



The Branch

November 2018

Newsletter of the Wiltshire Retired Firefighters Association



*To all members and
your families
with a wish that health and
happiness will be yours in
NEW YEAR.*



DORSET & WILTS FRS

**CAROL
SERVICE**

**13th December 2018
St Andrews Church, Long Street
DEVIZES 7.00pm
ALL WELCOME**

**CHRISTMAS
LUNCH**

15th December 2018

**BEAR HOTEL
DEVIZES**

*Have you booked yet?
Tickets selling fast*

**Book NOW to avoid
disappointment**





IN REMEMBRANCE



The annual WRFA event devoted to remembering those that have laid down their lives fighting for their country in war times was this year held on 10th November at Devizes Town Hall. After a dinner and a concert by the Devizes Town Band, a special guest, Mrs Jen Warren, recited a poem written by a nurse who treated the wounded during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Jen dressed in a nurse's uniform appropriate to World War One.

The band's musical programme and the address by Canon Henry Pearson were aimed at focusing our attention on the centenary of the ending of the Great War in 1918 by The Armistice.

WREATH LAYING

The CFO of Dorset & Wiltshire FRS, Ben Ansell, arranged a wreath laying ceremony at Service HQ in Salisbury on 9th November to which the WRFA secretary/treasurer was invited to attend and lay a wreath on behalf of our Association. Our wreath displayed a brass helmet surrounded by red poppies out of respect to the many firefighters who were called from fire fighting duties to serve in the armed forces in World War 1. Many gave their lives.



Welcome to **NEW MEMBERS**



A warm welcome is extended to the following new members



ELIZABETH (Betty) THOMAS
Betty has recently lost her husband, Terry, and together they were regular attenders at WRFA social functions. Betty lives in Malmesbury and we hope that we shall continue to see her regularly attending our social events.

YVONNE BABER
Yvonne was recently widowed when Joe passed away. We are delighted that Yvonne has accepted our invitation to join WRFA giving us the opportunity to stay in close touch with her and offer support in the future if necessary.



CATHY HILL
Cathy has joined the WRFA after her husband, Brian, passed away recently. We hope that Cathy will gain in many ways from her membership of WRFA and it is a pleasure to welcome her. Cathy lives in Warminster.



PAUL JAYCOCK
Paul gave 36 years service as officer in charge of Amesbury Fire Station. He is managing director of a building and painting company based in Amesbury. We welcome Paul into membership and wish him many years of happy fellowship within the WRFA.

PEOPLE & PLACES



BFSA COMMENDATION MEDAL AWARDED TO CFO ANSELL

The Commendation Medal of the British Fire Services Association has been awarded to **Chief Fire Officer Ben Ansell of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.**

The award has been made in recognition of the CFO's leadership of the Service through the early days of amalgamation and also when dealing with the unprecedented nerve agent attack.

PETER EDGE NOW A MEMBER OF LOCAL FIRE PENSION BOARD

Peter Edge has taken the place on the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Pension Board that was vacated when Cyril Moseley recently stood down from it. The purpose of the board is to have oversight of how the fire pension schemes are administered in Dorset and Wiltshire. Peter also serves on the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Authority and is a County Councillor and Wilton Town Councillor.



MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Some of our members have recently moved home or are about to do so.

DORIS ("Dimp") RICHARDS

Doris has moved but still lives within Amesbury.

LESLEY BETTS

Lesley has moved from Chilmark to Wilton.

JOE NASH

Joe is in the final stages of selling his house in Tetbury and will be moving to Stratford -on-Avon very soon.



LOUISE'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

Louise Fielding has recently very much enjoyed visiting her son in Sydney, Australia

We are pleased she had such a marvellous time. Her arrival back in UK almost coincided with Longleat Safari Park getting koala bears for the first time. Coincidence ?



PROUD GRANDPARENTS

John and Teresa Payne became grandparents in October and they are very proud of their grandson, Milo Henryk.

We offer our heartiest congratulations to Grandma Teresa and Granddad John. Milo and his Mum and Dad live in Bristol.





The Fire Fighters Charity



**The first step towards getting help from our charity is to call the SERVICES ACCESS LINE
0800 389 8820
9am to 5am Monday to Friday
Make a note of this number
Keep it to hand**

GOALS THE CHARITY HAS SET FOR 2017—2020

- (a) Increased mental health support**
- (b) Increased access to information, advice and support.**
- (c) Strong, healthy and connected communities built through combining the strengths of online interactions and face-to-face contact**
- (d) Enhanced physical activity and rehabilitation programmes.**

HOW TO SUPPORT THE CHARITY

- Join the REGULAR GIVER SCHEME.**
- Join the FIREFIGHTERS LOTTERY**

To learn more or apply for the joining forms, call on 01256 366566

DAILY TELEGRAPH CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The *Daily Telegraph* has chosen the Fire Fighters Charity as one of three national charities to support through its CHRISTMAS APPEAL this year.

Watch for news of this published in the newspaper.



**HEALTH
MATTERS**
News of those
dealing with illness



BOB HUMPHRIES

Bob has been under intensive treatment for prostate cancer, including a number of hospital visits for radiotherapy. He is now very optimistic about the prognosis and strongly advises male members that haven't had a check for prostate cancer to get one done without delay.



PATRICK GILLIAM-HILL

In June Patrick sustained a cut on his left shin that turned into an ulcer that is proving very difficult to heal. He also has a bladder problem for which he is receiving treatment that includes a surgical procedure at RUH, Bath.

We wish him good progress towards healing .



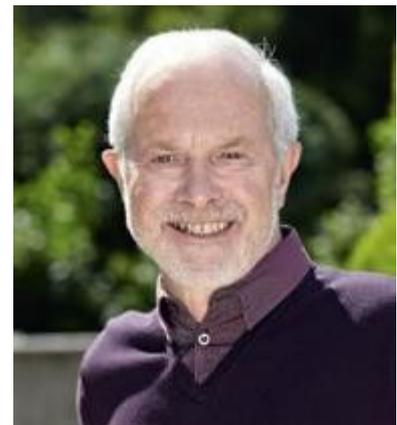
GLENN FOREMAN

Glenn is in need of further tests on his heart and this may lead to further treatment.

He is also coping with a chronic bowel condition that is not making life easy.

We wish Glenn better days and salute him for the way he copes with more than one serious illness.

Our thoughts are also with Angela.



ERNIE TAYLOR

Ernie is very poorly and after a time in GWH Swindon he has been transferred to Chippenham Hospital. He has lost the ability to walk and the immediate priority is to try to restore his mobility We wish him and Marion well.

HEALTH MATTERS (continued)

REVD. DAVID WAKEFIELD

David has announced that the cancer in his sinus passages has returned and this time it is inoperable. We had all hoped that the surgical work carried out last year at John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford had dealt with the tumour for good but this has proved not to be the case. David is receiving chemotherapy to slow the growth of the tumour in his head. David and Liz are in our thoughts and prayers.



BARBARA CLARKE

Many members will remember Barbara Clarke, the wife of George Clarke, former CFO of Wiltshire, then Hampshire and then Commandant of the Fire Service College. George and Barbara retired to Preston, Lancashire and it is with deep concern that we understand that Barbara is very seriously ill. George is a valued member of our Association and we send our love and best wishes to him and , of course, to Barbara.



JOHN & JANE COX

Jane had a knee replaced at The Circle, Reading recently and is recovering slowly at home nursed with lots of TLC by John. John will be going into hospital himself in early December for surgery on a knee. He hopes to get away with the less invasive form of knee surgery. We wish both John & Jane a very speedy recovery.

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR FLU JAB ?

Contact your GP surgery without delay if you have not yet had your flu vaccination.



HEALTH MATTERS (continued)



MPs PROPOSE NEW TAX TO FUND SOCIAL CARE

A levy to pay for spiralling costs of care in old age that should be paid by individuals and employers has been proposed by a committee of MPs. A tax of 2.5% on the earnings and incomes of those over 40 is at the core of the proposal. Those on lower incomes would be excused the tax but those over 65 with incomes that are above a threshold would be taxed.

A report by the Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Health & Social Care Committees calls the proposed levy a *social care premium*. The report highlights the evidence that social care costs in the UK will soon be unsustainable. Successive governments in past years have been warned of the impending crisis but have taken no discernible action to deal with it. In fact, the cuts to local council budgets imposed by central government have significantly worsened what was already a serious problem. Prime minister, Theresa May, promised a consultation Green Paper in the autumn of 2018 but it failed to appear.

The Health & Social Care Committee is chaired by Dr Sarah Woolaston (see photo), who is the Conservative Party MP for Totnes, Devon. Dr Woolaston has been outspoken in drawing attention to the above mentioned report and the proposal it contains. The MPs drafting the report took notice of the systems operating in Germany and Japan and they have noted that the social care taxation arrangements in those countries appear to be meeting the need.

Members of the WRFA Executive Committee are often faced with helping members who are victims of the inadequate social care system that so urgently needs reform.



“FIRE BOBBIES” TO BE REINTRODUCED IN DORSET

Faced with severe problems in meeting demands upon their services, the Chief Constable of Dorset , **James Vaughan**, (see photo) and CFO Ansell of Dorset & Wilts FRS have agreed a package of mutual aid. The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service is being asked to undertake some duties that have traditionally



been dealt with by police. This includes responding to people collapsed at home and other tasks that do not require the involvement of a sworn constable.

In return for this assistance, the chief Constable will allow Police Community Support Officers to respond as “on call” firefighters , duties for which they will not be paid. This radical measure emphasises the severe difficulties being experienced in recruiting and retaining “on call” (part-time) firefighters in Dorset and Wiltshire. The CFO has recently drawn public attention to the fact that unless the shortage of “on call” firefighters can be significantly improved the response to emergencies will deteriorate. The practice of using police as firefighters used to be illegal.



OUTCRY AGAINST SMALLER FIRE ENGINES

Devon & Somerset FRS has come in for strong criticism for adopting a policy of replacing full size fire appliances in a third of the fleet with much smaller and more sparsely equipped vehicles called *Rapid Intervention Vehicles (RIVs)*. Concerns have been voiced by the public including retired firefighters.

The concerns are about the limited equipment carried on an RIV and the delay in getting “proper fire engines” to the scene of a fire. In particular, the RIVs only carry a short extension ladder and this is deemed by some to make rescue and firefighting above first floor level to be a problem until a fully equipped appliance arrives. However, the fire authority has strongly defended the policy, pointing out that it will save £7.7m.

Initially, RIVs will be the only fire engines operated at Dartmouth, Porlock, Tiverton and Princetown but many more stations are to be similarly re-equipped.

EDITOR'S NOTE : The policy of using light appliances to replace Type B watertenders is not new. It has been tried, tested and then abandoned by many other UK fire authorities. In the 1990s, Gloucestershire bought a small number of RIVs very similar to those now being introduced in Devon & Somerset except they were on a GMC chassis.



CALIFORNIA WILD- FIRES THE WORST



Here is the text of a letter sent by the WRFA to the Governor of California

Dear Governor Jerry Brown,

Every day brings further very disturbing news about the scale of the wildfires currently raging in the State of California. Today, (17th November) the media in the UK is telling us that 71 people are now known to have lost their lives in the fires and over 1,000 are still missing. Understandably, President Trump has declared the fires to be a national disaster.

As veteran firefighters we can perhaps appreciate more than most people just how many difficulties you and all those engaged in dealing with the disaster have to face. We know that the fires are not yet under control and it is expected that it will be several more weeks before total control is achieved. It is our hope that until the fires are finally brought under control those threatened by them and involved in active fire fighting will be kept safe.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those that have lost loved ones to the fires and those whose loved ones are on the missing list.

We have in our public service seen many who have lost their homes, businesses and pets to the devastating power of fire. We can therefore fully appreciate the misery and shock being experienced by thousands in the fire areas, particularly around the community named Paradise.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the extent of the enormous losses but we have received reports that the fire fighters have achieved many victories. We are left with the impression that not enough is being done and said to give credit to the men and women fighting the fires for their skill, courage and enormous physical effort.

Firefighters are an international brother and sisterhood. "Kick one of us and we all limp" is an expression we use to show how we share our thoughts and care for each other. Thousands of miles do not separate us in spirit from those still facing the challenges and dangers of taming the wildfires, the worst in the history of your State.

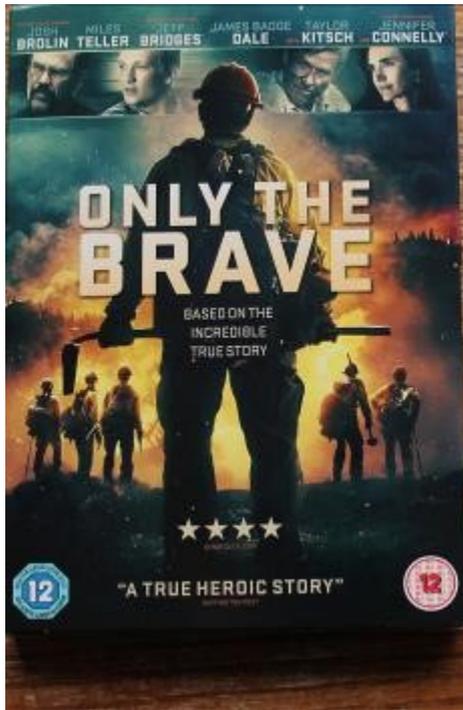
The members of this Association wish you to know we are standing in salute of all that is being achieved to deal with the wildfires and their aftermath.

Those of us with a faith are kneeling in prayer for those who mourn the loss of loved ones and/or have lost everything to the fires.

*Yours with the utmost sincerity,
JOHN CRAIG (Secretary & Treasurer)
Secretary & Treasurer*



REVIEWS Books and DVDs



ONLY THE BRAVE (DVD)

This film was first released in 2017. It is a dramatic account of the **Yarnell Hill** fire tragedy in June 2013 when 19 members of the **Granite Mountain Hotshots**, a specialist team trained to deal with wildfires, were killed when the fire overwhelmed their position. They were a highly qualified and experienced unit within the **Prescott City Fire Department** in Arizona.

The first part of the movie is devoted to introducing you to the characters and explaining how they have become increasingly concerned about the threat of wildfires in their part of the USA. It is in this section of the story that we see the inter action and tensions between the politicians responsible for public safety and the firefighters who put their lives on the line when the politicians get it wrong.

The fire was started by a lightning strike. This is significant because we are continually reminded throughout the film of the influences that weather and climate have on wildfires. Wind strength and direction have to be constantly monitored by the firefighters and even then, as in the case of Yarnell Hill, sometimes wildfires defeat the ability of human beings to get to safety such is the speed of spread.

I learnt a lot from watching this movie and it has helped me understand in greater detail what is happening in California at this very moment with over a thousand people feared dead from the latest wildfires.

The film is dedicated to the memory of the Granite Mountain Hotshots most of whom were still in their twenties. I heartily recommend it to you.

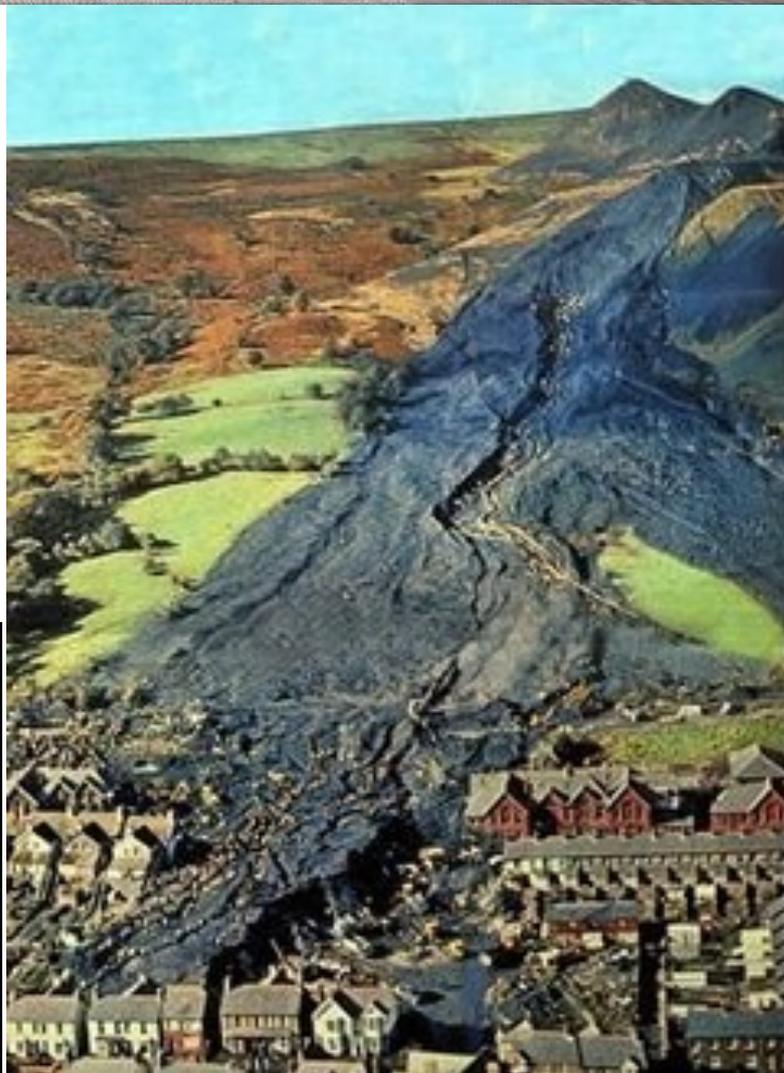
John Craig

Ready for the filming of the reconstruction of the children's funerals, a line of hearses dating back to the mid-1960s have been assembled.



ABERFAN FILM

The disaster at Aberfan in South Wales on 21st October 1966 is to be portrayed in a film now being made. 116 children and 28 adults were killed when an avalanche of coal slurry slipped down a hillside and buried a school and houses. **CHRIS WANNELL** has provided his Commer water tender for the filming and other preserved vehicles have also been used.



REST IN PEACE

We mourn with their loved ones the passing of the following

ANGELA JACKSON

Angela Jackson died in Worcestershire on 30th September. Angela, better known to us as “Angie”, was first married to Dave Symes who served Wiltshire Fire Brigade until his death in service in 1999 as the Brigade Engineer. After Dave’s death, Angie married Stan Jackson, a man that Dave and she had befriended through their love of sailing. Angie and Stan were happily married living in Defford, Worcestershire until her death. Angie’s funeral service was in Westbury on 24th October and she is laid to rest with Dave in Westbury Cemetery.



JAMES “Jim” GUY

Those who have been regular attenders at WRFA Remembrance Events will perhaps remember Jim Guy. He did his best to attend the Remembrance Evening run by our Association and travelled all the way from his home in Essex to be with us. He thought highly of the WRFA and was delighted to join as a full member. His long service as a member of the Royal Air Force Fire Section gave him eligibility to be a WRFA member. Very sadly, Jim passed away in Essex on 3rd November and we missed him at our Remembrance Event held a week after his death.

DAVE BERRY

Dave has died after a long battle with cancer. Although he moved to the Forest of Dean some time ago and allowed his membership of WRFA to lapse he retained many friends within our Association. Dave’s fire service career began in Ramsbury and then Swindon before he moved to London Fire Brigade where he served as an HQ staff officer. He was well known for his dedication to preserving fire appliances no longer in service. His funeral was held at Cinderford.



Dave’s coffin was carried to the crematorium on a restored London Turntable Ladder that once had Soho fire station as its home

DESIGN A LOGO COMPETITION

The WRFA lacks a logo of its own
The Executive Committee therefore invites you
to enter a competition to design a logo.

The winning entry will be decided by the
Executive Committee. All entries should be
submitted by 1st February 2019 to the Secretary/
Treasurer

John Craig 12a Gaisford Chase, WORTON
SN10 5RX. The prize will be two free tickets to
a future WRFA social event.



SPRINKLER SEMINAR

A very successful seminar took place at Salisbury Guild Hall in September to promote the wider use of sprinkler protection. The day-long event was organised by Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service with support from British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association. The speakers represented some of the most knowledgeable people in the world on the subject of the seminar. Several of the presentations were critical of the reluctance of the Westminster Government to take a more supportive attitude towards sprinkler protection in the face of clear evidence of the benefits.

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter is published by the **WILTSHIRE RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION.**

www.wrfa.org.uk

Views and opinions expressed within this publication are not necessarily shared by the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service or the fire authority