

FIRE

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Fire Heritage Network U. K.

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FROM THE SPARE BEDROOM.

Spring is upon us and the daffodils are pushing their way through to the sunshine. This gives us the excuse to get out and about and start restoring, repairing or researching, whichever is the thing that you do best. If you are looking for something to do a couple of working weekends are planned for this year, one will be at RAF Scampton to assist in the cataloguing of the collection there and there will be another Merryweather day at Moreton in Marsh. You should have notice of these events from Bob Bonner. There are some restrictions and conditions relating to these events but information will be supplied.

If you would like to promote your group and what you do, or to publicise museum opening times etc. there are a couple of ways that you can do this. Send me an article for publication in the magazine, another really good way is promote yourself in the "Events" section on the FHNUK website, send the details to, carl.bell@firemuseum.co.uk this will enable a wider viewing public to pick up the information.

Thirdly you could contact the organisers of the Preston Park Fire Engine Rally, North Yorkshire, This is held over the week end of 27th & 28th June. Contact 01642 527 346 to obtain an entry form for a promotional stand or enter an appliance. This show is well worth a visit regardless, you will see arena displays, fire fighting vehicles through the ages, classic cars and commercials, this must be the biggest and longest established event in the country. Give it a go!

The larger organisations within the FHNUK are sent more than one copy of this magazine for distribution amongst their membership. I trust that this happens, as if it does not it is a waste of resources. One month after paper publication the magazine can be downloaded from the FHNUK web site by clicking on the name of the issue that is required for reading. Please make this information available in your organisations magazine, it would also be helpful if you could send me you mag or newsletter, e-mail me for my address and put me on your mailing list please,

Phil Consadine, March, 2015.



Above. Bob Bonner at Manchester Fire Museum. Picture Manchester Evening News.

Below. Loughbrough Fire Brigade. WW2. Climax Trailer Pump.



The NFBU Roll of Honour –some research

Janice and Phil Morris

During our two visits to the Museum of RAF Fire Fighting we have been interested in the National Fire Brigades' Association Roll of Honour listing men who had been members of fire brigades and who were killed in military service during the First World War. Initially we saw the names of some Northamptonshire men from brigades near to where we live, and subsequently found some snippets of information about them. There are also 16 men from the Clarnico factory brigade on the Roll. Unfortunately, research at the London Metropolitan Archives produced no information about the Clarnico brigade or the men. However, we were more successful in finding information about two Market Harborough men. We belong to Market Harborough History Society and decided to do some research into the town's fire brigade up to 1914.

Market Harborough has had fire-fighting equipment since 1679 when the Feoffees of the Town Estate supplied a manual pump. In 1743 the town purchased a small engine (pump) from Thomas Sprigg of Oundle. A year later the Sun Fire Office contributed six guineas towards the purchase of a Newsham and Ragg's fifth sized engine. Water to fight fires was taken from a small reservoir north of the town centre, Folly Pond. When the sluice was opened the water went by culvert down the High Street. There were manholes at strategic points and boards carried on the fire engine were dropped in, making a dam into which the hose could be inserted. (Folly Pond still exists and the present day fire station is located just behind it).

In 1870 the Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed. In 1880 the Local Board took over and the Brigade became the Market Harborough Fire Brigade and in 1895 the Brigade came under the control of the Urban District Council. A new fire station was opened in 1903 and the first steam fire engine was bought by public subscription in March 1905 plus a fire escape. The fire crew displayed the capacity of the engine by testing it against the steeple of St Dionysius Church and fire men scrambled up the church porch using the fire escape. Probably not something that would be acceptable today.



Market Harbrough Fire Brigade.

1908.

In 1901 the Brigade had affiliated to the National Fire Brigades' Union. A photograph shows the town's firemen in 1908 standing in front of the steamer and a large silver cup, presented when they won the North East Steamer Championships. Steve Shirley at Scampton was able to confirm they won in a time of 30 $\frac{2}{5}$ seconds. The cup is the North Eastern District NFBU Steamer Challenge Cup presented by the Right Honourable The Earl of Londesborough Vice President of the district on the 21st August 1907. The trophy is displayed in the NFBA collection at Scampton. The Brigade was very successful in competitions, however in 1909 when they won the hose cart competition other competitors complained they were disadvantaged by having to use Market Harbrough's antiquated standpipe.

What then of the two firemen named on the NFBA Roll of Honour? They were John William Gore and Horace W. Palmer. Their details are given on the Harbrough History website, World War One-Men of Market Harbrough.

John William Gore was a member of the Fire Brigade's football team. He served with the 1st/5th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, and was posted to France in February 1915. He was Company Sergeant Major when he was killed, aged 28, in France on 8 June 1917.

Horace Palmer was 22 when he was killed in France on 12 January 1918.

He had originally enlisted in the Leicester Regiment, 5th Battalion (a Territorial Battalion) in February 1912 and was sent to France three years later. At the time he died he was Farrier Staff Sergeant.

We have not yet located a full list of men in the town Fire Brigade in the early 1900s and therefore, have not been able to establish how long John William and Horace were with the Fire Brigade before they joined the Leicestershire Regiment. The minimum age for enlisting in the Territorial Force was 17. Horace would have just been that old when he enlisted in the 5th Battalion. It is likely that he left school at 13 and would have been working by the time he enlisted.

The information about John William and Horace has been given to the Firefighters' Memorial Trust.



Market Harbrough Station One.

Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856 - 1925)

Not well known possibly by fire historians but to those interested in Literature or 'book worms' as the author of works such as '*She*' and '*King Solomon's Mines*' amongst a rather extensive list of publications, Sir Henry's other interest was agriculture and how to increase production, welfare, etc. especially throughout the British Empire.

He travelled extensively at a time when exploration was still fascinating the masses who would flock in their thousands to purchase his latest epic set in Africa or the Middle East. Papers announced when he was setting off on his travels. On one such journey he hoped to visit Khartoum. This journey would begin only a few weeks after his nephew had died, taking in many exotic sounding destinations.

By now I imagine you are wondering where this is leading and if I tell you it was whilst researching the articles about Alfred Barnard's books it might give you a clue that there is indeed a 'fire' connection!

During the early hours of Saturday 2 December 1899, the premises of Flowers Stratford on Avon Brewery were found to be on fire. The fire was reported by three Great Western Railway engine drivers who observing the blaze sounded their locomotive whistles to raise the alarm just before 2am. The local brigade in Stratford attended with manual fire engines but shortly afterwards it was realised that more help would be required. Leamington & Warwick were asked to send their steamers. Communication was such that the railway company signal boxes had to be employed to pass on the message as the local telephone office closed at night. Water was pumped by the steamers from the Birmingham & Stratford Canal and proved much more effective than the nearest hydrant. The fire had started in a large barley drying store, and very soon involved a range of malshouses, in excess of 5,000 quarters of grain and machinery. All were destroyed in a fire causing between £20,000 and £25,000 not all covered by insurance.

The flames were subdued but damping down and turning over went on for hours, in fact days involving not only the three town brigades but also that of the firm. Unfortunately Arthur Hartcup, under brewer and Captain of the Brewery Fire Brigade whilst directing a fire hose during these operations at 9 on the Saturday morning fell into a cellar following the

Rescue efforts resulted in Arthur being recovered from his predicament but his injuries were severe and he passed away a number of hours later in the local hospital where three Doctors were trying to assist. Arthur was the nephew of Henry Rider Haggard (he was knighted in 1912) and this was reported widely in the press both locally and nationally especially in reports regarding the inquest and funeral in Bungay, Suffolk. *The Leamington Spa Courier* on 9 Dec 1899 in their editorial commented on the fire concluding with '*what the Corporation of that town (Stratford).....stands to lose so long as it has to rely on manual engines*' whilst extolling the virtues of steam fire engines such as that operated in their home town. Finally it has to be admitted that Barnard did not visit Flowers Brewery on his travels, in fact he did not visit many in the Birmingham area of the Midlands. Details of this incident were found when using a computer to find details of other brewery brigades.

Nigel Crompton.



SIR HENRY RIDER HAGGARD.

Tooley Street

According to an official report copied by a large number of newspapers, the original call to the Tooley Street fire resulting in the death of James Braidwood was received at 4.50 on the afternoon of Saturday 22 June 1861 at the Watling Street Headquarters Station. Responding with a large force of firemen Braidwood who was at the time Superintendent and Officer in Charge of the London Fire Engine Establishment, obviously realised the problems facing his men. According to a newspaper report, the explosion that caused the building collapse that buried James Braidwood was caused by saltpetre and gunpowder. As will be seen later, these two commodities were just part of the problem faced by the fire crews.

The same newspaper is less than complimentary about several establishments that failed to send assistance when requested, The Tower of London and Woolwich Dockyard. Her Majesties Dockyard Deptford sent floating engines as did the St Katherine and London Dock Companies. Two steam floating engines from the London Fire Engine Establishment started work but had to retire as the surface of the Thames 'caught fire' and caused extra problems. Two large barques moored close by were destroyed as were a number of smaller vessels.

The fire started in the premises of Messer's Scovel, described in the report as 'wharfingers'. Their expansive warehouse was Cotton's Depot Wharf. Before describing the products and area we will add that apart from the LFEE crews, the military provided soldiers to work the manuals, conductors from the Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire attended and three of them had narrow escapes from death, staff from County Fire Officer arrived as did parish fire engines from the surrounding districts. Two private brigades also provided assistance. Mr Roberts from Millwall provided one engine with his Volunteer Fire Brigade whilst Frederick Hodges attended along with his Lambeth Distillery Brigade and two engines. The two Shand Mason steamers belonging to the LFEE were stationed in Tooley Street itself but again were moved due to the amount of tallow and other substances covering the roadway. The newspaper continues that the LFEE sent a representative to Shand Mason to borrow a third steamer. I wonder if they felt compelled to buy the engine after it had been working at Tooley Street?

Continuing, the reports in London and national daily papers state that the fire was 'brought under' after two days but paintings purportedly showing 'day two' of the incident show anything but! Other reports observe that the fire continued for many weeks and the Fire Engine Establishment attending flare ups for some time after.

The list of premises suffering damage was extensive. Damage amounted to in excess, at least according to the papers, two million pounds. In 2015 terms that equates to between £212,000,000 and £300,000,000 depending on the web site you consult.

But what was actually involved in the fire? Returning to the official report once again we find that the main product store in Scovel wharf was jute along with gum, cotton, tallow and rice goods. Close by was a cheese seller and warehouse, further down Tooley Street number 23 was a house totally destroyed along with the shop on the ground floor. Next door could be found a cyder store, stationers, two auction houses, tobacconist, licensed victualler, a jeweller, ironmonger and watch maker plus a chemist. On the other side of Cotton Depot Wharf, we find that the Vestry of St Olave's Church had suffered as well. Chamberlain's Wharf, Hays Wharf and premises as diverse as an eating house, solicitors, ships chandler, opticians were consumed by the flames along with potato merchants and confectioners. Lastly was a warehouse containing saltpetre and gunpowder. An additional hazard were the large amount of the buildings in the area that had been used by the Government for storing ordnance previously. Newspapers including the *Cambridge Chronicle* speak of the flames covering an area of over a quarter of a mile of river frontage, going back into the surrounding streets up to a depth of 300 to 400 yards. The highest warehouses were of 6 storey's whilst some had extensive vaults. The glare of the blaze could be seen for miles, drawing in crowds of sightseers and pick pockets! Explosions continued, causing consternation amongst the crowds; crews were relieved by firemen from other brigades and soldiers. Flying sparks and debris caused other incidents; fire engines from railway companies for instance were kept busy protecting stations and other railway premises.

Visitors to the scene of the conflagration included the Prince of Wales; Queen Victoria sent notes asking on progress especially the recovery of Braidwood's body. His inquest was followed by that of three others killed during fire fighting operations.

Two of the men died whilst involved in operations on fire floats. Robert Shenston was drowned after falling from a steam fire float at Beals Wharf. Dennis Sullivan was one of 70 men crewing the London Dock Company's floating engine when he was caught in the machinery and died as a result of his injuries. At the time of Braidwood's accident, he was accompanied by Mr Peter Scott of the firm of O'Connor & Scott who were hide merchants. Mr Scott was only identified by a watch and other personal effects found along with a collection of human bones. All deaths were recorded as 'accidental'.

However the four deaths were followed by a number of others involving people trying to recover items for re-sale. A number were drowned attempting to get grease from the surface of the Thames. Four young men collecting too close to the fire in a boat were engulfed by flames following a re-ignition setting alight their boat which was reportedly full of recovered grease! It is not known if they were burnt to death or drowned as others were. Again returning to the *Cambridge Chronicle* and their 29 June 1861 issue we find the report of the fire showing initial estimates that 2,660 tons of sugar had been lost as had 4,490 tons of rice, 785 tons of sago. The loss of 35,000 chests of tea appeared on the list as did 8,800 casks of best tallow. The total number of hides lost had not yet been found but 18,861 bales of cotton had been consumed by the blaze. Looting must have occurred especially given the large number of hams, hides and other portable items involved in the incident. Perhaps it was the force of in excess of 200 constables on site day & night that might have prevented too much thieving!

James Braidwood was laid to rest following a very large funeral procession (the cortege was apparently a mile and a half in length) attended by thousands who lined the streets of the capital. He was buried in Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington. In Tooley Street to this day memorials to his passing can be found including a road named in his honour.

Postscript:

C F Young's book *'Fires, Fire Engines and Fire Brigades'* published in 1866 reports that in July 1860 the first use of a Shand Mason steam fire engine by the LFEE took place. This occurred during a fire in Carters Lane, Doctors Commons on Wednesday 4 July 1860. The fire started whilst a large contingent of the LFEE were attending another blaze close by.

Manuals were sent from that incident and were joined by the steamer which was housed at Watling Street station which was reported to have been pulled by three horses. The Doctors Commons area was progressively demolished from the late 1890's. Later in the book we read that Mr Roberts, the engineer and inventor who lived in Millwall and ran his own volunteer fire brigade, constructed what was the first self propelled engine in 1862. It was trialled in front of the Admiralty and other organisations for apart from being able to operate as a fire engine it could be used to supply steam power for other purposes such as belt driven equipment. Roberts was well known for inventions and taking out patents.

Nigel Crompton.

Editor's Note.

The word WHARF; translates to Warehouse at River Front.

A good quiz question for the future.



JAMES BRAIDWOOD.

History of Fire Service Bicycles

This Article has been taken from, *Utility Cycling.org* web site.

The history of fire service bicycles is relatively hazy. I did however, find a handful of useful resources about early fire service vehicles, which appear to have been primarily used prior to the development of motorized transportation. Although I haven't yet been able to get my hands on what appears to be a very useful article by Steven Carter (1999) titled *Fire Service Bicycles: Did They Ever Exist?*, which was published in *The Wheelman* magazines, I did read through a journal article that cited Carter's piece. The citing article – *The Product Life Cycle and the Use of Bicycles to Deliver Goods and Services* by Ross D. Petty – is a definitely worth the read in general. As for its reference to fire service bicycles, Petty indicates that fire service bicycles of some variety were definitely used in Australia, Great Britain, and France, and for the most part, it would appear that the use was limited to the late 1800's and very early 1900's.

In 1905, the Birmingham Small Arms (BSA) Company – who are actually well-known for their motorcycles – commissioned a fire service bicycle. It is probably that the use of those fire service bicycles was limited to Great Britain, and I do not know how many were produced. Nonetheless, the frames were designed to accommodate a fire hose, a siren, and an axe.



BSA was actually quite involved in the early development of bicycles, and they are well-known for a variety of three-wheeled bicycles, including the “Otto” safety bike, which had wheels on each side, the “Alpha” ordinary bicycle, and many other safety bicycles and tricycles. BSA was also involved in the R&D of many important bicycle parts, which are now standard on most bicycles. But beyond the early 1900’s, BSA devoted a great deal of their attention to the development of motorcycles.

Fire service bicycles also appeared to be in use in the mid 1900’s. The Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) in Great Britain used fire brigade bicycles, some of which are still around today. Old Bike has a good selection of photos of two old fire brigade bicycles, which are being restored, but it is unclear what the AFS used the bicycles for. Perhaps getting to the fire to assist with suppression and extinction of the fire? However, after the 1940’s it seems that fire service bicycle use basically disappeared.

AFS-fire-brigade-bike



Modern Fire Service Bicycles

Modern firefighting generally requires a great deal of equipment, so it comes as no surprise that the modern use of bicycles for fire service is basically nonexistent. I did however, find one case of fire service bicycle use. Specifically, in the U.K., fire fighters are being deployed by bike to patrol neighborhoods and areas in which the crime of arson is a major problem. This helps to emphasize the point made in the police bike and EMS bike posts that using the bicycle as a vehicle for patrolling areas can be much more effective than using a motor vehicle.

However, this is the only information I could find about the use of modern fire service bikes. There are bike history enthusiasts that have restored and re-built old fire service bicycles, but for the most part, fire service by bicycle is basically non-existent.

Street Heritage

In

GLASGOW.



This picture submitted by Bob Wright shows part of the frontage of the old “North Fire Station”. This was located in Saint Georges Road, Glasgow.

Bob served at this fire station along with other members of the Scottish Fire Heritage Group, Davie and George.

Bob lived in a flat here along with his parents, his father was also a serving fireman.

Built in 1899 the building still stands although it is now converted into modern flats.

If you spot an item of fire service interest in the streets near you, take a picture and e-mail it to me. Phil.consadine@yahoo.co.uk

80th Birthday Celebrations for Massey Shaw

London's famous 1930's fireboat celebrates her 80th birthday in February in what promises to be a busy year of events. Massey Shaw was built by J Samuel Whites Yard, Cowes, Isle of White, in February 1935 at a cost of £18,000. She was designed by the London County Council to work on the River Thames at any state of the tide and produce large volumes of water to fight the increasing number of warehouse fires along the river.

During her thirty six year career as a fireboat for the London Fire Brigade she fought many large fires and is credited in helping to save St Pauls Cathedral during the Blitz by providing a continuous water supply to the land-based crews. Who would have thought that eighty years on and a one million



pound rebuild later, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, she would be back in full working order and ready to visit the site of her greatest triumph, Dunkirk.

In May this year, Massey Shaw will join the armada of "Little Ships" that will leave from Ramsgate to sail across the channel to Dunkirk to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo. Massey was the only fireboat to take part in the event and will represent the British Fire Service at the events played over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

Over sixty craft are due to take part in the event, which is organised by the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships formed in 1965 by the broadcaster Raymond Baxter. Massey is due to be one of the featured vessels during the event as she has the unique ability to pump three thousand gallons of water and provide a great backdrop to any celebration. The Society are working hard to get the boat and her crew ready for the event ,as Massey is likely to be away from her home berth in West India Dock E14, for ten days or more and is expected to be visited by lots of people.

During our time in Dunkirk we will be hosted by the French Fire Brigade, who since the first Return in 1965 have taken a special interest in the event. We will be exchanging gifts and sharing a glass or two with our French counterparts during the weekend and visiting the Operation Dynamo exhibition which features some great artefacts from the event.





The towns of Ramsgate and Margate are putting on a number of activities to celebrate this event during the week leading up to and after the boats return from Dunkirk. If you would like to visit Massey during her time in Ramsgate or in Dunkirk. Please get in touch by contacting us on masseyshaw@hotmail.co.uk or our website www.masseyshaw.org .

On return to London, the Society are planning to hold a birthday event for Massey at her former home at Lambeth LFB pontoon and invite former crew members of the boat and their families to celebrate her return .

David Rogers Massey Shaw & M .V.Pres Society.



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