



Beyond the Flames - A London fireman's Story

Author David C. Pike

The author has produced in paperback a very comprehensive personal account of his service in the LFB from 1965 to 1996. He joined under the Junior Fireman Scheme and after basic training was posted to Red Watch B22 Lambeth to serve out his probationary period. As his career progressed he was moved to other stations and different references. Many of the names mentioned are people that I knew too and it is interesting to read the way in which David Pike perceived these individuals including the Chief Fire Officers under which he served. There is even a brief mention of the late Jeff Townley who retired to Wiltshire with his wife Margaret and who became a member of our association.

David's account misses very few details and covers issues ranging from the FBU strike in 1977 to an extra marital dalliance he embarked upon with a lady member of the brigade. Many now serving with only a few years under their belts will probably read with horror and disgust David's frequent mentions of the large part that alcohol played in the on-duty life of the LFB in his days. For example, he writes about attending a working job as part of a pump crew when the station officer in charge was drunk and incapable but this was covered up. Also, interviews with senior ranks were often conducted with the interviewing officer clutching a glass of whisky.

JOHN CRAIG

Published by Austin Macaulay
Price in paperback £12.99

(The Branch – December 2013)