



The Branch

JULY 2016



Newsletter of Wiltshire Retired Firefighters Association

First Awards Ceremony for Dorset & Wiltshire FRS



On 22nd June 2016 people that were in the vicinity of the Guild Hall in the centre of Salisbury were treated to the sight of fire engines old and new on display. These appliances were used to dress the occasion that was the first Awards Ceremony to be held by the newly amalgamated Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. The presentation of the awards, that included several Long Service & Good Conduct medals were made by the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Sarah Troughton, and the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, James Gibson-Fleming.

The event was a great success and reflected much credit on the recently formed Service

Photos by courtesy of Dorset & Wiltshire FRS



Watch Manager Jim Shaw of Westbury receiving the award for 'On Call Employer of the Year' on behalf of his employer, **MAB Southern**. Jim's boss could not be present himself.

ALL SMILES AT THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of our Association was held on 26th June at The Marsh Farm Hotel, Royal Wootton Bassett. The meeting was preceded by a delicious three course lunch that put us in the right mood to enjoy the business part of the afternoon.

Yve and Len Benwell



Albi & Margaret Richardson



Our Chairman, Chris Wannell, and CFO Gunter putting the world to rights



Joan Blocksidge

The minutes of the AGM are available on request from the Secretary & Treasurer



Janet Gurney



Kate Vanstone



Gill Power



BEN ANSELL
Director of Operations



DARRAN GUNTER
Chief Fire Officer



JOHN ALDRIDGE
Director of Strategic Projects

The Top Team

Who's Who in **DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



MICK STEAD
Director of Prevention & Safety



DEREK JAMES
Director of Corporate Services



JENNY LONG
Director of People Services

To contact the
Headquarters
In Salisbury
Telephone
01722 691086



PHIL CHOW
Director of Finance



People & Places



CFO GUNTER TO RETIRE

Darran Gunter QFSM, the Chief Fire Officer of Dorset & Wiltshire FRS has just announced his intention to retire from the Service on 31st December, 2016. CFO Gunter took up his post on 1st April 2016 but had been working as CFO (Designate) for well over a year in planning for the amalgamation of two fire and rescue services. Coming as it did so soon after the CFO took up office, it was a surprise to many, particularly as the amalgamation has been launched so successfully. CFO Gunter has given as his reasons for retiring “personal and professional matters” without going publicly into greater detail.



GEORGE & BARBARA CLARKE

George and Barbara Clarke are in the throes of selling their house in Preston, Lancashire and moving to East Sussex. The move is to bring them closer to family. Barbara recently suffered severe injuries from a fall but has made a good recovery as this photograph shows. It was taken at her 80th birthday celebration. As a result of her injuries, Barbara was denied the use of both hands for a while and amongst other nursing duties, George had to learn to use lady's heated rollers. As you can see from Barbara's coiffure, he is doing a great job!



DAVID CHURCHILL

Dave Churchill has recently moved house from Chiseldon to Angus in Scotland.

His new address is known to the Secretary/Treasurer and anyone wishing to contact Dave may get the contact details from John Craig.

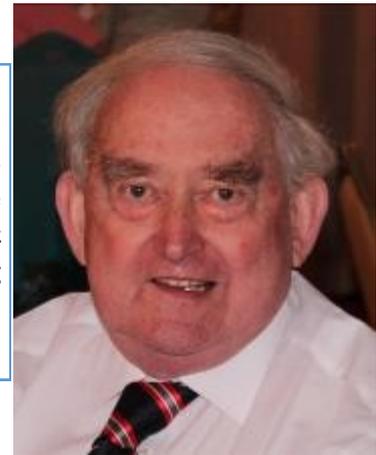
Dave has moved a long way from us but he has given an assurance that he does not wish to lose touch entirely and will presumably be a regular reader of *The Branch* and the WRFA website.



PEOPLE & PLACES (continued)

PETER MILLS

Peter Mills was taken ill in early July with excruciating abdominal pain. He was admitted as an emergency case to GWH, Swindon where an abscess in the bowel was diagnosed. The abscess was surgically removed and then treatment continued to deal with the infection it had caused. Peter is now making progress towards recovery and we wish him the very best.



LOUISE FIELDING

Louise Fielding has been voted onto the Executive Committee at the AGM held on 26th June. Louise recently retired as Head of Human Resources for Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. So, she brings to our committee a lot of expertise and a good base of knowledge about the Service and the people that have served in it. Louise is married to another WRFA member, Les Fielding. Louise and Les live in Devizes and she will act as one of the central area representatives on the Executive Committee.



JOYCE KINSEY

Joyce Kinsey has moved. She has left her house in St Clair Road, Salisbury to occupy a flat in the city.

The Secretary/Treasurer has the new address and he should be contacted if any WRFA member needs to get in touch with Joyce.



MANOR HOUSE, POTTERNE

This picture of WRFA members enjoying a garden party at The Manor House, Potterne some years ago is a poignant reminder of the days gone by and that will never return at that venue.

In September, the Fire Authority will put the Manor House on the market because it is no longer needed as the headquarters of the fire & rescue service after the amalgamation. The new HQ for Dorset & Wiltshire FRS is in Salisbury.





'BLUES & TWOS' NEWS

About the Emergency Services



DORSET & WILTSHIRE

FIRE CONTROL

Based at Potterne

Near Devizes, Wiltshire

Provides call taking and resource management services to the 4th largest fire & rescue service in

England

NEW COMMAND & CONTROL SYSTEM FOR THREE FIRE SERVICES GOES LIVE

CAPITA is the company that has supplied an integrated fire control system linking the fire controls at **Devizes, Eastleigh and Exeter** with an integrated system that is estimated will save the three services £16.91m by 2024. It has taken two years to develop the system under the umbrella of the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP). The network was formed to produce a collaborative approach to future provision of fire control services across the region. The fire control operators have trained to a common system of working so that during exceptionally busy periods the three services, Dorset & Wiltshire, Hampshire and Devon & Somerset, can work closely together.



DEATHS LINKED TO AMBULANCE SERVICE POOR PERFORMANCE

Weeks ago the coroners of England took the unusual step of issuing a joint statement that made public their concern that 35 recent deaths could be linked to under performance by the NHS ambulance services.

The coroners had presided over inquests that uncovered the evidence that must have caused them to feel justified in drawing public attention to the avoidable deaths.

The 111 telephone service has also been criticised recently and linked to deaths. This service is also provided by the NHS.

BLUES & TWOS NEWS (continued)



Rt. Hon. Amanda Rudd MP
Home Secretary

NEW HOME SECRETARY

Rt.Hon. AMANDA RUDD was appointed Home Secretary on 13th July 2016. She was elected Conservative MP for Hastings and Rye in 2010. Immediately before moving to take over the Home Office Amanda Rudd was Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, a post she had held since May 2015.

The Fire & Rescue Service is now under government supervision through the Home Office and so the Home Secretary has a powerful influence on the Service as it is today and as it will be in the future.

Before her promotion to be Prime Minister, Theresa May had recently announced her intention from her position as the then Home Secretary to institute a programme of reform in the fire & rescue service. Strong indications were given that this would bring the police and fire services much closer together and as soon as practicable the police and crime commissioners would be given responsibility to oversee the performance of chief fire officers as well as that of Chief Constables.

The question of how far the new Home Secretary will go in driving through the reforms that Theresa May had planned remains to be seen.

As far as Brexit is concerned, both Theresa May and Amanda Rudd were on the same side in arguing unsuccessfully for remain in the EU referendum. Amanda Rudd made statements warning of the detrimental impact upon the UK energy industry if the UK was to leave the EU. Time will tell if this was true or just part of the scaremongering campaign that failed.



Rt. Hon. Theresa May
Prime Minister

BOOST POLICING IN RURAL AREAS

Pressure is growing on the Government to boost policing in rural areas after new research showed that the countryside could lose out to cities in the fight against crime.

A report commissioned by the **National Rural Crime Network (NRCN)** concludes that a new funding formula looks set to unfairly disadvantage police forces that have countryside areas to protect.

That approach is claimed “sacrifices fairness in pursuit of simplicity”, by Professor Sheena Asthana, the lead researcher of Plymouth University

Chief constables heading the forces that cover rural areas have long argued that funding does not allow for the extra costs associated with a wide sparsely populated area and the influx of tourists

The research is being used as a basis for an appeal to the Home Secretary for a new system of allocating funds that is fairer to rural policing.



**Extra costs of
policing the country-
side revealed by
new research**



John Craig alerts WRFA members and friends to the situation facing our Charity

A couple of months ago, two WRFA members that had been for therapy at Harcombe House in Devon came home with the disturbing news that rumours had been picked up down there that

staff redundancies were likely. Indeed, the whole future of Harcombe House as a part of the Fire Fighters Charity seemed to be in doubt. I might add that both our members returned bursting with praise for the quality of the therapy and the excellence of the service they had enjoyed at Harcombe House. As a few weeks passed, it became evident that there was in fact a “sustainability review” initiated by the trustees. For very understandable reasons there had been an attempt to keep this confidential because the jobs of some of the staff at Harcombe House were under threat.

The aim of the review was to try to find viable ways to protect the service delivered while reducing the size of the financial deficit the Charity was carrying.



Harcombe House

At the time of writing, the review is still in progress and the Chairman of Trustees, Ken Seager, has given an assurance that firm decisions have yet to be taken. One proposal under consideration is to reduce the rehabilitation therapy services delivered at Harcombe House and use it to provide most, if not all, recuperation therapy required.

Whatever decisions and changes come about as a result of the review, one simple fact seems to be clear to me and it is that **the Fire Fighters Charity needs more income**. Before pointing the finger at others, I have first looked at myself and asked what more could I do to increase my personal giving? I am already part of the Regular Giver Scheme and the Firefighters Lottery so I am reviewing my donations under these two fundraising methods. **(SEE PAGE 11)**

The matter of the sustainability review has already been given a preliminary airing at the June meeting of the WRFA Executive Committee. EC members have gone away to think about how we as leadership of the WRFA can encourage and stimulate more fund raising for our Charity. I ask that all readers of this page give thought to the same matter, please. It is our Charity that needs our help now. **JOHN CRAIG (Life Patron of the Fire Fighters Charity)**

PLEASE NOW READ PAGE 11 GIVING INFORMATION ON ‘DONATE FOR A MATE’ CAMPAIGN

OBITUARIES



JOHN PERRY

JOHN PERRY

John Perry was born on 13th April 1931 and he died on 25th April 2016. He was married twice, his first wife was Jean, with whom he had three children. They were married for 39 years. He later married Maureen with whom he had 17 happy years. Maureen has joined the WRFA since John's death.

John was a master baker and for 18 years he traded as the Riverside Bakery in Wilton. However, when he joined the Wiltshire Fire Brigade in 1953 his service as a retained fireman quickly became a serious rival to his interest in his fulltime business. John rose to the rank of sub officer and was a very committed and enthusiastic fire fighter until on reaching the then statutory retirement age he was forced to retire in 1985.

Throughout his years as a fireman, John built up an amazing collection of fire service memorabilia. He mounted some of his collection as a mobile exhibition on trailers.

John joined the WRFA and was elected to serve on the Executive Committee, a post that he filled with distinction despite failing health. Maureen was ever at his side as John's devoted carer throughout several years of severe disability. His illness required him to have one leg amputated making him wheelchair bound for the last few years of his life. John and Maureen were very appreciative of the support that came from the Jubilee House Therapy Centre, run by the Fire Fighters Charity. John's funeral was held on 6th May at Salisbury Crematorium and the large number of mourners told its own story of how much John was liked and respected. **R.I.P**



MONICA TOVEY

Monica Tovey died on the 11th July 2016 in the Prospect Hospice, Wroughton.

Monica lived in High Street, Wroughton and she was a member of WRFA whose service in the post-war AFS and also as a fulltime control room operator in Wiltshire Fire Brigade Divisional Control (Swindon) gave her eligibility for membership.

Although we saw little of Monica at WRFA events it would be a mistake to think that this meant she did not value her membership of our Association.

Monica was born in March 1928 in Croydon but the family soon moved to Barford St Martin in South Wiltshire.

When only 15 Monica told the Women's Land Army she was 18 and they allowed her to join although under age. In 2009 she was invited to Buckingham Palace with other surviving members of the WLA at a special event to give Royal recognition to the work of the Women's Land Army. Monica was thrilled to be sat at the same table as the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

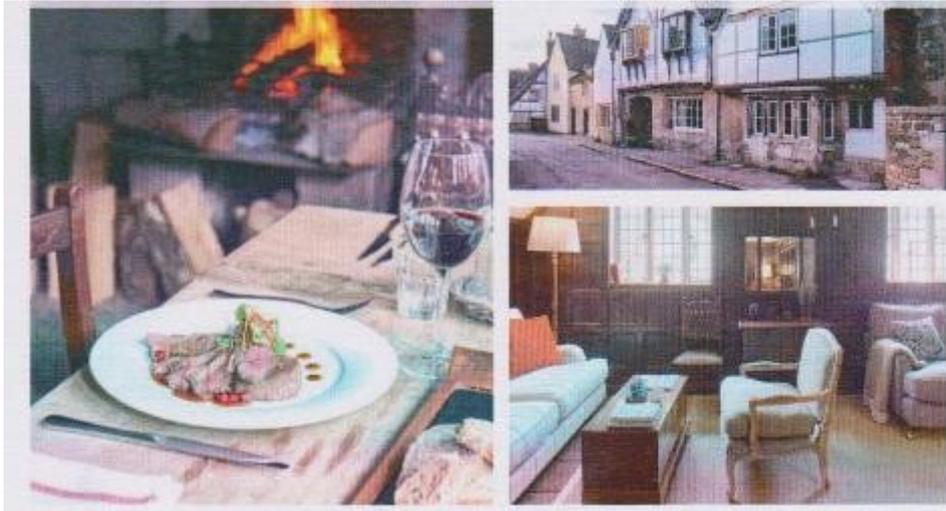
When in her 20s, Monica met Arthur Tovey and they soon fell in love and married. Arthur was a sub officer in the Wiltshire AFS and Monica took no persuading to join him in the AFS. It was through this contact with the Fire Brigade that Monica successfully applied to work in Swindon Fire Control in the 1970s. She left WFB in the 1980s to take up a career as a nurse specialising in emergency care. Sadly, Arthur died 23 years ago and Monica was bereft, taking some time to adjust to widowhood. Monica led an exemplary life of public service underpinned by her strong Christian faith. Rest in peace, Monica.



**SOCIAL
EVENTS**



WRFA SUMMER DINNER



**The Sign of the Angel Hotel
Church Street, LAYCOCK
10th August, 2016 7.00pm**

LADIES LUNCH

Saturday

22nd October 2016

**The
Lamb on the Strand
(near Seend)**



Details to follow



Dr Jill Tolfrey

OUR CHARITY LAUNCHES NEW FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Special appeal to **RETIRED** members
of the **Fire Service Community**

THE WILTSHIRE RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION is delighted to support the FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY *Donate for a Mate* fundraising campaign.

THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY provides life enhancing services to serving and retired firefighters across the UK and as demand for its services increases, it is directly asking retired members of the fire community to help in raising the £9m annual cost of operating the services.

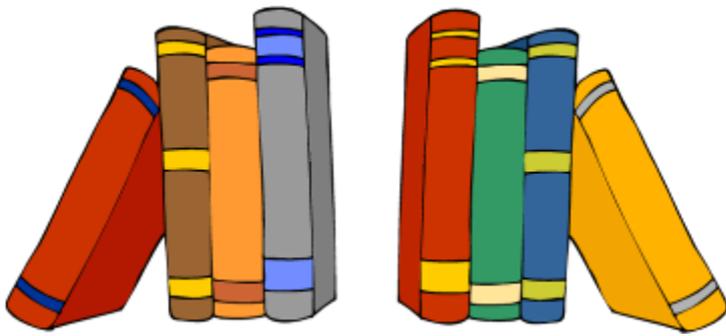
Chief Executive, **Dr Jill Tolfrey** , said of the campaign

“We support thousands of retired beneficiaries every year , in our centres and in the community, and if they need our help following illness or injury then we’ll be there for them. We rely on the generosity of our beneficiaries to provide these services , but we’re also facing the challenge of an aging population which has meant that we are seeing an increase in the requirement for support from amongst the retired community. So we are asking those that have left the service to give whatever they can to ensure that we are there for them and for all of their former colleagues and friends.”

The Charity’s *Donate for a Mate* therefore aims to raise awareness amongst retired firefighters of the importance of maintaining or re-starting their regular donations , if not for their own sake then for that of their former colleagues.

The campaign allows people to sign up to donate online via a dedicated website that can be found at www.ffcdonateforamate.org.uk/retired





BOOK SHELF
Reviews of recently published
books

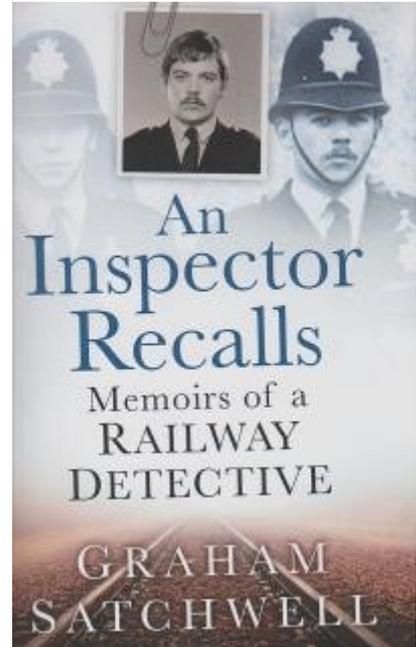
AN INSPECTOR RECALLS

By *Graham Satchwell* Reviewed by **JOHN CRAIG**

There are many features of this book that I found very interesting, not the least of which is the timing of its publication that coincided with the recent Inquest verdict on the 96 that died at the Hillsborough Disaster that has raised many questions about the culture that pervades the UK police service.

Graham Satchwell was born in Birmingham and served from 1968 to 1999. He served in the British Transport Police rising to the rank of Detective Superintendent.

Graham's career provided him with many challenges and brought him into contact with some of the country's most notorious criminals. Graham also took a leading role in the police investigation into the Southall Rail Disaster.



I was surprised by how open and honest the author was in penning his memoirs. The legal advisors to the publishers must have been kept very busy editing the text to avoid some of those Graham mentions being defamed by name. I couldn't help getting the impression that Graham was using the book to settle scores with some with whom he had crossed swords (or truncheons) during his service. He seems to have encountered few police officers of very senior rank, including a few chief constables, that impressed him.

There are multiple mentions of police corruption that left me in no doubt that if the police service was so riddled with corruption during the period that Graham served, there is little wonder at the accusations now being made against South Yorkshire Constabulary regarding the Hillsborough Disaster and the 'Battle of Orgreave' during the NUM strike. Although retired police officers that have written short reviews of the book on the dust cover are emphasising that police culture as described is long gone I wonder if this really is the case. Indeed, many of the ex-police reviewers are stating that the author is describing times to which they wish the service could return! All I can say is that things must be pretty bad now if that is true.



I suspect that some ex-coppers will say that Graham has been too honest but that just made his memoirs all the more interesting to me. It is certainly a 'warts and all' account of a thirty year career filled with incident some of which those that recognise themselves in the book will wish that Graham had treated them more kindly.

This book is a really good read that I heartily recommend. It is published by The History Press with an ISBN 978-0-7509-6640-5

HAVE YOU READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? If you have , why not write a review and have it published here?

THE DIGBETH STREET FIRE, 1878

John Craig reviews some of the lessons that were learnt at the time of a controversial fire in Birmingham when the city's fire protection was

There are clear signals coming from the lips of the Prime Minister, Theresa May, that she intends to reform the UK fire & rescue service and a central element of the plan will be to make the police and fire & rescue services draw much closer together, perhaps to the point of the two services actually merging with the Chief Constable in charge.

In the middle of the 19th century, most city councils in the UK were trying to find ways to provide fire brigades that didn't involve spending much money. The insurance companies provided some form of fire fighting service but only for insured properties and life saving they did not see as part of their remit.



Little Cannon Street Fire Engine Station

In the 1860s, five insurance companies in Birmingham provided a combined fire brigade under the title The United Fire Brigade. The firemen and engines were based in the fire station in Little Cannon Street. However, by 1870 the insurance companies had lost enthusiasm for providing the city with a fire brigade because it was a cost upon them that they felt ought to fall upon the Corporation. They therefore announced that the United Fire Brigade would only attend fires in property insured by them. This brought the matter to a head and, somewhat reluctantly, in January 1871, Birmingham Corporation took over the running of the United Fire Brigade. At that time, the brigade was being led by George Tiviotdale, an experienced fireman that the insurance company had recruited from London. When the handover took place, Tiviotdale was made subordinate to the Chief Constable.



Alfred Robert Tozer

Police constables were "supernumeraries" in the fire brigade and economy was the order of the day.

Four years after the Chief Constable was given responsibility for the fire brigade, fire broke out on the evening of July 29th, 1874 in a confectioner's shop with living accommodation above it for the proprietor and his family. The fire blocked the staircase trapping the proprietor's 19 year old wife, her infant child, the wife's sister and a servant girl. A crowd quickly gathered because it was the time people were leaving the theatres and music halls. They saw the wife holding her baby in her arms screaming for help at an upstairs window. The fire was within sight of the central police station.

Runners were sent from there to summon Birmingham Police Fire Brigade from the fire station in Little Cannon Street. The Brigade response was very slow and the size of the crowd witnessing the fire is said to have been partly to blame for the fire engines and their crews being impeded. Tiviotdale was out of the city and therefore not available. The Chief Constable was also not available and there was a lack of leadership that resulted in the rescue and fire fighting efforts deteriorating into chaos. Orders were given and then countermanded. A hose cart that was desperately needed to provide water on the fire was for some inexplicable reason taken back to the fire station without being got to work.

The Digbeth Fire (continued)

A wooden wheeled escape ladder was brought to the fire with the intention of it being pitched to carry out the rescue of the trapped women and the baby. However, the escape was in a poor state of repair and the fly ladder was jammed so that the main sections of the escape could not be extended. The escape was wheeled against a wall and abandoned where it later caught fire.

The young mother flung the baby from her arms. The child sustained fatal injuries. The mother was then seen to collapse backwards into the room and was never seen alive again.

Although the burning building was not large, it took four hours for the police/firemen to put out the fire and recover the bodies of the three fire victims from inside the property.

The fire brought to public notice the poor state of the Police Fire Brigade that so obviously lacked properly trained firemen, good leadership and well maintained equipment. The Chief Constable was held to blame.

The need to provide an efficient and well managed fire brigade independent of the police was recognised. Alfred Robert Tozer, one of the famous firefighting Tozer family, was appointed Chief Fire Officer in Birmingham. Tozer had established himself in Bristol as a very competent fire officer.

Other towns and cities that had yet to learn the lessons spelt out in Birmingham continued to use their Chief Constable as the head of the fire brigade and to give fire fighting duties to police constables. Eventually however, the inadequacies and dangers of such arrangements were recognised in Westminster and it was made illegal for police to serve in a fire brigade.

However, now that act has been repealed and there is even a case in the West country of a man that serves in the police force, the fire & rescue service and the ambulance service at the same time.

I question the motivation driving this. Is it being done to improve the service to the public or to simply save money? If it is the latter, I can see that the lessons of the Digbeth fire have been forgotten. **JOHN CRAIG**



WHO AM I ? (QUIZ)

I was born in Halifax on 13th October, 1904

I later made my home in Lancashire but was always proud of coming from Yorkshire

I married Mable in September 1930

After starting a stage career I then worked as a newsreader for the BBC during World War II

I became a household name for hosting the BBC radio show called 'Have A Go'

I used catch phrases such as "Are yer courtin?" and "Give him the money, Barney"

I died in Brighton on 27th March 1978

DISCLAIMER

Views and opinions published in this newsletter are not necessarily shared by the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service or the Fire Authority serving that Service.

This publication is edited by JOHN CRAIG who may be contacted by using the contact form attached to the website

www.wrfa.org.uk