

10TH ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR EDITION 1995 - 2005

FLASHPOINT



ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



INSIDE THIS 24 PAGE ISSUE

VE/VJ DAY CELEBRATIONS LONDON 10TH JULY 2005 - 10TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION QUALITY ROYAL HOTEL HULL

THE ASSOCIATION A DECADE ON! - RAF CATTERICK SPECTACULAR JUNE 2006 - ASSOCIATION SHOP

DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES RENAMED DEFENCE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE - FIRST SCOTTISH MACER?

VISIT TO RAF MARHAM NOVEMBER 2005 - AGM REPORTS - MUSEUM UPDATE- STOP PRESS



Brief History Of The Association

Formation of the Association

The formation of the Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association took place at Shoreham Airport in East Sussex, on the 13th. May 1995, when 23 ex-service personnel got together to settle the question of why there wasn't an organisation relating to the trade of firefighter when most other trades had formed one of their own many years ago?

Inaugural Committee Formed

On that day, when those founder members turned up from all over the country, they went on to form the inaugural committee of the Association and elected the following Officers and Committee:-

		Member
President	Late John Arthur	11
Vice President	Ken Rimmel	20
Chairman	Keith Penfold	9
Vice Chairman	Mick Clark	2
Secretary	Dennis McCann	7
Treasurer	Late John Knight	21
Editor *	Late Alan Alsop	49

*The position of Editor first introduced in 1995, when the late Alan Alsop took post as founding editor, but after the formation of the Association in May of that year.

Area Coordinators Elected

Area Coordinators were subsequently elected to cover the U.K.

The Intervening Years

Many changes have taken place since then as the Association established itself over the intervening years and, with its formation, colleagues, past and present, now have a better chance of finding each other again, renewing old friendships and making new ones.

The Association publishes Flashpoint magazine 3 times per year with information, news, updates, articles, anecdotes, photos. and stories.

Association membership is made up of ex and serving firefighters and includes those personnel who made up the Air Force, Army and Royal Navy* Fire Service Departments, which became the Defence Fire Services. Together we are the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association.

Associate Membership is open to ex and serving personnel having a minimum of three months service with the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) Licenced Aerodrome Fire Services.

* Royal Navy have since founded the Aircraft Handlers Association.

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Photo shows 21 ex-RAF Firemen attending Shoreham Airport, East Sussex on Sunday the 13th. May 1995 for the forming of the Association, but only 15 are named - Basil Cotton, Barry Poulton, Bob Good, Roger Brooks, John Knight, Joe Shackleton, Len Nightingale, John Arthur, 'Nobby' Clarke, Bob Hodgeson, Dennis McCann, Graham Kennedy, Keith Penfold, Bill Bennett & Tony Cullen (didn't join)! The photo was taken Sunday morning and several founder members were missing, for various reasons. They were, C Ayling, S Morley, F Hoxey, R Smallridge, A Watts, R Rideout, D Shields, J Dalton, G Bridges, Bob Westwood, Reg Silcock, Richard Callanan, 'Brummie' Yates, Brian Wooldridge, Brian Ford and Ron Mason. Grateful thanks go to Richard Callanan, 'Brummie' Yates, Brian Ford and, Ron Mason, for their help in compiling the list and, Joe Shackleton, for supplying me with further details. A grand total of 31 who started things off, for all those of us, who have followed on behind - Are there any more out there or, is that it? - Ed

Who To Contact

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CO-ORDINATOR VACANCIES

**EAST YORKSHIRE LINCOLNSHIRE/CAMBRIDGE MIDLANDS
SCOTLAND (2) SOUTH EAST - OTHER AREAS AS NECESSARY**

IT'S NOT TOO ARDUOUS, JUST A MATTER OF KEEPING IN TOUCH, AND PROMOTING THE ASSOCIATION WHEN ABLE TO DO SO. IF YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER. WE ASSURE YOU OF A WARM WELCOME.



FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH IS FROM THE OCTOBER 2003 REUNION WEEKEND WHEN, SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2003, SAW A SERVICE AT ST JAMES CHURCH, TO COMMEMORATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE RAF FIRE SERVICE AND THE FOUNDING OF THE RAF SCHOOL OF FIRE-FIGHTING AND RESCUE IN 1943. THE RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION STANDARD WAS DEDICATED BY THE REVEREND HEATHER NESBITT, IN A SERVICE ATTENDED BY SOME 200 RETIRED, AND SERVING, EX-RAF PERSONNEL FROM ALL OVER THE UK, MANY OF WHOM, DID THEIR TRAINING AT RAF SUTTON-ON-HULL, DURING THE 16 YEARS THE SCHOOL WAS IN EXISTENCE. THE SECOND STANDARD, ON PARADE, WAS THAT OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION (RAFA).

THE LORD MAYOR OF HULL, COUNCILLOR, KENNETH BRANSON, AND HIS LADY, ATTENDED THE SERVICE, AS DID TWO SERVING ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, SENIOR NCO FIRE-FIGHTERS, FLT SGT STEVE BOWDEN, RAF ST ATHAN, AND SGT TERRY MONAGHAN, RAF CONINGSBY.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, PERSONNEL PICTURED ARE -SGT TERRY MONAGHAN, RAF CONINGSBY, RAFA STANDARD BEARER, REVEREND HEATHER NESBITT, RON BROWN ASSOCIATION STANDARD BEARER AND FLT SGT STEVE BOWDEN, RAF CO-ORDINATOR.

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CHOICE OF FRONT COVER - The photograph of the Standard's first parade, following it's dedication at Sutton-on-Hull, was chosen as it represented a milestone in the development of the Association and also shows retired, and serving members standing together. The Badges on the cover are from left to right: RAF Fire and Rescue Service, RAF Sutton-on-Hull, School of Firefighting and Rescue, RAF & Defence Fire Services Association, Standard, RAF Crash Fire Rescue Service, Defence Fire Services and the Defence Fire and Rescue Service new badge - Ed.

Flashpoint Editorial

With this issue of Flashpoint, our 10th Anniversary year has, sadly, come to an end. A lot has happened since 1995 and, this year, has certainly proved to be, no exception. RAF&DFSA Enterprises (Shop) continues to develop and make a profit for Association funds.

We attended a number of shows, and events, and the VE/VJ 60th Anniversary Celebrations in London, on Sunday the 10th July, and there is a full colour report on the back cover of this edition. Some of the experiences, of those attending, are recorded in the Letters to the Editor pages.

The Remembrance Parade on Sunday 13th November will be a fitting end to 2005. Our late, and sadly missed, Founding President, John Arthur, would have been very proud of what we have all achieved together. Long may it remain so!

The John Arthur Memorial RAF Fire Service Museum and Halfpenny Green Collection, continues to develop and was an ambition dear to John's heart and he was actively working to find a suitable site until his death in 2004.

To help celebrate the decade, your committee approved my request to produce a December 2005 Souvenir Edition with extra colour in a pictorial centre spread depicting the growth of the Association over the past decade, as well as the usual front, and back, covers in full colour. I chose the Sutton dedication photo, instead of a Fire situation, as depicting a milestone in the development, and establishment, of our Association's history.

I've trawled through the archives for items to put on display, and it's proved to be a long, and difficult task, deciding which photographs to use and, it's been impossible to include a sample of every picture and, every member, over this period.

No doubt we will all have our thoughts on what is suitable but, sadly, it wasn't practical to survey the membership for your preferences, and I hope you will all find something of interest amongst the selections made.

I'm sorry to see my old friend, and colleague, Bob Feather, stand down as Membership Secretary. However, we aren't losing him entirely, as he intends to carry on organising the Reunions, and is to sit on



the committee as Events Organiser. He's also continuing to help out with the Shop. I now welcome John Hanley, member 69, to the role of membership secretary. New member Bill Wylie, number 785, has volunteered to be Australia co-ordinator and act as "Our man from Down Under!" Welcome Bill.

Finally, it's my sad duty to notify you that several members have recently passed away. They are, John Charlesworth, 729, Patrick Clarke, 587, Derek Thomas, 137 and Randolph Benson, 371. Their passing is recorded elsewhere in this issue. Our sincere condolences go to their families and friends.

Also, to those of our members, and family, who may not be in the best of health, our sincere good wishes go to you. We are thinking of you, especially at this time of the year.

Regards and best wishes,

Dave

STOP PRESS - MEMBER 741 - WARRANT OFFICER DAVID STARKINGS IS AWARDED AN MBE IN THE NEW YEAR'S HONOURS 4 JANUARY 2006

Warrant Officer David Starkings, the Senior Fire Officer at RAF Marham, had every reason to smile, having been awarded an MBE in this Year's Honours. David, from Stalham, near Norwich, has been at the Air Base since 2002. During this period he has been very involved, due to his professional standing as an RAF Firefighter, with supervising 4 temporary fire stations, during the Civilian Fireman's strike, which provided fire cover to all of Norfolk. Furthermore, he also commanded the sole Regional Equipment Support Team vehicle, providing specialized emergency cover for the entire County.

While serving in Iraq, he rapidly gained a reputation for being a highly motivated leader who set exceptional standards in a hostile environment. Despite a demanding job, he worked tirelessly to help improve the communal and leisure facilities, becoming the driving force behind many welfare improvements, which benefited all the deployed personnel at Basra Air Base. On being informed about his award, David said "I was very honoured and humble to receive such an award after 35 years service as a Firefighter in the RAF. This is the 'icing on the cake' for me!" Text from official RAF Marham website.



On behalf of the Officers, Committee and Association members, our sincere, heartfelt congratulations go to Dave, his family, friends and all

personnel at Marham. Very well done Dave - Ed.

RAF Fire Service Museum Committee report and proposed working weekends commencing February 2006 and the last weekend of every month until late autumn. In the past two to three years, a great deal of progress has been made. We now have the museum up and running and, as you can see, we are moving forward with obtaining and repairing vehicles with some waiting to be brought onto strength. There is a caravan site near to the museum and working parties will commence at the end of February 2006, continuing on the last weekend of every month there after. It is a happy experience as all get stuck in together wives, girl friends and children. While the end aimed for is worthwhile, the refurbishment of old and familiar vehicles etc, there is no law that says that we cannot enjoy ourselves playing with fire engines!!!!

In July, we put a display on at the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford and drew a considerable crowd of old and young alike who also like to play at being firemen. We have been invited back again this year and hope to have an even more impressive show. We have also been invited to other venues, which include such as, Waddington, Bruntingthorpe, Boulton & Paul, Cosford, and Catterick so, you can see that we are great ambassadors for the Association.

We are looking for much bigger premises where all the vehicles can be displayed, and worked on, under cover and where we can better display our artefacts. A heated aircraft hangar would be ideal but if any member can come up with something similar, or better, we would welcome any suggestions.

Best wishes for the New Year, Michael Shenton, Secretary and member 550 - Contact number - 01492 573 707

A Note from your Chairman

Chairman's Report at the 10th Anniversary & Reunion at the Quality Royal Hotel Kingston - upon - Hull October 2005



The chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed all; new and old, and said it's good to see you here at our 10th Anniversary AGM.

It's been quite an eventful year again. Unfortunately, he had to report that some of our members had passed away. Alan Alsop (who had served both as founding editor and secretary at different times over the years), Malcolm (Mac) Lawson, Pat Clark, John Charlesworth and Roger Smith who designed the front cover for first Flashpoint.

As far as new membership goes, we have 67 new members who have joined our Association this year, and a big thank you to Steve Bowden who recruited 16 new serving members from the RAF.

We are still looking for co-ordinators in some areas, if you are interested please speak to a member of the Committee. You may be interested to know that we now have a co-ordinator in the "Southern Hemisphere". Bill Wylie who hails from Australia and has approached us to take on this role and we have accepted with thanks.

Some members attended the 60th Anniversary VE/VJ Celebrations and Parade in London on Sunday 10th July. Unfortunately, our Standard Bearer, Gordon Smith, was unable to attend and I volunteered to carry our Standard and was very proud of the great honour to parade our Association Standard on Horse Guards Parade past Her Majesty, the Queen. As I marched down The Mall I remembered that our late founding President, John Arthur, did this same parade 10 years ago for the 50th Anniversary on a 45 Monitor, it was very emotional. Three couples went to the service at Westminster Abbey in the morning and another three couples, and their wives, went to lunch with the Queen in the garden of Buckingham Palace. Unfortunately, we were only given half a day to find the members and to get their names back to M.O.D in London so, a big 'Thank You'

to of them all for doing such a good job representing us. (For details, see the back cover of this issue of Flashpoint).

RAFDFSA Enterprises (the Shop) attended the 999 Show at Eastbourne in July with help from Bill Lawrence and Jason Lester who bought the Bedford Domestic down from the John Arthur Memorial Museum. The Saturday went well, we made £200 from the shop and gained 2 new members, but the Sunday was a washout, as it didn't stop raining until late afternoon. It was two days before the tent dried out! Bob and Sue would like to thank you all for your continued support, as you know, shop profits go the Association. There are a few new lines this year so do have a look at the Shop information elsewhere in this issue.

Some of our members and vehicles attended the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT), at RAF Fairford, and Wilf Longmire was to give a report but, unfortunately, he had to cancel his booking for the reunion. It's hoped the editor will be able to get an article into this issue of Flashpoint. (Over to you Dave).

Unfortunately we were unable to get into Eastbourne Airborne, the biggest free air show on the south coast, but will attempt to attend in 2006.

The John Arthur Memorial Museum is proving a great success and is going from strength to strength. I hope that some of you have managed to visit, if not I can recommend it. Bill Lawrence will tell us more, later, in this meeting.

The questionnaire, which went out to you all with the last, Flashpoint did not turn out as good a response as we had hoped with only 198 being returned. However thank you to those who did reply, we will be taking on board some of the comments you made and will be discussing the action this afternoon.

You now know that Bob Feather is retiring from the post of Membership Secretary. He's been doing the job for 8 years and what an 8 years it's been. Thank you Bob for all the hard work you've done for the Association. However, we aren't losing Bob's talents from the committee altogether, as he's to carry on helping with the Shop, and reunions, as Events Organiser.

We are looking forward to another interesting year in 2006 and I would like to thank all the Committee for their continued hard work and support and to you, our members, without whose backing the Association would not exist.

Roger Brooks Chairman member 16



AGENDA 22 OCTOBER HULL

1. Chairman's Opening Address
2. Introduction of Committee
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of last AGM
5. Matters arising
6. Chairman's report
7. Museum survey result
8. Treasurer's report
9. Secretary's report
10. Flashpoint editor's report
11. Membership Secretary's report
12. John Arthur Museum update
13. Election of Officers.
Chairman and Vice Chairman stood for re-election. John Arnold stood for Chairman.
There were 2 nominations for Membership Secretary - John Hanley and John Goupillot.
Election results were as follows:
Chairman Roger Brooks
Vice Chairman Jim Paterson
Membership Secretary John Hanley
14. Any other business - Ron Brown had spare tickets for the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 13th November 2005



The President, Vice President, Officers and Coordinators of the Association wish to extend to the members, their families, and serving firefighters everywhere, Good Health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year for 2006.

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Membership News - Next Reunion 10th to 12th March 2006!

FINAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT - As most of you will no doubt know this is my last report on the Association's membership. During the last membership year we did really well. I can say, that it was our best recruitment year ever. The numbers joining for 04/05 was 67 in total; of these there have been 16 who are still serving in the RAF Fire Service. This has all been down to Steve Bowden who is always pushing the Association wherever he is, just like he has been doing latterly whilst in the Falklands and, you guessed it, he managed to recruit another from there. I should like to put on record my special thanks for all his efforts in his drive to recruit serving members. Then there are, of course, the coordinators who have been helping over the years. I would like also to extend to all past, and present, coordinators my sincere thanks in helping to get new members.



Bill Wylie 785
1961 - 1970 (See new
co-ordinator Australia)

Ronald Sandford 786
1958 - 1961

Martin Harris 787
1975 - present

Ian Turner 788
1968 - 1973

Thomas Farrell 789
1971 - 2000

Terry Shaw 790
1972 - 1984

When I recently handed over the paperwork to our incoming Membership Secretary, John Hanley, member 69, we had had 13 new members, again this is a very encouraging start to the new membership year and I sincerely hope it continues.

I took this job on in 1997. Originally I did it to help our late friend, and Founding Treasurer, John Knight, who was not only doing the treasurer's job, but doing membership as well! Bear in mind also this was then all being done by hand: no computers. I suggested to John I might be able to help him out and, with encouragement from the then Founding Chairman Keith Penfold, now President, he agreed to let me help. Little did I know I would still be doing it 8 years later?

When I started I received, from John, all the paper application forms he had and I then started to make a database of them. It was a horrible job from scratch, and took absolutely ages to do. The boredom barrier kept kicking in. The creating of a database was new territory for me and I had to learn fairly fast. This, I did, including some very costly mistakes along the way. At this point I must give a big thank you to my old employer, the West Yorkshire Fire Service, for all the help, which enabled me to do it. I took all the courses I could get and used plenty of their electricity during my stand-down time. When I got it! Well, it was a busy station you know!! A very busy station!!

Anyway, our total membership stood around 240 when I took it on - and now, as I hand over, it stands at 810. This is the total of membership numbers issued since 1995, but, as membership numbers are not reissued, and members pass away, and others resign, we are now running at a total of 527 members, which is still a very good total.

Lastly I'd like to thank, each and every one, for all the support over my time as membership secretary and, to John Hanley, I hope you enjoy the post as much as I have done.

Bob Feather 218

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S HULL REPORT - DISABLED ROOMS - A member has written to the committee with the regards to Disabled Rooms at hotels we book for reunions. We try every time to get more Disabled Rooms as we know there are more and more members who have mobility problems. The European Law states that hotels must have Disabled Rooms but does not state how many and most hotels only have two or three, even these do not come up to the standard we require. Bob and I have turned down many good hotels because they could not give us disabled facilities. The European Law also states a hotel has only to inform a customer that they do not have any Disabled Rooms available, at the time of booking, so they can then not take the booking. I know this does not help the member who wrote to us, but there are not many hotels with ground floor rooms, although the next two we have do, so we hope to see members who have walking difficulties, and those in wheelchairs there, as this is the best we could do. Bob and I take on board what has been said and will keep looking for better hotels with our less mobile members in mind.



10th ANNIVERSARY HULL - Another brilliant weekend at Hull and it was nice to see so many new faces, we even had new members joining.



First of all I must apologise to Joe Shackleton as no one officially thanked him for arranging the 10th Anniversary Cakes which I think everyone enjoyed with their coffee, sorry Joe an oversight by the committee. (See photo left and page 18 for more detail - Ed)

The hotel staff were great again, they just wanted to help all the time and, when a problem arose, it was dealt with to everyone's satisfaction. This was until the Saturday night when the bar was closed at around midnight, the reason for this was a member was alleged to have sworn at the night porter because he could not get a drink. I have looked in to this with the night manager and we can see no reason why the bar was closed. If I had been informed about this quicker, the bar would not have closed

as the night manager was in the hotel and they would have sorted it out. The hotel has apologised for what has happened and the person responsible has been dealt with. I hope this does not put members off attending future reunions and we look forward to seeing everyone at Peterborough.

ELECTRIC SCOOTERS - Courtesy of Shop Motability, Kingston-upon-Hull - Thanks to Pete Parritt, member 515, for making arrangements to supply scooters for the reunion weekend. Jim Paterson Vice-Chairman

Foreword - Honorary President

Message from Air Marshal Sir John Sutton KCB



Having only recently become associated with the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association, I had not realised that, this year, is the 10th Anniversary of its foundation. I gather, that it was formed on 13th May 1995, at Shoreham Airport. I know Shoreham well from my time as RAFA President. Shoreham has a very active branch, which runs a superb air show and raises about £100,000 for RAFA funds each year. Perhaps there is a strong link between the RAFDFSA, and the RAFA - if not then, perhaps, we should try to arrange it.

I gather that this message will appear in a souvenir edition of the magazine, in which your Editor hopes to depict scenes from the foundation, and events over the years since. I look forward to seeing it. In the mean time, I wish all members the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

John Sutton

willing and able to deal with the demands of my new career ... or so I thought! But of course, despite the high quality of the training I had received, the one essential ingredient I lacked was experience.

This is a tale of how I gained that experience and my progression from a 'sprog' (immature, insignificant, lowest form of RAF life) to a seasoned airman. My journey includes stories from time spent at RAF stations in the UK, the Persian Gulf, Germany and the Falklands. There is also a section on my tour of duty at the RAF Careers office in St Helens and a chapter on my ten years as Officer Commanding 7F(1st City of Liverpool) Air Cadets.

It is a tale of a young man's initiation into the vagaries and complexities of military life - the social, sporting and professional activities, the journeys into the unknown, the people he met along the way, but above all it is a personal record of a man proud to have been an Airman in the Royal Air Force and an Air Cadet Squadron Commander.

George Edwards 2005.

FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES COMMENTS

The author's account of his time as the Officer Commanding 7F (1st City of Liverpool) Air Cadets is an interesting and heart-warming account of the achievements of a group of young people from the city of Liverpool. For ten years (1991 to 2001) I was 7F Squadron President. Many of the young people involved came from an area of Liverpool (Toxteth) tarnished with an unfair and unjustified reputation. The young people of 7F proved that given the opportunity and guidance they could dispel many of the myths surrounding young people today.

It was indeed my pleasure to have known so many wonderful young people and to witness them undertake their various adventurous activities and watch them develop into good citizens.

Lady Jean Stoddart DL

The author and I were roommates at RAF Sharjah in 1971. I never thought that

George would record his journey in the RAF; I am glad he has, as it has brought back so many fond memories of the time I spent in the RAF. I enjoyed all aspects of the book; the humour, the realism and above all like George's great view of life

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fighters both military and civilian.

Out of the Blue by George Edwards BEM £9.95 incl P&P



Bob Feather RAF Fireman 1967-1972 West Yorkshire Fire-fighter 1976- 2001.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book it brought back many memories of my service life- putting a supercilious smile on my face just thinking about experiences many of us shared. A good read and most illuminating for those who weren't involved.

Dennis McCann BEM Warrant Officer (4054690) RAF Fire Service 1950 - 1980

TO ORDER YOUR COPY: The book is available from Woodfield Publishing Woodfield House Babsham Lane Bognor Regis West Sussex PO21 5EL Telephone 01243821234 Email address woodfieldpublishing.com

Alternatively, the book (personally signed by the author) is available from:

George Edwards, 8 East Close, Eccleston Park, Prescott, Merseyside L34 2RA

Cost is £9.95, including post and packing.

Memoir of a former RAF fireman who later became a Probation Officer and Officer Commanding 7F (1st City of Liverpool) Air Cadets.

For any newly trained serviceman, arriving at your first operational unit after completion of basic and trade training is a bewildering experience - and it was no different for me. I remember my sense of fulfilment on 'Passing Out' at RAF Swinderby, in front of my parents, a never to be forgotten experience. I was fit, confident and knowledgeable and ready,

HERO AT ROYAL AIR FORCE CATTERICK FOUND!



Thanks to Gordon Ayles, member 732, SAC Nick Harrison, featured in the April 2005 issue of Flashpoint, has been found living and working, in his home

Town of Wath Upon Dearne, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Hopefully, Nick will be an Association member by the time you read this update. John Goupillot, Nick's Flt Sgt, at the time, has been informed, and is delighted. Gordon, well done - Ed.

"Dan Dare" Memories

Dear Dave,

The main feature in the August edition of Flashpoint, the "Dan Dare" story brought back memories as I had the good fortune to serve under W/O Dare at RAF Bovingdon Hertfordshire.

Flabbergasted to hear that he is now 87 years young how the years have flown. I wish him well. I have a couple of tales to relate I hope that he remembers them. The first I shall call the cigar story. I had recently been taken off the crash line and put in the fire section stores as the chaps, an SAC Williamson, if my memory serves me right, had left for pastures new.

I had recently got married to my first wife and was living in an RAF hiring in the lane from Boxmore Railway station and the camp. I had had some extra large cigars sent to me by an Aunt, not sure why as, at that time, I did not smoke! This particular morning I set off with the box and only walked a few yards when a Rolls Royce pulled up. The driver was a friend and the Rolls belonged to a "Lady something or other." He said, "Hop in" and, as we approached the camp gates, the MP Sergeant raised the barrier and we were waved through. Much to our surprise, as we pulled up outside the section, W/O Dare was just going up to the door. Brian, the driver, said, "Stop in" and, whilst he opened the door, I got one of the cigars out of the box and Brian opened the door,

I sort of sauntered out waving the cigar. Then Brian saluted and I said, in the poshest accent I could lay on, "Thanks James, see you at 5 o'clock" and off went the Rolls. Dan, (If I can call him that?), said "Whose is the Rolls?" I replied, "Oh! It's

one that daddy loaned me for a week or two". To be honest, inside I was shaking like hell, but once the thing had started it was impossible to stop.

The outcome of this was, a little later, the CO sent for me. I knocked and, when bid, entered his office, "Ah! Just the man" he said. On his desk were a load of forms and he said to me, "I have just heard from reliable sources that your father has lent you one of his Rolls Royce's" and to be honest, young man, I think you had better fill these forms in for officer training". By this time the legs were like jelly so, obviously, I had to make a clean breast of the affair. The CO, much to my amazement, suddenly burst out laughing and thumped the desk. He then asked why I looked so shocked. I replied I was quite expecting the book to be thrown at me and spend some time in the glasshouse. "No lad," he said, "For once I am going to forget that this ever happened, one thing though, we keep W/O Dare in the dark for a while!"

It was in the afternoon that "Dan" summoned me to his office and seemed to be absolutely fuming and started to wipe the floor with me. All of a sudden, just like the CO, he burst out laughing and boy could he laugh, "Nice one son", he said "But it will never happen again?" "No Sir", I said. It was that, once the whole thing had started, it was easier to carry on than back down. To "Dan" I offer my heartfelt apologies, but the one thing that will always stick in my mind is how gracious he was at the time, good on you "Dan".

It was a few months later that I got informed that I had been posted to Rattlesden and was brought off the crash line, once again, for the last week of my stint at Bovingdon. Once again I was put in the Fire Sections stores to help out. Most of the week it was my job to brew the tea. On the next to last day the practical joker in me came to the fore and, although everyone had been watching for any false move, I managed to lace the big tea pot with Epsom Salts and I even faked pouring myself a cuppa from the pot. (Unbeknown to everyone I had brewed a cuppa on its own). After about an hour I locked myself in the stores after putting a notice on the door saying I had gone to the civvies canteen and would be back in ten minutes. As I waited in the stores the doors to the offices suddenly flew open and out charged "Dan" closely followed by the Corporal, and another guy, all were heading for the ablutions! I heard them all come back only for a few minutes and then the whole scenario was repeated.

This happened a good many times. I think, after a while, the penny dropped and they all started hammering on the door

but me, coward that I am, kept cavy till it was home time and they had all gone their merry ways. The following day I spent going round the various places to get the forms signed. When I entered the Fire Section, although he glowered at me, "Dan" never mentioned a thing. Once again "Dan" I profusely apologise after all the many years.

Sorry for all the chat, but now, on to the next part, which concerns John Halstead and "Rocket" Stevenson. Although I was at Bovingdon around the same time, I remember the order coming out for all the fire personnel to get the RAF Regiment flashes sewn on. For some reason I cannot remember their names. Were they there?

After having the camp decorated for the AOC's inspection, a week later, another crew of decorators came and put camouflage paint over all the newly decorated buildings. This was for the film "The War Lovers" starring Steve McQueen, Robert Wagner and Shirley Anne Fields.

After all this Dave, I think I will leave the third item until a later date.

Regards,

Ray Skinner 793

THE ONLY SERVING SERVICEMAN AT SHOREHAM 13TH MAY 1995!

Dear George,

Please accept my apologies for not being able to be present at the AGM at Hull, on Saturday 22nd October.

Could you inform the editor of Flashpoint that, on the inauguration of the Association, there were 22 ex servicemen, and 1 serving serviceman and, that was me! I still had just over two years to go, to my 55th birthday although, in reality, I signed on for a further year, to my 56th birthday. Two other there, but not mentioned, were Paddy Mulready, and Brian Ford.

There was list of names taken at that first meeting, and I thought they would have been in the Minutes. I am not on that first photo, because I was having a 'piddle', at the time! Don't ask me about my membership number, 36, because I can only assume that, by the time we had membership cards, more members had joined. Just remembered, Brian Wooldridge was also there! Best wishes to all.

'Brummie' John Yates member

36

Many thanks for the info 'Brummie' - Ed.

Letters to the Editor

John Arthur Memorial, RAF Fire Service Museum and Halfpenny Green Collection, Wolverhampton Airport

Frank Smith Museum volunteer and member 593 reporting



Frank Smith in DP2 at RAF Stafford - 4 June 05
Photo - Dave Kenyon 239

A f t e r a hectic day at RAF Stafford, Saturday 4th June, work carried on at a more leisurely pace, at the

Museum. David Hughes, and Bill Lawrence, attending on alternate weekends, along with our mechanic, Jason Lestor. An 'A' frame, for heavy lifting, was acquired, and erected, mid June.

July saw the museum attend the RIAT at RAF Fairford which is covered elsewhere in this issue.

Early August brought the arrival of 3 large, heavy-duty, tarpaulins from 2MT, 'surplus to requirements' and, 'rescued', by our 'Chief Scrounger', Steve Brown, helped out by Dave Lakin. Well done both!

Mid September, after fitting remaining parts, to the MK6 engine, a water leak was found and put right but, after 'start up', Jason informed Bill, of a defective head gasket! About this time, Bill Lawrence went to RAF Stafford to collect 5 tyres, for the DP's, and some tins of signal red paint, 'surplus to requirements?' A new head gasket was fitted to the MK6.

During the latter part of September, a 'Lister', fork lift truck was donated, by the airport's maintenance unit, that has come in handy and, was put to very good use at the working weekend, starting Friday 29th September to Tuesday 3rd October.

Into October now, and the working weekend was a great success, with the weather proving to be about perfect. Approximately 20 volunteers all contributed in some way, and included, Basil Cotton, (visited Saturday afternoon), ??????

Mid October and Steve Brown arrived, at the Museum, with a 'Portable Hangar' big enough to house about six vehicles, when erected! Thanks to him, and 2MT. That's all I have, at this time.

Regards,

Frank Smith 593

1948 – 1953 – Fassburg - John, (Jock), Arthur and the 1948 Berlin Airlift, and 'Weekend Flyers'

Dear friend,

I have just received the latest edition of Flashpoint and am really pleased to go through it.

It brings back many memories, especially of John, (Jock Arthur), in particular, as we were together at Fassburg, Germany, at the conclusion of the Berlin Airlift. He was great and a Sgt, at the time, and I was only in my early 20's.

On returning to the UK, my home posting was a great thrill to 4 SOETT, St Athan, and able to live out!

1953 to 1957, I joined, what was known then, as the 'Weekend Flyers', 614 County of Glamorgan Squadron, when, being an ex fireman, I was attached to ATC Assistants.

I did the last 2 Summer Camps at Gib. (Gibraltar) then the Defence cuts put the end to County Fighter Squadrons. I would love to hear from any of the boys, still out there! I'll close now. Please keep me in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Ron 'Taffy' Ridout member 12

'DAN DARE' UPDATE ON AUGUST FLASHPOINT ITEM

Many thanks for the two extra magazines and, also, for the letters passed on from members, which were very interesting to read, from 'my boys' (now men!). It was a smashing write up in the mag. and we are delighted.

We are now updating you on the RAF photos used in the article in the August Flashpoint, with a recent photo, seeing as we have moved on to 'Civvy Street' since 1973.



All are welcome to call, if down this way in the Weymouth, Swanage, Lulworth Cove area, for a cup/glass of wine???

Many thanks.

Dan and Mabel Dare

Happy to be of service - Ed.

'I WAS 237th FROM THE LEFT!'

I feel I must write to congratulate the RAF News team on a really great six-page spread in the 1128th edition, 5th August, covering the 60th Anniversary of VE/VJ Days in July 2005.

I, with my wife, Glad, Wilf and Rita Longmire and Keith and Kath Penfold, were among the honoured, and privileged few who attended the lunch hosted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, as representatives of the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association.

It was truly an unforgettable day with only one snag; we could not be everywhere at the same time. So much going on – the service at Westminster Abbey, the Living Museum in St James' Park, the Parade on Horse Guards, and the march of the Standards along The Mall – and we wanted to see them all!

So, it was really helpful to see the photos and read the articles in RAF NEWS, especially the fly-past of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. We saw it from the ground (in your picture, I was the one



standing 237th from the left in front of the Palace Gates!). It was a wonderful shot from above, of the three 'Golden Oldies', by SAC Scott Robertson, and then the 'Poppy Cascade' by Sgt Graham Spark. Even as old hairy-faced ex-WO of 35 years in the 'Mob' who thought he had seen it all, I must admit I had a rather damp hankie after it was all over. So this fantastic day of pleasure, excitement, nostalgia and emotion ended, we wended our weary, but happy, way home to live on the memories for many along day.

R.J. Fairhurst, Welton, Lincoln

Pictured are me, Glad, Kath and Keith Penfold at the Palace. I am the one who forgot to shave!

Footnote: text taken from his letter to the RAF NEWS. Photo courtesy of Smokey, member 35.

Letters to the Editor

AGM MUSEUM UPDATE!

We opened on April 2nd 2005, the anniversary of the Association's late Founding President, John Arthur's funeral. That is why I aimed for April 2nd 2005, right from the formation of the museum. Since opening we have had a few visitors and, as word gets around, they will increase. We have also had two working weekends arranged by our member Wilf Longmire. Both were successful and enabled us, after the first one, to get the DP2 ready for RAF Stafford 65th Anniversary and open day on Saturday 4th June 05.



Whitsuntide Bank Holiday saw Jason and myself, along with Frank Smith, our volunteer re-

porter, spraying the DP2 and adding finishing touches. We worked on the engine of the MKVI but, alas, we have to replace the cylinder head gasket. Jason and myself have done several rallies to both promote the association and museum. We have also acquired a Dennis F7 from Berkshire and Reading Fire Station; it needs a new exhaust, but is otherwise intact. We have also been given a Coventry Climax demountable trailer pump. The trailer needs a lot of work but the pump is okay. We have also got a mini Bedford T.K 200 gallon 'jobby', purchased from Merseyside Fire Museum by Wilf Longmire, member 83. Member, Peter (Scouse) Carter, negotiated for this vehicle, and we're very grateful for his efforts.

The Merseyside Fire Museum also gave us two pumps and some equipment. One pump is a foam pump as used in bulk fuel installations. The other, also a foam pump, was manufactured for the first Iraq war, however, it never actually got there; it is complete with its Coventry Climax 2 man pump. Our grateful thanks go to the museum curator, Danny Murphy, for his help, and support.

We have also got another hose reel cart, and a handcart, courtesy of the Defence Fire and Rescue Services at RAF Stafford, arranged by our chief scrounger, Steve Brown, (great lad). He has also supplied us with Eau-de- Nil gloss, undercoat,

thinners and Signal Red top coat paint, three large tarpaulin sheets, five very good tyres for DP1's and, now, he has obtained two rubber hangars (with brand new sheets), unfortunately, no metal work! Keep up the good work, Steve, and Dave (Lala!) Lakin. I wonder what else is in the pipeline, a flagpole, 5 tyres, a larger caravan and, a Dennis Fire Appliance? Watch this space!

I must mention RAF Fairford RIAT in July; it was a good week, plenty of sun and fun, courtesy of Dinger Bell, the music man, and the lion hunt? (Please tell us more- Ed).



The last working weekend saw us stripping the bodywork from one of the DP1's, which was too far gone to replace, it will be a display model so the public can see the works. The outer cab was stripped of paint, with just a bit more to do, then ready for painting. We all had a good time, especially in the evenings, courtesy of Dinger Bell's awning! My grateful thanks



go to Dinger, and Betty, for this, and to all who turned up on the Saturday night. *

I would also like to thank the wives, who came along to help with the museum on the recent working weekend from Thursday 29th September to Monday 3rd of October. In the order there were written down, they are, Brenda Sanders, Rita Longmire, Marylyn Brooke and Betty Bell. Betty wasn't too good over the weekend, and we hope she is now fully recovered.

Jason and myself have found a Thornycroft MKV and negotiations are taking place and, one day, I hope it will reside at the museum.

We have been given an old, but serviceable, forklift, by the airport authority, which has proved invaluable. They have also donated the original military airfield recognition Pundit Light, from it's time as RAF Halfpenny Green airfield, and, as an added attraction, it will be moved from it's existing site, to close to the museum.



So from this report you can see a lot of hard work has gone into the museum and collection. The site is secure in that there are about 100 private aircraft stationed there, plus three flying schools. Also the West Midlands Police have built a new hanger to house their helicopter, as the airfield is their base. There is also a company that has invested £100,000 in refurbishing a hanger to build kit planes. I therefore don't think that we need worry about the site closing.

As far as the museum goes, at his funeral, I made a commitment to John's family, to form a museum, either in a caravan behind my appliances or find a site! We now have a site, a museum and a collection of fire vehicles; and I am damn sure it's not going to close! With or without the help of the Association we will carry on. Bill Lawrence museum co-founder and association member, 494 *Footnote: - I think I speak for everyone,

at the working weekend, when I say thanks to Bill, for arranging a meal in the ATC restaurant on the Saturday evening, prior to retiring to Dinger's awning for further festivities - Ed.



L/R - Fred Greenwood - Bob Dickinson - Mike Clapton - Mike Hayward - Hull



L/R - Bob Dickinson - Mike Hayward - Mike Clapton - Fred Greenwood

Last minute request to go in Flashpoint, from Bob Dickinson, member, 154. Top photo is from the recent AGM at Hull, bottom is from the Remembrance Parade Sunday 13th November 2005 on Horse Guards Parade. They all served together at Dishforth and Bob's sending in a story for a future edition -Ed.

Letters to the Editor

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II "A DAY AT THE PALACE"

What a Day! First however, I must thank the Committee of the RAF and Defence Fire Services Association (and I feel sure Keith and Kath Penfold, and Wilf and Rita Longmire will allow me to write on their behalf) for granting us the honour, and privilege, to represent the RAF and DFS Association at a Luncheon Party hosted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on the 10th July 2005. I also feel that we not only represented our Association, but also the thousands (and believe me, over the years, there have been thousands) of Firemen who have served and are still serving in the RAF today.

It was an unbelievable day; the weather was kind, the sun shone on us all day. We presented ourselves at the Palace in good time. Proudly wearing our Blazers, Association Badges and our Medals. (As all good airmen should!) Our ladies also did us proud in their lovely elegant outfits, fit for the Queen herself. On arrival members of the Queens Household staff escorted us through the Palace to the Gardens at the rear. Then served drinks by immaculately dressed young Servicemen and girls (at my age I am allowed to call them "girls"!). Constantly at hand were more members of the RAF Army and Navy, ready to lend a hand and assist, if or when needed, by any of us old 'Codgers.' Not only young Servicemen aided or assisted, there were also Senior Officers, Group Captains, Colonels and Navy Captains all ready and willing. One Air Vice Marshall was taking cameras from couples and groups to take



their snaps to ensure they were all on the photo. So many incidents like this going on, all around. We then sauntered round the Gardens while being entertained to music provided by the Bands of the Royal Marines and the Queens Division. Then onto the Marquee to Lunch, the ladies were taken speechless by the beauty of the tables and flowers. Next, the arrival of the Great and the Good! The Prime Minister, Ex Prime Ministers, (Mrs Thatcher and John Major), The Princes

and Princesses of the Royal Family, Prince Andrew, Prince Edward and the Countess of Wessex, (Keith and Kath were seated at the Countess's table), Duke of Kent, Prince and Princess Michael. Then the Queen and Prince Phillip. There were no long speeches just Grace then virtually straight to lunch. Then came a tribute to Her Majesty by the Rt.Hon.Sir Tasker Watkins YC.

Afterwards the Queen left to attend the Ceremony on Horse Guards Parade. We, who did not have further duties, lingered a little longer and then slowly left the Palace grounds and gathered in front of the Palace to watch the Horse Guards Ceremony on a huge TV screen. Entertained by music etc, with all the old tunes and songs of yesteryear (sounds familiar, that expression!!)

Next a truly magnificent sight as hundreds and hundreds of Banners of all the Ex Service Associations and Organisations carried so proudly and in full step by their Standard Bearers. I would love to say I saw our own Standard carried by Roger, (but there were several hundred, and all fairly well packed together!! (Sorry Rog.) Then the Queen and the Royal Family came on the Balcony for the "Fly Past", Rapides, Ansons, Catalina, Dakota's, B17, B25s, then last, the Memorial Flight, the Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane, and the Poppy Cascade. It really was very emotional and there were many wet eyes and, I have to admit, I was amongst them.

We were just a few among many thousands who in spite of, or in defiance of, the events of three days before, had gathered to celebrate this 60th Anniversary. I am absolutely sure none of us will ever forget this day. If I may end, with just two more incidents that made the day more memorable to me personally. I know that it is very very unlikely that the people concerned will ever read this, but I must thank them. First, the two Para-medics, (a lovely young lady, and a young chap), and members of the St Johns Ambulance Brigade who came to our assistance over a slight problem caused by the heat and crowded conditions, they were wonderful. THANK YOU.

Also the two Taxi Drivers (and London Taxi Drivers are not normally known for sweetness and light!!) who,

after the journeys to, and from the Palace, one who would only accept a token payment as part of his fee, and the second, one who refused to take any payment whatsoever!! And they say the young people of today do not care any more. Believe me Chaps it isn't true. It was a wonderful day and one that we will always remember. On behalf of Glad, and myself, thanks to you all.

Smokey Fairhurst member 35
Smokey No 35

Note: Photo in first column shows Smokey and Gladys with a Chelsea Pensioner in Buckingham Palace grounds.

'CARRY ON' AT THE TAXI RANK!



After we left you on The Mall, on Sunday 10th July, 2005, and were waiting for a taxi, there was an ex Wing Commander complaining about the

bad service (he made it well known to whoever would listen), and I tactfully reminded him our service ranks did not work in civvy street.

The person standing next to me was smiling and, when I had a second look, I realised it was Leslie Philips (the Carry On films fame) so I had to speak to him and say that not all ex service people were like the ex Wingco and, in any case, he probably was nobody really important!

I was speaking to an ex WAAF in front of us and just let it drop we'd had a special invite to the Abbey and sat behind the Queen, the ex Wingco was looking the other way.

On the home video tape it showed the NAAFI wagon where I tried to get a 1d, (1 old penny), cup of tea and saw the same lady I spoke to. As we arrived at the station we heard the Aircraft go right over the top of us, and the tape I'd set at home, did not record the second part.



Cheers.

Steve Doran member 41

RAF & DFSA 10th ANNIVERSARY- PICTORIAL RECORD - FIRST



Museum Working Party - 29th Sep to 3rd Oct 2005

'A VERY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Thursday 29th September dawned bright and sunny as I set off by car from home to Wolverhampton Airport and the Museum for my stint as a volunteer. After a pleasant journey via the M1, A5, A449 and minor back roads, I arrived around lunchtime. I thought I was the first to arrive and, after parking the car, wandered into the Airport grounds and down to the Museum. As I got close, I discovered that several members, including Wilf Longmire, Allan Brooke and John Sanders were already there and preparing for action. I joined in and pottered about until it was time for me to leave for Telford, as David and Sue Hughes had kindly offered to put me up. Wilf and Rita Longmire, Allan and Marylyn Brooke, John and Brenda Sanders and Dinger and Betty Bell had brought their caravans and were on a campsite across the road from the main airfield. Thanks to the wives who gave their time and helped where needed. Friday morning I returned and joined Bill Lawrence, Jason Lestor, Wilf, Allan, John and Colin Nixon, member, 752, who'd travelled down from Shaw, near Oldham. Once organised, Colin, and I, were tasked to start stripping a DP1 cab down to bare metal. Not a very glamorous job, but one that needed to be done. We set to with paint stripper, brushes and scrapers. Meanwhile, Allan Brooke, John Sanders, Wilf Longmire and Roger 'Dinger' Bell were sworn in as 'Legalised Vandals' and set to with a will and commenced removing the rotten bodywork. It was explained, to us, that the intention wasn't to scrap it, but turn it into a demonstration exhibit, to show all the internal workings, usually concealed within the bodywork. Wilf said that this had been done at RAF Gan, sometime in the dim and distant past, and was very successful. Yeah, right! I'll believe it when I see it!

Each day, tea and coffee were brewed by anyone available with lunch taken in the ATC café/restaurant. Around 1600hours, we started packing up and I again left for Telford. Colin was sleeping in a two-berth caravan, parked near the museum and was either sharing with Bill or Jason? Whoever drew the short straw slept on the floor in the kitchen/office? Bill had mentioned that he'd arranged to have a meal Saturday night in the Air Traffic restaurant and I made arrangements with David and Sue, to stop over at the Museum from Saturday, for the rest of my stay This would cut down on my travelling time, to and from Telford and allow me to stay for the meal with the crowd I'd been working with. So, from Saturday night, I shared the caravan with Colin, with Bill and Jason sharing the kitchen/office floor. Bill provided tea and beans on toast for breakfast. Ablutions were via a nearby toilet block, but were clean and had hot water on tap. Spartan but adequate! At the end of the day, when everyone had left Colin, and I, found the peace and quiet

was magic. I thought I'd have problems sleeping, but found it all quite relaxing. I've not worked so hard for years and was knackered!

Saturday morning, the Bedford Domestic was delivered from the Merseyside Fire Museum, and members, Steve Brown and Dave 'Lala' Lakin arrived from RAF Stafford DFS for the day. Their task was to sort out the stores/workshop area, *again!* They'd done it a short while before, but someone had been a bit careless with their 'housekeeping' (can't say who?) and it needed their expertise and TLC, and they, quite happily, set to work with a will and sorted it. Well done to them. I wouldn't have known where to start! Museum volunteer, Frank Smith, member, 593, arrived to help out and, around lunch time Basil Cotton, member 13; turned up to see how we were getting on. He just happened to be in the area well, not quite. He was attending a weekend reunion for the Royal Naval Association in Edgebaston and, as he had an hour or two to spare, decided to 'pop' over for the afternoon by taxi! The round trip cost him about £70 quid, and it's not the first time he's visited. Not bad for his age and living on the Isle of Wight! He's amazing.

The Museum's first official visitor, Daniel Talbot, aged 4, and his dad, made an appearance. Daniel was the first one through the door at the official opening on Saturday 2nd April 2005, and was recorded as such. He loves the museum and, as he lives locally, likes to visit regularly, although, he had an ulterior motive, as, on a previous visit, he'd seen a Helicopter Transporter in one of the exhibit cases, and fell for it. Bill made the mistake of saying he could have it as a souvenir and was frequently reminded of his promise. So, we held a little ceremony and presented him with his reward. His smile was a mile wide and he wouldn't let go of it! It was decided to make up a Certificate commemorating the event with photos, to be presented on one of his future visits and it's now awaiting his return.

Saturday night saw those of us staying locally; meet up at 1900 at the ATC Restaurant for the meal Bill had arranged. The choice was Chilli or Curry and was very good, but Betty Bell, wasn't feeling too well, but came anyway. We then retired to Dinger and Betty's caravan awning and helped get rid of some beer and spirits provided by the caravanners, along with various nibbles, crisps, savouries and Rita Longmire's 'cheesy balls' (don't ask).

Sunday saw a reduction in 'Staff' with Frank Smith, Basil Cotton, Steve Brown and Dave 'Lala' Lakin having other commitments and we carried on with the DP1 paint and bodywork stripping. We had a few visitors, including two driving by, saw the Fire Vehicles, and called in to satisfy their curiosity, and a couple looking for flights, and were all well impressed.

Monday saw David Hughes putting in an appearance and closely inspected the progress made with the DP1 demolition,

sorry, restoration!

The working party had been intended to last until Tuesday 4th October, but by late Monday afternoon numbers of volunteers had reduced, and it was decided to pack up. Colin, and I, were a little dropped on, as we thought we'd another night under the stars to look forward to, but realised we would be the only two there Tuesday so, after a brief 'confab' we agreed to call it a day and head on home.

I was a little dubious about doing the weekend in the first place, as I have a lot on with Flashpoint and aren't getting any younger but, in hindsight, I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I made some new friends and the work and banter was a reminder of my time in the RAF and it was great to be working on an ex RAF airfield again. The weather was kind with a few brief isolated showers.

Thanks to Wilf Longmire for organising the long weekend and those members, and their wives, who helped make the weekend a great success.

I hope to return again and wish the museum founders, and their supporters, all the luck in the world in developing, and consolidating, what is, a fantastic project. As with any new venture it's complicated and there are problems that need resolving, but John Arthur would have been proud of your efforts so far!

Dave Kenyon Flashpoint Editor

Below are 10 photographs showing the stripping of a DP1, delivery of mini Bedford TK, Basil Cotton, Daniel Talbot and his Helicopter, Steve Brown and Dave 'Lala' Lakin' Towing out of the MK7 by the DP2.



Remembrance Day Parade - Report



REMEMBRANCE PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON SUNDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2005

The Sunday morning was cold and cloudy early on but, by the time members, who were on Parade, arrived on Horse Guards Parade, the sun was breaking through and, whilst still quite chilly, was turning out to be a very pleasant day. By 0945, all our members taking part were on parade and were as follows, Ron Brown, Dennis McCann, Geoff Varley, Ray Faires, Fred Greenwood, Mike Clapton, Jess Jessup, Bob Strachan, Trevor Hayes, Bob Dickinson,

David Frost, Howard Harper, John Roberts, Steve Doran, John Goupillot, Brian Jones and Mick Hayward and Arthur Elton.

The final turnout was a little disappointing, as there were only 18 of us, but we made our presence felt. It was a special occasion, as it was the first time we had paraded without Alan Alsop, who was the person we have to thank for our participation in the Remembrance Parade and, I for one, felt that he was with us as we marched.

We were led this year, by Steve Doran, who looked very smart, with a paystick provided by John Goupillot, your turn next year, John. On Horse Guards Parade, after the march past, we all said our farewells, and agreed to meet again next year, a fitting end to a very moving day. Thank you to all those who attended.

Ron Brown member 294



Photo courtesy of Howard Harper, member, 682

Letter of Appreciation to the Membership

From the widow, and family, of the late Alan Gordon Alsop, member 49, and Flashpoint founding editor.

Dear Members,

Both families, and I, would like to thank secretary, George Edwards, for sending us such a kind letter of condolence from the President, and Committee, following the death of my husband, Alan Alsop.

Joe Shackleton, and Ron Brown, each wrote a memorial to Alan in the last issue of Flashpoint, and my personal thanks have been sent to members who attended the funeral.

May we also extend our thanks to all members who telephoned, wrote cards and letters and donated money to Cancer research U.K. We were all very grateful.

We hope Alan's memory will live on in the great magazine, Flashpoint,

Iris



An expression of grief

*Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow
I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain.*

*When you awaken in the morning
hush
I am the quiet uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the soft stars that shine at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there - I did not die.*

The poem was left in an envelope by Stephen Cummins, a soldier serving in Northern Ireland to be opened in the event of his death. Stephen was killed on active service and many people incorrectly assumed that he had written it. Stephen's father read the poem on Remembrance Day 1995.

There are several people who claim authorship of the poem, which was also read at the memorial service for the five Astronauts who died in the Challenger Space Shuttle tragedy.

The poem was reproduced in Yours magazine May 2004 and states: - 'This is a well known poem which is often read at funerals and seems to offer comfort to bereaved people.'

Vice-President's Remembrance Weekend & Photos!

REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND TO REMEMBER LONDON 12 AND 13TH NOVEMBER 2005



This was certainly a weekend to remember for Pauline, and I. Our weekend began when we arrived in London on the Saturday morning. It was very busy due to the Lord Mayor's Show on the Saturday and the Festival of Remembrance in the evening followed by the parade of course on the Sunday morning. We had a marvellous time on Saturday evening at the Royal Albert Hall with a circle seat right opposite the Royal Box.

At 0900 on Sunday morning we started to arrive at Horse Guards Parade and there was all the usual banter and the familiar hip flasks of brandy and whisky coming out and being shared around. Behind us were the RAF Marinecraft band of merry men who seemed good friends of our little group, most likely due to Ron Brown and his regular 'paraders' of the Fire Service lads from last year. In front of our group were the RAF Police wearing white berets. We also had a lot of good laughs with them; especially when one of our group, who shall remain nameless, suggested that we should do a "right dress".



We then moved off to a holding area nearer the Cenotaph where we stayed amongst a lot of different regiments. As the various groups such as the Chelsea Pensioners, the Land Army and other famous Regiments marched past us we all gave them a rousing round of applause.

The actual march past the Cenotaph went without a hitch and our leader Steve Doran with his SWO's silver top baton tucked under his arm did us proud. It made one feel fortunate to be able to pay our respects in this way remembering all those who never made it. On our return to Horse Guards Parade Prince Charles took the salute, as we approached.



We then continued to enjoy a good laugh and the odd photo before we all went on our way. As we left the parade area I met up again with Pauline and we went in a Pub, which was bursting at the seams with ex service men and women, and the atmosphere was great. After a few drinks, banter and laughs, we made our way home. It would be nice to see a few more of our members on parade next year. Thank you Ron Brown for making it possible.

Dennis McCann Vice President

Note: Can't remember ever seeing shots like these of Association members marching past the Cenotaph. well done - Ed.

FIRST EX RAF SCOTTISH MACER! - Dear Dave, From an interest point of view perhaps you, and the members, would care to hear about the job I'm now in. After leaving the RAF Fire Service on completion of 37 ½ years in 1997, I had a few jobs including, property management, legal messenger, car hire and RAFA, Scotland.

In 2001 I applied for a job as a Macer in the Scottish Court Service, and was accepted. There are only 34 Macers employed at any one time, one for each High Court Judge. The duties are wide, and varied, however, our main role is to attend to a Judge, bring in witnesses and look after, and present, the evidence to witnesses. The evidence that is termed, Productions and Labels, was known, in earlier days, as Exhibit(s) A & B etc. We are also required to go on detachment, known as, a Circuit where the High Court sits. I have been to Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, Forfar, Airdrie, Paisley and Hamilton.

I enclose a photo of myself in Court kit of, black gown, white bow tie and flyaway collar. We are required to be competent in the three disciplines of criminal, civil and commercial courts. I was tickled pink to find I was the first ex RAF to be a Macer, although, there have been plenty of ex Army, Navy and Marine personnel in the role. Since I started, we have had another 2 ex RAF started, a supplier and an air traffic chap. I hope you find this of some interest for Flashpoint and wish you all the best. Yours sincerely, George Harley member 540

Footnote - George served from 25 March 1960 to 1997 and was stationed at, Cardington, Bridgnorth, Catterick, Lyneham, Dishforth, Selata (with Dennis 'Mac' McCann), Gan, Melksham, Binbrook, St Athan, (driving course & FTI Course for Corporal), Gib. (66), Machrahanish, (69/71), Laarbruch, Lossiemouth (74), Hendon, Afcnt (Holland), Brussum, Buchan (86), Falklands (89), Machrahanish (91), Akrotiri (93), Kinloss (96 - 97) and demob (97). Thanks a lot for the article George, personally, I found it of great interest and offer you my congratulations on your success in getting the job. The Court kit certainly gives you an air of authority, and presence, in your judicial role -Ed.



LATEST PRESS RELEASE - LAST VULCAN PASSES TEST - In 1947, the Avro Vulcan was designed to carry a nuclear bomb as a countermeasure to Soviet aggression. Lethal, but never launched in this role, the Vulcan can claim a bloodless victory in the Cold War.

'Unsung Hero' Vulcan XH 558, has just passed a milestone in the campaign to return the aircraft to the sky. Non-destructive testing with deep X-ray has just given XH 558 a clean bill of health. This means work towards her reconstructive 'surgery' can start and her 'medical team' under the supervision of CAA 'consultants,' are hard at work in a hangar in Leicestershire.

The Vulcan to the Sky Trust purchased this icon of the Cold War in February this year, to be restored for the nation, and this remarkable project is moving towards first test flight IN 2006.

Around 20,000 donors have sustained the project for four years and have now been helped by a grant from the Lottery heritage Fund. For more details visit www.vulcantothesky.com or send donations to; VTS, PO Box 3240, Dorset, BH21 4YP

Text courtesy of RAF NEWS, page 23, 25th November 2005

RAF & Defence Fire Services Association RAFDFSA ENTERPRISES - Our "Shop"

Those of you who have been able to attend the reunions will be aware that we have a range of promotional **RAFDFSA goods for sale**, all profits of which go to **Association funds**. Goods are also available by mail order via **Sue Brooks (Chairman's wife)** - (see **WHO TO CONTACT** on page 3 for full address details). Goods are also available via the **Association website** shown at the bottom of each page. As requested by members, we have several new items this year including mugs and self cling car stickers, as well as new fire engine thimbles and keyrings. Looking forward to seeing you at the reunions, regards and best wishes, Sue Brooks and Bob Feather.

Below is an updated stock and price list for your information.

Cheques and Postal Orders payable to RAF&DFSA Enterprises

Note:- For Mail Order Postage & Packing please add 17% to prices quoted. Minimum Postage charge £1.00

STOCK AND PRICE LIST 2006

RAF FIREFIGHTING & RESCUE

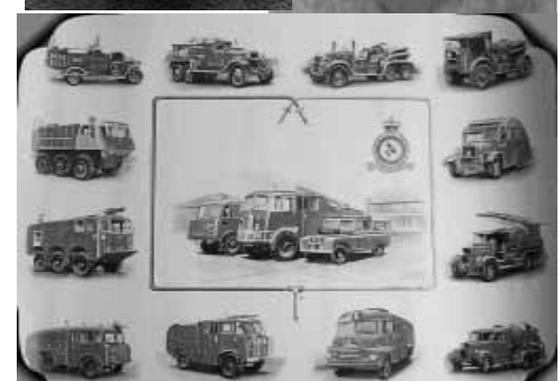
STICKERS x 2 (RAF Fire Service).....	£0.50
CAP BADGE (RAF Crash Fire Service).....	£10.00
EMBROIDERED PATCH BADGE.....	£3.50
ACRT CORGI MODEL.....	£10.00

RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

CAR STICKER.....	£1.20
KEYRING.....	£2.00
MUG.....	£4.75
ASSOCIATION PEN.....	£0.50
THIMBLES.....	£1.50
Set of 4.....	£5.00
POCKET CALCULATOR.....	£3.99
WALL PLAQUE.....	£26.00
OLD SUTTON-ON-HULL MAGAZINE.....	£1.00
BLAZER BADGE (Gold Wired).....	£10.00
LAPEL BADGE.....	£3.00
TIES (Blue, Grey, Burgundy, Green).....	£6.00
SWEATSHIRT (Navy, Grey, Green, White) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£16.99
POLO SHIRT - Navy (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£10.00
T SHIRT (Red, Black, Navy, White) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£6.50
FLEECE (Navy - to order only) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL, XXL).....	£35.00
BASEBALL CAP (Navy, Black, Green, Natural).....	£6.00

MISCELLANEOUS

FIRE ENGINE PRINT.....	£6.00
FIRE EXTINGUISHER LIGHTER.....	£2.50
CHRISTMAS CARDS - REDUCED TO CLEAR	
Pack of 10.....	£1.50
Special Offer - 4 packs.....	£4.00





Arabian Service Medal

Proposed by the Aden Veterans Association, the new commemorative Arabian Service Medal 1839 - 1967 provides medallic recognition to all former civil and military personnel who served in this former Colony of the British Empire. Next of kin or direct descendants can also apply.

A donation of 10 percent from each medal sold will be made to the Aden Veterans Association.

Cost approx. £32.50, send no money now. Application form and details of the medal available by contacting: Award Productions Ltd, (Dept. RA), PO Box 300, Shrewsbury

SY5 6WP

Tel 01952 510 053 or Fax 01952 510765

Website: www.awardmedals.com email: award@crown-lane.co.uk

Note -This information is courtesy of the Royal Air Force News, page 9, Issue 1136, 11th. November 2005 - Ed.

Next Issue

- RAF Catterick event June 2006 - more details to follow in April 06
- RAF Marham visit - full report
- John Hanley new Mem. Sec. profile

Centre Spread Detail 1995 - 2005!

Top row left to right - Shoreham Sep 94 - May 95 - Sep 95 - Stafford Feb 96 x 2 - Worthing Sep 96 - **2nd row** - Worthing Sep 96 - Brighton Oct 97 x 2 - Morecambe Mar 97 - Scarborough Oct 00 5th Anniversary Cake - John Arthur's Funeral 2nd April 04 - **3rd row** - Goupillot Wedding Sep 04 - Leeds Mar 98 - Shoreham Sep 96 - Morecambe Mar 97 - RAF Laarbruch 97 - RAF Coningsby June 04 - **4th row** - Worthing Mar 99 - 10th Anniversary Cakes Hull Oct 05 - Sutton Gates x 2nd April 99 - Committee Jan 01 - RAF Waddington June 00 - **5th row** - Cenotaph Nov 01 - Worthing Mar 99 - Sutton Oct 03 - Remembrance Parade Nov 03 - Hull Oct 05 - RAF Waddington Airshow June 04 - **6th row** - Cenotaph Nov 01 - RAF Coningsby June 04 - Hull Oct 05 - John Arthur Memorial RAF Fire Service Museum Opening 2 April 04 **34 photographs including first informal meeting at Shoreham in September 1994 to Oct 2005 - Ed.**

RAF MARHAM VISIT WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2005

Following an official request from our Secretary, George Edwards, to the Commanding Officer of RAF Marham, Norfolk, Steve Doran, Norfolk coordinator, finalised arrangements for a visit on Wednesday 22nd November 2005 where, thanks to WO Dave Starkings, eleven of us were guests of the Fire Section. Sgt Neil Coussell, our chaperone for the day, met us at the Guardroom around 0930 hours and helped sort our ID's and car passes, before escorting us to the Fire Section. Then, after a quick cuppa, whisked us off on MT transport, for our first engagement of a comprehensive programme of events. SAC Tom Gateley, a Station photographer, accompanied us and recorded our visits to the Fire Section, 39 PRU Canberra and 13 GR4 Tornado Squadrons. In between visits, we enjoyed an excellent leisurely lunch in the WO/Sgt's Mess. It had come to our notice, that fire section personnel were heavily involved in Charity Fund raising and, on return to the Fire Section for a final 'cuppa, a quick 'whip round' amongst our members, raised a grand total of £81, which was presented to Neil Coussell. He was a little taken aback and, after thanking us, said that the extra money had raised their efforts for the Children In Need fund to over £3000. Good luck to them with their 'Full Monty' fund raiser in December. Well done to those personnel involved, we were only too pleased to help out as a thank you for their hospitality. Around 1530hours, members started drifting away home and, by 1600, we were all on our way with some great memories. Look for a full report, with photographs, in the April issue of Flashpoint. If you ever get the chance to go, don't miss it. I can highly recommend the visit!

Have a look at RAF Marham's Website it's a cracker. Just type in RAF Marham and away you go. Enjoy - Ed.

BRAIN TEASER FUN

2YYS UR 2YYS UB ICU
R 2YYS 4ME

A little Brain Teaser for our readers sent in by Ken Hird member 491

Give in? - answer below

Too wise you are too wise you be, I see you are too wise for me!



Joe Shackleton, founder member 22, and Co-ordinator North, for arranged for the 10th Anniversary Cakes. Based on a number 10 and one with founder member's names, and decorated with flags and badges. At the rear, was a selection of photos from 1995 to the present - Ed.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES FOR NEXT FLASHPOINT ISSUE DUE APRIL 06 1 MARCH 2006



POINT TO PONDER - ASSOCIATION BADGE - FLAMING SWORD & GAUNTLET LOGO!

The RAF & DFS Association badge centre may have, inadvertently, insulted members of the DFS (now DF&RS - See the amended Brief History of the DF&RS on page 19 of this issue.) and be putting them off both the Association and the Flashpoint magazine. How? By use of the Flaming Sword and Gauntlet logo taken directly from the RAF Fire Service Badge. I understand that, when the Association was first formed ten years ago, it was initially named Royal Air Force Fire Service Association as it was set up by ex RAF fire-fighters and the badge was designed with that in mind. However, it soon became apparent that this was an oversight, and the name was amended to include the Defence Fire Services.

The matter was brought to my attention by an ex RAF fire fighter, now in the Defence Fire & Rescue Service, who told me that it was a barrier to convincing personnel to join the Association, and it was discussed in Committee at Hull in October. The consensus was to leave things as they are, mainly due to the cost implications, and time, involved in changing the existing Constitution & Rules, Association Standard, Blazer Badges (Royal College of Arms), Stationery and Merchandise, logos etc.



When viewed from a distance, the logo in the centre of the badge could be mistaken for the RAF Fire Service Badge, therefore, nothing to do with the Defence Fire Services (now the DF&RS). Initially, I didn't see the point as, like many others, I'm familiar with the wording on our badge but, at first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking that it was the RAF Fire Service Badge.

Those of you not sure what all the fuss is about, will note that the DF&RS centre logo is made up of three separate service emblems; Army Crossed Swords, Royal Navy Anchor and RAF Eagle. I assure all personnel serving in the DF&RS, many of them, ex-RAF that there was never any intention to ignore, dismiss, nor insult, your branch of the service. I myself am ex-RAF and Air Force Department Fire Service (1963 - 66 prior to formation of the DFS). I don't want to provoke a war of words, just some objective thought. If someone feels they've been insulted, then it can be difficult to convince him or her otherwise.



To try and remedy the problem, I could consider amending the front cover to read as follows : ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE (INCORPORATING THE DEFENCE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE) Please let me know what you think?

Finally, I refer you all to the Brief History of the Association on page 2 of this issue, which says:

"Association membership is made up of ex and serving fire-fighters and includes those personnel who made up the Air Force, Army and Royal Navy Fire Service Departments, which became the Defence Fire Services. Together we are the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association."

Yours sincerely,

Dave Kenyon – Flashpoint Editor.



10th ANNIVERSARY REUNION HULL ENTERTAINMENT Richard C Parker Comedy, Cabaret & Magic



Saturday Night entertainment followed the Gala Dinner and was, once again, provided by Richard C Parker with a combination of Comedy, Cabaret and a little bit of Magic. Dick, as he is less formally known, first performed for us at the Peterborough Moat Hotel, in October 2004. He has his own inimitable style and, once the audience had acclimatised to his vivid outfit, (sorry Dick!), he soon had them in the palm of his hand. His presentation and humour, (some of it very saucy), and his non P.C. jokes kept everyone enthralled. This was interspersed with his Banjo playing, (or was it a Ukelele?), and inviting the audience to 'Sing along' with old favourites from George Formby's repertoire. He puts a lot of energy into his act and the members, and staff, thoroughly enjoyed his lively performance. Well done Dick. You made a lot of people happy and helped the rest of the evening go in a more relaxed manner. A fitting end to the day.

Text & photos Dave Kenyon member 239

LAST POST & REVEILLE

Before the start of the Gala Dinner, in remembrance of all those members who had passed away during the last ten years, Terry Parry, a Cornet Player, from Llandudno, played the Last Post and Reveille. Terry is a friend of Mike Shenton, member 550. Well done to them for a very poignant moment in our 10th Anniversary year.



Photographic Memories!

SALUTE TO BRENDA AND SUE!



After the Tombola - L/R - Brenda Paterson & Sue Brooks

For those of you not aware who Brenda and Sue are, then let me please enlighten you. Brenda is the wife of our Vice-President, Jim Paterson, and Sue is the wife of our Chairman, Roger Brooks. Between them, they get through an awful lot of very hard work for the Association, which may not always be appreciated.

Brenda, with the help of Sue, Hazel Varley, and anyone else she can rope in, organises the Tombola/Raffle and, even with over a hundred prizes, has managed to reduce the time taken to issue them, down to really no time at all. She deserves a bouquet for her efforts, which brings in around £600 twice a year for Association funds.

Sue recently took responsibility for the Shop and Mail Order, otherwise known as, RAF&DFSA Enterprises. With Bob Feather, they put in a tremendous amount of work into researching, ordering, storing, transporting, displaying and selling the items, at our twice a year reunions, and via mail order. (See Shop items for sale elsewhere in this issue). Again, their efforts help swell Association coffers, which puts a smile on our Treasurer's face, (Geoff Varley).

They do this voluntarily, without pay, and don't always get the time to enjoy the reunions with the added responsibility. So, if you see them beavering away flogging raffle tickets, or merchandise, please offer to help, or say, "thank you" for all they do on your behalf. They make it happen.

Oh yes. The guy cadging in on the photo is member, Ken Bowden, who, I'm told, allegedly, has, an eye for the ladies! Sorry Ken.

Photo taken at Quality Royal Hotel, Hull, Saturday 22nd October 2005, after the last prize had been distributed - Ed

RAF&DFSA 10th ANNIVERSARY PICTORIAL RECORD FROM FIRST MEETING AT SHOREHAM IN SEPTEMBER 1994 AND INAUGURAL MEETING ON 13th MAY 1995 TO 2005 - PAGES 12 AND 13 OF THIS ISSUE. SEE PAGE 18 FOR DETAILS

A random selection of photographs taken from the Association album, members contributions and the Editor's archive.

It has proved impossible to include every member, and occasion, since 1995, but I've tried to take examples from the Reunions and the events in between. I hope you enjoy this nostalgic look back.

Dave Kenyon Flashpoint Editor.

FIREMEN KILLED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED IN TRAGIC HUNTER CRASH RAF OLDENBURG GERMANY 22ND JULY 1955 - LATEST UPDATE!

Whilst reading the Flashpoint, for August 2005, I came across an article, on page 20, on an incident about a Hawker Hunter jet aircraft, which ploughed through the Runway Caravan Control, and Crash Rescue Crew, at Royal Air Force Oldenburg, Germany, on the 22nd July 1955. Dan Gurney, member 795, had sent in the article.

This incident brought back memories to me, as I was at this Station, and was Corporal in charge of the Domestic Crew, at the time. On this day, I was in the Fire Station Office, talking to our Flt Sgt Roberts, at the time of the incident, and was looking out towards the airfield. I immediately told the Flt Sgt and sounded the alarm bells.

We proceeded out to the Crash Crew and, when we arrived, were devastated at what we came across. The aircraft's wing had ploughed through the Control Caravan, the top of the Crash Rescue Landrover, and the cab of the Foam Tender. I believe that the airmen, and sergeant, in the caravan, were all killed. Due to being lower than the other Fire Tenders, the Landrover Crew of two airmen survived, but were seriously injured. The Foam Tender Crew of two German Firemen, were seriously injured, and died in hospital. The two-man German Crew in the Powder Truck were also seriously injured.

During the rescue operation, the Control Tower, and Medical Services, had also been alerted, and the Commanding Officer, closed the airfield for 24 hours whilst new equipment was obtained.

I would like to hear from Jim Paterson, and Dan Gurney, on this incident, and, if it's possible, I would like to see the Flashpoint magazine for December 2003 to see the photographs



of the Foam Tender, and Powder Tender, after the accident. I enclose two photographs of the Foam Tender, and Powder Tender, clearly showing the serious damage to the vehicles.

Yours kindly, William D Pratt, member 783

Footnote: The incident William refers to, was first mentioned on page 8 of the 2003 Flashpoint with photographs sent in by

Jim Paterson member 405, (Vice-Chairman). Dan Gurney, member, 795, (a non-member at the time), saw the article and supplied the information for the follow-up article on



page 20 of the August 2005 Flashpoint. This is a great result, and shows that it's possible to get info after all those years. I will pass on your details to Jim Paterson, and try and sort out a copy of the 2003 Flashpoint you requested. Well done, and many thanks for sending the photos and text. - Ed.

Secretary and Treasurer's Hull AGM Reports

Since the last General Meeting and secretary's report, letters have been received from the following members: Colin Edwards, member 47, sends his apologies for his inability to attend future reunions due to deteriorating health. Philip

Cooper, member 779, sends his apologies for none attendance at the October reunion also due to his poor health.

Dave Starkings, member 741, sent a letter confirming the visit to RAF Marham Fire Section could go ahead. Dave went on to say that he thoroughly enjoyed his first association reunion (March 05) and looks forward to attending many more.

Letter received from Kenneth Green, member 255, volunteering to be the co-ordinator for Northern Ireland. Kenneth was accepted as the Northern Ireland coordinator at the August committee meeting.

E-mail received from John Savage informing secretary that there is an RAF Khormaksar/ Steamer Point Association, which has about 70 members. Any interested members wishing to find out more, contact John Jones 01492 622 660.

Catterick Visit proposed for June 2006 Secretary has been in touch with the Catterick Garrison Commander. Approval has been given for the Association to undertake a visit/function at the old RAF base now known as Marne Barracks. This is an issue for discussion and, it is hoped an organising committee can get together, and plan the event. Volunteers and ideas most welcome; please contact the Secretary.

World War Two Anniversary Events 10 July 2005 - Keith Penfold, Wilf Longmire, Smokey Fairhurst, and their wives, attended a Royal Lunch at Buckingham Palace. Steve Doran, Jess Jessup, Dave Kenyon, and his carer for the day, Bob Feather, attended the Westminster Abbey Service. Association Chairman Roger Brooks carried the Association Standard in the standards and banners parade. It was, for the members who attended the events, a wonderful, never to be forgotten occasion and a great honour for the Association.

On a more personal note - I have for the last few years been completing an autobiography which is now completed and available for sale. Signed copies of the book, *Out of the Blue an Airman's Tale* (cost £9.95 which includes post and packing) are available from myself. (See Who to Contact page for address details) Season's greetings and best wishes,

George Edwards member 238

Footnote - Further details on George's book are included in elsewhere in this issue of Flashpoint and I look forward to reading it - Ed

It gives me much pleasure in presenting to the membership, my second, end of Financial Year Report. As you will see from the audited

Statement of Accounts (as a loose leaf item with this issue) our expenditure has not exceeded our income, so we have been able to slightly increase our end of year balance from last year, but it should be noted that part of this increase includes a refund from the Peterborough Hotel, regarding our last Reunion (more on this from Jim Patterson), the balance of the increase I feel, is due to the vast improvement in subscription payments and that is now running at 86% (after reminder letters), compared with less than 76% for the previous year,

These figures, I think you will agree, fully justify our decision to increase our spend on postage sending out Reminder Letters, to all members who do not hold a Standing Order Mandate or have paid their subscriptions in advance.

After printing and stationery, you will see postage is our major expenditure and if recent warning from the Post Office are to be believed, it will cost as very much more next year, with this problem in mind, Bob Feather and myself are looking into ways of using a cheaper way of sending out "Flashpoint" and Reunion information.

Our other major expenditure was, as you will see, our purchase of the Mark 8 Crash Tender, its purchase price was mostly offset by pledge payments from members, but transportation and service tooling was paid out of the Association's funds.

Should any member have any queries regarding these accounts, please do not hesitate in contacting me at my listed address.

As to this current year (2005/06), I still await subscription payments from 78 members but I expect that number to reduce, during and after the Hull Reunion.

Regrettably, it must be noted that a number of the members Bank's (not our own, I hasten to add), have totally mismanaged Standing Order payments for this year's (2005/6) subscriptions, with many duplicated payments. I have written to all of the members affected, to offer help in receiving reimbursement from their respective Banks, but our thanks must go to those members who have requested that their overpayments

be used as donations to the Association funds.

The number of members now paying by "Standing Order Mandate" has increased over the years, with over a third of the membership now using this system of payment.

Our thanks must also go to all of the new members who joined the Association during 2004/05, for forgoing their entitlement of a discounted payment for this year subscriptions, having made full payment, and asking for the balance to go into the funds.

As your Treasurer I still continue to seek further ways of increasing the Association's coffers.

Geoff Varley member 221.

VE/VJ CELEBRATIONS

LONDON SUNDAY 10 JULY 2005 - BACK COVER PHOTO

Main photo - BBMF flying down The Mall

Top Row Left to Right - Edie & Steve Doran, Bob Feather, Jess & Georgina Jessup - Association Standard On Parade - NAAFI Wagon on show at 'Living Museum' St James Park

Centre Row - Wilf & Rita Longmire - St James' Park & London Eye - Gladys & Smokey Fairhurst - Kathleen & Keith Penfold

Bottom Row - Buckingham Palace Garden Party - Outside the Palace Gates - Queen & Prince Philip driving down The Mall - Poppy Cascade

In Memoriam - a sincere tribute to those recently passed away

Arthur 'Mac' McCabe 1925 - 2005

Dear David,
Thank you for your letter dated 29 June 2005 regarding my late father. Mr. A S McCabe. I apologize for the delay in writing back but I have been trying to find all the information you requested. This has been quite difficult as all of the people who could give us this information are now dead. After talking to my sister and by tracing my father's Certificate of Service, we can now advise the following.



He was born on 28th August 1925, Arthur Squire McCabe but on joining the RAF on 20 October 1943, he was given the nickname 'Mac', a name he was known as by all of our family and friends for the rest of his life. His trade on enlistment is stated as Air Craft Handler/General Duties. Initially he was sent abroad to Amman Trans Jordan (not sure if the spelling of this is correct) and was stationed in, or near, Jerusalem and also Cairo. We have no idea how long he was there, but he was sent home as he contracted Typhoid and Malaria and went into a coma, which seemingly he was not expected to come out of. In all he was in the coma for over a month but regained consciousness and was eventually nursed back to health.

We believe that it was after his recuperation; he was transferred into the Fire Fighting crew. His record noted a course on Fire Fighting from 18 April 1945 to 17 May 1945. Courses in Instructors Techniques and his driving test to drive RAF Fire Fighting Vehicles followed in November 1950 and March 1951.

Unfortunately, we were unable to track down any dates in respect of his service in any particular base but we do know that he did serve at Sutton-on-Hull and Leuchars, which was his last posting.

He spoke very fondly of his time in the RAF often recounting many stories of his escaped. In particular, he mentioned the names of Bill Williams, Paddy and Chalky White as well as his close friend Alec Mustard, who remained in the RAF for several years after my father.



Another colleague, Jimmy Moonlight, who was also in the fire crew, became a civilian firefighter until his retirement. Unfortunately, he too has passed away.

At the time of leaving the RAF, my father was a Corporal, although he did mention that he passed his sergeant's exam but never got round to getting the stripes due to his imminent demob.

I have enclosed some pictures from my father's RAF days, which you are welcome to copy and send back to me. As regards, a poem,

my father was not one for poetry but as anyone who knew him would testify, he was good at telling stories and making everyone laugh. He also had a serious side, especially when it came to "Fires".

I can remember as a child, going through several fire drills in the home, as he was adamant that we all knew what to do in case a fire broke out. This is something that has remained with both my sister and myself and something, which we mentally practice in all the homes we have lived in



I trust this information will help you with your article and look forward to receiving a copy. We are going to Canada to visit my father's only remaining



brother in September and this will bring him great comfort.

Thank you for all your kind words and sentiments, which are appreciated by all the family.

Yours sincerely
Mrs. Maureen E Ness (Daughter)

Footnote - 'Mac' wasn't a member, as he didn't know the Association existed until too late. On being made aware that 'Mac' had died, I contacted the family, and they agreed to provide information. I thought it only right, and proper, that his passing should be marked as an ex-RAF fireman, particularly as colleagues may remember him from his service as an instructor at the RAF School of Firefighting, Sutton-on-Hull, East Yorkshire - Ed.

OBITUARIES

John Charlesworth 729 - Served 13th February 1958 - 1970 at Syerston, Stradishall, El Adem, Abingdon, Tengah and Northolt

Pat Clarke 587 - Served February 1962 - 1971 at Marham 1962-65, Khormaksar 1965-66, Brize Norton 66 and Fairford 66-71 Pat also served as coordinator for Suffolk/Essex - a collection, in his memory, was taken at the Hull AGM and totalled £500. His widow requested that any monies were to be donated to the John Arthur Memorial RAF Fire Service Museum at Halfpenny Green, Wolverhampton Airport

Randolf Benson 371 - Served July 1947 - January 1953 at Cardington, Sutton-on-Hull, Butterworth, Changi, Lords Bridge and Riseley. Then MOD RAE (Royal Aircraft Establishment), Bedford and Bedford Fire & Rescue Service 1961 to 1963

Derek Thomas 137 - Due to the recent changeover of Membership Secretary, Derek's details are not available at the time of going to press.

It is hoped to rectify matters for the next issue - Ed.

The National Service (Royal Air Force) Association's Astral Magazine

UPDATE - On page 11 of the Flashpoint April 2005 edition, I published an extract from the above Association's magazine, headed, HAY MAKING OR WERE THEY MAKING HAY? written by ex-RAF fireman, Cpl Brian Robinson. Member, Ron 'Yorkie' Gaunt, tracked him down to Redcar, Cleveland.

He also knows founder member, Joe Shackleton, but neither was aware of each other's background, as Joe is also ex- National Service! Brian has visited the Redcar RAFA Club, and met some members, and is considering applying for membership of our Association. I've spoken to him and he's going to send me the original article so I can reproduce it in Flashpoint and, maybe, find some more of his old comrades?

Brief History of the Royal Air Force Fire Service



(FSCTE) which still continues to this day.

When you see the way uniform, equipment, technology and appliances have developed since then, it seems a very different job today. But it's not! Today's personnel are doing exactly what those early pioneers did then, whilst still maintaining necessary high standards of training, expertise and efficiency.

They are carrying on the same traditions, skills, expertise, enthusiasm and dedication, to which we can all relate from our own personal experiences, via whatever branch of the Fire Services we did our time.

Today, the service is very much depleted from those days following the War years plus, when the Cold War eventually came to an end, many Overseas and Home Stations closed, with the choice of postings

The Trade of Fireman was first introduced in 1943 within Trade Group 9, to train personnel in Aircraft Crash Rescue and Firefighting techniques and included an Advanced Trade in Air Traffic Control. Prior to this, personnel on general and aircraft handling duties were used to carry out fire fighting responsibilities; with vehicles being driven by M.T. drivers. It was mainly a case of turning up for duty and being detailed on the day.

No insult intended, but it was down to the "Odds & Sods" to do the best they could in the circumstances. This they certainly did, if listening to some of our "Elder Statesmen" is anything to go by! A School of Firefighting and Rescue was then established on an RAF Balloon Unit, north of the City of Hull, as RAF Sutton-on-Hull, until its closure in 1959, when the School moved to RAF Catterick, North Yorkshire and, later, in 1988, to RAF Manston in Kent as the Fire Services Central Training Establishment

being reduced and numbers of personnel and equipment being gradually cut back to the service levels of today.

Hopefully, it should remain a viable force in the long term. - Ed

Pictured below is an MFV producing 'On the run' courtesy of Ground Photographic Section RAF Marham and Station photographer SAC Tom Gateley on an Association visit to RAF Marham Wednesday 23rd November 2005 Grateful thanks to Steve Doran, Norfolk coordinator for the visit.



New Name & Badge for the Defence Fire Services!



In the late 1950's, the RAF Fire Service was amalgamated with the RAF Regiment for several years until being reinstated as an independent Trade in its own right.

The early 1960's also saw the gradual civilianisation of certain Stations starting with Flying Training Command. Many personnel recruited were ex RAF, Navy and Army, and formed an experienced nucleus for the change over.

Some recruits hadn't experienced service camaraderie before; although it developed by nature of the job itself. This is no reflection on those individuals whatsoever, or on their abilities as fire fighters, it was just a complete change in the way things were done when previously manned by Regular Volunteers and National Service personnel.

Some of those early recruits went on to become Senior Officers, Training School Commandants at Manston, and Command Fire Officers throughout the RAF and DFS, both home and abroad. Another change was that many recruits were now older, married and lived off camp, so the days of the young, single, living on camp serviceman sadly, in my opinion, came to an untimely end!

I was recently informed, by two of our serving members, that the DFS had now acquired a new badge, which is reproduced alongside the old one for comparison. The badge centre remains the same, but the name has changed to **Defence Fire and Rescue Service**



Basically, it appears to be a name change only recognising the rescue role. If, and when, I have any official detail explaining the changes, I'll keep you informed. The job will still tend to attract those personnel with similar characteristics, personalities, and vocation, as all those who have gone before Long may it remain so! Thanks to members, Steve Brown (Stafford)

and Gordon 'Smudge' Smith (Leeming) for their input - Ed.

Photo courtesy of Gordon 'Smudge' Smith, member, 64 and shows one of the Fireground facilities at Teeside Fire Training School





The Association received an invitation from the WW2 60th Anniversary Commemoration Team, at the Ministry of Defence, for six couples to attend the celebrations in London. Three couples for a Commemorative Event of Reflection and Reminiscence at Westminster Abbey led by the Queen. Three other couples to lunch with the Queen, and members of the Royal Household, at Buckingham Palace. In this, our 10th Anniversary year, it's a fitting memorial to our late Founding President, John Arthur, and all the founder members who started the Association. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Sunday 10th July 2005 dawned with weather fit for the occasion, and we went to rendezvous with Association members, Steve and Edie Doran and Jess and Georgina Jessup, for a Service at Westminster Abbey. Keith and Kathleen Penfold, 'Smokey' and Gladys Fairhurst and Wilf and Rita Longmire were to make their way to Buckingham Palace for lunch.

We were also invited to parade our Standard, along with seven hundred others, on Horse Guards Parade, and down The Mall, to Buckingham Palace, led by the Queen, and Prince Philip, in an open top Range Rover. The Queen, and members of the Royal Household, then assembled on the balcony and waved to the vast crowd congregated outside the Palace gates.

The finale involved a fly past of vintage British, and American, aircraft passing directly over the heads of thousands of people crammed onto The Mall. The climax being, when the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight of Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster roared overhead and, as they approached the Palace, the Lancaster's bomb bay opened and one million poppies cascaded over the crowd. A very poignant tribute to all those who died in the war and a very humbling experience to those of us privileged to see it.

Photos - BBMF & Poppy cascade courtesy of SAC Scott Robinson, Sgt Graham Spark & RAF NEWS 22 July 2005 and Dave Kenyon Flashpoint Editor

