



KARA E-News

No. 32 –20th July 2025

Summer Edition



THE START OF THE KENT AMBULANCE RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION *by Barry Barnsley*

During the latter part of 1992 I was at the previous Ashford Ambulance Station at Silver Hill Road with the then Chief Ambulance Officer Mike Robinson who was presenting Long Service/Good Conduct medals to a number of staff. After the presentations he was approached by Murray 'Badger' Swift and Bert Leadbetter, who asked him whether it was possible for a retirement association to be set up. Mr. Robinson subsequently asked me to investigate whether there was any interest in such an idea and if so, carry it forward.

I decided to visit the Personnel Department at Headquarters in Coxheath, Maidstone and, together with Val Page (Personnel Secretary), we identified the names and addresses of all members of staff who had retired either through ill health or age during the past 15 years. A questionnaire was then produced and circulated to all known retirees and whilst a number were not returned, I guess due to changes of address or circumstances, a significant number were returned with the vast majority in favour of the idea. KARA subsequently started in 1993 with John Hart as President and Bob Smith as Chairman. I attended the inaugural meeting in the Boardroom at Coxheath in 1993 when the Committee was elected and initially was asked if I'd be Chairman, but John Hart (HQ) pointed

out that as I was not retired this was not possible as the rules did not allow this. Basil Bourne (Lydd) became Treasurer for a significant number of years but I'm unsure if, as at this time, or shortly afterwards. I also recall Alan Vine (Folkestone) serving as an original member of the Committee.

***Extra Special Meeting – Social Meeting 4th September**

STOP PRESS...

An Extra Special Meeting will be held during the Social Meeting on 4th September to discuss the amendments to the Constitution.

More information is on Page 4

Social Meeting

**September 4th September – Speaker:
Pete Allan – How Now Spirit?
Tingling Tales of Theatre Ghosts**

Subs Due

There are a number of members yet to pay their subs for the year – please contact the Treasurer if you need further information

MEMBERS SUMMER LUNCH 2025

(images provided by Frank Stocks & Barry Barnsley).

This year's members summer lunch was again held at the Dog & Duck in Plucks Gutter, with members enjoying games of Bat & Trap and catching up with both old and new faces, before sitting down to a fantastic lunch.



Having a lovely lunch and afternoon, members and partners met with friends and old colleagues, with all having a great time, supported with live music covering everything from the '50s to now.



KARA Membership...



Membership numbers! *July 2025*****

Members: 124 Associate: 38 Total: 162

Social dates for 2025...

4th September – Pete Allen

6th November – Speaker TBC

10th December – Christmas Meal – The Orida, Maidstone

Committee Meeting Dates 2025...

10th September & 10th December.



KARA Fishing Competitions

Competitions at Deal Pier, Wednesday 8th October.

Welfare Officers

Could you be a Welfare Officer? Could you be someone to look out for those in your area, perhaps call them to touch base and help keep them updated with all things KARA? We are aware there those that are unable to make it to meetings so the more we can do to look after each other and look out for each other, the better. If anyone is struggling, please get in touch with us.

KARA Website News +

Please keep an eye on the website regularly, as changes are being made, for your interest. We are aiming to change over to a new website, purchasing a domain for the association, to allow us to build a more user-friendly site.

Hopefully, members will also be able to upload stories and images that they wish to include in the archive and to share with your fellow friends and colleagues too!

Please help us, to help you.

Barry & Adam

SECamb News

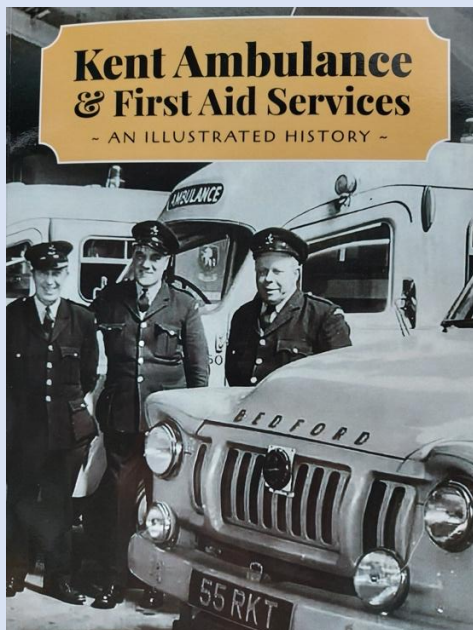


SECamb Ret. A & AS Association Meetings 2025

Still awaiting a date for the next meeting.

Divisional Working Update

SECamb have now divided each of the three counties into 'divisions', each frontline county having its own Divisional Director of Operations, Consultant Paramedic and education lead.



New Book Finished 'Kent Ambulance & First Aid Services – An Illustrated History -

The book by Brian Janman covers the early years 1870 to the beginning of the National Health service and then continues through to the change from Kent Ambulance Service to the amalgamation into South East Coast Ambulance Service, combining Kent, East & West Sussex and Surrey Ambulance Services in 2006.

Brian Janman also published the following other books;
Handcart to Hanlon – West Sussex Ambulance Services

1885-1995 published in 2013 & *Sussex Ambulance & First Aid Services* published in 2020.

He has spent some time researching and compiling, with the assistance of many; including Frank Stocks & Collin Varrall. All his research material has been gifted to KARA and the aim will be for this to be included in the electronic archive for the new website soon!

The book is available to purchase via the link on the KARA website and from the link below:

https://www.woodfieldpublishing.co.uk/contents/en-uk/p453_kent-ambulance-and-first-aid-services-janman.html

Other books available:

Sussex Ambulance & First Aid Services

https://www.woodfieldpublishing.co.uk/contents/en-uk/p442_sussex-ambulance-and-first-aid-services-illustrated-history-1890-present-janman.html

Handcart to Hanlon (Brian Janman) West Sussex Ambulance Services 1885 - 1995

https://www.woodfieldpublishing.co.uk/contents/en-uk/p404_handcart-to-hanlon-West-Sussex-ambulance-service-history-1895-1995.html

Richard Palmer – Ambulance Technician to the heady heights of KCC!

Hello everyone,

I would normally not bring the subject of politics into our forum at KARA but found this interesting. Last month as you may know was the local County Council elections for Kent, though for some of us living in the Medway Towns we were not invited as apparently, we had ours a couple of years ago and Labour swept in taking over from the Conservatives.

Anyway, my wife and I were watching the ITV Meridian news, and an article came up about the political party Reform U.K having knocked out the Conservatives after 20 years controlling KCC, and there displayed on the tv screen were all the elected Reform U.K candidates. Immediately, there at the front and at the foot of the staircase I recognised Richard Palmer a technician that served at Medway Ambulance, I cannot recollect how long he was therefore but it was during our dispute back in the eighties when we were out on strike but still providing one 999 vehicle as I found myself paired up with him for a shift.

Well since that TV appearance he has been appointed by the leader of KCC (now Reform U.K) as Chairman of KCC in Maidstone. You can Google him where they give a rundown of his working and home life for those interested.

Steve Webb

KARA Constitution & Extra Special Meeting 4th September

Constitution Changes

As members will recall, there has been great discussion around accepting currently serving members of SECAmb into the Association as members.

Your committee have discussed this at length and propose a change to the Constitution which is shown below. The proposed changes are shown in italicised red text.

Motion 1:

The objects of the Association to be for the purpose of mutual friendship and welfare also the promotion of social contacts between *serving and* retired members of the service

Motion 2:

Membership of the Association will be available to all *serving staff, and those* leaving *or having left* the service by reason of approaching or reaching retirement age, ill health or redundancy, or those entering into other employment within the NHS, who wish to maintain social contacts. *Membership is also open to those* leaving the Service for any other reason, subject to application to the committee for approval. However, a member of staff will NOT be granted membership if he/she has left the Service through reason of a disciplinary nature or having received a custodial sentence in a Court of Law.

Motion 3:

Subscriptions will be payable by members upon enrolment and thereafter on the 1st day of April, in succeeding years. The amount payable as subscription shall be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. Any member or associate member who is 3 (three) months in arrears with his/her subscription will be deemed to have cancelled his/her membership. *Any member who reaches their ninetieth (90th) birthday is deemed to not be liable for membership fees and will not be required to pay for their membership as they shall be granted 'life membership'.*

Motion 4:

Associate Membership (AMs) shall be available to spouses, partners, widows or widowers of

Members. An annual subscription fee, payable on the 1st April will be in line with that of full Members. *The membership fee shall be waived for any widows or widowers.* AMs will be eligible to attend all KARA events including the AGM, however only full members may vote. They will receive the KARA Magazine and have access to our Web site.

We would urge members to register any concerns or contributions they have regarding this amendment by contacting the Secretary as soon as practically possible.

KARA Archive

Please remember to dig out any pictures that you may have of stations, staff, vehicles and anything else that we can scan and include for future newsletters or the website!

2025 – 2026 Term

***KARA Contacts**

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Social Events

Your committee work hard to provide a variety of social meetings and speakers throughout the year. We are keen to hear from you – what would you like to have a talk or demonstration on? Have you seen someone do a talk that you think would be great for our meets? Do you have a passion or hobby you could talk about?

Let us know!