the powers to be decided to massively recruit firemen, no matter where they came from, and if they didn't answer the call a search party was sent out to persuade them to join up!! It was common to see an applicant turn up for medical with the backside hanging out of his strides, straight off a building site. The Civilian department was also undergoing a sudden surge with various departments springing up. Fire appliances were getting a bit crowded and there was a rumour that personnel could have a day or night off as there was no room for them to man a PE P or TL!! Now we come to the present time. The Brigade is undergoing a lot of changes, fire station closures and front line staff (operational - the ones that matter) reductions all in the name of operational efficiency. So you might ask what my query is. Well, here it is. I was reading about the new Southwark Headquarters and the opening by the Queen also with a sentence - quote - "The extensively refurbished building is also the home of the London Fire and Planning Authority (LFEPFA), which runs the Brigade, and will be the base for around 850 plus (more like 1,000) of the Brigade's core managerial and administrative staff". Could someone tell me why they need 850 plus civilian staff to run a diminishing front line operational Fire Brigade. **Alex Fry ex Sub.O**

# THE ROUNDTHEADS



**'A detailed and heartfelt tribute to the camaraderie, dedication and professional pride of his fellow firefighters.'** – **Fire Magazine**

**NOW £5 off full retail price**

**Please send a cheque for £13.50 which includes p&p (UK MAINLAND) and a £1 donation to LFBWF**

**To Ray Chilton, 22 The Woodfields, South Croydon, CR2 0HE**

## LONDON FIREMAN 1966 RE-VISITED

**Is it still 1966 ?** once again, a look back is called for. Credit was in the news even in those early days. Barclays Bank issued its first credit card and inflation ran at 3.9%. Government pay policy determined a maximum pay rise would be 3.5%. Junior doctors kicked a hole in that one with a rise of 30%. Sitting here on a cold November night, I seem to remember another group of workers asking for 30% some 31 years past this week. The general election produced a win for Harold and his Labour party and England won the World Cup. It was a good job that a dog called pickles found the cup after it had been stolen. Our American allies were up to their old tricks, managing to drop and lose a number of nuclear bombs in Spain. Meanwhile, the LFB's new magazine was producing its second edition. Shoreditch won the Brigade pump competition a three page article was produced telling of the deeds of the workshops people. We bend em; they mend them, well, most of the time. Retirements were listed with the average service time being around 26 years but with remarkably few medical retirements. New members were also listed. Tottenham and Enfield got new stations ( Middlesex style with whacking great big London style drill towers) The magazine in its editors note informed us that they were circulating the new magazine to 'our friends in the press' ( his words, not mine ) in an effort to bring the brigade some more publicity. Looking at some of the stuff coming out in the news and the papers, I sometimes wish that he hadn't bothered. The final 'London Fireman' of 1966 detailed the Queen's review and visit to Lambeth where she opened the new control room. A display of various drills showed off the abilities of the brigade with fire scenes, high speed rescues by line and carry down (not allowed under health & safety now days) and a demonstration by eight TLs (I don't think the brigade has eight TLs these days.) Culminating in a flag being unfurled from the head of two of the ladders, (that was the plan anyway). On the day, the flag refused to become untangled. Moving on, the Lord Mayors Show brought another exhibit of the brigade with fire appliances from both the steam and the mechanised era followed closely by a vehicle from the London Salvage Corps. The AFS had a big exercise in the London docks with 1000 vehicles involved. (All of them petrol powered. What a bill that must have been). The aim of the exercise was reached when 400 jets were got to work. Sport was still very popular and was covered in some detail. Ian Alsop from Willesden gained a gold medal in the Commonwealth games in a 10 mile track cycle race. The cricket team were on winning form with 19 wins, 4 draws and three losses. However, whilst competing was popular, spectators were few. At the members meeting at Hurlingham, very few turned up to watch the competitions. Other subjects covered included a recipe for cooking Christmas dinner and a knitting pattern for a rather natty woollen waistcoat. The letters page had a Station Officer writing about an independent body (Consultants, they are probably called today) being paid to look at the brigade with a view to projecting a new image. Eltham fire station wrote proudly of a 5 man crew of a pump escape whose ages totalled 256 years, with 114 years of service between them. I think that would be a bit hard to beat these days with a whole watch. **Jim Geoghegan**

## BRITAIN'S OLDEST ex-fire-fighter HARRY PATCH

Born in 1898 in Coombe Down. Harry is well known for being a survivor of WW1; he also spent four years during WW2 in the AFS and later in the (N.F.S.) at Coombe Down near Bath. He was awarded the Defence Medal, which was lost some time ago. Recently he was presented with a replacement, by Chief Fire Officer, Kevin Pearson of Avon Fire and Rescue Service at Bath Fire Station, where Harry had done his training over sixty years earlier. He was able to meet again Fred Hooper who had served with him.

**Article by Norman Pauldin**

Photograph courtesy of Avon Fire & Rescue Service



# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## CITY OF SUNDERLAND REMEMBRANCE PARADE

THE LFBRMA STANDARD BEARER NORMAN PAULDING and his wife Brenda attended the City of Sunderland Remembrance Parade. It is the second largest parade and service of Remembrance held in Great Britain, second only to that held in Whitehall, London. On Saturday evening a Concert of Remembrance was held in the Seaburn Centre with the Mayor attending.. The Light Cavalry Band opened the concert, then children of St.Cuthbert's Primary School sang three songs. The Borneo Band and Bugles of Durham Army Cadet Force amused us with their musical skills and humour. Durham Constabulary Male Voice Choir raised the roof with appropriate songs, and the reading of 'In Flanders Fields' was followed by songs from a soprano, and some community singing. After the interval about twenty standards of the Royal British Legion, Ex-service organisations and the Emergency Services marched on, the LFBRMA Standard well to the fore. The evening continued with more readings and a blessing



by Canon Stephen Taylor. 'Flowers of the Forest' from

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service Pipe band stirred us and was followed by the 'Last Post', two minutes silence as poppies cascaded from the roof, the 'Reveille' and National Anthem. The Mayor's reception followed. The morning was bitterly cold with a strong wind blowing and some rain fell as the people gathered around the City War Memorial, Troopers of the Household Cavalry stood at the four corners of the memorial base, as the parade moved down from the Civic Centre. Led by the Royal Marines Reserve Tyne, the 5th Regiment Royal Artillery, 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1st Battalion Scots Guards, The Royal Dragoon Guards, Rifles Training Company ITC Catterick, 9 Regiment Army Air Corps / R.E.M.E, Royal Military Police, the Parachute Regiment, 609 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force, RAF Leeming all took their places. The LFBRMA Standard

escorted the Queen's Colour. The service was led by The Mayor's Chaplain Father Andrew Jones and the hymns interspersed by readings. The Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Mary Smith gave a commemorative address and laid a wreath on behalf of the citizens. The laying of wreaths by representatives of diplomatic, military and emergency organisations, including one from LFBRMA continued until the area round the memorial was carpeted in red poppies. The crowd then moved to get a view of the parade as it made its way through the city, large screens were available for all to get a good view. Thirty standards led the groups as the sound of colliery and other bands filled the air. After the parade many went into the Masonic Hall for warming food before returning to their various bases. Article by **Brenda Paulding**.



### City Hall Service

The City Hall Remembrance Service was attended by our Standard Bearer George Perren and his wife Olive.

photographs supplied by Chris Hart LFB



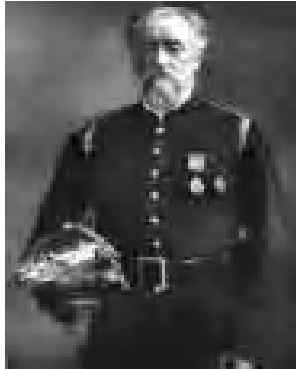
### **JAMES R.CUSHWAY.**

After serving in the Royal Navy aboard Landing Craft Jim Cushway joined the London Fire Brigade, and was a staunch supporter of the LFBRMA. He retired to the Chelmsford area and died in April 2008 leaving a legacy to the Farleigh Hospice in gratitude for their care of himself, and earlier his wife Renee.

# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## Legendary Blitz boat Massey Shaw gets new lease of life thanks to Heritage Lottery grant

A unique vessel that saved hundreds of lives at Dunkirk and went on to fight fires throughout the London Blitz is to be restored to full working order, thanks to a grant of £425,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Massey Shaw, currently moored at Deptford Creek in south east London, was built in 1935 on the Isle of Wight, to a special design by London County Council. With a shallow draft and narrow beam so she can navigate all the Thames bridges at any state of the tide she is the only surviving fireboat of her type in Europe. She was also equipped with a unique set of pumps made by Merryweathers of Greenwich capable of pumping 11 tons of water per hour straight from the river. For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF London Sue Bowers said: "This project will preserve a remarkable vessel with a proud history and explain its achievements to a much larger audience of all ages. It will also be able to demonstrate its capabilities for many years to come." The grant will be used by the Massey Shaw and Marine Vessels Preservation Society to restore the fireboat to full working order as well as creating an education programme that will include workshops for schools, open days and special events. Volunteers will also receive training to guide visitors around the vessel, in conservation work and IT skills. Commenting for the Massey Shaw and Marine Vessels Preservation Society, Director David Rogers said: "The Society is delighted by the news of its grant award from the HLF. The funding will secure the future of this unique vessel and allow the history of firefighting on the River Thames to be brought to a wider audience. This is a tremendous achievement for a small group of volunteers who have demonstrated the 'Dunkirk Spirit' in order to fulfil their vision. We would like to thank our partners in this project, The London Fire Brigade Museum and The Cutty Sark Enterprises Ltd for their help in achieving this success and look forward to working with them and the local community to make this project a reality." The vessel was named after Sir Eyre Massey Shaw, founder of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, forerunner of the London Fire Brigade. At the start of the Second World War she was ordered to Dunkirk to help in the evacuation of the British Army and saved the lives of more than 600 soldiers. Returning to duty on the Thames she proved invaluable during the Blitz pumping water ashore to supply fire appliances when water mains had been damaged by enemy action. She played a vital role in saving St. Paul's Cathedral from destruction. Massey Shaw continued in her role until retired in 1971, one of her last major duties was to fight a huge blaze at the Tate & Lyle factory at Silvertown. At first she was abandoned at St Katherine's Dock where she was used as a public walkway whilst construction work took place around her. She was saved in 1980 by a preservation society set up by a former London fireman and work began on restoring her diesel engines and pumps. More recently the vessel suffered several attacks from vandals whilst moored in Woolwich. She will now be thoroughly overhauled and during the restoration period Massey Shaw will continue to welcome visitors two days per week. This will be increased once the work is completed.



gramme that will include workshops for schools, open days and special events. Volunteers will also receive training to guide visitors around the vessel, in conservation work and IT skills. Commenting for the Massey Shaw and Marine Vessels Preservation Society, Director David Rogers said: "The Society is delighted by the news of its grant award from the HLF. The funding will secure the future of this unique vessel and allow the history of firefighting on the River Thames to be brought to a wider audience. This is a tremendous achievement for a small group of volunteers who have demonstrated the 'Dunkirk Spirit' in order to fulfil their vision. We would like to thank our partners in this project, The London Fire Brigade Museum and The Cutty Sark Enterprises Ltd for their help in achieving this success and look forward to working with them and the local community to make this project a reality." The vessel was named after Sir Eyre Massey Shaw, founder of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, forerunner of the London Fire Brigade. At the start of the Second World War she was ordered to Dunkirk to help in the evacuation of the British Army and saved the lives of more than 600 soldiers. Returning to duty on the Thames she proved invaluable during the Blitz pumping water ashore to supply fire appliances when water mains had been damaged by enemy action. She played a vital role in saving St. Paul's Cathedral from destruction. Massey Shaw continued in her role until retired in 1971, one of her last major duties was to fight a huge blaze at the Tate & Lyle factory at Silvertown. At first she was abandoned at St Katherine's Dock where she was used as a public walkway whilst construction work took place around her. She was saved in 1980 by a preservation society set up by a former London fireman and work began on restoring her diesel engines and pumps. More recently the vessel suffered several attacks from vandals whilst moored in Woolwich. She will now be thoroughly overhauled and during the restoration period Massey Shaw will continue to welcome visitors two days per week. This will be increased once the work is completed.



**ARTICLE BY DAVE RODGERS**

## **Narrow Boat Short Breaks**

**BOOKINGS FOR 2009  
NOW BEING TAKEN**

The Merryweather was built in 2001;  
It is moored on the Grand Union Canal at  
Gayton, Northamptonshire.  
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.

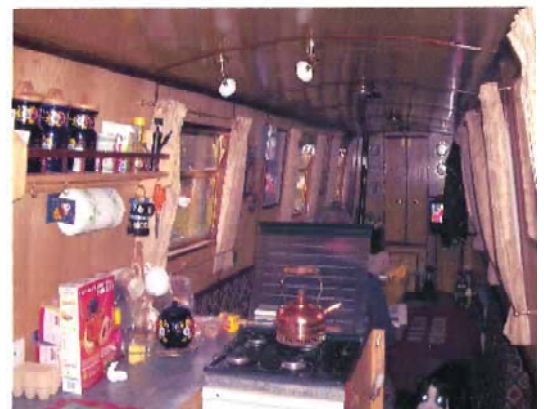
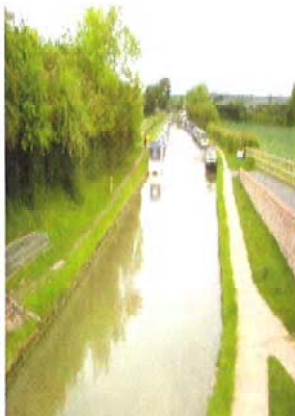
Price from £600 per week

For more details contact

**Ray Eldridge**

**24 Michell Close Dartford Kent DA1 1PJ**

**Or Phone 01322 272134**



# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## Southwark Museum Update

During the discussions leading to the LFEPA Committee decision not to close the Fire Brigade Museum it became apparent that the current situation is in need of changes in order that it may develop effectively. It is clear we need to take the opportunity to move forward in a constructive way. To that end we have decided to form a friends group. Initially this will be a non-contributory E Mail group and the object will be to get as many people as possible interested in playing a role. When we have sufficient numbers we will negotiate a package of benefits. In the meantime we will keep all members informed of developments as they occur. The Mayors office recognises "the museum is an important asset to the community and an educational resource for the local people". They are "keen to see a solution", and we intend to play a part in that process. Anyone interested in playing a part should E Mail

Friendsofthelfbmuseum@hotmail.co.uk . All details will be held in accordance with the data protection act. In future we will negotiate a role for the group as part of the long term management of the Museum and its key role both as part of the heritage of London and as a means of promoting fire safety to the people of the capital. Thank you for your support to date, we hope you will continue to help us find a long term a robust solution. Please see page 10 **Update from Tony Sweeney**



## Suranne Jones Wins £25,000 for Fire Fighters Charity

The former Coronation Street actress appeared on the hit TV programme Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, in a special Christmas edition which was watched by 5 million people.

Suranne took part in the show with pal, Anthony Cotton who plays factory worker Sean Tully in the hit TV soap Coronation Street. The pair scooped a fantastic £50,000 in total, which was split between each of the star's charity of choice. Anthony chose The Terrance Higgins Trust as his Charity, whereas Suranne picked The Fire Fighters Charity. The Manchester actress felt driven to help after visiting an open day at Bolton Fire Station which was held to raise money for the Charity after local fire fighter, Steve Morris, was badly burnt in a house fire back in August 2008. Suranne said, "The Fire Fighters Charity has no government funding yet helps the brave heroes that put their own lives at risk on a daily basis to help people in their local communities. When I heard that Steve Morris had suffered a horrific 50% burns, I immediately wanted to do something to help the Charity." Chris Burghes from The Fire Fighters Charity said: "We were more than impressed with the efforts of Suranne and Anthony on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire - we were on the edge of our seats watching the show. Everyone at the Charity is delighted with the money raised - all of which goes towards helping the injured fire community." Former So Solid Crew member - Lisa Mafia also supported The Charity back in Autumn 2008, by winning the ITV airline show Celeb Air. This raised an additional £21,000 for the Charity.

**The Fire Fighters Charity** – supports injured Fire Fighters through physical and emotional trauma. Despite the best training, accidents and tragedies are sadly inevitable and The Fire Fighters Charity is here to support these brave men and women when things don't go according to plan. On average, a Firefighter suffers physical, psychological or emotional trauma every hour of every day. The Fire Fighters Charity have three rehabilitation and recuperation centres in the UK which provide physical and emotional therapy to the fire community. Today over 13,000 beneficiaries are supported annually by the charity, which puts it in the most Top 10 Most Effective Charities in the UK.

For more details about the Charity, log on to [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk) or call 01256 366 566.



## YOU'VE GOT TO LAUGH

### Fire station burns in Japan after cooking mishap

A blaze broke out at a fire station in Japan in January 2009, after a firefighter left a cooking stove burning as crew members left the station to respond to emergency calls. All the firefighters were out on a call when their colleague, alone at the station and cooking dinner for the crew, was himself called out. In his haste to respond to the call, he forgot to turn the stove off, said Seiji Hori, a Nagoya City Fire Department official. Ten fire trucks from other stations put out the fire, Hori added. "We are an institute that should be in a position to educate people about fire, so we are extremely embarrassed that such an incident happened," Hori said, that they would consider ordering-in for dinner from now on.



# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## Swim Team do it again!

On a cold wintery evening on (12<sup>th</sup>) February 9 swimmers from the Brigade's swimming section took part in this years Purley Rotary Club Swimathon where over £300 was raised for local charities. In this event the team complete as many lengths of a 25m pool as they can in 55 minutes. Well slowly the banter stopped and a few white faces appeared but a new LFB record was set of 198 laps. 'Thank goodness we had an outside lane with steps to get out of the pool each time' said Biz our oldest swimmer! This was a fantastic effort and very close to the overall record of 208 which had only just been pushed up from 191 the previous week. Afterwards in a local tavern planning began on next year's target. How about an inter area challenge next year? As most were from the SW in this year's event. You only need 5- 10 swimmers. Anyone interested should contact Bob, John or Seth for more information on joining in the fun.(it's never too late to take up swimming!) Or see [www.fssaa.co.uk/swimming](http://www.fssaa.co.uk/swimming) for all the latest news.



**Team members:** (all retired) Bob Bray, Seth Why, John Elwell, Paul Hebrow, Biz Barrell, Roger Gibbs, Dave Robinson, Phil Cherrington & Martin Heron. **Article by Bob Bray**

## LFB RMA ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

Please reserve for me \_\_\_\_\_ places at £59.00 per person for the RMA Annual Dinner Dance at The Charing Cross Hotel, on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ **Made payable to the LFB RMA**

Payment can be either made in full, by instalments, or by a deposit with full payment made by the 24<sup>th</sup> September.

No refunds can be paid to cancellations made after this date.

**All members and guests who are attending are invited to a pre Dinner drinks reception from 6:30pm.**

Name:- \_\_\_\_\_ Partner/Guest Name:- \_\_\_\_\_

Address:- \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No:- \_\_\_\_\_

If possible I should like to be seated with:- \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to order a vegetarian meal or if you have any other dietary requirements please contact the Secretary.

Double rooms with breakfast are available at the hotel. To reserve a room, please telephone the hotel direct on 0871 376 9009. Alternatively the Union Jack Club, Sandall St. SE1 by Waterloo Bridge offer rooms to Fire Brigade personnel, rates vary - to book telephone 0207 902 6060.

**Confirmation of times and your Tickets will be sent to you at the beginning of October.**

**Please return completed form to:-**

**B.J.Sargent MBE**  
**LFB RMA General Secretary**  
**14 The Driveway**  
**Canvey Island**  
**Essex SS8 0AD**  
**Tel & Fax:- 01268 692675. E mail:- bazzambe@supanet.com**

# THE ROUNDTHREADS

## Terence George Needham 1920-2008

Terry who is mentioned in the Smithfield article, sadly passed away in March 2008

Terry was born in the east end of London; he joined the Tank regiment in 1938 and was sent to serve in France in 1940. He was later evacuated from Dunkirk. Terry also saw action in North Africa, but at Tobruk in Libya in June 1942, two of his tank crew were killed and he was seriously wounded, so began 3 years as a prisoner of war. In 1947 he joined the London Fire Brigade and served about ten years before moving to Hartfordshire Fire service. [Len Keeble](#)

## Friends of the London Fire Brigade Museum

### Inaugural meeting summary

The full notes of this meeting along with the agreed Constitution will be available on the web site ( [Friendsofthelfbmuseum@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Friendsofthelfbmuseum@hotmail.co.uk) ) as part of its initial launch.

**Date** Meeting took place Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009 with 17 members in attendance.

**Constitution** The draft constitution was circulated; several amendments were made and then agreed.

### Aims

- To support and preserve the London Fire Brigade Museum.
- To enhance awareness of the Museum and its work.
- To help raise fire safety awareness in London
- To provide educational enhancement for the people of London.
- To do other things which further these aim's.

**Officers** The following officers were elected

Chair	Dave Rogers
Vice Chair	Tony Sweeney
Secretary	Murray Beale
Treasurer	Brenda English

**Subscriptions** In order to fund the organisation it was agree that an annual subscription of £10 would be collected by the Treasurer. This would cover running the administration i.e. postage etc, the cost of a web site and other ancillary costs.

### Join the Friends of the London Fire Brigade Museum.

The group has been formed to support the work and the historic collection of the London Fire Brigade Museum.

Name: .....  
Address.....  
.....  
Postcode.....  
Email.....  
Telephone.....

### Additional skills you can bring to the group:

.....  
.....  
.....

Are you brigade personnel or ex brigade?.....

Please send completed forms and £10 joining fee to 11 Pollards Hill South, Norbury, London.SW16 4LD

Cheques made payable to "The Friends of the London Fire Brigade Museum"

Data Protection Act 1998. Your details will not be passed to a third party. They will be used only for the purposes of circulating information relating to Friends.

Thank you.

# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## **SMITHFIELD JANUARY 1958.**

**After many years, I have at last managed to put pen to paper, to write a small story about my memories of the Smithfield Meat Market Fire (Union Cold Storage) which occurred on the 22nd of January 1958.**



It was a very sad occasion for us all due to the loss of two members of our brigade, but I wish to write about an incident which I think will amuse you as it unfolds. My name is Len Keeble and I was stationed at B24 Homerton red watch at the time. As some of our older members may remember, the Smithfield fire was virtually impossible to extinguish by normal procedures. As the story goes, the powers to be attempted to flood the catacombs and so extinguish the fire, but this attempt failed, as the water was running out of the basement as fast as it was pumped in. We heard on the grapevine that the fire would be contained in the basement and would not break through the ground floor premises due to the thickness of the concrete. But it did. My story actually begins here. I think it was possibly the second or third day, (my memory is not as good as it used to be) that B24s Pump was ordered on as relief at 01.00 hours with Fm Arthur Davies, Fm Terry Needham, L/fm Bob Turner and myself. When we arrived there was very little to be done except to man a branch. Holes had been made in the ground floor concrete as the basement was still very much alight and the ground floor premises were demolished. There was a tremendous amount of heat being generated from the basement. Well my story goes on, Terry Needham (ex POW) wandered off and returned a little later with an extremely large kettle, a length of wire and would you believe it a large catchall of eggs, we all looked a little puzzled and asked the awkward question; what was it all for, the answer came forthwith, fill the kettle with water place the eggs in the kettle lower the kettle into the basement and boil the water and we will have boiled eggs for breakfast. We all fell about laughing; Terry just carried on with what he intended to do. With the kettle lowered into the basement for about 10 to 12 minutes, accompanied with endless laughter, Terry was cajoled into retrieving the kettle; low and behold we were all taken aback to see that not only were the eggs hard boiled, they were beginning to bake. It was then at this moment after we had just shelled one egg that a Sub.O called out B24 your relief is here report to the Command Unit. What to do with the eggs? We thought the best place for them would be to place them in our tunic pockets but Bob Turner decided to put them in his helmet, what a disaster. At the Command Unit was none other than ADO Jack Milbery; "put your helmet on Turner" says the ADO, well he managed to do it by bending forward and putting his head into the helmet, if Bob had done it any other way the eggs would have been laying on the floor between them and Bob would have possibly been put on a charge. Now the laughter really began as the eggs were very hot and Bob had to keep moving his head from side to side to move the eggs which were burning his head. The ADO said "what's the matter with you Turner are you feeling alright?" Slight Headache Sir Bob replied, with that we sloped off out of earshot our sides bursting with laughter. Can you just picture the scene, it was better than Sunday Night at the London Palladium. We drove away from Smithfield, still laughing at the L/fms most embarrassing moment. Arthur our driver, parks up somewhere near Fenchurch Street and we sit there shelling and eating our eggs with laughter and the general banter you get on the back of a fire engine. I am sorry to say, we even left some of the shells for the oncoming watch to clean up. Those were the days. [Article by Len Keeble.](#)

## **John Gerrard Hobbs, Known to us all as Jack Hobbs.**

**1926-2008**

Jack, was born in 1926, the stop was sent back on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2008.

I had known Jack for 50 years or more. We had joined the LFB within a few months of each other and we became firm friends. Prior to this Jack had volunteered and joined the Royal Navy in 1943; he saw plenty of wartime action. He served aboard HMS Caesar which carried out escort convoy duties to Russia, which we as veterans know was no picnic. Jack and I joined the LFB in 1949 and as I was ex Royal Navy we used to swap stories relating to our service time. (Swinging the lamp was the saying). Jack was a fireman you could always rely on to stay by your side when the going got a little rough. There is many a good tale I can recall about Jack, he was such a likeable man and know matter what antics he drummed up nobody took offence, such as his infectious smile and laugh. One Christmas Jack and I decided to celebrate and having had a few bebies, we were walking past our station B24 Homerton; Jack decided to turn them out for drill, so he stretched the knocker and the doors swung open and the duty man came running out. Turn them out for high street drill says Jack with me at his side. Thankfully the OIC took it with a wry smile, but was very angry. We were very lucky that time. Jack served at Homerton for the greater part of his service, but was eventually decided to go for promotion. We parted company in the 60s, but always remained friends. Jack was a man of integrity and honour, very well liked by all who knew him. After Jack retired from the brigade he moved the isle of white, he never failed to attend any reunion that was going. I will miss. Farewell dear friend, Gone but not forgotten. [Len Keeble.](#)



# THE ROUNDTHEADS

## Edited & Designed by

Keith Sefton.  
Email:  
Keith.sefton@btopenworld.com

## Printed by

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

All material contained within this publication is strictly copyright and all rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without permission is prohibited. Every care is taken by the publishers in compiling the contents of the 'Round threads' but no responsibility is assumed for any injury, loss or damage arising from any article or advertisement contained within the publication. The views expressed within this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers or editor of the 'Round threads'.

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

## RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE & IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

### COMMITTEE

Gerry Clarkson	Chair		
Sir Ken Knight	Deputy Chair		
Barry Sargent	Sec	01268 692675	bazzambe@supanet.com
Ellie Stocker	Treas	020 8302 3805	elliestocker@talktalk.net
Jim Geoghegan	M/Sec	01843 229808	lfbrma@btinternet.com
David Harn	RMA Welfare REP (South)	020 8642 2822	david.harn@virgin.net
Norman Paulding	RMA Welfare REP (North)	01245 601886	supremo@blueyonder.co.uk
Andy Poole	RMA FSNBF REP	020 8402 5723	apoole1@sky.com
George Perren	LVP	020 8902 3746	george.perren@ntlworld.com

### Branch Secretaries

Colin Hart	Branch 2	020 8300 0227	
Erik Crichton	Branch 3	020 8597 5862	erikcrichton@aol.com
Fred Freeman	Branch 4	01206 385145	f.freeman@ic24.net
Jim Geoghegan	Branch 5	01843 229808	lfbrma@btinternet.com
Mick Dunworth	Branch 6	01470 532774	mickandlinda.dunworth@btinternet.com
Hugh Harrison	Branch 7	01494 439964	hugh_katefaraway@hotmail.com
Gary Knight	Branch 8	01404 41359	garyandbevknight@tiscali.co.uk
Norman Paulding	Branch 10	01245 601886	supremo@blueyonder.co.uk
Colin Elve	Branch 11	01992 423945	cpg.elve@ntlworld.com
Les Powell	Branch 12	01425 275335	
Ken Martin	Branch 13	020 8640 4184	kjm.martin@btinternet.com
Mel Dix	Branch 14	01903 535832	mel@dixie23.fsnet.co.uk
Pat Royal	Branch 15	020 8640 4038	

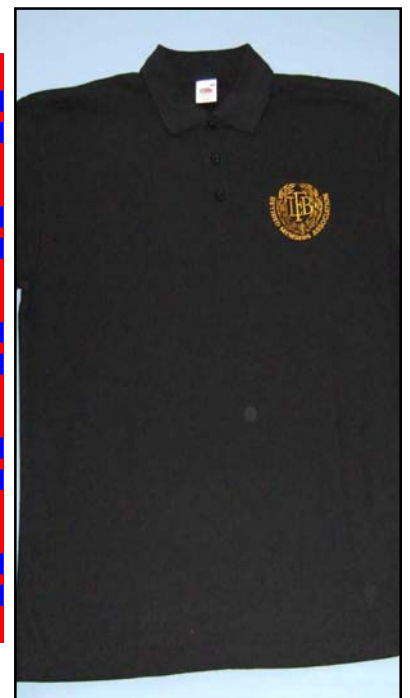
Alan Healey	Chaplain	020 7232 0495	
Barry Hammond	F/F CHARITY	020 88509804	barry.hammond@london-fire.gov.uk
Dan West	F/F CHARITY	020 85551200 ex 33029	dan.west@london-fire.gov.uk

**MICHAEL.WOODS** formerly of West Ham and London Brigade now in retirement, carves some really impressive bas relief plaques in both wood and marble. While showing his work to us he took a great interest in Norman's collection of sailing ships and they both agreed more should be known of the diverse hobbies that retired members pursue in their 'dotage'. If you have a pastime of interest to the rest of our readers send a few words and a picture if possible to include in a future issue. **Norman Paulding.**

## LFBRMA Trading Items



Blazer Badge	£15.00
Ladies Head Scarf	£10.00
Cuff Links	£8.00
Pin Badge	£1.50
RMA Tie	£10.00
Knitted Cap	£6.00
Baseball Cap	£6.00
Polo Shirts - Black	£12.00
Sizes M. L. XL.	
Jacket - Black	£25.00
(Windproof, water resistant, full zip, two side pockets)	
Fleece Jacket - Black	£22.00
(Full zip, two side pockets)	
Jacket Sizes M. L. XL. XXL.	
Car stickers	75p each
LFB-RMA Shield / Plaque	£20.00
Christmas Cards	10 for £3.00



You can order the items from Erik Crichton on 020 8597 5862 or Email [lfbrmatrading@aol.com](mailto:lfbrmatrading@aol.com)  
Postage prices on application