

ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023



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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN ...

Following the traditional 2022/3 RMA winter layoff, events this year commenced on the 15th April with the Annual General Meeting held at the Fire Museum, Grays Fire Station. About thirty members were present.

On the 20th April members gathered at The Barn, Cressing Temple for Afternoon Tea, which was arranged by Jan and Barry Cable. A very attentive staff ensured members were well looked after. The weather was warm and sunny providing members with the opportunity to stroll around the immaculate walled garden.

A scorching hot day on the 14th June saw members and guests ferried by coach to the RAF Museum at Hendon. It was a very interesting visit and Martin Pullen did an excellent job organising the event.

In June Tony Pizzala arranged for members and guests to attend an evening of greyhound racing at the Romford dog track. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening which included an excellent three-course meal whilst watching the racing, and of course everyone trying to beat the Tote!!

In early August a small group of members braving the awful weather visited the wonderful garden of Brian and Wendy Wickenden at their home in St Osyth. Their hospitality was superb and I am most grateful to them.

Following the great success of the 2022 Heythrop Park event, in September this year, members and guests joined a 4-night break at the Warners – Studley Castle Hotel in Warwickshire arranged by Dave Birks. The subsequent feedback has been very positive and it is likely that this type of event will be repeated.

In October Jan and Barry Cable organised another afternoon tea at Cressing Temple Barns. Approximately twenty-five members and guests were seated which shows that this has become a popular event and will be repeated in 2024.

The final event of this year was the very successful Christmas Lunch organised by Diane and John Rogers in the private function suite at the Lion Inn, Boreham. My thanks go to Diane and John for their first-rate attention to detail. The room was beautifully decorated bringing Christmas cheer to all the diners, and the food and the service were excellent. The comments after lunch were especially complimentary.

I am delighted to say that the ECFRS CEO/Chief Fire Officer, Rick Hylton, met the RMA Committee twice during the year for informal and interesting 'chats'. His visits confirm a positive support for our organisation.

My sincere thanks go to the members who have supported events in the past year. It is your support that will encourage event coordinators to continue with the arduous task of finding venues for your enjoyment and entertainment.

On a sad note, we have lost a number of RMA members and non-members this year. Firstly, I need to mention the tragic loss of our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Graham Farrell who sadly passed away in November. Graham was a well respected and dedicated member of the RMA Committee and he will be truly missed. My condolences go to Graham's family and especially to his wife Sue whom we sincerely thank for her part in assisting Graham with the Treasurer's role during his illness.

We have also lost RMA Members Keith Webster, Bob Hurley, Mick Hughes, Gordon Everson, Roger Paramor, Harold Riddlestone, Carole Bester, Pat Jones and non-members Rod McLeod & Ray Baxter.

However, on a more positive note we have gained nine new RMA Members and I would like to express a warm welcome to them all.

I am also delighted to welcome Gillian Day to the RMA Committee and wish her well in her important new role as RMA Treasurer. Gillian has been shadowing Graham for a while and accordingly the transition should be virtually seamless.

My special thanks and sincere appreciation are also due to the following Committee members: Jan and Barry Cable, Diane and John Rogers, Dave Birks, and Tony Pizzala for all the hard work in ensuring the events above were very successful and well received by the members. Members continue to receive birthday cards, and my thanks are due to Committee member Linda Boar for completing this important task. Thanks also to Committee members Janet Baker, Jan Caldwell and Ray Parfit for their contributions.

To end, I hope to see many of you at our outings in 2024 and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.



RMA ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION



Time is running out for you to revise your Standing Order for your RMA subscription which increases to £3 per annum on 1st April 2024

A visit by the Chief Fire Officer

The ECFRS CEO/Chief Officer, Rick Hylton, welcomed the opportunity of meeting the RMA Committee again some 10 months after his first visit. He gave an update on how the Service was changing, and confirmed that currently the figures for personnel were 600 whole-time and 400 on-call. New appliances are now in use with another twelve on order. Calls were up last year because of the very hot summer, but they are now coming down, but not as low as before.

A new system has been introduced whereby, at certain times, appliances and crews were moved to specific areas where it was considered that extra cover was needed.

The conversation continued with the Chief answering various questions about new procedures, etc. that have been adopted both on and off the fire ground.

The Chief thanked the Committee for inviting him to the meeting and said that he would like to meet the Committee again in the future.

ESSEX FIRE MUSEUM



We are looking for new volunteers at the Essex Fire Museum (for Thursdays). We also need help for our family open days (which run on the last Sunday of each month.....mostly).

Would this be of interest to any members?

NEW MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome **Colin Cooper** as a new member of the RMA

Christmas Lunch at the Lion Inn

Just under forty members and guests had a memorable afternoon in the company of colleagues and friends whilst enjoying their excellent choice of Christmas fare and hospitality offered by the Lion staff. A good time was had by all!



Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Christmas Carol Service

The Christian Fellowship at Kelvedon Park are organising a Carol Service at All Saints Parish Church, Springfield on Wednesday 13th December at 7pm. They have sent the following invitation: "We would like to invite retired members to come along and meet serving officers and celebrate Christmas with us. We'll have refreshments afterwards and a time of sharing, we hope members of the RMA will enjoy the service too."

OBITUARIES

Graham Farrell

We are very sorry to announce the passing of RMA Treasurer Graham Farrell, his funeral was held on the 6th December at Maldon Methodist Church. Many of you will remember Graham from his time at ECFRS HQ as a Communications Technician from January 1988 until his retirement in July 2011.

Bob Fish

We are very sorry to inform you of the passing of Sub Officer Bob Fish from Old Harlow who died in November at the age of 93. His funeral was on the 28th November at Harlow Crematorium.

Steve Smith

It is with great sadness to inform you of the passing, after a short illness, of Steve. He served at Harlow, Chelmsford and Great Baddow and was a member of the service golf society. Our sincere condolences to his father, our Chairman Smudger Smith and to all his family and friends.