



March 30.
LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL *check.*

ROOM 113 · COUNTY HALL · SE1

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PRESS BUREAU

A NEW FIREBOAT FOR
THE LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

On Thursday 30 March 1961 at 11.15 a.m. the handing-over and naming ceremony of a new fireboat "FIREBRACE" will take place on the Thames at the Festival Pier. The proceedings will be presided over by the Chairman of the Council Mrs. F. E. Cayford and the ceremony will be performed by Mrs. Rosemary Bazett, daughter of Commander Sir Aylmer Firebrace, C.B.E., formerly Chief Officer of the London Fire Brigade after whom the boat has been named. Sir Aylmer will also be there. After the formal handing-over, the "Firebrace" and the Brigade's two other fireboats "Massey Shaw" and "James Braidwood" will give a demonstration with jets.

A description of the "Firebrace", notes about the other two vessels taking part and a short history of fireboats in London are attached.

Members of the Press are invited to attend the ceremony and there will be facilities for taking photographs. Those wishing to attend are asked to ring the Press Bureau (Ext. 7667). Photographs of the new boat will be available at the ceremony.

 24 March 1961

Description of the "Firebrace"

The "Firebrace" was constructed by S.A.R.O. (Anglesey), Ltd., at a cost of over £40,000. She has an all-welded steel hull divided into five watertight compartments for storage, machinery and crew's accommodation. Her length overall is 69 feet and beam 13 feet, draught 3 feet 8 inches and gross tonnage 45.18, and a maximum speed of $11\frac{1}{2}$ knots. Twin propellers and twin rudders have been fitted to provide good manoeuvrability. Two marine diesel propulsion engines each developing 228 B.H.P. are fitted to drive the twin screws; two identical engines are fitted to drive two two-stage fire pumps each capable of 2,000 gallons per minute output at 100 lbs. per square inch; a 27 B.H.P. diesel engine is fitted to drive an A.C. generator and a hose reel pump of 20 gallons per minute capacity at 120 lbs. per square inch. The generator will supply the ship's lighting, heating and cooking services, and additional portable equipment such as floodlights, cargo clusters and light salvage pumps. One monitor and one hose reel of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch tubing are positioned centrally and with one four-way deck discharge box and two salvage suction connections on both port and starboard deck sides. Power-operated winch gear is fitted at stem and stern and provision has been made for all electrical services to be supplied from shore mains when berthed. All controls necessary for the running of the main and pumping engines can be remotely operated from the wheelhouse, which is also equipped with radio.

HISTORY OF FIREBOATS

The first fireboats in London were owned by the Insurance Companies. In 1833 the London Fire Engine Establishment took over, from the Insurance Companies, two floating fire engines. Other similar craft, manually operated were added later. In 1852 the pumps on the two largest of the London Fire Engine Establishment's floating engines were converted to steam power, and at the same time it was decided to propel them by steam power instead of by oars. For this purpose water was pumped aft, to drive the boat on the reaction or jet principle. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory, however, and oars were again resorted to.

The early fire vessels, however, proved to be too large and were replaced by tug boats which drew only a few feet of water and towed pumping engines on rafts, known as "fire floats".

In 1899, when the London Fire Brigade came into being, it took over seven tugs and eight fire engine rafts. The first modern type of fireboat, the "Alpha II", was commissioned in 1900.

THE FIREBOATS TAKING PART IN THE CEREMONY

The "Massey Shaw" was placed in commission in 1935 and was named after the first Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. She has a distinguished war record. In 1940, manned by naval personnel assisted by a voluntary crew of regular and auxiliary firemen, she was one of the fleet of "little boats" which helped in the evacuation from Dunkirk. In all she made three crossings and brought back 106 soldiers, in addition to ferrying about 500 from the beaches to larger ships. On the final return journey she rescued 40 members of the crew of a French ship which had struck a mine.

The "James Braidwood" is a smaller, faster fireboat, and was commissioned in 1939. She was named after the first Superintendent of the London Fire Engine Establishment who was killed at the Tooley Street Fire in 1861.