

NOTES FROM BOX 2851

The National Emergency Services Museum Sheffield, UK

by: John Fisher

Officers

President	Kevin McWalters SDFD Ret.
Vice President	Jack Gosney DMFD Ret.
Secretary	John Fisher SDFD B-7/B
Treasurer	Rob Harris National Tax Relief
Museum Executive Director	Mike Colafrancesco SDFD Station 11/C
Board Members	Bob Hammond SDFD Ret.
	Dale Wineteer Road One Towing
	Stuart Sprung Cal Fire Division Chief
	Dave Duca Fire Etc.
	Bill Black Safety Components
	Kevin Ester SDFD Assistant Chief
Newsletter	Michael Watson



One of the great things about the fire service is that those who become firefighters tend to be the same sort of characters no matter where they are in the world.

Firefighters world-wide visit each other and share their experiences. One would be hard pressed to find another profession where the members include visiting fellow professionals in their travel plans.

I had the opportunity to take a driving tour of England in 2016. Yes, driving on the wrong side of the road. It's not as bad as you think, though I got a photo ticket within 45 minutes. I hadn't quite figured out all of the traffic markings yet. Oops.

Our plans took us through Sheffield, renowned for being an industrial town full of manufacturing plants. And the National Emergency Services Museum.

Much like our own Firehouse Museum, the NESM is quartered in a former fire station. The similarities are quite striking. The former fire station that the NESM is housed in was built of brick in 1900, while our own museum was built in 1915. Unlike the Firehouse Museum, the NESM also includes tributes to police officers. Here in San Diego, you should visit the wonderful SDPD museum on College Avenue to take a look at their collection.

PIONEER HOOK AND LADDER FIREHOUSE MUSEUM

Sheffield's museum is a little newer than our San Diego museum. It was founded in 1984. European fire stations tend to be a bit more centralized and larger than American ones, so the museum is just a bit bigger than Pioneer Hook and Ladder's. One of the most interesting things is that the NESM has a couple of American engines among their collection. Imagine my surprise when I wandered out back and found an early 1990's Pierce triple combination pumper that used to serve Philadelphia. Inside was a 1960's vintage American La France.

One of the most interesting parts of the museum was the homage to wartime fire services. Sheffield was a huge target for German bombers because of its industrial facilities. Firewatchers were placed in shrapnel proof (hopefully) steel pill boxes to keep an eye out. There was a lot of smaller equipment issued out so that neighborhoods could take care of their own problems. This equipment even included hand pumps that could draft from the many canals. More modern equipment showed signs of being used for riot duty, including metal screening over windows. American fire equipment showed some of the same screening during the "war years" of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Luckily, we don't need it today.

As you would expect, the staff was friendly and knowledgeable. They were glad to welcome an American visitor. I'd highly recommend going out of your way just a little bit and exploring Sheffield while you're in the UK. The Emergency Services museum was top notch and so were the other museums honoring Sheffield's industrial heritage.



Shrapnel proof steel pill box



Canal hand pump



1928 Dennis 'AJAX'

President's Notes

Kevin McWalters

It's with great pleasure to share with you that your Firehouse Museum continues to prosper and expand in many directions. We continue to improve our facility, host numerous social events and participate with the Little Italy community toward improving the district.

We were able to host our National Historical Landmark Dedication ceremony and thanks to all that were able to attend including Councilmen Ward and SDFR Chief Kevin Ester for speaking at our event.

The mission of the PH & L is to preserve the past, capture the present for the future and this is all accomplished by your support and membership. The driving force behind the museum is the "Volunteers". If you or know of someone that has the desire to become apart of our team please contact Mike at the museum.

Additionally we are seeking corporate sponsorship at the museum to assist us with capital improvements. If you have a company or organization that may be willing to support the museum please forward the contact information to Mike.

Until next time stay safe and may you and your family have a great summer!



Council Member Ward



*Assistant Fire Chief /PHL Board Member
Kevin Ester*

Executive Director's Report

Captain Mike Colafrancesco

It is hard to believe summer is already here.....Time has flown by at the Firehouse Museum. On April 7, 2017 we hosted a National Historic Site Plaque Dedication. This designation ensures that the museum will be available for future generations to enjoy.

We have several capital improvement projects scheduled for FY2018, including remodeling the entrance display area. In addition, the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Board is spearheading the rebuild of old SDFD Foam 28.

At the beginning of 2017, we conducted a membership drive and gained several active duty members. The tax deductible membership fee includes several free annual events, and discounted hall rental pricing. We look forward to having additional active duty and retired personnel participate as members. Your support as members is what allows the museum to continue to prosper and grow!

If you are interested in helping out with our capital improvement projects, or joining as a member, please email me at sdfirehousemuseum@gmail.com.

Have a great summer!



*Former museum volunteers
Jack Mecham (L)
and
Allen Swartwoudt (R)*

*Proud recent graduates of the SDFD
83rd Basic Fire
Academy*



*PHL President
Kevin McWalters
Historic Site Plaque Dedication*



FOR INFORMATION
on membership and/or
these events, visit
www.sandiegofirehousemuseum.com
or contact us at:
phone:
619-232-3473
email:
sdfirehousemuseum@gmail.com

2017 Fire Season Outlook

John Fisher

Welcome to the worst fire season ever – 27 years in a row for me! So what's really going to happen this year? Well, that depends. More than 80% of wildland fires in Southern California are human caused. So if no one causes fires, we won't have them.

This past winter's rains have brought a lot of relief from the previous years' drought. Yet the tap shut off around March 1st and we haven't seen much rain since. So while the drought is technically over, Southern California still shows as abnormally dry on the drought monitor.

What has happened is that the early season rains brought tremendous growth of the grass crop, but the lack of recent rain means that all of that chest high grass is dried out. It's vertically arranged light flashy fuel in quantities that we haven't seen in decades. That much grass means a ton of heat in a quick burning fuel. Don't get sucked into the "It's just a grass fire" trap. Be very, very careful committing firefighters to grass fires this year. Just the slightest wind shift can cause a dramatic increase in fire behavior.

So what about the brush? Well, the rains have helped get the fuel moisture up in the chaparral. The live fuel moisture is just about average this year. It's up 20-30% from this time last year. Last year's early June brush burned like late July or early August brush. Think about last June's tragic Border Fire along Highway 94. So far this year, we're seeing grass fires that aren't getting the brush going because the brush is still too wet. As the season goes on, the tremendous grass crop will easily be able to get drier brush burning. At the same time, the five year drought caused a great deal of die off in the chaparral. So there is a lot of dead fuel hiding among all that beautifully green brush this year. That will contribute to fire behavior as it dries out.

High winds with a grass crop like this year's will spell trouble. Unfortunately, it's still too early to predict how the Santa Ana season will shape up. Keep an eye on the new Santa Ana wind season outlook available from the South Ops Predictive Services crew. Predictive Services is your best spot for long term outlooks. Check out their products at: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/predictive/weather/>

More near term products can be obtained from the daily fire weather forecasts available from the National Weather Service. (weather.gov/sdx) San Diego Fire-Rescue personnel have access to the daily forecasts via daily emails from 911Weather. You do read the forecast, don't you? Also check out the daily Fire Potential Index that comes out from SDG&E's weather shop. They've done some great work in creating the country's largest network of weather stations. SDG&E weather stations are available at: sdgweather.com.

Remember Fire Order 1: Keep Informed on Fire Weather Conditions and Forecasts. You can't keep your crews safe without starting at the beginning.

Have a safe summer!