



LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

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PRESS BUREAU

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PAPERS ON THURSDAY, 7 JULY
1960.

THE LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Notes for press use in the context of
the Review of the Brigade by
H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh on 7 July 1960

The Statistics for 1959 reported to the L.C.C.'s Fire Brigade Committee show some interesting comparisons. Fires during the past 12 months have increased by over 50% to 14,688. This was particularly due to the large number of grass fires. Special calls on the Brigade's rescue, flood and other services have remained fairly steady (3,318). In the past year London's firemen dealt with some 28,000 calls.

Fire Prevention continues to play a vital part in the Brigade's work, with nearly 16,000 inspections being made in the course of the year. The Brigade is co-operating in a campaign by H.M. Factory Inspectorate and advisory work on factory premises is increasing and will increase even more under the Factories Act, 1959.

Despite the general shortage of manpower, the Brigade now has 2,372 officers and men, an increase of some 400 picked men in the past three years. But another 350 at least are needed this year to achieve the authorised establishment. A 56-hour week has been approved by the Council but cannot be implemented until the recruiting problem is solved. Training arrangements have been developed to meet the needs of the increased number of recruits.

All first-line appliances have been replaced by post-war models and replacement of second-line and training appliances is well advanced. Appliances have new extension ladders designed and made in the Brigade's own workshops. Light alloy hose couplings have been introduced and light (nylon and terylene) hose is undergoing operational trials. Light alloy hook ladders and a new wheeled escape are on trial or at an experimental stage. A new type of breathing apparatus has been developed, tested and proved and is now in full use under a comprehensive operational procedure.

Fire stations at Wandsworth and Greenwich have been rebuilt and brought into use and four new drill yards and two new towers have been completed. Limitations on capital expenditure have held up 14 other new stations needed, but a three-year programme now approved and under way includes four new fire stations at Clapham, Shoreditch, Chelsea and Lewisham, costing in total some £750,000. A fifth new station will be built within the Barbican scheme in the City and others may be built in connection with private redevelopments. Several more new drill yards and towers are also envisaged.

Close co-operation has been developed between the Brigade, the L.C.C's Architect and private developers, in relation to the design and construction of high buildings, their staircases, lifts and fire safety standards. There are 167 high buildings completed since the war or now under construction. Another 43 have town planning consent but building has not yet started.

A detailed review of fire safety conditions in London's bonded warehouses is being carried out.

The Brigade continues to play a major part in London's civil defence organisation.

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A great deal is done to ensure the general welfare of London's firemen and women. In many ways they live and work together as one great family in a service which combines the human touch and great traditions forged in peace and war, with maximum efficiency and immediate readiness to safeguard and save life and property day and night throughout the year.

It is a service provided for $4\frac{1}{2}$ million people who live or work in the County. Over a million properties with a total fire insurance value of some £6,000 million are involved. The cost of the London Fire Brigade service this year is approximately £2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million.

7 July 1960

REVIEW 1960

PROGRAMME

1. Scaling a building with hook ladders X

Three pumps enter the yard from the north embankment gate and stop in line abreast in the yard centre (facing bandstand). Twelve men dismount, are handed hook ladders from off the pumps, and march in line abreast to face the drill tower. Meanwhile the pumps turn round ready to drive off. The men ascend the drill tower, in pairs, progressively, until there is a man on a hook ladder at each window opening from the first to sixth floor. A whistle is blown and all twelve men lie back from their ladders, suspended only by the hook belt. On a second whistle the men descend, fall in facing the audience, march to the pumps, replace ladders and mount the pumps. The pumps then drive out by the same gate.

2. Escape drill and rescue by carrying down X

Four pump-escapes enter from the north embankment gate and stop in line abreast in the yard centre (facing bandstand). The crews slip the escape simultaneously and wheel them close to the front of the drill tower. The two inner escapes are extended to the fourth floor, the two outer escapes to the third floor. One man ascends each escape and carries down a live body, all four coming down together. The escapes are then 'housed', wheeled back to the appliances and are replaced simultaneously. The crews mount and the appliances drive out in a sweeping turn around the yard, through the same gate.

3. Rescue by escape, hook ladder and line X

As the commentary finishes, smoke rises at the third floor window (and subsequently at the sixth) and a pump-escape enters the yard through the rear south gate. It makes a sweeping turn, approaches the tower, and the escape is slipped. The escape is pitched to the third floor whilst the appliance is set in to a hydrant. Two men, with a hook ladder, ascend the escape and then continue to scale the building by hook ladder to the sixth floor. A third man ascends the escape to the third floor, enters, and rescues a body by carrying down. At this point an ambulance enters by the same gate and the body is placed on a stretcher. A line of hose is taken up the escape and the 'fire' extinguished. Meanwhile, the hook ladder men reach the sixth floor and rescue a second body by lowering it to the ground. When both bodies are in the ambulance it leaves the drill yard. The escape and hose are then made up, the hook ladder men descend the tower, and, with all the crew mounted, the appliance leaves the drill yard in a sweeping turn through the north embankment gate.

4. Demonstration of squad drill by Auxiliary Fire Service women

The women give a demonstration of squad drill under the command of an A.F.S. woman officer. They come into view from under the balcony and disappear under the balcony after taking their "bow".

5. Demonstration of emergency appliances and equipment given by men of the Auxiliary Fire Service

A small convoy consisting of four emergency pumps and a Land Rover will enter the drill yard from the north embankment gate. One pump will park in the centre of the yard, the other three at the bandstand end. A hose lorry will enter through the rear (south) gate and lay one line of hose to the centre pump to supply water from an outside source. Meanwhile a portable pump will be off-loaded from each of the pumps and will be sited on an arc facing the drill tower. Three lines of hose will be laid out from each portable pump which will be fed from the centre (major) pump. When twelve jets are playing on the drill tower the 'knock-off' whistle will be blown to signify the make-up.

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REVISIONS TO THE PROGRAM
MAY 1950

PROGRAM

6. Turntable ladder demonstration

Four turntable ladders enter by the north embankment gate and four by the rear north gate, to form three lines facing the bandstand. After the jacks and blocks are put down the ladders are elevated and the branchman mounts to the head of the ladder where he hooks on. The ladders are then extended and trained (rotated) in various movements to present tabloidal patterns to the audience. The climax occurs when a flag is broken at 95 ft. Thereafter the ladders are made up and finally leave the yard by the north embankment gate. All movements are directed by walkie-talkie radio which the operators wear.

7. Fire scene

As fire shows on the ground and third floors where persons are trapped, the commentator briefly sets the scene. Alarm bells ring in the station and almost immediately the bells of the appliances are heard responding to the call. A pump-escape enters the rear south gate, approaches the tower and the escape is slipped and pitched to the third floor. A pump enters the rear south gate as the escape is being pitched and sets in to a hydrant. Almost immediately two turntable ladders enter, one by the rear north gate and the other by the north embankment gate, and prepare to get to work as water towers into the sixth floor of the tower. Meanwhile the rescue of a person from the third floor is being effected. As soon as the turntable ladders are in position a pump, ambulance, control unit, fire car, emergency tender, and supporting pump enter by the rear south gate with only a slight pause between each appliance. These appliances represent the progressive stages in the attendance at a serious fire. In addition to the person rescued from the third floor, another person is rescued from the ground floor by men wearing breathing apparatus (a breathing apparatus control point is set up); both rescued men are put in the ambulance which then leaves the yard. Meanwhile, eight jets are got to work from two pumps and one from each turntable ladder. Finally, a hose lorry enters by the rear south gate, drives round the drill yard laying out a line of hose to simulate a water relay. When a whistle is blown, all jets are knocked off, hose and other equipment is made up, and the appliances leave the yard in succession by the north embankment gate.