



EASTBOURNE FIRE BRIGADE

OFFICIAL OPENING

of the

NEW FIRE STATION

WHITLEY ROAD, EASTBOURNE

by

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, K.G.

Lord Lieutenant of Sussex

4th DECEMBER 1973

COUNTY BOROUGH OF EASTBOURNE



MAYOR

Alderman Sir Sydney Caffyn, C.B.E.

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Alderman L. W. Pyle

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs. W. E. Ouzman

Mr. Councillor G. J. Anderson

Mr. Councillor R. Poynter

Mr. Councillor F. C. Solly

Mr. Councillor M. E. Tunwell

Mr. Councillor T. W. Ward

TOWN CLERK

J. Dartnell, B.Sc. (Econ) D.P.A.

BOROUGH ARCHITECT

H. Connolly, A.R.I.B.A.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

F. P. Tarling, F.I.Fire.E.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

- 11.15 Arrival of The Mayor of Eastbourne, Alderman Sir Sydney Caffyn, C.B.E. and the Mayoress, Lady Caffyn. To be met by the Chairman of the Public Protection Committee, Mr. Alderman L. W. Pyle and the Chief Fire Officer Mr. F. P. Tarling.
- 11.25 Arrival of His Grace The Duke of Norfolk. To be met by The Mayor who will introduce The Mayoress, The Chairman of the Public Protection Committee, The Town Clerk, The Borough Architect, The Chief Fire Officer and Mr. R. E. Powell.
- 11.30 The Chief Fire Officer will invite the Duke of Norfolk to inspect the Parade of Eastbourne Fire Brigade personnel.
- 11.40 **OPENING CEREMONY**
- The Mayor will introduce the Duke of Norfolk. The Duke of Norfolk performs the opening ceremony and unveils the commemorative plaque. The Chairman of the Public Protection Committee to thank the Duke of Norfolk.
- 11.55 The Chairman of the Public Protection Committee to invite the Duke of Norfolk to tour the premises. To be accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoress, the Chief Fire Officer, the Borough Architect, Mr. A. J. Sherwin, Mr. R. E. Powell and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 12.20 Duke of Norfolk to leave for the Official Luncheon.

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF EASTBOURNE FIRE BRIGADE
FIRE STATION, WHITLEY ROAD, EASTBOURNE**



The site occupies an area of approximately one acre with a frontage of 234ft. to Whitley Road and 201ft. to Chawbrook Road.

The accommodation provides:

A six bay appliance room opening on to a forecourt and thence directly to Whitley Road, to house two Water Tender Ladders, one Turntable Ladder, one Hydraulic Platform, one Emergency Tender and ancillary equipment.

The remainder of the ground floor provides general station accommodation including a two bay workshop, a control room and female rest room, Conference room, Mess Recreation room and Kitchen, Lecture room, breathing apparatus maintenance room, ablutions and locker room and various offices.

The upper floor provides an administrative suite for Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and typing and clerical staff, a fire prevention suite to accommodate the whole of the fire prevention staff and their drawing and office equipment, dormitory/rest rooms for personnel on night duty, television room and study room.

In the south east corner of the site is situated a fifty feet high drill and hose drying tower, a two storey training building, a hose repair room, a room housing the generator for secondary electrical supply, and a room housing the compressor for breathing apparatus cylinders.

A spacious drill yard is provided at the rear of the premises, together with car parking for staff and five garages for brigade staff vehicles.

The premises are heated from oil fired boilers which also provides domestic hot water. Lighting and cooking is provided by electricity. Secondary lighting is available from an automatic diesel operated generator which also provides facilities for maintaining radio and telephone communications in an emergency.

The contractor for the construction of the premises was E. Powell and Sons Limited (Builders) and the total cost was £190,000. The appliance room and workshop are steel framed with a light alloy roof cladding, the remainder of the premises are load bearing brick walls with reinforced concrete floors and roof. The whole premises have a floor area of 18,683 sq. ft.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EASTBOURNE FIRE BRIGADE

The earliest record of the Fire Brigade in Eastbourne appeared in 1824 when the Parish Council purchased a manual pump. Various incidents have been recorded since then including one in 1830 when a Mrs. Gilbert offered to take the pump and keep it in good repair. In the 1840's a Manual Pump from Compton Place and the one belonging to the Parish Council constituted the sole protection against fire in Eastbourne for some years. The original Parish Council manual pump was renovated and kept at Grove Road Station, where it was used for display purposes but this pump was destroyed when the Station was bombed in 1943. The manual from Compton Place fell into disrepair and was found in pieces in the basement of the Towner Art Gallery. A few years ago the parts were recovered and with a few replacements rebuilt to become the manual pump which is sited in the entrance of this new fire station.

In 1853 the manual pumps were to be replaced by more modern appliances and a "Shand Mason" Steamer was purchased by public subscription. Difficulty was found in housing the appliance and eventually a building was erected for the purpose at a cost of £80 in July 1857. Fourteen years later the local board saw the necessity for purchasing an escape ladder and a Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed under the local Surveyor, Mr. Charles Tomes, who acted as Captain. These duties were later taken over by a Mr. Henry Brown, but in 1873, due to difficulties, Mr. James Towner took over as Captain of the Volunteer Brigade and a Mr. Thomas Fuller was Captain of the Steam Section. About this time a second steam engine had been purchased and there had been some difficulties in the provision of horses, also differences of opinion as to whether the Volunteer Brigade and the Parish Engine should be housed in the same building.



1899. Members of the Brigade with a "Shand Mason" Steamer



1898, *The Fire Station in Grove Road*

In 1883, Eastbourne was granted its Charter and became a Borough Council, the Council decided to establish a Volunteer Brigade maintained by the Rates, previously the cost of the Brigade had been borne by subscriptions. Additional premises were obtained to house the appliances and equipment and eventually fire stations were set up, one each at Grove Road, Cavendish Place, Old Town, Meads and Hampden Park.

On the establishment of this first Eastbourne Brigade in 1887, Mr. John Hounsom, who joined the Volunteer Brigade in 1878, was made its first Captain and continued to serve as such until his retirement. During these years much advance had been made in appliances and equipment and eventually it was decided by the Council that a professional officer should take charge of the Eastbourne Brigade.

The retirement of Captain Hounsom in 1931 saw the appointment of the first professional Chief Officer, Mr. D. W. Spence, who himself retired in 1938. During his service the Brigade was centralised at Grove Road Fire Station and a nucleus of professional firemen were employed.

Fire Brigades throughout the Country were nationalised in 1941, for the defence of the Country during the Second World War.

On mobilisation in 1939 the strength of the Eastbourne Brigade was increased from 13 to approximately 130 with about 150 part time members on call and to even greater numbers in later years. Temporary premises throughout the area provided accommodation for personnel and appliances.

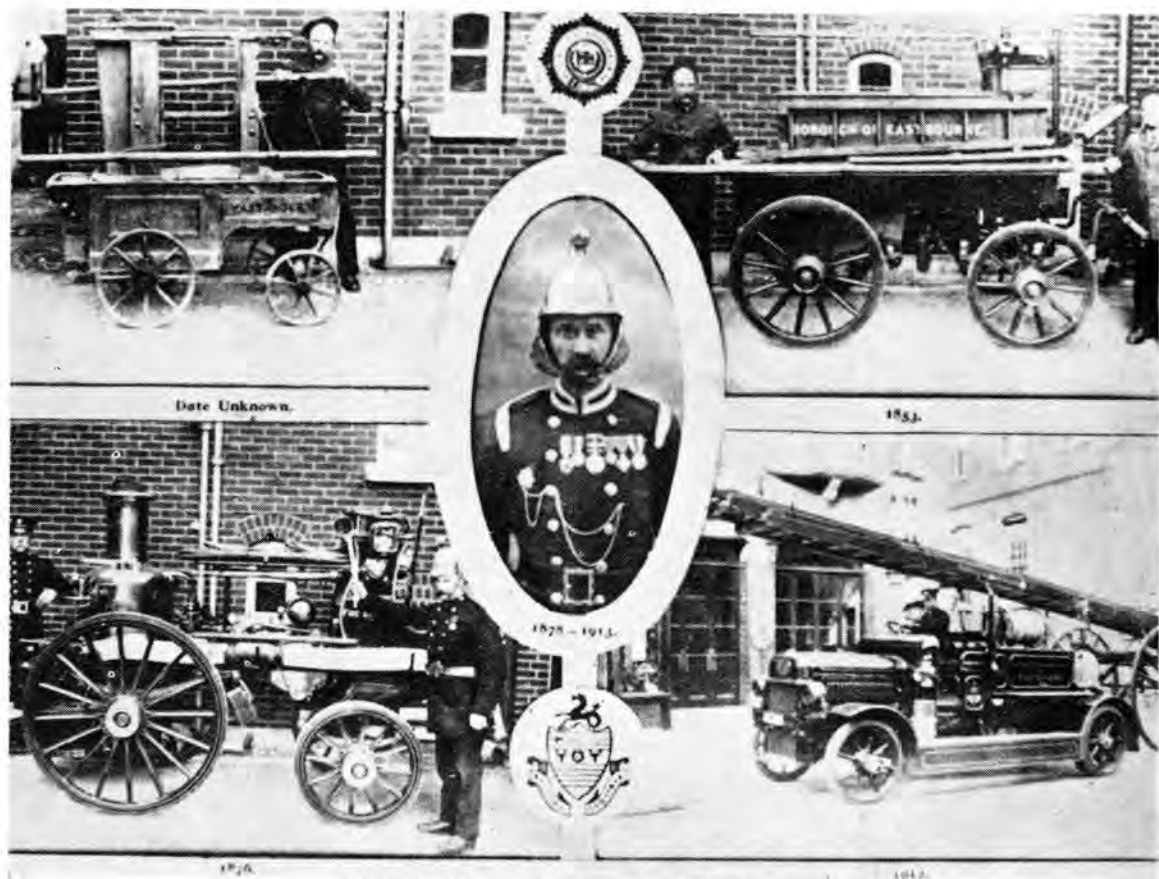
The deeds of the Fire Service in Eastbourne have been referred to in other publications, but it must be recorded that in Eastbourne, a front line town, the service went through ordeals too numerous to detail, due to the many "Hit and Run" type air raids and eventually V.I's (flying bombs).

On the 7th February 1943 the Grove Road Fire Station received a direct hit, six members of the brigade were killed and others were injured. A replacement temporary station was planned and built by the National Fire Service and opened on 10th May 1946 in Bourne Street, Eastbourne.

When the brigades were handed back to the local councils in 1948, Eastbourne being a County Borough, took over its responsibilities for the fire protection of the Borough and Mr. Phillips who had been Chief Officer since the retirement of Mr. Spence until Nationalisation, was reappointed Chief Fire Officer and served as such until his death in June 1953.

Since the War the Eastbourne Brigade has been served by wholtime personnel and with the advance of responsibilities in fire protection and the increasing number of emergencies to which the Brigade were being called, the premises in Bourne Street rapidly became inadequate for present day standards to house the modern equipment, administration and facilities for training.

In 1969 the Council gave approval for a start to be made on the planning of new premises and as the new Stafford School was opened, this site in Whitley Road was allocated for Fire Brigade purposes. The Borough Architect, Mr. H. Connolly, A.R.I.B.A., was instructed to prepare the plans for a new headquarters and fire station. Construction of this building started in January 1972.



1912. Eastbourne Fire Brigade's Christmas card



One of the manual pumps used in the "East of Bourn" between 1824 and 1850

CHIEF OFFICERS OF THE EASTBOURNE FIRE BRIGADE

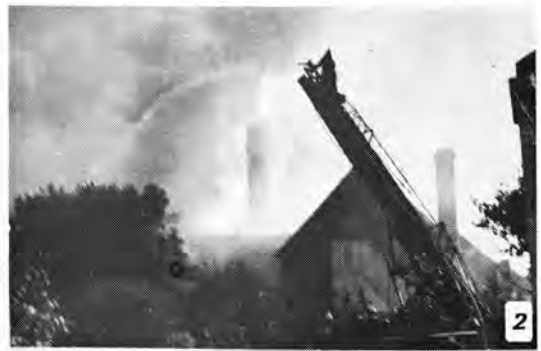
1887 — 1931	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CAPTAIN JOHN HOUNSOM
1931 — 1938	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER R. W. SPENCE
1938 — 1941	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER S. A. PHILLIPS
1941 — 1948	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE
1948 — 1953	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER S. A. PHILLIPS
1953 — 1954	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER C. J. MURRANT
1954 — 1964	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER P. C. SHORT
1965 — 1968	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER W. F. DANCEY
1968 —	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	CHIEF OFFICER F. P. TARLING

A FEW INCIDENTS AND FIRES

January 1853	“The Grays”, Old Town.
17th November 1876	Peerless’s Timber Yard, Langney Road.
29th September 1927	All Saints’ Church, Carlisle Road.
8th June 1933	Royal Marine Laundry, Winchelsea Road.
4th April 1940	S.S. “Barnhill” (5,000 ton freighter, bombed in Channel).
7th February 1943	Fire Brigade Headquarters, Grove Road, bombed (6 killed).
4th June 1955	Crash landing of RAF Sunderland Flying Boat (4 dead, 10 injured).
23rd January 1958	F. R. Pinker (Fruiterers) Ltd., Mark Lane.
25th August 1958	Scotland-Eastbourne Car Sleeper train crash at Eastbourne Railway Station (6 dead, 30 injured).
28th March 1961	G. E. Maynard Ltd., Furniture Depository, Firle Road.
20th October 1961	Eastbourne College, College Road.
5th November 1961	W. Llewellyn & Sons Ltd., Timber Yard, Whitley Road.
30th April 1963	S.S. “Georgios II” (fire — <i>esparto grass cargo</i>).
9th July 1963	Roy Hudson, Terminus Road (<i>collapse of part of 4 storey building</i>).
3rd December 1964	Pura Plastics, North Street.
10th January 1965	J. W. Brisley Ltd., Leather Works, Bourne Street.
23rd January 1965	W. Llewellyn & Sons Ltd., Timber Warehouse, Whitley Road.
21st June 1965	Lamb Inn, High Street (<i>double-decker ’bus crash — 29 injured</i>).
6th April 1966	Beachy Head Hotel, Beachy Head.
10th September 1967	Booths’ Commercial Hotel, Langney Road.
21st October 1968	S.S. “Sitakund” (15,567 ton oil tanker. <i>Explosion and fire, 3 dead</i>).
8th January 1970	Pier Theatre, Eastbourne Pier.
20th May 1972	Coverplas Ltd., Plastics Factory, Maple Road.

Acknowledgements

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1. All Saints' Church after the fire.
2. Royal Marine Laundry,
Winchelsea Road.
- 3 & 4. The Theatre, Eastbourne Pier
5. Coverplas Ltd., Maple Road.
6. S.S. "Sitakund".
7. W. Llewellyn & Sons Ltd.,
Timber Warehouse.