

ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER JUNE 2025

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RMA Website: <https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/retired-members-association>



Tower of London – Ceremony of the Keys

Despite the cool temperature and chilly breeze 17 RMA members and guests including our good friend - retired Police Inspector Pat Mahoney (who arranged the

visit) - assembled at the Tower West Gate just before 7:30pm where along with other visiting groups were welcomed by Dan our Yeoman Warder and host for the evening. Dan took us on a walking route around the Tower grounds pausing frequently to explain about the buildings, giving us a potted history of Kings, Queens and notable 'others' who were fortunate or unfortunate enough to spend time at the Tower. His explanations and anecdotes were extremely interesting, humorous and liberally filled with gruesome details of the punishment and beheadings for which the Tower is notorious. After an hour or so we arrived at 'The Keys' the Yeoman Warder's bar and our opportunity to indulge in a drink or two and take part in their raffle, proceeds of which go to building expenses and donations to deserving charities. Again, Dan was an excellent host, and it was fun and good entertainment. 9:30pm saw us assembled outside for a briefing followed by a short walk towards the West Gate where at precisely 7 minutes to 10 the ceremony of the keys commenced with a small party of guards parading to the gate and carrying out the 700-year tradition of locking the gates. The ceremony finished with a memorable floodlight parade by the Irish Guards and a bugler sounding a moving rendition of the last post.



Some guests then left whilst others returned to finish their drinks. Everyone said how much they enjoyed the visit, and a good time was had by all.

John Rogers.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

June: 2nd- 6th June - Warners 5-day break to the Isle of Wight: *(Now fully booked)*
July: Thursday 31st July - Visit to The Gardens of Easton Lodge, Dunmow (see flyer)
August: Galleywood winery tour with afternoon tea (to be confirmed)
August: River Trip on the Orwell Lady (to be confirmed)
September: Monday 29th - Lunch at the Ironmongers Hall, London (see flyer)
October: Thursday 23rd - Afternoon Tea at Cressing Temple Barns.
December: Thursday 11th - Christmas Lunch at the Lion Inn (details to follow later)

A Visit to the Gardens of Easton Lodge

Thursday 31st July 2025



The RMA have arranged a visit to the beautiful and historic Gardens of Easton Lodge on Thursday 31st July. This was the home of Daisy, Countess of Warwick, a renowned socialite and close friend of King Edward VII who visited regularly. The gardens, originally designed by Harold Peto, had fallen into disrepair but have been lovingly restored by the Trustees volunteers over the past few years and remains a work in progress.

Our visit will start at 11.00 am at the entrance to the gardens where there is free parking and a guided tour of the gardens will commence at 11.30 where we will learn the history of the gardens and hear about the fascinating life of Daisy, the Countess of Warwick. Following the tour, tea/coffee and cake will be served in the outside cafe. **The cost of the visit, including refreshments will be £12 pp.** Well behaved dogs are welcome, and you are free to bring a picnic if you wish.

The Gardens of Easton Lodge are located at Park Road, Great Dunmow, CM6 2BB. You can also use Park Road, Little Easton in your SATNAV. The Gardens are signposted by Brown Heritage signs. You will find the Gardens on Park Road about half a mile further on from the Little Easton church. Turn right into the Car Park. This will be a fascinating visit, of interest to gardeners, historians and lovers of beautiful places alike.



Book early to reserve your place by contacting Janet Caldwell at janetcaldwell123@btinternet.com

Payment can be made by online or telephone banking

Account: ECFRS Retired Members' Association,
sort code: 30-91-85, account number: 49411768,

Please use reference: "Easton [surname]" so that we know how to attribute the payment

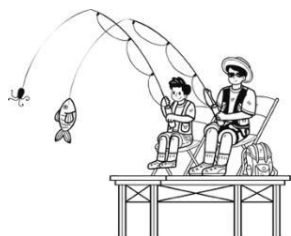
SOME IMPORTANT BANKING INFORMATION

Lloyds Bank has informed us that from January 2025 it will be charging organisations such as RMA for banking services (in line with other High Street banks). The most significant charge will be a 50p charge for processing every cheque. To minimise this additional cost to the RMA it would be appreciated if any future payments are made by using bank transfer or telephone banking instead of cheques.

Gillian Day (*Treasurer*)

HOBBIES AND PASTIMES

We all have the Fire Service as a common background but most of us also have hobbies, interests, pastimes or even passions in our daily life.



Would you like to share any of these with possibly like-minded members? Fishing is popular and probably the most talked about, but even something as everyday as dog walking can be shared if there is a will. The list of hobbies and pastimes is enormous but if anyone would like to share them, I would be more than happy to try to connect members and co-ordinate efforts. This could, in time, generate sub-groups in the RMA, such as motorcycle section, photography section, fishing section. etc. Contact me if you would like to be part of or have some ideas for an interest group.

Ted Collins

Email: ted53collins@gmail.com

Tel: 07875 64052



NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome **Matthew Hodgkinson** and **Mick Watton** as new members of the RMA.

Welcome also to Alan Stone, a long-standing member of the RMA who has volunteered to become a member of the RMA Committee

The following is taken from the May 2025 edition of the ECFRS Newsletter...

PROTECT THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT: LET US KNOW WHO MIGHT NEED HELP TO ESCAPE

The ECFRS is urging families and carers to book a free Home Safety Visit for anyone who may find it difficult to escape their home in the event of a fire.

This includes people with reduced mobility, long-term health conditions, or disabilities that may slow down or prevent their ability to get out quickly during an emergency.

If it's required, ECFRS will also update its system to show that someone at the address may need help evacuating. If a fire is reported at the address, control room staff can share that vital information with fire crews before they arrive – helping firefighters prioritise a safe rescue.

Read more about escape routes [here](#)

GLASS OF SPARKLING WINE, 3-COURSE MEAL, HALF BOTTLE WINE AT

IRONMONGERS HALL

Shaftesbury Place, Barbican, London, EC2Y 8AA

Private Luncheon in the Great Hall.

Monday 29th September 2025

Enjoy pre-lunch drinks in the Drawing Room before making your way to your table

Bar is open from 12.30 and lunch is served from 13.00hrs

£ 70.00 per person

Dress Code: Suits & Smart Casual - Travel: Own transport

To register your interest please contact Ron Murray 07879 493087 or

firefighterrpm@btinternet.com

Payment details will be given in a future newsletter



TO SAIL OR NOT TO SAIL, IT'S YOUR DECISION, SO ...

ACTION PLEASE

We are looking at the possibility of a river trip on the **Orwell Lady**. The trips comprise various options, including the hire of the complete boat, but at this stage, before getting involved with the arrangements, we **need to know how many members will be interested**. The sailing will be in late August so it will be possible to bring along children and grandchildren. During a three-hour excursion, experience the tranquillity and peace of the River Orwell, arriving close to the mouth of the river and witnessing the immense scale of the UK's largest container port at Felixstowe. Listen to fascinating tales of the history of the river and surrounding area, before returning to Orwell Quay.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR COMMITTEE TO GO AHEAD WITH ORGANISING THIS OUTING, PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Declare your interest to: Dave Birks by phone 01702 528355
Or email dave-jean-birks@supanet.com and give your contact details.