

EYNSFORD FIRE BRIGADE

The pre-War Position

There were no public Fire Brigades locally.

Some villages, like Eynsford, had their own fire brigade.

Crockenhill and Farningham had to rely on engines from other villages.

Eynsford's Fire Brigade was stationed at Eynsford Paper Mill. It originally served just the Mill, but was also called out to village fires.

The fire engine was a horse-drawn manual pump, with 5 volunteer firemen seated on either side. It had been in use since 1896.

It was funded privately and from rewards from Insurance Companies.

Early in 1914 the Eynsford Fire Brigade was in disarray, the Fire Brigade was reorganised and received a grant from Eynsford Parish Council.

With the outbreak of war doubts were raised about the adequacy of the Fire Brigade, especially when it was losing men to the armed forces.

EYNSFORD FIRE BRIGADE



Eynsford Fire Brigade with 1896 horse-pulled, manual pump, and 10 volunteer firemen

LOCAL FIRE BRIGADES IN WAR-TIME

With the danger of fires being started by German aerial bombing, there was urgent need to improve the local fire service.

EYNSFORD

1916 December - 300 foot of new hose was bought.

1917 October - New uniforms were needed to replace 12-year old ones.

CROCKENHILL

1917 February - Crockenhill got an estimate for a fire appliance, 500 foot hose, standpipe and a branch key. 6 ratepayers promised £70 towards this venture. Nothing came of it.

FARNINGHAM

1915 April - Parish had its own hose, and subscriptions were raised for the upkeep of fire extinguishing appliances.

1915 August - Enquiries to purchase Longfield's 2 hose carts.

1916 October - Fire hydrants cost £22, idea dropped.

1916 June - Parish Council put in precept for £25 for more fire equipment.

1916 October - Costs had soared, £16 short. Suggested donations, but only 30s. raised. Farningham considered combining with Sutton-at-Hone.

LOCAL FIRE BRIGADES IN WAR-TIME – ATTEMPT TO COMBINE BRIGADES

The village Fire Brigades were short of funds, so in 1917, as bombing raids intensified, local fire brigades tried to form a joint Fire Brigade.

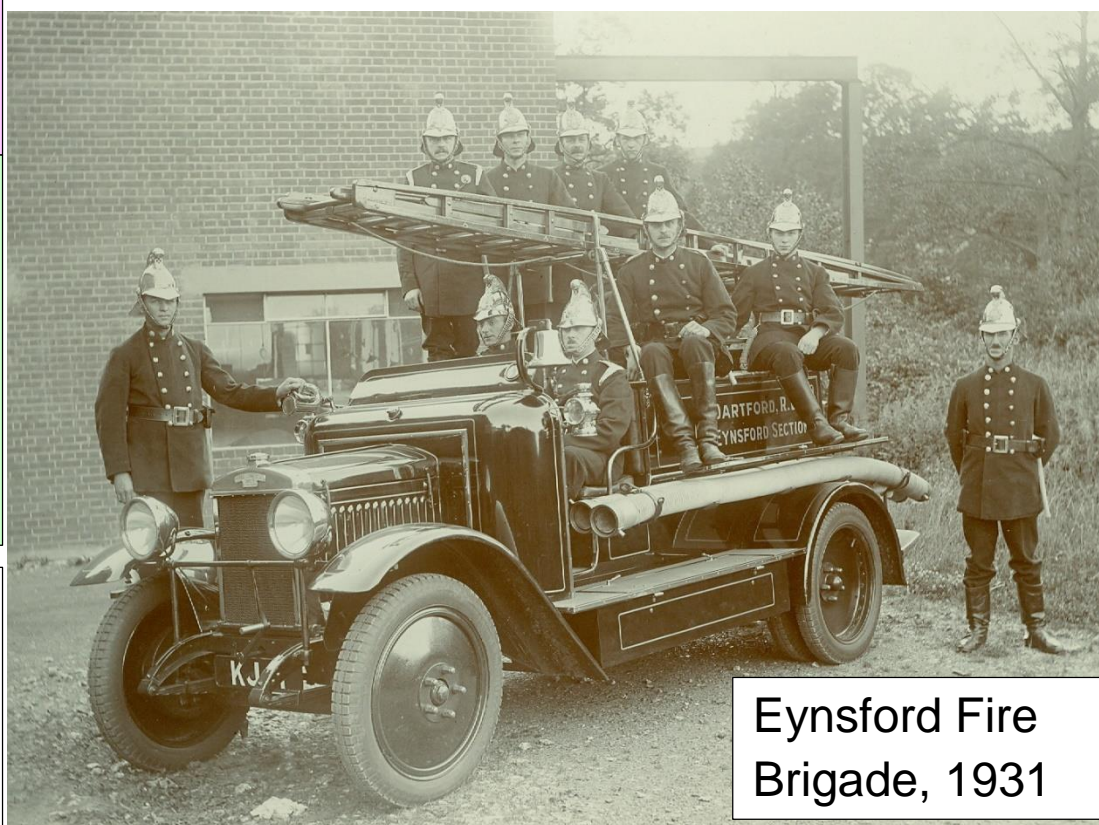
August 1917- Delegates came from Sutton-at-Hone, Eynsford, Horton Kirby, North Cray, St Mary Cray and Wilmington.

A charge of half penny in the pound on the rates would pay for this Brigade.

Eynsford Fire Brigade refused to cooperate.	Talks got nowhere.
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Only in 1931 did Dartford Rural District Council have a unified Fire Brigade with an Eynsford Section, which was issued with its first motorised fire engine (Morris Commercial-KJ11- 03/31)

(l) Fred Andrews, (r) Joe Pankhurst, driving (near) Percy Hussey (far) Harold Major, (behind ladder, l > r) Sam Hussey, Trilly Turner, Mr Turner senior, Edgar Martin, (front of ladder) (l) Sid Hussey, (r) Pattsey Rivers



Eynsford Fire Brigade, 1931



FRANK HUSSEY – CAPTAIN OF EYNSFORD FIRE BRIGADE

The Hussey family was closely involved with the Eynsford Fire Brigade. Frank is thought to have been one of its first members. He was Deputy Captain in the First World War, and later became Captain.

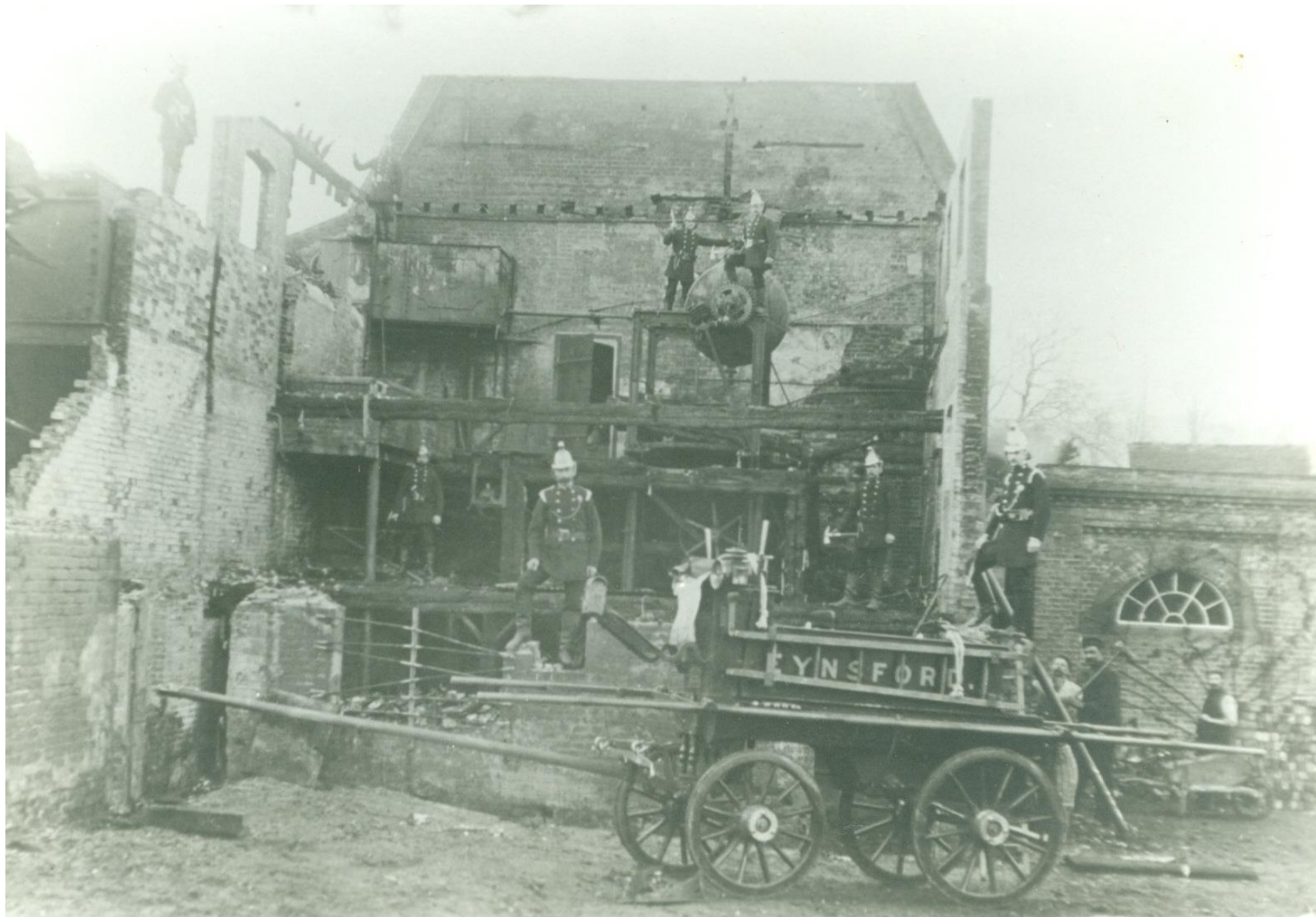
He served on Eynsford Parish Council, with a period as Chairman. He became Chief Air Warden in the Second World War.

This photograph was taken as a glass plate between about 1909 and 1914. Brass helmets were withdrawn when electrical fittings became common in houses, and firemen were being electrocuted on bare wires exposed by the flames.

In the photo of the fire engine in 1931 are Percy Hussey (Frank's son), Sam Hussey (Frank's cousin), and Sidney Hussey (Frank's son).

On display is Franks's presentation fireman's axe of 1897.

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Eynsford fire engine at Eynsford Paper Mill after a fire there, 1909