

# FIRE

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# HERITAGE NETWORK UK



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BOB WRIGHT. S.F.H.G.

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**WEB SITE,,, [www.fire-heritage-network .org](http://www.fire-heritage-network.org)**

**Fireheritage.org** will get you to the site too.

**Cover picture. Left. The late Mick Kernan, QFSM.**

**Right. The late Ian McMurtrie. MBE. Pictured with his wife.**

## FROM THE SPARE BEDROOM.

Most of our members will be aware of the recent sad death of two of our senior members. The first being our membership secretary Michael (Mick) Kernan QFSM, and Curator of the Firefighters Memorial Trust collection at the Fire Service College, Moreton in Marsh. You can read an Obituary devoted to Mick on the FHNUK website.

The other member to pass was Ian McMurtrie MBE. Ian was well known as the retired Assistant Firemaster of the Scottish, South Eastern Fire Brigade, he was also Honorary Curator of the Edinburgh Fire Museum. Ian also hosted our AGM in Edinburgh a couple of years ago. You can read a full tribute to Ian, written by Bob Wright within this magazine.

The Chairman, Committee and members of the FHNUK send their sincere condolences to the wives and families of our dear departed friends.

We are rapidly approaching the AGM which as you know will be held in Grays, Essex during October. A couple of reminders, if you have not sent your registration in to Bob Bonner yet, DO IT NOW before it is too late. Another point to bear in mind is the Dartford Crossing. If you are coming from the north on the M25, then there should be no real problem apart from the usual traffic congestion. A problem could arise if you are travelling from the south and you intend to cross the river via the Dartford Tunnel or return via the bridge. Do not be fooled by the fact that the toll booths have been removed, you still have to pay. You are required to go onto the Dartford Crossing website and pay there either in advance or in arrears, within a time limit. If you do not pay you can expect a fine demand to drop onto your doormat and it aint cheap.

At the AGM we find ourselves with a number of vacancies on the Committee, these are listed below.

Due to the untimely demise of Mick we will need to elect a new Membership Secretary, Bob Wright has stepped up to the plate and is willing to take on this position. As part of the constitution of the FHNUK Committee positions come up for re-election on a rotational basis dictated by time served, the positions are, Chairman, Secretary and Website Manager. All of the present incumbents are prepared to stand for re-election. And Carl Bell is prepared to go from pro-tem to elected. If Bob Wright takes the Membership Sec's position that would lead to a vacancy on the committee for an ordinary member, currently I am co-opted to the committee as Magazine Editor. It is intended that if elected by the membership I would take on this committee position on a term basis.

I hope that you understand the above as written, if not please contact Bob Bonner for clarification. Equally if you or any of you group members would like to stand, then put names forward now via Bob B. Do not leave it until it is too late, we are a democratic organisation and you are all part of it.

Roger Pickett is going full steam ahead with the organisation of the AGM and some excellent speakers have been lined up on the Saturday, Roger has also promised a spectacular surprise for us all. All I can say is it is something that I have wanted to see for a long time and I don't think that I will be disappointed.

One of the speakers will be Jane Rugg, talking about the closure of the London Fire Brigade Museum, this will be closed for 3 years from September and it will re-open in newly refurbished premises.

The Committee would like to welcome a new group to the fold, and this is the, **240 FLM Group**. Amongst other things they are restoring a former London TL to it's former glory. With a bit of luck they will send me a few words for publication in the magazine to let us all know what they are about, where they do it and most importantly who they are.

You can do the same for your group or museum, write a short article possibly mentioning items that you need, your aims in preservation and historical context and who knows someone out there in the the wide world might be able to help or advise you. Have you got an event coming up? Would you like to publicise your museum to get more visitors? E-mail Carl Bell, his address is on the inside cover and he will put it on our web site. The web site has improved greatly since it was re-vamped, give it a look at [www.fire-heritage-network.org](http://www.fire-heritage-network.org)

You can send in pictures for the news page or make general announcements, send it to Carl.

It is your web site *make use of it and make it work*.

ITV Central News in the West Midlands did a feature on the emergency services recently which they spread over three nights. It looked at the services on a then and now basis, with the fire service being looked at first. They featured Ian Forrester, from the West Midlands Fire Service Community Heritage Group, talking about his time in the Brigade and the equipment used along with the uniforms worn. They then looked at a modern appliance and the up to date uniform and the protection from fire that it gives in comparison to the old. They also showed the modern lightweight firefighting kit carried on the engines.

The following evening I was featured talking about a 1960's Ambulance at Coventry Transport Museum. The comparison here was to show how sparsely equipped the vehicle was, with just space to sit, an area to carry a stretcher and a cupboard to store bandages and kidney bowls. The modern Ambulance was then shown with enough equipment in a back-pack carried by a Para-medical to almost do major surgery. The third evening was devoted to the AA and RAC as the Police were reluctant to come out to play.

Something that has been talked about for sometime is, working weekends. Fear not, people have been beaver away in the background to make these weekends happen and we are at the stage where we will soon be able to release some dates and locations. I can assure you it is not an easy task co-ordinating these weekends. Plans are afoot for work to be carried out on the collections at RAF Scampton and Moreton in Marsh. Further announcements will be forthcoming soon.

An apology to Nigel Crompton, I did not acknowledge the article that he wrote in last months magazine. Thanks for the contribution Nigel and please keep them coming.

Finally, for services over the years to the fire brigade in Coventry, I was recently made an Honorary member of the local branch of the Retired Firefighters Association. A great honour indeed.

*Phil Consadine September 2015.*

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## **Retired Assistant Firemaster Ian McMurtrie MBE**

Retired Assistant Firemaster Ian McMurtrie (South Eastern Fire Brigade) aged 90, passed away peacefully on Friday 7th August at his home in Edinburgh with his family in attendance.

A stalwart of the fire heritage and preservation movement, I have included my own personal tribute to Ian.

### **Ian McMurtrie MBE. Honorary Curator of the Museum of Fire, Edinburgh.**

Ian was born in the Stockbridge area of Edinburgh in 1925 and joined the fire service in 1949 following in the footsteps of his Great Grandfather and his two brothers, his Grandfather and Great Uncle (both of Ian's sons - Kenneth and Jamie were also in the fire service having served in Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade). Prior to his fire service career Ian had been in the Army serving in Palestine and also worked in the Leith shipyard of Henry Robb & Sons.

Ian gained promotion and worked his way up through the ranks finally attaining the position of Assistant Firemaster. He often recalled a conversation he had with Edinburgh's then Firemaster Frank Rushbrook in which he mooted the idea of preserving Edinburgh's firefighting past. Mr Rushbrook thought the idea a superb one and tasked Ian with developing the project. Initially, the collection was located in spare bays previously occupied by the Auxiliary Fire Service at the City's McDonald Road Fire Station and then the exhibits were moved to Lauriston when the station ceased to function in an operational capacity. Today the Museum of Fire is probably the finest fire museum in the country.

The formation and operation of the Museum of Fire and its continuing popularity has been due in no small way to the input, enthusiasm and lifetime's work of Ian McMurtrie. A very modest man, Ian never sought recognition and had remained behind the scenes working until recently, two days a week at the museum ensuring the numerous requests for information were answered. He has in so many ways shown us how to preserve and protect Scotland's firefighting heritage and also highlight the memory of James Braidwood and Edinburgh's birthright as the first city in the United Kingdom to have a properly trained and highly motivated fire brigade.

At the 2012 Annual General Meeting and Seminar of the Fire Heritage Network UK in Edinburgh, Ian was presented with a Crystal Decanter and Glasses to honour his Lifetime Achievement to Fire Service Preservation. All present then endorsed this fitting tribute by giving Ian a standing ovation.

Ian McMurtrie's funeral took place on Monday 17th August 2015 at St Ninian's Church, Edinburgh. The church was packed, testimony to the popularity of a man who had served the city of Edinburgh so well and also done so much to further the preservation movement. A Fire Brigade honour guard was in attendance and a piper played a lament as Ian's coffin was carried into the church by his sons and grandsons.

The Minister spoke of Ian's early and family life and then Alex Clarke, Deputy Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service paid tribute to Ian's fire service career including his award of the MBE for services to the Fire Service. DCO Clarke spoke at length of Ian's involvement and enthusiasm in establishing and operating what is now a world renowned fire museum.

A private burial service then took place followed by a reception at the Holiday Inn Edinburgh

Our sincere condolences go to Ian's wife Betty and all of the McMurtrie Family at this sad time.

My personal thanks go to Ian for the benefit, help and experience he has shown and passed on to me over the years. A true friend and gentleman, he will be sadly missed.

This Obituary was written by Bob Wright, SFHG.

Bob also attended the funeral on behalf of the FHNUK.

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# Brigade's heritage secured as proposals for new museum unveiled

16 July 2015

The future of the Brigade's museum has been secured after proposals to build a brand new, dedicated space to house its extensive collection of artefacts and memorabilia were unveiled.

The news follows today's decision by members of [London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority](#) to make the provision of a new museum, as well as a fire station, a condition of the sale and redevelopment of the Brigade's old headquarters on Albert Embankment in Lambeth.

A modern, flexible location will allow more people to visit the highly praised [Arts Council accredited museum](#), which is regularly described as one of the capital's 'hidden tourist gems.'

Last year, the museum's popularity saw over 2,000 school pupils reluctantly turned away because of the current site's limited capacity.

The new location will provide an opportunity to develop and expand the museum's world class collection, which tells the story of firefighting from the [Great Fire of London](#) until the present day.

The museum has been located on Southwark Bridge Road since 1966 but the current site is now set to be sold as part of the redevelopment of the Brigade's Southwark Training Centre.

London Fire Commissioner Ron Dobson said: "This decision is fantastic news, not only for London Fire Brigade, but for anyone interested in the capital's history.

"It secures the future of our extensive collection of artefacts and memorabilia for generations to come and provides us with an exciting opportunity to develop a state-of-the-art space to house it in.

"A new, purpose built location will also give even more people the opportunity to explore the Brigade's rich heritage"

## Going back home

Going back home to its original location, at the listed former headquarters on Albert Embankment, means the museum will be close to an operational fire station, helping maintain a clear link between the Brigade's past and today's modern fire service.

It will also allow the Brigade to look at funding opportunities available for new museums with a permanent home, which have been unavailable before.

The current museum will remain open until September 2015, after which the complex process of packing, storing and auditing the museum's contents will begin.

It is estimated it could take between three and five years until a new museum opens but plans are being developed that will ensure there are still opportunities for the public to view the Brigade's historic collection.

These include temporary exhibitions at various spaces across London, including fire stations and Brigade headquarters; outreach visits and educational talks and lectures and events to commemorate next year's London Fire Brigade 150th anniversary celebrations.

The decision to make the provision of the museum part of the Albert Embankment sale rather than the redevelopment of the former Southwark Training Centre will allow the Brigade to increase the price for the Southwark site by £1 million. This money will be used to off-set the fit-out costs when the museum relocates to Lambeth.

The above article is taken from the "London Fire Brigade Magazine".

As stated in the Editorial Jane Rugg will be covering this topic at the Essex AGM.



## LONDON FIRE BRIGADE MUSEUM.

### Massey Returns to the Beaches.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May this year Massey Shaw left her berth in London to sail to Ramsgate and join the “Little Ships Armada” and commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Operation Dynamo. Massey Shaw had just completed a four year restoration with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and this was to be the longest journey that she and her crew had undertaken since the work was completed. Many months of hard work by the volunteers who now crew the fireboat to prepare the boat for sea, was in stark contrast to the three hours or so taken by the original crew of AFS and Regular firemen at Lambeth to carry out the same job. Both crews did a good job as Massey arrived in Ramsgate after a night in Queen borough on the 20<sup>th</sup> May. The current crew did experience a rougher passage as they came around the Kent coast and several of the first time sailors were very glad to step on to dry land. The people of Ramsgate and Margate had been very busy coordinating numerous wartime based activities and made the fifty or so Little Ships and their crews feel very welcome.

Massey was visited by a group of Fire Cadets from London and they were given the task of contacting as many of the Little Ship Skippers and asking them to sign their commemorative book and take pictures for our website. Whilst the Cadets and their instructors carried out their task they were introduced to a Dunkirk Veteran who gave them a very moving account of what it was like to have been on the beaches awaiting rescue by the Little Ships. His memory of events even at 96 was vivid and the young people and adults were visibly moved by his account, demonstrating that living history and storytelling still has a place.

Throughout the day various parades took place on the quay side and Massey played host to a number of visitors from the Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Kent Fire Museum and many of the Society’s friends and supporters. As the day came to an end, the crew prepared for an early night as the following day they would, weather permitting, be leaving Ramsgate to cross the channel. An early start was required in order to get the Armada of elderly boats safely across the shipping lanes and into Dunkirk

Early on the morning of 21st the Commodore of the Little Ships, Royal Navy and skippers met to confirm if the weather was good and the ships would sail. The weather was set fair and so the order was given to prepare to leave Ramsgate. Throughout the harbour crowds gathered at vantage points to see the procession of Little Ships head out into the open sea and the coast of France. Outside the break water Massey held her station and provided a watery salute as her fellow craft made their way into formation for the crossing.

The jingle of the telegraphs signified that Massey's engine were ready to turn and carry the newly restored craft back to the beaches. The flotilla was treated to a further salute as a Spitfire and Hurricane flew past at low level dipping their wings in a final salute. The trip across the channel went according to plan, as Massey and her crew grew in confidence as the waves rocked the vessel and her bow carved its way into the breakers. The passage took a little over eight hours which is a good time for fifty Little Ships and their escorts to navigate across the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Soon Massey was entering the large sea locks that protected the town of Dunkirk from the open sea. Many craft were huddled together and found that a large crowd of natives and supporters from the UK awaiting to applaud the Little Ships return.

The crew on Massey waved and posed for photographs as she slipped out of the locks and headed for the centre of town and her berth for the weekend. As the Little Ships approached their berth they were greeted by a large crowd who assembled on the quay and gave all the sailors a great welcome. Massey was soon alongside and greeted by her supporters who had followed her across the channel. More pictures were taken and the crew given an opportunity to regain their land legs before the vessel was secured for the evening and the crew came ashore.

The Return weekend is well renowned as being a busy time, as the Association, Royal British Legion, Civic Government and many others plan events on each day for everyone to participate in. Massey's crew many of whom had never experienced how popular their vessel was, soon found themselves playing host to a constant following of people throughout the weekend. Queues of expectant locals and veterans waited patiently to climb aboard and do the tour of the fireboat. Groups of twenty or so were allowed on each time and it's estimated that some eight hundred or so had taken the opportunity to pay us a visit. Our crew managed to pick up some French conversation and they were all glad that Tom Rogers had provided some bi-lingual histories of the vessel to help them explain more technical items.

On the Saturday, we were pleased to host a group of fire cadets and their instructors who joined us in the afternoon as we visited the Fire Station and presented them with our Spirit of Dunkirk plaque. Our visit to the station was a celebration of fifty years since the LFB had met with the Sapeur Pompier in Dunkirk, when Massey had sailed over with the IST ADLS Return in 1965. The firefighters made us all feel very welcome and it did not take long before various apparatus was being displayed and many more pictures taken. Later that afternoon the town held a parade through the streets with marching bands and military equipment from WW II, a fitting end to a great day. The Fire Cadets returned home and the Massey Shaw gang went to a restaurant to celebrate.

On Massey's final full day in Dunkirk some of the crew and the supporters took part in the Church Service on the Quayside attended by all of the crews from the Little Ships and veterans. A large crowd gathered to pay their respects to the fallen and to the town that had suffered a great deal during Operation Dynamo. At the end of the service, a number of our group left to travel to Ypres and the Menem Gate, whilst the remainder continued taking tours aboard Massey. By six o'clock in the evening we decided to put the chain across the gang plank and head off into town for some very welcome refreshment and a rest. All the crew were back aboard at a reasonable time as the boat was due to sail at 7am the following morning.

Monday morning came all too quickly for some Little Ship crews but not ours. Massey was made ready for sea welfare time and awaited her instructions to leave for the journey back. The weather was changing so the crossing was likely to be a bit more exciting than on the way over, however the skipper and his crew were now more confident on what the vessel could handle as they left the sea lock and headed home. One thing that had been noticed in Massey's journey to Dunkirk was that she had picked up some speed since her restoration. In the past she would have struggled to keep at eight knots for long periods, yet now she could do this with little problem and top ten knots with some power to spare!

Thus the return to Ramsgate was made in good time and it was decided that instead of staying in the port for several days, Massey would return to London the following day. The passage back to London was made in quick time thanks to the use of the tides and Massey's new found speed.

Her arrival at West India Dock was an hour early, and so she was able to enter the dock and make her mooring ahead of schedule. Once secured, the telegraphs rang for the last time and the engines were stopped and the boat went quiet. The crew collected their kit and made their way home after one very memorable trip which will stay long in the memory of all connected with Massey Shaw.

During 2015 Massey will be attending a number of events on the Thames and you are welcome to come aboard and find out more about our Little Ship. If you would like to arrange a family or group visit then please contact us at [info@masseyshaw.org](mailto:info@masseyshaw.org)

David Rogers,

Massey Shaw

Note. To the best of my knowledge, my father was a Stoker aboard the Medway Queen, which was another of the ships that went to Dunkirk. I cannot confirm this as no crew manifest survives from this period. He was attached to Trawlers on Minesweeping duties out of Lowestoft. (Editor).



**FIRE BOAT  
MASSEY SHAW  
AT HER  
BERTH.**

**TIME FOR  
INSPECTION  
BY THE  
DUKE  
OF  
KENT.**



**TIME TO RELAX  
WITH THE  
ROYAL NAVY.**

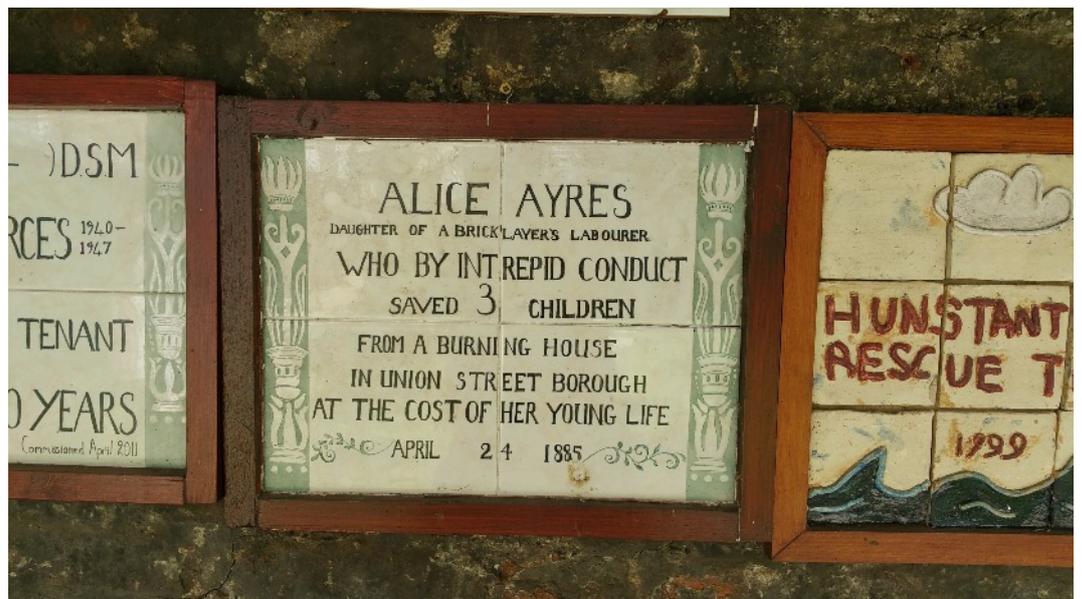
## STREET HERITAGE. FROM THE CAMERA OF PHIL MORRIS.

### FIRE MARK CIRCLE.



A holiday in Wales saw us visit Port Meirion and under one of the buildings was a door marked "FIRE STATION". Does any one know if it is a fire station?

Octavia Hill & Robert Hunter co-founders of the National Trust were both active in creating Postmans Park near St Pauls Cathedral to provide a resting place for workers from the nearby Post Office headquarters. George Frederick Watts later erected a memorial wall of historic deeds many relating to rescue from fires.



A smaller version of the wall is in the garden of Octavia Hill's birthplace in Wisbech and has plaques commemorating "Heroic Self Sacrifice" of likely to be forgotten heroes whose stories were stimulating and instructive. The first plaque is a copy of the one to Alice Ayres in Postmans Park but the remainder are local to the Wisbech area.

# The saga of Aberdeen's first Turntable Ladder (or Scottish thriftiness)

During 1929 Aberdeen City Fire Brigade placed an order with Leyland Motors Ltd. For a new 85ft. Leyland Metz Water Tower and Turntable Fire Escape.

Prior to its delivery in April 1930, it's capabilities were demonstrated to the members of the Watching, Lighting and Fires Committee of the City of Dundee, who I imagine were obviously in awe of Aberdeen's purchase. It's registration number RG 1066 was chosen as a reminder of home by the then Firemaster Frederick Bell, a Englishman lost in the North East of Scotland, struggling with our "Doric" interpretation of the English language!

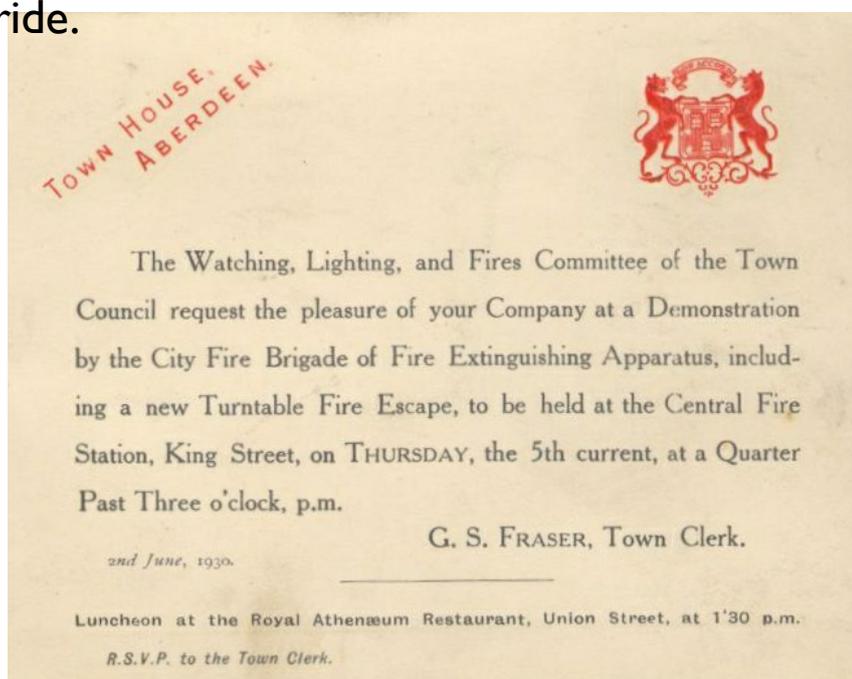
This Appliance went on to serve the City both in anger and humanitarian situations – such as in 1931 blasting the nests of crows who had the "cheek" of setting up home in the trees leading up to St. Machar Cathedral.

From 1930 until 1941 it was under the authority of the City Brigade, then the NFS and after 1948 returned to the local authority under the banner of the North Eastern Fire Brigade having never left King Street Fire Station in the City centre.

By 1948 this Appliance was sadly showing its age, with a top speed of barely 12 mph coupled with solid tyres would have been a boneshaking ride.

on the granite setts (cassies) which paved the streets of the City during this time.

A replacement was out of the question due to post war restraints placed on every Brigade. Not to outdone, it was found that the ladder and mechanism was still in good working order (a testament to German engineering ).



Two years later an order was finally secured from Dennis Bros. Guildford for a chassis and cab for a Turntable Ladder.

The Metz wooden ladder was removed from the old Leyland, being totally refurbished within the Brigade Workshops, was mounted onto the new Dennis chassis and given a new registration No. GSA 999, this was carried out during 1950 – 51.

Unfortunately after a few years the wooden ladder started to show signs of warping and was condemned, again not to be outdone, with the ladder and mechanism removed from the Appliance it was returned to Dennis Bros.Ltd, to be converted into a Pump Escape, on return bearing its original registration number.

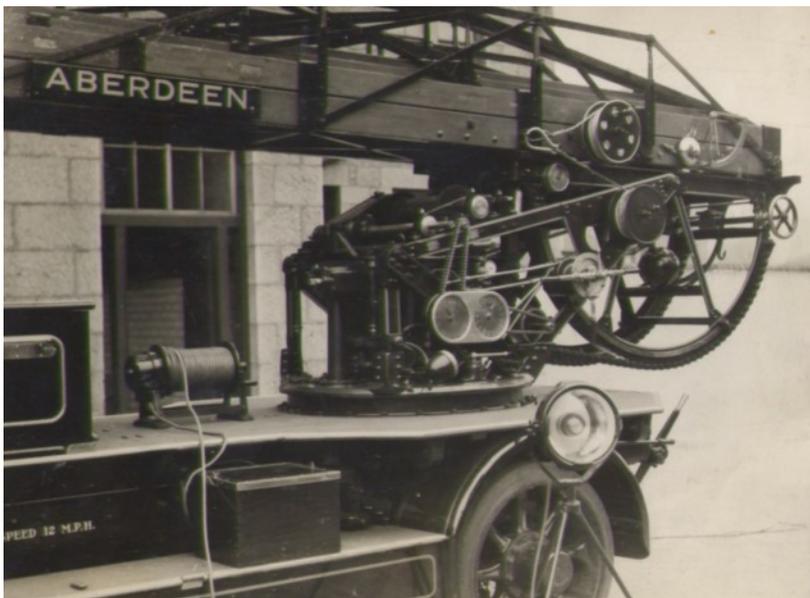
As with all Fire Brigade Appliances they are eventually disposed with after their working life, GSA 999 was sold on to the Aluminium Smelting Works at Invergordon, following their demise went south to series of private collectors, it has at present disappeared off the radar.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS Copyright Dennis Scott, Aberdeen.





Leyland T L in Dundee



Leyland TL RG 1066 Built 1930

## FIERCE WARFARE AT CHANONRY.

CROWS' STRONGHOLD  
ATTACKED.

VICTORY FOR FIRE  
BRIGADE.

The peaceful, old-world quiet of the Chanonry, Old Aberdeen, was rudely broken at eight o'clock this morning, when a fierce war was waged against the tribe of crows which there take up their abode.

The birds have been causing annoyance, and the Fire Brigade was called upon to destroy their nests. As the firemen directed streams of water against the nests, the alarmed crows flew backwards and forwards overhead, cawing in the most excited fashion.

For half an hour a column of water

played on the first tree, on which there were three nests, without causing much damage. Tactics were changed several times by an alternative in the size of the nozzle, but still the strongly-built and strategically-placed outposts held out.

At the end of three-quarters of an hour a shout went up. The first position had fallen.

### Gunning Birds.

There was a flutter in the air; the crows gathered in full force to defend their homes, and it seemed that they were successful, for suddenly the hose was dismantled, and the Fire Brigade retreated.

Two years ago the crows' homes had been flooded in this way, and had been washed away.

Profiting by this bitter experience, the birds had built more strongly, and in more carefully selected high places.

### New Tactics and—Victory.

But this was only a lull before the great push. The huge eighty-five feet fire escape was requisitioned.

Fighting now commenced at close quarters. The firemen mounted the fire escape and, armed with saws and other deadly instruments, hacked their way to the enemy redoubts.

Then the slaughter began. Position after position fell in quick succession until the whole of the entrenchments had been evacuated and destroyed.

During the "offensive" crowds of people looked on with interest. Whilst the hose was playing fruitlessly on the nests, the remark was made—"If the Council hooses were built like that there wud be nae complaints a' fa'in' gables or damp wa's."



GSA 999.

For your information if required:

Translation of the bottom part of the newspaper article

“If Council houses were built like that there would be no complaints of falling gables or damp walls”

.....

*POSTCARDS FROM HAEME.*

*POSTED BY BOB WRIGHT.*



The postcards come from an 'Uncle Jim' who I think must have been a member of the GFB, to his nephews in Ellon, Aberdeenshire.

The postcards are dated 30th December 1907 and show the trials of Motorised Pumping appliances at Glasgow Corporation Waterworks at Milngavie (on the outskirts of Glasgow) that took place in the autumn of that year.



The first motorised pumping appliance was delivered to GFB in early 1906. This was a Mercedes powered by a 'Panhard' engine with a petrol driven Hatfield fire pump capable of delivering 450 GPM. The two Merryweather appliances were delivered in the autumn of 1907. The first postcard shows from L to R a horse drawn steam appliance and the two Merryweather appliances with their suction hose set into the reservoir and the GFB personnel lined up ready for the "Get to Work". The second postcard shows the Mercedes and the two Merryweather appliances working with the 'Civic Dignitaries' and Firemaster John McColl looking on. According to Uncle Jim's postcard to Master Alex Marr, "The Motor Tests were a great success and we're doing away with the horses". This however did not occur until 1911 when Glasgow Fire Brigade's last two horses Kelvin and Tweed were sold and the Brigade became fully mechanised.

oo

Magazines recently received by the editor.

Kent firefighting Museum.

“ROUTINE ORDERS”. From Roy Goodey.

Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum..

Keep them coming, send them to [phil.consadine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:phil.consadine@yahoo.co.uk)

MORE FROM  
THE  
CAMERA OF  
PHIL MORRIS



The photo shows a display of equipment that was used in Boughton House Northamptonshire.  
The Davy fire escape I am guessing is about 1900 and the modern day equivalent is used as a means of escape from some order pickers





***FIRE BOATS, IN LIVORNO, ITALY.***

***NO WATER SHORTAGES HERE!***





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