



HEADSTONE  
MANOR &  
MUSEUM

# RAISE THE ALARM!



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF

# HARROW FIRE STATION



### 1877–1938

The first fire station in Harrow was built in 1877 at the Southern end of High Street in Harrow. The building housed two manual pumps owned by the Harrow Local Board of Health. The original station was extended in 1889, followed by an increase in staff which brought the total strength of the brigade to 21 firefighters. The station was then rebuilt in 1914.

### 1938–1965

The current fire station at Harrow on Pinner Road was built in 1938 to replace the old station on the High Street. It became a very important divisional headquarters for the National Fire Service (NFS), set up during the Second World War. Harrow Fire Station was situated in Zone G of the London region for the NFS and was the Headquarters for J Division with twenty-five other sub-stations under its control across Harrow and Edgware.

After the war Harrow Fire Station became part of Middlesex Fire Brigade, before being later becoming part of London Fire Brigade in 1965, with the creation of the Greater London Council.

### 1952

One of the worst incidents Harrow station had to attend was the Harrow and Wealdstone Rail Crash. Firefighters from this station were among the first rescuers at the scene of the accident in which three busy locomotives had collided on the morning of 8 October 1952. The incident resulted in the loss of 112 lives and remains the worst peace-time rail crash in the United Kingdom.

### 2011–2015

Harrow Fire Station attended an average of 787 incidents per year between 2011 and 2015, of which 160 were fires. The station is crewed by one watch manager, one crew manager and five firefighters.

### 2022

The station turns 85!

STORIES FROM  
HARROW'S  
COMMUNITY

## IAN GAWN

### HARROW RESIDENT



Our Dad, Reg (Reginald Horace) Gawn was a Fireman then Leading Fireman in the AFS then NFS at Pinner Road Fire Scion until after the City Blitz in May 41. Fought fires in the blitz in London and Portsmouth. City blitz in May 41 was at the City Temple fire on same crew as Ernest Lough, who as a boy soprano had recorded Oh For The Wings of a Dove there.

Although based at Pinner Road they attended fires all over London, and for a week or so the Portsmouth Blitz. If the air raid siren sounded they would pull the appliance forward onto the forecourt and wait to see which way the Hurricanes from Northolt went after taking off.

A lot of their work was in the East End. Dad was a driver and also worked on the top of a 100ft turntable ladder. Only later, probably after Dad died in 1974, quite young, just before his 65th birthday, that I really appreciated the outstanding courage of the fire crews, male and female. More than 350 died in service. Dad's early death was probably in part due to exposure to smoke, gases and the heat of fires fought not in protective clothing but a tin hat and a battledress jacket. As kids we used to wear Dad's tin hat, fireman's jacket and belt.

Mum was a fire watcher, and put out incendiaries with buckets of sand. The nearest bomb to home was about 100 yards away, and dislodged a piece of plaster on the cornice in the sitting room, which would never stick back in place.

Dad ended up breaking his wrist so had to stop being an operational fireman, and went back to the Post Office in I think 1942.



## ANDREA FURIE

### HARROW RESIDENT



[My grandfather] George Henry Green was working for the Kodak fire service on March 31st 1916 and had reported for duty as usual, but when the men were called to a fire, George could not be found. He was later discovered behind the engine shed, having suffered a fatal heart attack. He was aged just 41.

My mother, who was only nine at the time, remembered his funeral and memorial service which was held at Wealdstone Parish Church on April 5th 1916. There was a black hearse, drawn by black plumed horses...

Sadly, there are no images remaining of my grandfather. I like to think he was one of the men in the newspaper cutting.



KODAK FIRE BRIGADE, 1914



## LINDA MCGUIRE

### HARROW RESIDENT

— “ —

My mum Mavis Brown was the Cook..it was her and the mess manager from each watch.

The large one taken in the kitchen is an official fire service photo.

I was about 10 when my mum transferred to Harrow I think. But my mum loved the job..she had a lot of laughs and a lot of fun..and I know she was very highly thought of. She also worked extremely hard. She probably left in the late 1960's as I left school.

Our playground backed onto the yard at the fire-station and mum would often pass cake and pies through the fence if there was some left over.

Mum was a great cook but was really nervous taking on such a task but basically she just multiplied the amount she home cooked for me and my dad..

— ” —

IMAGES COURTESY OF LINDA MCGUIRE

# BRIAN RANDALL'S STORY

## HARROW RESIDENT



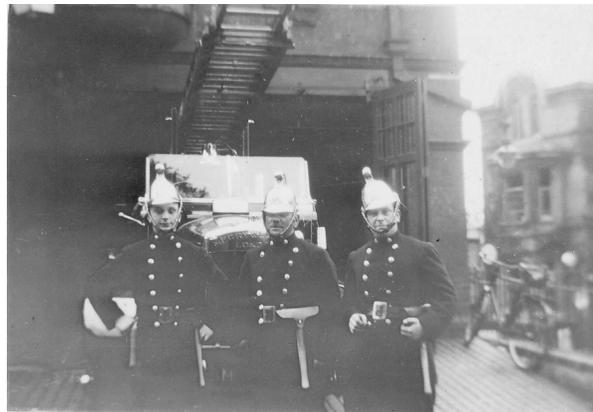
Brian's father was at Harrow on the Hill Fire Station for 34 years. Started in 1932, as a fireman, his father (his grandfather) was a fireman - also great grandfather. In 1937, he was a regular fireman then he got promoted in 1941 with NFS leading fireman.

Brian's father is in the photo we used as our call out poster photo - in 1937.

Brian joined Middlesex Fire Bridgade in Wembley. From Wembley to HM Forces, came out - went back in training - then transferred to Willisden Fire Station then served at Harrow on the Hill before it closed on 11 March 1963 - was there 18 months. After, he went to Northolt - In 1964, he was transferred to Harrow Fire Station - served until Aug 1965 when he had a promoted to Leading Fireman. Then Brian went to Stanmore, then promoted in 1968 to Sub-Officer transferred to Ruislip. Wealdstone 17 years. Retired in 1986



BRIAN AT HARROW  
1967



BRIAN'S DAD, GRANDFATHER, UNCLE JOHN,  
HARROW HILL 1934

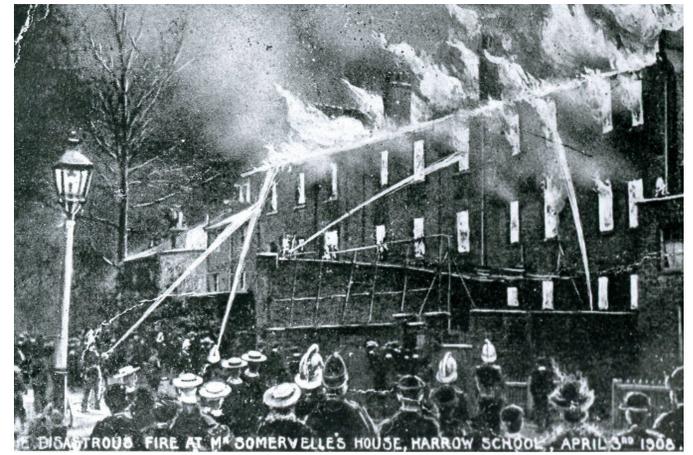


BRIANS DAD DRIVING ON THE HILL  
CIRCA 1950

THE 1908 HARROW  
SCHOOL FIRE



On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 1908 there was a devastating fire in the School House 'Westacre' at Harrow School, which was at the time occupied by a Mr Somervell as well as 40-50 boys. Luckily at the time the boys and Mr Somervell were attending a lecture in the Speech Room and therefore nobody was injured. Due to the magnitude of the fire the Wealdstone, Kodak and Wembley Fire Brigades were all called to assist. However, when they arrived there were several hindrances to extinguishing the fire: firstly, the doors to the School House were locked and the Brigade's struggled to gain access, losing precious minutes in the fight against the flames. Secondly, there was trouble in trying to obtain water to put out the flames. By the time the Brigade's had overcome these troubles the fire had become such a magnitude that many people from around Harrow had flocked to see it! The fire had been spotted at 9pm on the Friday evening, and still at noon the next day the Fire Brigades were continuing in their efforts and had managed to save part of the building as well as the buildings either side. By the time the flames were thoroughly out hundreds of people had paid a visit to the Hill.



HARROW TRAIN  
CRASH INCIDENT  
1952

MAJOR INCIDENT IN HARROW ATTENDED BY THE HARROW FIRE BRIGADE

239755 ES

AID FOR INJURED.

Harrow, Middlesex:  
aid an injured soldier  
three-train crash  
About a hundred are  
disaster, which occurred  
8th October:

*Fireman Jim Daykin*

MANY CASUALTIES IN THREE-TRAIN CRASH.  
BIG DEATH ROLL FEARED. 8.10.52.

Three trains - the ~~Midland~~ Night Scot -  
another express and a local train - crashed at  
Harrow and Wealdstone station this morning.  
One of the trains ploughed into the platform  
and wreckage was scattered all over the tracks.  
A big death roll is feared.  
KEYSTONE PHOTO SHOWS: A fireman with  
walkie-talkie radio - at the scene of  
the crash today.  
H/Keystone. MI/RJ/596971

FLOODLIGHT RESCUE WORK AT SCENE  
OF TRIPLE CRASH

Beneath the harsh glare of the  
floodlights, firemen and  
other rescue workers delve in  
the wreckage of the three trains  
at Harrow and Wealdstone Station,  
Middlesex, to-night (Wednesday)  
more than twelve hours after the  
triple crash that cost 85 lives,  
and injured more than a hundred  
people.  
The crash occurred when two  
express trains travelling in  
opposite directions, ripped  
into a suburban train.  
Oct 8th 1952 PAR 31641-31 (Be-G)

PAY FEE TO CAPTION

KEYSTONE

239739 SKIN

AMERICAN SERVICEMEN AID CRASH VICTIMS.

Harrow, Middlesex: American servicemen help to  
give a blood transfusion to one of the injured  
after the tragic three-train smash at Harrow and  
Wealdstone Station.  
About a hundred are believed killed in the smash,  
which occurred this morning during a fog.  
8th October, 1952 PN-d.

ACCIDENTS 1952 - HARROW & W  
K, VICTIMS, INJURED, RESCUE WORK

TRIPLE-TRAIN CRASH  
Harrow, Middlesex: The foreground of the picture  
presents a scene of chaos which contrasts  
strangely with the orderly layout of the houses  
and shops in the background. This aerial view  
was taken after the triple train crash at Harrow  
and Wealdstone. Many of the people seen were  
rescue workers, intent on removing the bodies of  
the dead and injured from the tangled steel of  
the piled up coaches and engines. Latest figures  
give the death roll as 85 and 170 injured in  
hospital.  
The night express from Perth ran into the back of  
a stationary Tring to Euston train. A minute  
later the Euston to Manchester express ploughed  
into the wreckage, breaking the station footbridge.  
9th October 1952 PN-b

LATE PRINT OR CAPTION

LOAN FROM  
S PERIODICALS LIBRARY  
1 HOLBORN, W.C.1

1952 - HARROW & WEALDSTONE S.H.  
K, VICTIMS, INJURED, RESCUE WORK

COPYRIGHT  
PLANET NEWS

239816 SKIN

THE SEARCH GOES ON IN TRAIN CRASH DEBRIS.  
MOUNTING DEATH ROLL.

Harrow, Middlesex: Firemen dig amongst a tangled  
mass of steel and wood, searching the wreckage  
of the triple train crash for bodies.  
As work continued at Harrow and Wealdstone station,  
the scene of yesterday's three train crash, more  
bodies were recovered, swelling the heavy death roll.  
9th October, 1952 PN-d.

239891 AND

DAY AND NIGHT SEARCH GOES ON FOR TRAIN SMASH VICTIMS.  
DEATH ROLL STILL MOUNTING.

Harrow, Middlesex: The scene at Harrow and  
Wealdstone station late this afternoon as rescue  
workers probe the wreckage of the triple-train  
smash for victims still believed buried.  
The search has gone on day and night since early  
Wednesday morning (8th October) when the three  
trains piled themselves into a mass of tangled  
wood and steel at the station.  
The death roll now stands at 107, but more victims  
are believed to lie under this debris, beneath  
the engine (centre background). Rescuers risk  
their lives as they tunnel into the tons of  
wreckage.

SUBJECT

Wealdstone Rail Crash

DATE

9 October 1952

TAKEN BY

Planet News Ltd

PRINT OR CAPTION  
FROM  
S PERIODICALS LIBRARY  
1 HOLBORN, W.C.1  
LATER SHOWN

1952 - OCT

DO NOT MUTILATE PRINT OR CAPTION  
ON LOAN FROM  
ADAMS PRESS PERIODICALS LIBRARY



HARROW AND WEALDSTONE RAIL CRASH, 8 OCTOBER 1952

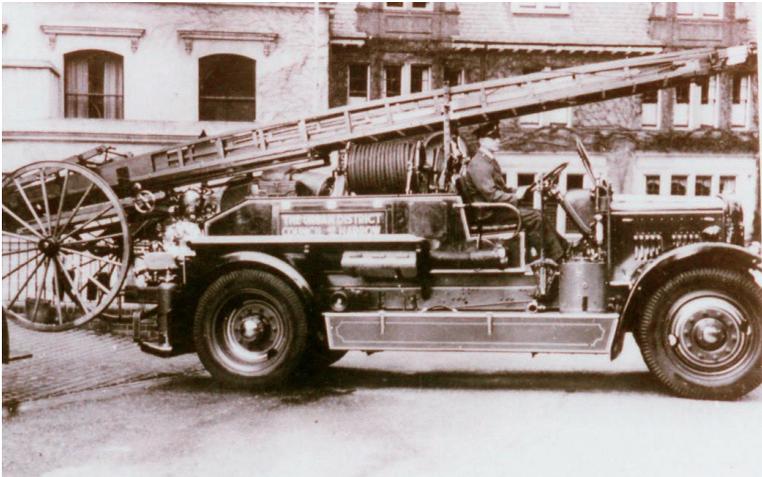
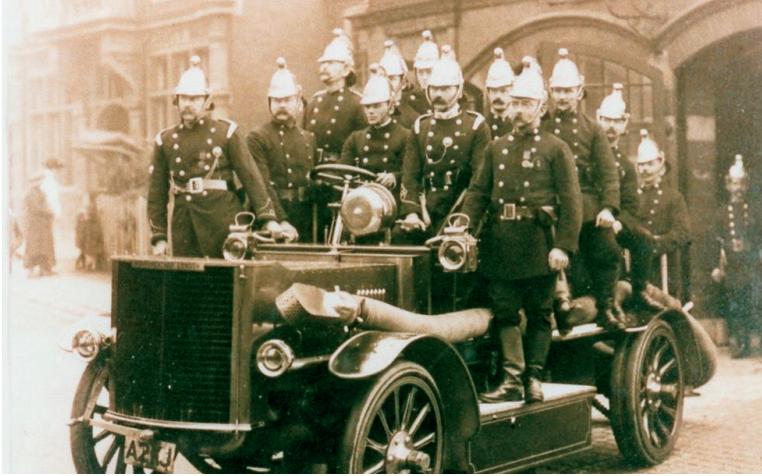
# TRANSPORT

FROM THE ARCHIVES AT HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM



HARROW.

LOCAL BOARD.



'HERGA' ENGINE, JUNE 1937

CIRCA 1935

UNIFORM



[1]



[2]



[3]

[1] UNIFORM 1937 [2] UNKNOWN [3] TOM PARKER, WEALDSTONE

— “ —  
"OUR DAUGHTER,  
RUTH, AGED 4 IN  
1987 AT AN OPEN  
DAY."  
— ” —

-MARY SCOBIE (NOW RESIDENT  
IN NEW ZEALAND BUT BORN  
AND BROUGHT UP IN HARROW!)



# HARROW FIRE BRIGADE



W. ENSTEN      J. L. STANFORD      DRIVER A. KING      DRIVER G. BEVINGTON      DRIVER A. NICHOLLS      A. BEAMON      T. SILK  
 W. WEBB      W. PUTMAN      ACTING SUB. CAPT. G. W. BERRY      ACTING CHIEF OFFICER A. LANE      ESCAPE FOREMAN J. MANN      A. WALLS      G. MANEWELL



MEMORIES FROM THE  
BRIGADE AT LFB  
HARROW TODAY

## TONY DURHAM

### FIREFIGHTER AND DRIVER, HARROW FIRE BRIGADE



I always wanted to join the fire service from a young age, but didn't manage to join until I was thirty years of age, and have not regretted a single moment of my career.

It's not just about putting out fires and attending car crashes. It's also about getting out into the local communities and give people advice on the ways they can protect their self and their families in the event of a fire and ways to make sure their homes are safe.

I feel very honoured to be stationed at this [Harrow] station that has a long history in the harrow area and hopefully it will still be here for many years to come.

Harrow is a great station to work at, all of the watches are great friends and colleagues, it's more like an extended family then work friends. You will find that most of the fire stations in London have the same vibe to them.





FROM THE ARCHIVES AT HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM

## ALAN ALLMARK

### STATION COMMANDER, HARROW FIRE BRIGADE



I have worked at Harrow Fire Station since December 2020. I joined the Fire Service in January 1999. I wanted a career that could have a positive impact for society. I initially joined the Police Force but soon found myself more drawn to the type of role the firefighters took whilst we often attended the same incidents.

I wasn't initially aware that Harrow Fire Station was 85 years old but I'm immensely proud to have served here. I am very aware that LFB has a long and prestigious history and Harrow Fire Station celebrates and values its long links to the local community and wider London.

I think what stands out about Harrow is there is a lot of pride in the station, the firefighters really enjoy working here and that makes for a great atmosphere.





PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN ALLMARK

## TOBY AYLETT

### SUB OFFICER



[Firefighting] was suggested by a Sargent I had in the TA, I had just returned from a tour of IRAQ and the LFB were recruiting. I always wanted to do a valuable job and seemed to be the opportunity.

Being a firefighter today is so Varied, not similar to what I expected. We do fight fires and train regularly in all the operational areas we work. We also spend a lot of time in the community making sure that they are safe completing visits such as fire safety Audits and Home fire safety visits.

The most important thing to me is being part of a valuable professional team who are there to help people during their most difficult times.

I am proud to be a firefighter, I have had the fortune to be part of teams that have saved lives, I have also used the skills learnt as a firefighter in my personal life.

I have been a firefighter in a number of varied stations, including the centre of London. I like harrow for its varied demographic, older buildings in one area and brand new high rise in others.



## RORY LYNCH

### BREATHING APPARATUS AND REAL FIRE TRAINER



I had always wanted to be a firefighter since I was a small child. My dad was a 31 year firefighter in the West Midlands Fire Service so it was a natural choice for me to follow in his footsteps.

It's about more than fires and responding to incidents. It's about being a valued member of the community and having a positive impact on people's lives. Whether that is pulling them from a burning building or doing prevention work by visiting a primary school.

It's very humbling to be at the front end of this history that will hopefully continue.

It feels more like a home than a workplace. Because we are a small station and it is an older build it has a more relaxed atmosphere which makes it a friendly place to come to work each day





PHOTO COURTESY OF RORY LYNCH



PHOTO COURTESY OF RORY LYNCH

# OTHER HISTORIC BRIGADES IN HARROW

– FROM THE ARCHIVES AT HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM



PINNER FIRE STATION



WEALDSTONE FIRE STATION

LONDON CIVIL DEFENCE REGION.

HARROW URBAN DISTRICT.

---

---

**FIRE GUARD**

---

---

Signature of Holder :

*John W. Stowell*

No 23512

National Registration 

B11C	323	/
------	-----	---

87.167

HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THIS BOOK INCLUDING EVERYONE WHO  
HAS SHARED THEIR STORIES. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK  
HARROW MUSEUMS TRUST, HARROW LOCAL HISTORY  
COLLECTION & ARCHIVE, FRIENDS OF HARROW MUSEUM AND  
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE



