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Monday, 28 January 2013

(10.00 am)

THE CORONER: Any matters that anyone would like to raise before we ask the jury to come in? In that case, please could we ask the jurors to come in.

(In the presence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Members of the jury, good morning. Today we're going to be hearing from some firefighters, from one of the former residents of Lakanal House and a police officer. I think that's right, isn't it, Mr Maxwell-Scott?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, it is, madam.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, the first witness today is Julia Burrell. Her statement is at page 115 in the statements bundle.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

Yes, Miss Burrell, would you like to come forward, please. Thank you.

JULIA BURRELL (sworn)

THE CORONER: Thank you, Miss Burrell. Do sit down. Do help yourself to a glass of water if you would like. Mr Clark will do that for you. Miss Burrell, your voice is quite soft. There's a microphone just there in front of you. If you could please try and speak quite closely

1 to it, that will help us all to hear what you have to  
2 say.

3 A. Okay.

4 THE CORONER: If, when you're giving your answers, you look  
5 across the room at the jurors opposite them, that will  
6 help them and that will also help you to stay close to  
7 the microphone.

8 A. Okay.

9 THE CORONER: Mr Maxwell-Scott, who's standing, is going to  
10 ask you many some questions on my behalf and then there  
11 may be some questions from others. All right?

12 A. Okay.

13 THE CORONER: Thank you.

14 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

15 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good morning. Could you give the court  
16 your full name, please.

17 A. It's Julia Sandra Burrell.

18 Q. Is it right that you used to live in flat 56 in  
19 Lakanal House?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. I'm going to ask you some general questions about your  
22 knowledge of Lakanal House and then some questions about  
23 your experience of the fire on 3 July 2009.

24 Firstly, dealing with the general questions, we're  
25 hearing evidence from at least ten people who were

1 residents of Lakanal House at the time of the fire  
2 in July 2009, and we would like to ask each of them  
3 essentially the same questions about their awareness of  
4 fire safety advice and of the layout of the building, so  
5 that we can build up a picture.

6 Firstly, fire safety advice. If I could ask you to  
7 be shown a document that starts at page 1050 in the  
8 advocates' bundles. You can see it on the screen --  
9 that's the first page of it -- and Mr Clark will give  
10 you a paper copy as well. (Handed) That's the first  
11 page of a four-page London Fire Brigade leaflet, and  
12 what I'd like you to do is to, in your own time, look at  
13 each of the four pages, so finishing on page 1053, and  
14 then, as best you can, tell us whether you think you  
15 recognise it or not, whether you think it's something  
16 you've ever seen before or not. (Pause)

17 A. Regarding this, this is the first time I've seen this.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Then if you go on to page 1054. That's the first page  
21 of a two-page document, so if you could just look at  
22 that page and the next page, and then it's the same  
23 question: in your own time, whether you think you  
24 recognise it or not and tell us, as best you can,  
25 whether you think it's something you've seen before or

1 not?

2 A. This is the first time I've seen this leaflet.

3 Q. Thank you. Then if you go on to page 1068. In the  
4 bottom right-hand corner do you see a number 27?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So this is part of a longer document and I'm going to  
7 ask you to look at three pages of it: this page, the  
8 next page and then this page which has a 29 in the  
9 bottom right-hand corner. Again, take as long as you  
10 need and think about whether you recognise it, then tell  
11 us whether or not you think you've seen those pages  
12 before.

13 A. No, I haven't.

14 Q. Thank you. You can put that bundle away now, thank you.  
15 When you lived at Lakanal House, did you ever  
16 receive what's called a home fire safety visit, which is  
17 when a fireman comes to your flat and gives you some  
18 general advice about fire safety matters?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Thank you. Did you, for whatever reason, ever have  
21 a look at the London Fire Brigade's website for fire  
22 safety advice?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Thank you.  
25 I'm now going to move away from that and ask you

1           about your knowledge of some aspects of the layout of  
2           Lakanal House.  Firstly, can you tell the jury how long  
3           you'd been living in Lakanal House?

4    A.  I moved in on 8 October 1984.

5    Q.  Do you remember how many floors there were in the  
6           building?  Did you know how many there were?

7    A.  13.

8    Q.  Did you know how many flats there were in the building?

9    A.  Yeah, 98.

10   Q.  Were you aware that all the flats were essentially  
11           identical in layout?

12   A.  Yes.

13   Q.  Can you help us with whether you had a feel for where  
14           the numbers of individual flats were in the building?  
15           So for example, if you'd met somebody at the entrance  
16           and they'd said, "I need to go and visit my friend in  
17           flat 27", would you have been able to give them any  
18           useful directions on how to get there?

19   A.  Not really, no.  I'd have to guess.

20   Q.  Turning then to the layout of your own flat, you will  
21           remember, I imagine, that on the upper level of it there  
22           was a lounge and a kitchen?

23   A.  Yes.

24   Q.  And there were doors from each of them onto balconies?

25   A.  (The witness nodded)

1 Q. Let me refresh your memory with a photo of a balcony.  
2 That's a photograph taken from a balcony at  
3 Lakanal House. You can see that there is a door at the  
4 end of it. That's a close-up photograph of the same  
5 door. That's a view looking in the opposite direction  
6 on the balcony, where you can see a wall at the end of  
7 it. Let me take you back to that photograph. Did you  
8 know at the time where that door went?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Where did it go?

11 A. The stairs.

12 Q. Do you know what the purpose of the balcony and the exit  
13 through that door to the stairs was?

14 A. Yes, to get out, the fire escape.

15 Q. I'm going to ask you now about your experience of the  
16 fire in Lakanal House on 3 July 2009. What was it that  
17 first alerted you to the fact that there was a fire  
18 nearby?

19 A. I could smell a weird smell. I thought I'd left my iron  
20 on, because I was doing some ironing. It was like  
21 a metal smell. So I went and checked the iron but  
22 I knew I'd switched it off. Then I could hear --  
23 I think it was fire engines, and then when I looked out  
24 the window there was a load of people.

25 Q. Did there come a time when a fireman knocked on your

1 door?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Before that, had you yourself gone out onto the corridor  
4 through your front door to see what was going on?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Before the fireman knocked on your front door, can you  
7 remember whether there was or was not any smoke in your  
8 flat?

9 A. No smoke.

10 Q. Before the fireman knocked on your door, had you given  
11 any thought to leaving the flat and leaving the  
12 building?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Rather than staying in it?

15 A. No, I didn't.

16 Q. By that do you mean that you didn't think about it at  
17 all, or that you thought about it and decided you would  
18 say?

19 A. I didn't think -- I didn't thought the fire was in the  
20 building itself, and then if it was I don't usually  
21 leave. I might have a look, but I don't usually leave,  
22 'cos it would be out in minutes.

23 Q. Have there been other fires in the building in the  
24 14 years or so in which you lived there?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. On those occasions, can you remember whether you had  
2 been allowed to stay in your flat or whether you'd ever  
3 been asked to evacuate it?

4 A. I've never been asked to evacuate.

5 Q. Turning then to the time when a fireman first knocked on  
6 your front door, did you then see what the conditions  
7 were like in the corridor?

8 A. It was smokey but it was -- you could see. It was like  
9 a clear smoke, and he knocked and asked if I was okay  
10 and I said yes, and he asked if I wanted to leave, and  
11 I said, "No, I'm fine." And then he said that, "Okay,  
12 shut the door", and that they know that I'm there.

13 Q. If the fireman had asked you whether you were willing to  
14 leave on your own at that time, can you help us with how  
15 you would have answered?

16 A. I would have left.

17 Q. I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that?

18 A. I would have left. If he had said that I had to go,  
19 I would have left.

20 Q. Can you say there that's something you would have been  
21 able to do on your own or whether you think you would  
22 have wanted help at that time?

23 A. I think I'd be okay.

24 Q. As you've explained to the jury, you then stayed in your  
25 flat and whilst you were in it, did you have any sense



1 of what was happening outside or in the corridor?

2 A. Not at first. After a while -- 'cos when he knocked  
3 I just had a -- like a cotton dress on, so I went and  
4 changed into my -- no, after a while -- that was it.  
5 When I could hear, like, all the shouting and I could  
6 hear people saying, "Don't jump, don't jump", and then  
7 after a very long time, that's when I think I went and  
8 put on my trousers and a top and I got my handbag.  
9 That's it. I could hear -- sorry, I could hear a lot of  
10 banging, a loud smashing, walls crumbling. I didn't  
11 know what it was at the time, but I knew what it was  
12 when I left -- when I left the flat.

13 Q. I'll ask you about that in a moment, but did you  
14 experience any change in the conditions inside the flat?

15 A. I -- yeah, it started to get more smokey. At one time  
16 I could see the smoke pouring through the letterbox.

17 Q. Of your front door?

18 A. Yeah. It's got a metal letterbox with -- what do you  
19 call it -- one of the things where you push the letters  
20 in. Draft excluder. That's it. Even though the  
21 letterbox had a metal flap and that was there, it was  
22 just pouring through the letterbox -- thick smoke -- so  
23 I went and got a tea towel and wet it and put it against  
24 my nose and I stayed on the top of the stairs. I think  
25 at one time I opened the door and called out and the

1 fireman said that they knew I was here and I shut the  
2 door and went back up and sat on the stairs with the  
3 towel over my face.

4 Q. So you think there was a time when you opened the door,  
5 spoke very briefly to a fireman --

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. -- and then closed the door again. When you did that,  
8 can you remember at all what it was like in the  
9 corridor, and whether it had changed from when you  
10 previously looked at the corridor?

11 A. It was -- I couldn't see. It was black, thick black.  
12 But I went as low -- I didn't go head height, I went as  
13 low as I could, but it was just black. It was thick.

14 Q. If one of the fireman had asked you at that time if you  
15 were willing to leave on your own, walk down that  
16 corridor on your own and then down the stairs to the  
17 ground floor level, what do you think you would have  
18 said?

19 A. Not on my own, no.

20 Q. Did you have a smoke alarm in your flat?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Was that something that you had put in, or had it been  
23 there since the time when you first moved in?

24 A. No, it was put in when they rewired the building.  
25 I think it was 2007. I can't remember. When they

1 rewired and they put the new windows in, that's when  
2 they put the fire alarm in.

3 Q. Did your smoke alarm go off at any point on 3 July?

4 A. Only when the fireman came in after I'd called out. He  
5 came in and then when he left, that's when it went off.  
6 'Cos I think when he opened the door the smoke came in.  
7 But it hadn't gone off when I opened the door the  
8 first -- that first time.

9 Q. Did there come a time when firefighters knocked on your  
10 door again?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And was that the third time that they did so?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. What was said on that occasion?

15 A. He -- he went straight upstairs. He wet -- I remember  
16 he wet my tea towel again and said that they would lead  
17 me out and down the stairs.

18 Q. Do you remember how many of them there were?

19 A. I think there was a lady, there was a man, and then  
20 I think some more came through. I don't know if they  
21 came up the stairs or they came through the landing, but  
22 there was a couple in there because I think they turned  
23 my gas -- my cooker off.

24 Q. At that moment in time, did they give you any choice  
25 about whether to leave or not?

1 A. No, they didn't ask me. They just said that they're  
2 gonna take -- that they're gonna help me to leave.

3 Q. Did you then leave?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That would have meant walking the length of the corridor  
6 on the 7th floor?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. What was it like on the corridor?

9 A. I had the towel like that, so I could only see my feet.  
10 Everything else was black, and then as I passed my  
11 flat -- lady across me, and then when I passed the  
12 second flat, this side was fine but that side, I could  
13 feel the heat. That's when I realised that that noise  
14 that I'd heard was them trying to break in and then  
15 I realised that's why I couldn't come out, because there  
16 was a fire in her flat --

17 THE CORONER: Sorry, Miss Burrell, you're gesturing to the  
18 right-hand side and you say you could feel the heat?

19 A. Yeah, on this side. This side was fine, but I just felt  
20 the heat on this side as I passed her flat.

21 (Indicating)

22 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you.

23 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: If you look in the jury bundle at tab 4.  
24 (Handed) You won't have seen that before, but it's  
25 a representation of the flat numbers within

1           Lakanal House, looking from the west side. Your flat  
2           was 56, which had its lower level all on the east side,  
3           so where we see the number 56, that represents the  
4           lounge of your flat.

5    A.    Okay, yeah.

6    Q.    So when you came out of it and walked down the corridor,  
7           you would have passed on your right flats 55, 53 and 51?

8    A.    Yes.

9    Q.    And one of those you could see had been on fire?

10   A.    Yes. It would have been 53.

11   Q.    That's correct. Did you have any difficulties in  
12          getting along the corridor past flat 53?

13   A.    No, because I had my -- at the time I had a walking  
14          stick and I was holding onto the fireman, and I just  
15          remember it was wet and stepping over the hose, but when  
16          I got to where the lifts were, it was quite clear there.

17   Q.    Did you then go downstairs?

18   A.    Yeah, I went down the stairs.

19   Q.    Did any firefighters help you down?

20   A.    Yes, I held onto one all the way down.

21   Q.    What were the smoke conditions like on the stairs as you  
22          went down from 7 floor?

23   A.    I think it was clear.

24   Q.    Did you require any medical assistance or treatment as  
25          a result?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions, but others  
3 may have some questions.

4 THE CORONER: Members of the jury, do you have a question?

5 Questions by the Jury

6 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thanks, madam coroner. I just  
7 have one. I was just wondering from Miss Burrell if the  
8 fireman on each occasion -- the three when they came to  
9 the door -- was the same fireman or somebody different  
10 each time.

11 THE CORONER: Thank you.

12 A. Oh, I couldn't tell, because they had masks on.

13 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you.

14 MR WALSH: Madam, I'm so sorry, I should have stood up.

15 THE CORONER: I'm sorry, I didn't see you.

16 Questions by MR WALSH

17 MR WALSH: Miss Burrell, I represent the Fire Brigade.

18 I just want to double check and clarify one matter.

19 That is that when you were in your flat, 56, and you  
20 could hear banging and crashing noises outside, at that  
21 point you didn't know what that was, did you?

22 A. No.

23 Q. No. When you were led out by the firefighters later on  
24 and went past flat 53, you could see that it had been on  
25 fire?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Did you realise then that what had been going on while  
3 you were in your flat was that the firefighters were  
4 fighting the fire in flat 53?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. That's why I realised -- why they said to stay inside,  
8 that they knew I was there.

9 Q. Yes, all right. Thank you very much indeed.

10 THE CORONER: Thank you. Miss Burrell, thank you very much  
11 for coming. Thank you very much for the help that  
12 you've been able to give to us.

13 A. That's okay.

14 THE CORONER: You're welcome to stay if you would like, but  
15 you're free to go if you would prefer.

16 A. Okay, thank you.

17 (The witness withdrew)

18 THE CORONER: Yes, Mr Maxwell-Scott, are we asking  
19 Mr Crowley?

20 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I might call Mr McAndrew, because I think  
21 he will be quite quick.

22 THE CORONER: All right. Well, that sounds sensible, yes.

23 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: His statement starts at page 197.

24 THE CORONER: All right. Would you like to come forward,  
25 Mr McAndrew.

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CHRISTOPHER MCANDREW (affirmed)

THE CORONER: Thank you, yes. Good morning. Do sit down.  
Do help yourself to a glass of water if you'd like. As  
you probably heard me say to Miss Burrell, please, if  
you could keep your voice up and make sure you speak  
closely to the microphone that would help us all, and if  
you direct your answers to the jury, that will also  
help. Thank you.

Mr Maxwell-Scott, who's standing, will begin by  
asking you some questions on my behalf and then there  
may be questions from others. Thank you.

Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Could you give the court your full name,  
please?

A. It's Police Sergeant Christopher McAndrew.

Q. I'm going to be asking you some questions about what you  
did whilst on duty on the afternoon of 3 July 2009. You  
made a statement about the events of that day on  
15 July 2009?

A. (The witness nodded)

Q. Is your memory of events likely to have been better at  
that time than it is today?

A. It would be, sir, yes.

Q. Would it assist you to be able to have a look at that  
statement?



1 A. Yes, it would.

2 Q. Page 197. (Handed) Just take a moment to look at that  
3 and confirm that that is your statement dated  
4 15 July 2009.

5 A. That is my statement.

6 Q. Is it right that you were called to attend Lakanal House  
7 and you arrived there at approximately 4.35 in the  
8 afternoon?

9 A. That is correct.

10 Q. You could see that the London Fire Brigade were already  
11 in attendance?

12 A. That's correct, yes.

13 Q. I'm looking about three quarters of the way down the  
14 first page of your statement. Can you remember how many  
15 flats you saw on fire at that time when you arrived?

16 A. From memory, I believe it was four -- four flats on fire  
17 in what appeared to be an inverted L-shape from about  
18 halfway up towards the top of the building.

19 Q. If I just refer you to your statement, do you see it  
20 says:

21 "I could see two separate upper floor flats were on  
22 fire."

23 A. (The witness nodded)

24 Q. It's certainly the case that there came a time when  
25 there were four flats on fire. Can you remember at all

1           whether there were four already on fire when you arrived  
2           or if that's something that happened later on?

3    A.   Not definitely, sir.

4    Q.   Could you see debris falling from the building?

5    A.   Yes, I could.

6    Q.   Your statement refers to seeing glass and metal falling?

7    A.   That's correct, yes.

8    Q.   Can you remember -- your statement doesn't comment on  
9           this one way or the other -- whether any of that debris  
10           was on fire?

11   A.   Not that I recall.

12   Q.   What were you asked to do?

13   A.   I spoke to one of the firefighters who was there at the  
14           scene, asked him how we could best facilitate what they  
15           were doing, and he asked me to start putting in cordons  
16           in and around the vicinity of Dalwood Street to  
17           facilitate further fire engines.

18   Q.   Just pausing there, I'll show you an aerial photograph  
19           that may well help you.  If you take a moment to have  
20           a look that.  The building in the middle that I'm  
21           marking with the white arrow is Lakanal House, and then  
22           you have, helpfully, some street names marked.  
23           According to your statement, you were first involved in  
24           implementing a cordon across the junction of  
25           Havil Street and Dalwood Street?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Which is where I'm marking now with the arrow; is that  
3 right?

4 A. That's correct.

5 Q. Then a little later on you implemented a traffic cordon  
6 at the junction of Brunswick Villas and Havil Street?

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. With you able to assist us with where Brunswick Villas  
9 were?

10 A. Where Havil Street is, if you point your arrow up  
11 towards the top of the page, it's just on the left-hand  
12 side there.

13 Q. Thank you. Did there come a time when you were joined  
14 by PC Esangbedo?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Did you ask him to do something?

17 A. Yes, I asked him to implement a cordon.

18 Q. Where was that to be?

19 A. Is it okay to refer to my statement?

20 Q. Yes, absolutely.

21 A. Thank you. He was asked to place a cordon before the  
22 junction with Sedgmoor Place and Sceaux Gardens.

23 Q. Is that where I'm marking?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Were there many people around the area?

1 A. There were, yes.

2 Q. Were there any particular issues in dealing with the  
3 crowd at that time?

4 A. There were. They were congregating in very close  
5 proximity to Lakanal House. I had concerns that they  
6 would be exposed to --

7 THE CORONER: Mr McAndrew, can I just stop you? Could you  
8 just move the microphone closer to you, or move closer  
9 to the microphone.

10 A. We had concerns that they were very close to  
11 Lakanal House, could possibly be exposed to smoke or  
12 falling debris from the building. They could also cause  
13 an obstruction to attending emergency service vehicles  
14 and personnel.

15 Q. Did there come a time when you went to the east side of  
16 the building?

17 A. There was, sir, yes.

18 Q. Did you notice anything in particular when you looked up  
19 at it?

20 A. Yes, I had to attend that side of the -- the building  
21 because my attention was drawn to a large crowd that  
22 were walking across from -- I think it was Stanswood  
23 Gardens, Sedgmoor Place towards Lakanal. As I've gone  
24 to move the crowd back, I've turned and seen a gentleman  
25 on one of the upper floors attempt to climb over the

1 balcony.

2 Q. Was he on his own or were there others with him?

3 A. I believe he was with a female and a young child.

4 Q. If you have a look in the jury bundle at tab 12 on  
5 page 22. (Handed) Do you see there's a photograph  
6 which is timed at 17.09?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And you can see a man and a woman, and the man is  
9 holding a yellow rope or piece of fabric?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Which is dangling down. Does that refresh your memory  
12 at all of what you saw?

13 A. It does, sir, yes.

14 Q. Is that the man, and the woman with him, whom you saw on  
15 that upper balcony?

16 A. It is, yes.

17 Q. Was the cordon effective in preventing people from  
18 trying to get into the building?

19 A. As far as I'm aware it was, sir.

20 Q. Were there any people who wanted to get into the  
21 building?

22 A. There were several people who wanted to.

23 Q. Did they say why?

24 A. I think there was a perception from the crowd that the  
25 emergency services weren't doing enough to get into the

1 building and rescue these people. That was directed  
2 towards the police as well as the firefighters.

3 Q. What were some of the people in the crowd saying that  
4 they wanted to do?

5 A. Basically they were telling me that they were gonna  
6 breach the cordons and run in there and try and save  
7 these people.

8 Q. How did you react to that?

9 A. I just explained that it's far too dangerous for people  
10 to actually go in there due to falling debris and the  
11 risk of smoke and that it was best left to the  
12 firefighters to deal with it because they were trained.

13 Q. Was that effective in persuading people not to try and  
14 go in?

15 A. I believe it was, sir, because no-one tried to come past  
16 me.

17 Q. Did the group that we see on that balcony in the  
18 photograph remain there for a little time?

19 A. They did, sir, yes.

20 Q. Were any attempts made to communicate with them?

21 A. I remember that the firefighters used an aerial platform  
22 with a hose attached, which they raised to speak to the  
23 people directly.

24 Q. Did there come a time when a man spoke to you about  
25 Flat 81?

1 A. One of my other officers relayed that he'd been speaking  
2 to a relative of someone who was in flat 81.

3 Q. What was the message that was relaid to you?

4 A. That the gentleman's -- members of the gentleman's  
5 family were trapped in flat 81.

6 Q. What did you do when that message was passed to you?

7 A. At this point I was stood near some firefighting  
8 supervisors and I relaid that information directly to  
9 them.

10 Q. Looking at the map which you have on the screen, are you  
11 able to say where you were at that time when you passed  
12 that message on?

13 A. I was immediately to what I'd call the east side of  
14 Lakanal House, approximately 15 metres from that  
15 entrance where there was a triage area for the  
16 firefighters and the London Ambulance Service.

17 Q. Were you passed any other messages about specific flat  
18 numbers?

19 A. I was, sir, but I'd have to refer to the statement to  
20 refresh my memory.

21 Q. If you have a look at page 200. There's a reference to  
22 the fact that at 17.47 you received information about  
23 a lady trapped in flat 49 on the 7th floor who was  
24 having problems breathing?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. What did you do when you received that information?

2 A. I immediately approached the nearest Fire Brigade  
3 supervisor and relayed -- relayed that information  
4 directly to them.

5 Q. There's also reference to you receiving information  
6 about a woman trapped in flat 79 on the 11th floor --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- at 17.52. What did you do when you received that  
9 information?

10 A. Again, I immediately relaid that to the nearest  
11 supervisor from the Fire Brigade.

12 Q. There is no other reference in your statement to you  
13 being given specific flat numbers. As far as you can  
14 remember, were you given any other details about  
15 specific flat numbers?

16 A. Not that I recall, no.

17 Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions, but others  
18 may have some.

19 A. Thank you.

20 THE CORONER: Mr Hendy?

21 Questions by MR HENDY

22 MR HENDY: Sergeant McAndrew, my name's Hendy and I ask  
23 questions on behalf of some of the bereaved families.

24 I just wanted to ask you about this: you had to move the  
25 crowd back because they were desperate -- or some of





1 A. Sorry, which flat?

2 Q. I can take you to the page. It's page 200 of your  
3 statement. Can you please just remind the jury at what  
4 time you received information that there was an occupant  
5 in flat 79 who was trapped?

6 A. 17.52.

7 Q. Was that the first occasion that you had received such  
8 information?

9 A. As far as I'm aware, yes.

10 Q. Did you receive any other information after this point  
11 in respect of this particular flat?

12 A. Not that I'm aware of, no.

13 Q. Thank you, Sergeant McAndrew.

14 THE CORONER: Yes, Mr Walsh.

15 Questions by MR WALSH

16 MR WALSH: Just one matter in relation to that. That was at  
17 17.52 you received, via your personal radio, a message  
18 about someone being trapped in flat 79. From whom was  
19 that message sent? Whom did you receive that message  
20 from?

21 A. I can't recall. I haven't included that in my  
22 statement, sir.

23 Q. Yes. You passed the message on to LFB personnel at that  
24 stage, but am I right in assuming that the information  
25 you received was from a police source?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Yes, thank you.

3 THE CORONER: Thank you. Members of the jury, do you have  
4 a question for Sergeant McAndrew? All right.

5 Sergeant McAndrew, thank you very much for coming  
6 and thank you very much for the help that you've given  
7 to us. You're welcome to stay if you would like, but  
8 you're free to go if you would prefer.

9 A. Thank you, madam.

10 THE CORONER: Thank you.

11 (The witness withdrew)

12 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, the next witness is Luke Crowley.

13 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Crowley, would you like to come  
14 forward.

15 LUKE CROWLEY (sworn)

16 THE CORONER: Thank you, Mr Crowley. Do sit down.

17 A. Thank you.

18 THE CORONER: Help yourself to a glass of water if you would  
19 like.

20 A. Thank you very much.

21 THE CORONER: As you've probably heard me say a couple of  
22 times already this morning, please keep your voice up  
23 and please speak closely to the microphone so that we  
24 can hear what you're saying. Thank you very much.

25 Mr Maxwell-Scott, who's standing, is going to be

1 asking some questions on my behalf, and then there may  
2 be questions from others. Thank you.

3 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

4 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good morning. Can you give the court  
5 your full name, please?

6 A. It's Luke Crowley.

7 Q. Back in July 2009, were you a firefighter working for  
8 the London Fire Brigade?

9 A. I was.

10 Q. How long had you been working for the London  
11 Fire Brigade?

12 A. Approximately 24 years.

13 Q. Would I be right in thinking that you don't work for  
14 them anymore?

15 A. No, I retired back in July 2010.

16 Q. Unless I indicate otherwise, my questions today will be  
17 directed to how things were done on or before the date  
18 of the fire. Back in July 2009, which fire station were  
19 you based at?

20 A. I was stationed at Peckham.

21 Q. We've heard that there are several different reasons why  
22 a firefighter might come to visit a building like  
23 Lakanal. They might go because there's an operational  
24 incident, which could be a fire but wouldn't necessarily  
25 be a fire. They might go on a home fire safety visit,

1 or they might make a familiarisation visit, sometimes  
2 called a 72D visit. Can you help us, as best you can,  
3 with whether you had been to Lakanal for any of those  
4 reasons before the fire in July 2009?

5 A. Yes, I'd been there on a number of occasions. We've  
6 been to release people from lifts, rubbish fires, and  
7 also for 72Ds.

8 Q. Do you think that before July 2009 you'd ever been  
9 inside a flat?

10 A. I can't recall ever going into a flat, sir.

11 Q. Can you recall when your most recent visit  
12 before July 2009 might have been?

13 A. It would have been some time ago and I couldn't  
14 accurately say when that was.

15 Q. Are we talking about a timeframe of weeks or months or  
16 years?

17 A. I would say years.

18 Q. Because you had been to Lakanal before the fire, I'm  
19 going to ask you a series of questions about what  
20 knowledge you had of certain features of the building  
21 before you got there on 3 July 2009. Firstly, were you  
22 aware that there was a single central staircase?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did you know how many floors there were in the building?

25 A. I couldn't accurately say how many floors.

1 Q. Did you know how many flats there were?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Did you know that the flats were on two floors with  
4 an internal staircase?

5 A. I did, yes.

6 Q. Just pausing there, you knew that without ever having  
7 been in a flat?

8 A. Yeah, that was -- as part of our 72Ds, we would discuss  
9 amongst ourselves, the crew, and people would say if  
10 there was any particular features of flats, if you had  
11 to turn up and had to get in there quickly, and that was  
12 how I became aware of that fact.

13 Q. I know this is stretching your memory a bit, but can you  
14 help us at all with whether your colleagues who told you  
15 that on a 72D visit had been in a flat themselves or if  
16 they'd worked it out in some other way?

17 A. I couldn't say, honestly, whether they were -- they'd  
18 actually been into the flats. I just understood that  
19 they had, if that makes sense.

20 Q. You understood that they had been in the flat, or you  
21 understood that they knew that they were flats on two  
22 floors?

23 A. That they knew there was flats on two floors.

24 Q. But you didn't know how they knew that?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Were you aware that all the flats were essentially  
2 identical in layout inside?

3 A. No, I couldn't say I was aware of that fact.

4 Q. Did you know that there were signs within the building  
5 giving information about flat numbers?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Let me show you a couple of photographs just to  
8 illustrate. So that's a first floor sign on the central  
9 staircase and that's a close-up of it. There are  
10 similar signs within the central staircase. If I take  
11 you to the area where the lifts are on the ground floor  
12 level. This is the lift lobby on the ground floor. Do  
13 you see a sign on the wall above the lifts?

14 A. Yes, yeah.

15 Q. That's a close-up of that sign. I don't know if that  
16 refreshes your memory at all?

17 A. It does, yes.

18 Q. You say it refreshes your memory. Does it refresh your  
19 memory of what you'd seen on the day of the fire, or  
20 seen before that?

21 A. Things I'd seen before.

22 Q. Before you arrived on 3 July 2009, did you have any feel  
23 for how the flat numbering system worked, in other words  
24 where different flat numbers were located within the  
25 building?

1 A. No.

2 Q. But you were aware that there were signs like this?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Turning then to the position inside flats -- I know  
5 you've said that as far as you best recall you'd never  
6 been inside one, but did you know that each flat on its  
7 upper level extended the width of the building, and  
8 therefore had access to either side of the building?

9 A. Yes, I was aware of that, yes.

10 Q. As best you can, can you help us with how you were aware  
11 of that?

12 A. Again, it would have been talking to my colleagues about  
13 the layout of the flat, but I was aware of it.

14 Q. Would that have been a conversation in relation to a 72D  
15 visit, or for some other reason, do you think?

16 A. It generally took the form of during a 72D visit,  
17 familiarisation visit, yes.

18 Q. Again, I know I'm stretching your memory a bit, but do  
19 you think that's a conversation that would probably have  
20 taken place at Lakanal House itself or in some other  
21 context?

22 A. It would have taken place at Lakanal itself.

23 Q. When you were doing the 72D?

24 A. 72Ds, yes.

25 Q. Let me show you a photograph of balconies from the



1 outside of the building. This is taken from the corner  
2 of Dalwood Street and Sedgmoor Place, looking at the  
3 west side of the building with part of the north side  
4 shown in the picture. You can see that on alternate  
5 floors there are balconies?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. If I show you a close-up image from the same spot, you  
8 can see the balconies better now and you can see a white  
9 door at the end of the balconies?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Before you went to Lakanal House on 3 July 2009, did you  
12 know what those balconies were?

13 A. Yeah, they were a means of escape for residents of  
14 flats.

15 Q. Do you know how you knew that?

16 A. During a 72D visit in the past, we'd gained access to  
17 the lobby area, which in turn gave access to the  
18 balconies. So you didn't -- you didn't have to go  
19 through the flats to get at them; you could see them  
20 from the middle access point.

21 Q. Had you actually been on a balcony?

22 A. In the past I had, yes.

23 Q. Having got there from the central staircase --

24 A. Stairwell, yes.

25 Q. -- rather than from a flat?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. If you could just help the jury with why it was you had  
3 been on a balcony in the past?

4 A. It was part of the 72D familiarisation visit, where we  
5 would check means of escape, obviously the firefighting  
6 equipment that was on site, the lifts, et cetera. It  
7 was all part of it. Water supplies.

8 Q. To help refresh your memory -- this is a slightly  
9 difficult photo to get your head around because it's  
10 taken from above. It's taken from an odd-numbered floor  
11 looking down on a door on an even-numbered floor. If it  
12 helps to refresh your memory, that is a door that leads  
13 onto a balcony.

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Your recollection, as I understand it, is that you would  
16 have been through one of those?

17 A. Yes, in the past.

18 Q. And looked down the balcony or actually walked down it?

19 A. Looked down it.

20 Q. I'm now going to move away from your prior knowledge of  
21 the layout of the building and ask you about your  
22 involvement in the attempts to fight the fire at  
23 Lakanal House in July 2009. Is it right that you  
24 travelled to Lakanal on pump E372?

25 A. Yes, I was driving it that day.

1 Q. You were the driver. Do you remember where you parked  
2 it?

3 A. Yes, we went down Dalwood Street and then turned left  
4 onto the access road, which runs --

5 Q. Pause there. I'll give you a photograph which may help.  
6 So Lakanal House is the building in the middle of the  
7 picture that I'm marking with my white arrow.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. You were just saying you went down Dalwood Street?

10 A. Yes, turned left into Sedgmoor Place which runs down the  
11 side of Lakanal.

12 Q. Which I'm marking with the arrow now; is that right?

13 A. Yes, yes. The pump ladder Echo 371 was in front of me,  
14 and that pulled up towards the end of Lakanal, the  
15 furthest end away from Dalwood.

16 Q. Thank you.

17 A. That's where the water supply was situated.

18 Q. Where did you stop your vehicle?

19 A. A few feet behind the first machine there.

20 Q. When you got out of your vehicle, what were your first  
21 impressions?

22 A. Well, I looked up and could see that clearly there was  
23 a flat with flames coming out of the windows, so we just  
24 went into our high rise procedure.

25 Q. Just explain to the members of the jury what it means to

1 say "we went into our high rise procedure"?

2 A. That's where we pre-plan for an incident such as this.

3 Certain members of the crew train for it so you know

4 exactly what you have to do when you got there. Some

5 grab particular items of equipment and go up to the

6 floors below, and then they will set into what we call

7 a dry riser, which is -- for simplicity's terms, is

8 a tube that runs up the building and it has outlets on

9 every other floor.

10 Q. As the driver, do you have a specific set of tasks that

11 you know then fall to you?

12 A. Yes, that would be to -- what you call set into the

13 hydrant, then run the hose from the pumps into the

14 dry riser and charge it so when the crews arrive on the

15 floor concerned they can plug their hose into that and

16 they've got water ready to attack the fire.

17 Q. Did somebody ask you to do that, or did you know to do

18 it?

19 A. No, that was part of our sort of pre-planning. We just

20 went into that, that being designated.

21 Q. You told us where you parked the fire engine. Did it

22 stay there?

23 A. No, I had to move it. There was debris falling from the

24 flat that was on fire. We had pieces of metal and stuff

25 coming down, so I had to reverse it down the access road

1           until it was safe.

2   Q.   Just going back to the photograph, you reversed it back  
3       up --

4   THE CORONER:   Yes, I am sorry, I should have reminded  
5       everyone: we have a short fire alarm test at 11 o'clock  
6       but if it doesn't sound for any longer than this we can  
7       continue.

8   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:   So you reversed back up Sedgmoor Place to  
9       the corner with Dalwood Street?

10  A.   Yes.

11  Q.   Where did you then park the appliance?

12  A.   It was -- I just reversed it back towards -- towards  
13       Dalwood Street.  It didn't go right back towards the  
14       corner there but just enough really to get it out of  
15       harm's way should anything else fall from the flat.

16  Q.   You mentioned before that about items falling down,  
17       including metal?

18  A.   Yes.

19  Q.   Can you remember whether any of what fell down was on  
20       fire?

21  A.   Yes, it was.

22  Q.   When you noticed that, what did you think?

23  A.   I was sort of so concerned with my task in hand --  
24       I remember looking at it and then just getting on with  
25       what I had to do, really.  I didn't have time to sort of

1 ponder it.

2 Q. Thank you. I'm going to ask you to look in the  
3 advocates' bundle at page 394, which is the text of  
4 a message that came over the radio. You'll be provided  
5 with a copy of that. (Handed)

6 You see what it says at the top. It's a transcript  
7 of radio traffic between someone called Vicki Barnet,  
8 who's in the control room, and mobiles attending the  
9 Lakanal incident. Do you see at 16.32.37 under the  
10 transcript there's reference to E372?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. It says:

13 "FS from Echo 372. Echo 351 and 2 are in  
14 attendance. Do you want me to pass the message on?  
15 Over."

16 You were the driver of E372?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Can you help us with who would have been saying that on  
19 behalf of E372?

20 A. That would have been myself.

21 Q. Then do you see the message below at 16.33 precisely,  
22 where the woman from the control room says:

23 "372 from M2FS. Trying to get a message to the  
24 incident command pump. Can you pass this message on?  
25 We've had a further call. We're actually with someone

1 on the line at the moment in flat 79, [and she makes it  
2 clear which flat number she's giving] seven, nine. The  
3 smoke in the flat is becoming quite bad and in flat 68.  
4 Can you pass this on over?"

5 Then E372 says:

6 "S from Echo 372 received."

7 Is that you?

8 A. That was me, yes.

9 Q. So you had that message addressed to you and you  
10 indicated that you received it?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Let me show you an earlier message in time. I'm going  
13 to ask you to look just at the bottom of that page, the  
14 final message.

15 THE CORONER: Sorry, page number?

16 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I'm so sorry, 442.

17 THE CORONER: Thank you. It's in the next bundle.

18 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Ah.

19 THE CORONER: It's in bundle number 2.

20 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: You'll be shown a hard copy in a moment  
21 to make it easier to see. (Handed) What we are looking  
22 at is a message timed at 16.28.54 between control room  
23 and E355. It starts with E355 saying:

24 "355, status 3, further traffic. Over."

25 Then control room says:

1           " Yeah, Echo 355. It was just further information  
2           regarding the last message about flat 79. The caller is  
3           still on the line and is apparently trapped in the flat.  
4           Over."

5           E355 says:

6           " Yeah, received. I'll pass that on over."

7           And the control room says:

8           " Received. Thank you."

9           The first question I wanted to ask you was whether  
10          you remember hearing that earlier message and  
11          communication over the radio between control and E355?

12        A. I don't remember hearing the communication between  
13          control and Echo 355.

14        Q. Do you remember hearing any earlier messages about flat  
15          numbers before the one that we know you were personally  
16          involved in?

17        A. No.

18        Q. I'll take you back to the one that you were involved in,  
19          which is back in the first bundle at 394. Can you  
20          remember what you did after you received that message at  
21          16.33?

22        A. As the message was being passed to me, I wrote it down  
23          and then proceeded -- I think it was the west side of  
24          Lakanal House. The incident commander from the  
25          Old Kent Road was situated there and I passed the



1 message on to him and made him aware.

2 Q. You say you wrote it down. What would you have written  
3 it on?

4 A. We have a message pad and pencil for taking down any  
5 information that's important and relevant.

6 Q. You went over to the incident commander, who wasn't, at  
7 this time, Mr Willett from your station?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. It was somebody from the Old Kent Road?

10 A. That's correct, yes.

11 Q. Did you hand him the message, or tell him the message,  
12 or both?

13 A. I -- both. I sort of -- I had the message pad in my  
14 hand and I was telling him that -- what -- the message  
15 I had just received, and he informed me: "Yes, I am  
16 aware of that information."

17 Q. He said he was aware of it?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Just so that we're clear on this, looking at what the  
20 message you had heard said -- and you've told the court  
21 it's the only message you did hear -- it gave two flat  
22 numbers, it talked about smoke condition, but it didn't  
23 say anything about anybody being trapped?

24 A. No.

25 Q. So you wouldn't have been in a position to say to the

1 incident commander that anyone was trapped?

2 A. No.

3 Q. What did the incident commander then ask you to do by  
4 way of giving you a task?

5 A. I wasn't given any tasks by the incident commander at  
6 that time.

7 Q. So what did you do?

8 A. I made my way back to the other side of Lakanal House.

9 Q. The east side?

10 A. The east side. I wanted to have a look up the side of  
11 the building to see if there was anybody there that  
12 needed -- that was trying to attract our attention, and  
13 then made my way back to -- up onto the mezzanine floor  
14 to go aloft.

15 Q. Did anyone ask you to do that?

16 A. No, I did that of my own initiative.

17 Q. Was there any particular reason why you decided to go  
18 aloft?

19 A. Just from experience, really. We had personal radios  
20 and I heard the crew talking to each other and I thought  
21 I could be of some assistance to them.

22 Q. What was it that you heard that made you think --

23 A. I couldn't say with any accuracy. It was just I heard  
24 lots of radio traffic and I thought -- you know,  
25 experience, call it that if you like -- I thought I'd go

1 up and see if I can lend a hand.

2 THE CORONER: Were you wearing your breathing apparatus at  
3 that point?

4 A. Sorry?

5 THE CORONER: Were you wearing your breathing apparatus at  
6 that point?

7 A. Not at that particular point in time, no.

8 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I think it's right that you made some  
9 notes a few days after the fire. Let me show you those  
10 just to confirm that I'm right. If you look in the  
11 advocates' bundles at page 153. That's the first page  
12 on page 153. Just going through them on to page 157, is  
13 that your signature on page 17?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. If you go back to page 154.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Where my cursor is, towards the bottom of the page, do  
18 you see a sentence that says:

19 "I was intending to make my way aloft to support the  
20 crews as I could hear on the fire ground radio that they  
21 appeared to be short-handed."

22 A. It was -- it was nothing they actually said. It was  
23 just that I thought I could be of assistance.

24 Q. So what did you do?

25 A. I got as far as the mezzanine floor, where there was

1 a locked door, and by that time I had received a call to  
2 return the ground floor by my crew manager.

3 Q. Just tell us who that was?

4 A. Crew Manager Willett.

5 Q. What did he ask you to do?

6 A. Put on some breathing apparatus, and he tasked us with  
7 going -- I believe it was to the 7th floor and take  
8 a ladder with us.

9 Q. Who else had the same task?

10 A. There was four of us. It was myself, Clinton Green from  
11 Brixton and Steve -- I can't remember his surname.

12 Q. Ismail?

13 A. Yes, and Crew Manager Willett was with us as well.

14 Q. Did you then get a short extension ladder?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. From where?

17 A. It was in the pump ladder, the first machine to arrive.

18 Q. The Peckham pump ladder?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did you then go into the building?

21 A. We did, yeah.

22 Q. Were you kitted up to do so?

23 A. Yes, I was in full PPE breathing apparatus, yes.

24 Q. Who went in with you?

25 A. That was Clinton Green, Steve Ismail, and I believe

1 Crew Manager Willett was with us as well.

2 Q. At the time that you went into the building, had you had  
3 any further contact with the incident commander from the  
4 Old Kent Road other than that first contact when you  
5 passed him a message?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Which floor did you go up to in the building?

8 A. The 7th floor.

9 Q. Did you get there by the lift or the stairs?

10 A. The stairs.

11 Q. Was there any particular reason why you went on the  
12 stairs?

13 A. The lift was in use. I wasn't even sure if the ladder  
14 would fit in there, so we decided -- the decision was  
15 made to take the stairs.

16 Q. Once you entered the central staircase, what were  
17 conditions like?

18 A. On the mezzanine floor, I remember there was smoke at  
19 that level, the first floor. As we sort of went up the  
20 stairs it sort of cleared and then again got smokey as  
21 we approached the floor we was aiming for.

22 Q. What were your thoughts about coming into contact with  
23 smoke as low as the mezzanine level?

24 A. I thought it unusual. I've never come across that  
25 before at that level.

1 Q. Did you come across any members of the public coming  
2 down the stairs as you went up?

3 A. I can't recall at that time anybody passing us on the  
4 stairs.

5 Q. Can you recall speaking to any members of the public on  
6 the stairs?

7 A. No, not at that time. I can't recall.

8 Q. Can you remember any of your colleagues speaking to  
9 members of the public?

10 A. No, no.

11 Q. Can you remember whether anything happened to cause  
12 members of the public to go back up the stairs?

13 A. No, no.

14 Q. Did you make it up to the 7th floor?

15 A. We did, yes.

16 Q. What were conditions like there?

17 A. On the 7th floor it was quite smokey. We were detailed  
18 to start up, which means activate our breathing  
19 apparatus, but because of the level of smoke we  
20 couldn't. We had to drop down two floors on the 5th  
21 floor before we could do that.

22 Q. Madam, that is perhaps moving to a separate moment in  
23 the chronology. I notice it's just after 11.15. It  
24 might be a convenient moment for a mid-morning break?

25 THE CORONER: That sounds a good idea. All right.

1           Mr Crowley, because you're part way through giving  
2           your evidence, the strict rule which I do ask you to  
3           comply with, please, is that you must not talk to anyone  
4           at all about your evidence or about the case, all right?

5   A.   Yes.

6   THE CORONER:   So we'll have a break now, and can we all be  
7           back in the room by 1.30 on the clock at the back of the  
8           room, please? Thank you.

9           Members of the jury, if you want to leave your  
10          papers on the desks there that will be fine. Please go  
11          with Mr Graham.

12       (11.18 am)

13                               (A short break)

14       (11.30 am)

15   THE CORONER:   Thank you. Could we have the jury back in,  
16           please. Mr Crowley, you're giving your evidence on  
17           oath.

18                               (In the presence of the Jury)

19   THE CORONER:   Yes, thank you.

20   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  Mr Crowley, we'd reached the point when  
21           you had made your way up the stairs. Just to recap very  
22           slightly on that, who had made it up to the 7th floor  
23           with you?

24   A.   It was myself, Clinton Green, Steve Ismail, and  
25           I believe it was Crew Manager Willett who was with us at

1           that time as well.

2    Q.   How did you know that you had reached the 7th floor?

3    A.   There was an entry control point that was set up on the

4           7th floor.

5    Q.   Was that in the staircase itself or somewhere else?

6    A.   That was -- yeah, around the stairwell area and the

7           lobby.

8    Q.   So essentially as you walked up the stairs, there came

9           a point when you reached it?

10   A.   Yes.

11   Q.   Can you remember at all how many people were at the

12           entry control point?

13   A.   No, not accurately, no.

14   Q.   Did you recognise any of them?

15   A.   There were a couple of members from my watch, I believe,

16           but the majority of them I wasn't aware -- yeah.

17   Q.   Who was in command at the bridgehead? Do you remember?

18   A.   I don't, I'm afraid, no.

19   Q.   You were telling the jury just before the break that you

20           were then instructed to start up your BA sets?

21   A.   Yes.

22   Q.   But there was a difficulty; is that right?

23   A.   Yeah.

24   Q.   What was that?

25   A.   It was quite -- it was getting heavily smoke-logged



1           where the entry control point was, so the decision was  
2           made to drop down two floors to the fifth floor where we  
3           could attempt to start up there.

4   Q.   Who was it who went down to the fifth floor with you?

5   A.   It was myself, Clinton Green, Steve Ismail.

6   Q.   What were conditions like in the stairwell at the 5th  
7           floor level?

8   A.   They were better but they still weren't ideal.

9   Q.   What's the problem with starting up BA sets in smokey  
10           conditions?

11  A.   Because it's a positive pressure set.  If you start up  
12           in smoke, the smoke will be driven into your lungs and  
13           consequently into your bloodstream.

14  Q.   So there was still concern at 5th floor level in the  
15           stairwell.  So what did you do?

16  A.   Luckily, I think somebody had a key to get out onto the  
17           balconies.  We managed to the through that into a small  
18           lobby and then in turn onto the balconies, where we  
19           could get access to fresh air.

20  Q.   In order to do that from the 5th floor, did you go up or  
21           down, do you remember?

22  A.   I think it was on the same level, as I recall.  I don't  
23           remember going up or down.  To my -- to my recollection  
24           it was on the same -- on the same floor.

25  Q.   I appreciate it was some time ago.  Let me show you

1 a couple of photographs just to help refresh your  
2 memory. That is on an even-numbered floor. It's a door  
3 from the central staircase not out onto a balcony itself  
4 but onto an area from where you could get onto  
5 a balcony. Do you recognise that?

6 A. Yeah, I do.

7 Q. Then I'll show you the photograph I showed you earlier.  
8 That shows a door which does lead onto a balcony.

9 A. That's correct, yeah.

10 Q. Did you and Mr Green and Mr Ismail go through two sets  
11 of doors like that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And get onto a balcony itself?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Out in the open air?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. How did you get through each set of doors? So firstly  
18 at page 50, that door.

19 A. Somebody had a key. I don't know who, but somebody had  
20 a key to the first door, which we was able to go  
21 through, and then I believe the second door was open  
22 anyway.

23 Q. So the door like that leading onto the balcony was open?

24 A. Was open.

25 Q. Did all three of you go onto the balcony?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Just to assist you, you would have had to have been on  
3 an even-numbered floor, as it happens.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. So on the basis that you've gone down from the 7th  
6 floor, you would have had to have been on either the 6th  
7 or the 4th.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did you then start up your breathing apparatus on the  
10 balcony?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. All three of you?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Just to try and put a time on when that might have been,  
15 I've put up on screen -- this is page 1037 in the  
16 advocates' bundles, file 3. Mr Crowley, I think it's  
17 unlikely that you will have seen this document before.  
18 Mr Clark will get it, because it's in a different file.  
19 (Handed)

20 It's also probably not a format of document that  
21 you've ever seen before. I'll just explain what it is.  
22 The breathing apparatus sets that you wore have  
23 a bodyguard system on them, and that records some  
24 information. In particular, it records when the user  
25 starts up the set and also when they shut it down. All

1 that this sheet does is to take the information from the  
2 Peckham breathing apparatus users and to put it into,  
3 essentially, a spreadsheet. If you look towards the  
4 right-hand side of the page, there's a column which says  
5 "wearer name" and the third name down is yours.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Then if you look across, there are a number of times but  
8 we understand that the one that we need to look at in  
9 the "from" column is 16.56.52. You were with  
10 firefighters from Brixton fire station, and on page 1031  
11 we have the same type of document for them. Mr Ismail's  
12 data is in yellow because there was some form of battery  
13 change which makes the numbers not as reliable as they  
14 could be. Mr Green's data doesn't have that issue, and  
15 that shows him as starting up at 17.00. So for whatever  
16 reason, you and Mr Green are shown as starting up about  
17 three to four minutes apart. Is it the case that you  
18 didn't start up at the same time, or do you think there  
19 may be some inaccuracy in the data, or can you not say?

20 A. Well, when we were out on the balcony, I was -- I was  
21 attempting to start my set and I was aware of Clinton  
22 Green attempting to start his, but I couldn't explain  
23 how that is.

24 Q. Did Mr Ismail start up on the balcony as well?

25 A. Yeah, I was aware of that, yes.

1 Q. After you had all started up your breathing apparatus,  
2 where did you go then?

3 A. Then we made our way back to the 7th floor, where we met  
4 our crew manager, who tasked us with going along the  
5 corridor and just checking all the flats, that there was  
6 nobody in the flats.

7 Q. So the crew manager, do you know who that was?

8 A. John Dennis, I believe.

9 Q. You say he tasked you to go along the corridor checking  
10 flats?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. There are two corridors off the central lobby?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Can you say which corridor he asked you to check, or was  
15 it both of them?

16 A. No, it was the one where the fire flat and the fire were  
17 situated. So if you come up the stairs, you would turn  
18 right into that.

19 Q. If you have a look in the jury bundle at tab 11, the  
20 first page of it. (Handed) That's a representation of  
21 Lakanal House looking from the west, which also shows  
22 north and south. It shows flat numbers. On the 7th  
23 floor, on the north corridor we have flats 51 to 56 and  
24 on the south corridor you have flats 43 to 50. The  
25 corridor that you went down, was there a flat on fire in

1           it?

2    A.   Yes.

3    Q.   Was that flat 53 on the north corridor?

4    A.   Yes.

5    Q.   When you went into that north corridor, what were the  
6           conditions in the corridor?

7    A.   It was fairly heavily smoke-logged.

8    Q.   Could you tell which flat was on fire?

9    A.   Yes.

10   Q.   How?

11   A.   There was smoke issuing from the letterbox and around  
12           the doorframe, and it was hot.  The door was hot to the  
13           touch.

14   Q.   So what did you do?

15   A.   We proceeded along the corridor, checking -- banging on  
16           the doors, checking -- trying to check the flats.  
17           I myself got to the end of the corridor and banged on  
18           flat number 56, I believe it was, where a lady came to  
19           the door.

20   Q.   Can you describe her?

21   A.   She was 5 foot something, black.  I couldn't tell her  
22           age.  I think I had a stab at it in my statement.

23   Q.   Did you have a conversation with her?

24   A.   Yes, I asked if she was okay and was she happy to stay  
25           in the flat, and she said, "Yes, I am."

1 Q. So what did you advise her to do?

2 A. I advised her to stay in the flat at that time.

3 Q. What was your thinking at the time?

4 A. The -- it wasn't too heavily smoke-logged, the actual  
5 corridor itself, but bearing in mind the smoke  
6 becoming -- or issuing from around the doorframe and  
7 that, I thought she's probably better there than sort of  
8 bringing her back through all the smoke. She seemed  
9 quite calm, quite at ease.

10 Q. So what did you do next?

11 A. I made my way back along the corridor and reported to  
12 the crew manager that there was a lady in 56 and then we  
13 were then given another task, to attack the fire in 53.

14 Q. Were you aware that this fire was below where the  
15 original fire started?

16 A. At that time, no. Oh sorry, you mean --

17 Q. The flat that --

18 A. Yes, sorry -- yes, I was aware of that, because the  
19 original one, I understand, was on the 9th. Yes, I was.  
20 Sorry.

21 Q. What were your thoughts about that at the time?

22 A. It just seemed, in my experience, unusual that that  
23 should occur.

24 Q. If I refer you to what you said in your notes a few days  
25 after the fire. This is page 157. You see the number

1 14?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. That relates to a set of questions, and the question  
4 that you were answering there was this:

5 "Were there any things that you witnessed or heard  
6 during the incident, beyond what you've already said,  
7 that went beyond your previous experience as  
8 a firefighter and that are worthy of particular note?"

9 Then your answer was:

10 "The key thing from this incident was the way the  
11 fire spread both up and down the front face of the  
12 building. I have not seen fire spread down like this in  
13 my 23 years' experience."

14 Was that how it struck you at the time, a few days  
15 after the event?

16 A. That's correct, yes.

17 Q. Then, going back to the story, you're outside flat 53,  
18 tasked with putting out the fire. What did you do?

19 A. We had a slight delay in that we had to interrupt the  
20 water supply to the firefighters fighting the fire on  
21 the 9th floor, because we had to put in what we call  
22 a dividing breach in so we could then charge our lengths  
23 of hose to then proceed to the flat and make an entry.

24 Q. Did that go smoothly, or were there any difficulties?

25 A. There was a slight delay but it went smoothly and was



1 under way.

2 Q. And after you'd done that, what did you do next?

3 A. We then proceeded to flat 53. I think we had to break  
4 the door in to get access to the flat, and when the door  
5 finally went in, we tried to make an entry. We could  
6 see the flat was 100 per cent alight, pretty much, on  
7 that floor. The windows had gone. Entry was difficult,  
8 because as soon as the door went, the wind blew the fire  
9 towards us, so it was like a blowtorch effect. So we  
10 had to sort of -- it was difficult to get in.

11 Q. Who was with you to help fight the fire?

12 A. That was Clinton Green and Steve Ismail.

13 Q. Were there any particular problems that you encountered  
14 in the flat?

15 A. Yes. As we were making our entry, the cables that had  
16 come down from above the ceiling, they wrapped  
17 themselves around Clinton Green's cylinder, and they  
18 were actually catching on my face mask as well, so we  
19 only managed to get so far in before we stopped.

20 Q. What's the problem with cables like that and the risks?

21 A. Well, they can just wrap round you, get caught up, they  
22 can pull your face mask off and just make moving about  
23 very difficult, and certainly getting out very difficult  
24 as well.

25 Q. So what did you do?

1 A. We got so far and then we attacked the fire as best we  
2 could from the lobby area. I believe by this time our  
3 air was getting low so we had to make a withdrawal at  
4 that time.

5 Q. Was the fire out when you left?

6 A. Not completely, no. We'd knocked it down, but it wasn't  
7 completely out.

8 Q. When you decided to withdraw -- you're out in the  
9 corridor outside flat 53 -- did you consider going back  
10 to flat 56 and getting the occupant out with you?

11 A. Not at that time. When we withdrew further along the  
12 corridor to where the crew manager was, I was aware of  
13 another crew passing. They were going to actually get  
14 the lady from the flat then.

15 Q. So after you withdrew, where did you go?

16 A. We went back to our entry control point to collect our  
17 tallies.

18 Q. Just pausing there, was that where it had been on the  
19 7th floor or not?

20 A. No, I believe they'd moved down by that point. So we  
21 just followed them down, and again we bumped into them  
22 and we was able to collect our tallies.

23 Q. Do you remember which floor they were on at that time?

24 A. I think it might have been as low as the third but  
25 I couldn't say.

1 Q. Wherever it was, you then collected your tally?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you know who was in charge at the entry control point  
4 by this time?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Just to clarify one point, how many times, as far as you  
7 could recall, had you had contact with the occupant of  
8 flat 56?

9 A. It was just the once.

10 Q. Was there any kind of debrief or conversation at the  
11 entry control point?

12 A. There were people chatting about it but I can't remember  
13 any particular details of what was said.

14 Q. When you went out the bottom of the building, did you  
15 have any conversation or debrief with any senior officer  
16 outside the building?

17 A. No.

18 Q. What did you do after you had come out of the building?

19 A. I went to the muster area and I actually asked whether  
20 I would be required to go back in, and I was told  
21 I wasn't needed to reenter with breathing apparatus at  
22 that point.

23 Q. Just to put some possible times on this, we're going to  
24 look back at page 1037 in file 3. We have you there  
25 shutting down at 17.08. Do you see that?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So having used your breathing apparatus for just under  
3 11 minutes. Does that sound about right, 11 minutes, do  
4 you think?

5 A. It didn't seem like it at the time, but it's possible.  
6 We were working very hard, it was very hot. We had  
7 a PPA on so your air consequently gets used up very  
8 quickly.

9 Q. If your air had run low at about the time you withdrew  
10 and that had just taken place within under just 11  
11 minutes, that would indicate that you had been working  
12 very hard, wouldn't it?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. After you had had a break and something to drink, what  
15 did you do next?

16 A. I -- after I think I was told I was not going to wear  
17 again, then I got involved with sort of taking some hose  
18 back up to the entry control point.

19 Q. Where was the entry control point at that time?

20 A. At that time, I'm not sure. I couldn't recall.

21 Q. Did there come a time when you were aware that some of  
22 your Peckham colleagues were getting kitted up in BA to  
23 go into the building again?

24 A. I can't remember.

25 Q. Do you remember some residents coming out of the

1 building at a later stage?

2 A. Yes, there were some people coming down the stairs and  
3 they seemed to be slightly distressed. They had a child  
4 with them, so we assisted them out of the building  
5 before reentering and going up the stairs again.

6 Q. Did you later assist in rolling out some hoses for  
7 an aerial appliance?

8 A. I did, yes.

9 Q. You were relieved from duty at around 8.30 in the  
10 afternoon?

11 A. I believe it was about that time, yes.

12 Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions, but it's  
13 likely there will be some questions from others.

14 Questions by MR HENDY

15 MR HENDY: Mr Crowley, my name's Hendy. I represent some of  
16 the bereaved families. First of all, the 72D visits  
17 that you conducted, you recall that you went onto escape  
18 balconies, as I understand it?

19 A. I looked along them. I didn't actually go onto them.

20 Q. Right. Was the purpose of that to check whether the  
21 doors onto those escape balconies were functioning  
22 properly?

23 A. At that time, no. It was just really familiarisation  
24 with the layout.

25 Q. Right. Presumably -- well, let me ask you a more open

1 question. Did you check the numbers of the flats  
2 against the floors to see if there was any obvious  
3 connection?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Did you check the numbers of the flats at all?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Would you or your colleagues have kept any notes of your  
8 visits?

9 A. Yes, they would be in the office.

10 Q. What sort of things? I don't suppose -- well, let me  
11 ask, again, openly. Do you recall any of the things  
12 that notes were taken about on 72D visits?

13 A. Not in that particular instance.

14 Q. No. What sort of things would you have kept notes on,  
15 you and your colleagues?

16 A. If there were any problems with the lift -- firefighting  
17 lift, any problems with the dry riser, anything like  
18 that. If there was a problem, it would have been noted  
19 and then sent on to the proper department really.

20 Q. Right. What if you found that one lift was shuttered  
21 because it was undergoing renovations so there was only  
22 one lift working? Is that something that you might have  
23 made a note about?

24 A. I imagine it would be, yes.

25 Q. Would you have checked radio communications at various

1 levels in the block of flats?

2 A. I can't remember that being done, no.

3 Q. I wonder if we could just look at the notes that were  
4 made soon after the incident. This is at page 153 of  
5 the advocates' bundle. Perhaps the jury could look at  
6 it on the screen.

7 If we just look at the top of the page and see if we  
8 can identify when it was made. We can see the incident  
9 date there: Friday, 3 July 2009. That's obviously when  
10 the fire was, and then in the top right corner it has  
11 "11/7/09", the 7 raised a bit, which looks as if it  
12 might be 11 July 2009. Would that be right? You see in  
13 the top right-hand corner?

14 A. Yes, yes.

15 Q. Would that fit with your recollection, that this  
16 interview was conducted --

17 A. Sorry, could you repeat the first part of the question?  
18 I didn't get that.

19 Q. Yes, I was just trying to establish when it was that  
20 this interview took place, and it looks as if it was  
21 11 July.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. A week after the incident? Would that sound about  
24 right?

25 A. That would sound about right, yes.

1 Q. We can see that the persons present were obviously  
2 yourself and a general manager Malcolm Bowden; is that  
3 right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Who's doing the writing, you or him?

6 A. He was.

7 Q. If we look at number 2 on that page, it says:  
8 "Previous incidents: shut in lifts and bin fires  
9 mainly."  
10 Is that your recollection now?

11 A. Yes, yes, that's right.

12 Q. This is obviously previous incidents at Lakanal House:  
13 "No code 1 incidents ..."  
14 "Code 1" meaning major fires; would that be right?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. "No code 1 incidents that Luke personally recalls.  
17 Can't recall with any conviction whether this particular  
18 block had been visited for 72D purposes."  
19 That was your recollection at the time?

20 A. At the time, yes.

21 Q. And it has come back to you since that you had in fact  
22 been on the balconies?

23 A. Yes, and on the roof, yes.

24 Q. The jury may think it a little odd that you couldn't  
25 remember a week after the fire but you can now, three



1 years later. Can you help them with that?

2 A. I can't explain it. It just came to me. I remember  
3 distinctly being on the roof of the building.

4 Q. Attendance at the fire I want to ask you about now. If  
5 we look at page 154 of your statement, please. We need  
6 the bottom part of that page. If you look some seven  
7 lines up from the bottom, there's a line that begins  
8 with the word "Brixton". Do you see that?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Shall we just read that together:

11 "Crew Manager Willett tasked us with taking a short  
12 extension ladder aloft. All four of us made our way up  
13 to the bridgehead on the 7th floor. We used the main  
14 stairway, having gained access through the locked door,  
15 having been let in by a member of the public. Prior to  
16 this, the firefighter from Brixton had attempted to  
17 access the door with his drop-down lift key to no  
18 avail."

19 And then you go on. Do you remember that, the  
20 firefighter from Brixton attempting to open the main  
21 door of the block of flats but failing to do so?

22 A. Now I don't remember it. It's in my statement but I do  
23 not remember.

24 Q. No. So presumably, according to this statement, you  
25 were all standing there waiting while he tried to get

1 the door open and then luckily a member of the public --  
2 presumably somebody coming down from the inside --  
3 opened the door and then you could all go in?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. If that hadn't happened, presumably you would have been  
6 obliged to force the door with a sledgehammer or with  
7 another tool?

8 A. Possibly.

9 Q. Yes. Can you remember how long it took while your  
10 colleague was trying to use his key?

11 A. Not accurately.

12 Q. No. You've explained, in answer to questions from  
13 Mr Maxwell-Scott, about how you repositioned your  
14 vehicle and you received a message, which you wrote on  
15 a message pad, and you relaid the information to the  
16 officer in charge. You did that when you had finished  
17 repositioning the vehicle. The officer in charge at  
18 that point was Mr Howling, was it not?

19 A. I believe so, yes.

20 Q. You explained to Mr Maxwell-Scott that you conveyed that  
21 information by telling him. Did you also hand to him  
22 the message that you had written on the pad?

23 A. I don't recall handing him the actual message pad, no.

24 Q. Just help the jury with this: a message pad of this kind  
25 is a standard London Fire Brigade issue pad. It's

1 a sort of block of paper about half the size of an A4  
2 sheet. You write the message down, tear it off, and you  
3 can give it to whoever it has to be given to; am  
4 I right?

5 A. Yeah, that's correct.

6 Q. Do you try to take down the message in full?

7 A. Yes, wherever possible, yes.

8 Q. So if we just look at the message for a moment. That's  
9 in the same volume of the advocates' bundle at page 394.  
10 It's the first and the second entry, I think. The first  
11 entry, VB, Vicki Barnet, is trying to speak to E352, and  
12 E372 -- that's you -- intervenes to say:

13 "FS from Echo 372. Echo 352 [I think that must be  
14 '1'] and 2 are in attendance. Do you want me to pass  
15 the message on? Over."

16 She replies:

17 "372 from M2FS. Trying to get a message to the  
18 incident commander. Can you pass this message on?  
19 We've had a further call. We're actually with someone  
20 on the line at the moment in flat 79, seven, nine. The  
21 smoke in the flat is becoming quite bad and in flat 68.  
22 Can you pass this on? Over."

23 And you say:

24 "S from Echo 372. Received."

25 That means you've acknowledged receipt of it?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Then you would have jotted on the pad, presumably, the  
3 essence of the call that you'd received?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Would you have recorded the fact that control was still  
6 on the telephone line with the person in flat 79?

7 A. Yes, I would have -- I should have written that down.  
8 As I say, I would have tried to get as much information  
9 as possible before passing it on.

10 Q. Because presumably it would be quite important that if  
11 they were still on the line then communications could be  
12 passed both ways?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. If necessary?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. If you hadn't given the message to Mr Howling, the  
17 message from the message pad, the actual sheet of paper,  
18 what would have happened to it?

19 A. It -- we have -- we had a wallet on the machine that you  
20 would open and there would be a number of -- any vehicle  
21 attending would -- what they call a nominal role call  
22 board on that, so you know who's there.

23 THE CORONER: Sorry, could you just start that answer again  
24 because we're losing you.

25 A. It should have been stored or hung on to(?) for future

1 reference, basically.

2 MR HENDY: Right. On the machine itself? On the appliance  
3 itself?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. But obviously, things being so hectic, you wouldn't have  
6 run back to the appliance just to stick the message back  
7 in the box. You would have presumably stuffed it in  
8 your pocket, would you?

9 A. No, it would have stayed with the message pad because if  
10 there was a debrief later it might have been needed.  
11 But it would have stayed on the message pad. It would  
12 have been on the appliance.

13 Q. So you tore off the sheet of paper with the message on  
14 it in order to hand it to the officer in charge?

15 A. No, I didn't.

16 Q. Ah, right. So you only conveyed it to him by word of  
17 mouth?

18 A. I had the pad with me, and I conveyed it by word of  
19 mouth.

20 Q. Right, and the written message that you had taken stayed  
21 on the machine?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Sorry, I misunderstood you. Now, he told you that he  
24 was aware of that information. Did he tell you what, if  
25 anything, he was going to do about it?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Just two other matters: you explained what you did after  
3 you switched your BA equipment on and the firefighting  
4 that you carried out, and then -- I'm looking at your  
5 typed statement at page 183 at the bottom. You say:  
6 "As we made our way back to the lobby, the crew  
7 manager, John Dennis, told us that he wanted all  
8 BA crews to withdraw from that floor."  
9 Do you recall that?

10 A. I don't recall that, again, happening there now, but  
11 it's in my statement.

12 Q. It's in your statement, so that's what you assume  
13 happened?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. As you made your way out of the 7th floor, before you  
16 descended, presumably the hoses were still going up to  
17 the 9th floor. Could you recall that?

18 A. Not exactly, no.

19 Q. Can you remember whether there was still firefighting  
20 going on on the 9th floor?

21 A. No.

22 Q. You went back to the bridgehead, which by that stage had  
23 been moved from the 5th floor to the 3rd floor by your  
24 colleagues, and you collected your tally from the  
25 control point.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. We'll just try and identify the time for that. I wonder  
3 if we could have up again page 1037 in the advocates'  
4 bundle. I know this is not a document that you're  
5 familiar with but if you just look at the entry for  
6 yourself, which is the third person down, Mr Crowley, we  
7 see that your BA set is recorded, after the correction  
8 for the computer fault, as being 16.56.52. Do you see  
9 that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. That's the "from", and then the "to" is 17.08.32, yes?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Then if you look down two lines, there's another entry  
14 saying from 17.11.58 to 17.16.38. I think  
15 Mr Maxwell-Scott said to you it looks as if you were  
16 only using BA for a little bit less than 11 minutes, but  
17 in fact, if you add the second period, it looks as if  
18 it's about 16 minutes, in fact, right? You can see the  
19 total in the brown writing.

20 A. Yes, I can see.

21 Q. Yes, there's two periods. I just wondered if you can  
22 help us -- and it may not be possible so long after the  
23 event -- as to why there's an apparent break in your BA  
24 use between 17.08.32 and 17.11.58?

25 A. I can't explain that, to be honest.

1 Q. Do you recall any break at all?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Anyway, 16 minutes sounds a bit more like the sort of  
4 wear that you might have had from it, does it?

5 A. It depends on the conditions. I can't say.

6 Q. I understand. At that stage, I think in your witness  
7 statement you say that you were aware that other  
8 colleagues from Peckham were being redeployed in BA kit.  
9 I don't know if you want to be reminded of that. It's  
10 page 184. Do you see that? It's the second line of the  
11 big paragraph in the middle of the page.

12 A. I'm lost, I'm afraid.

13 Q. I'm so sorry. It's the witness statements at page 184.  
14 You could probably just take it from the screen if you  
15 like.

16 A. Sorry, yes.

17 Q. The paragraph in the middle of the page:  
18 "I then assisted in gathering additional equipment  
19 ... I was aware that other colleagues from Peckham were  
20 being redeployed in BA kit to go back into the  
21 building."

22 Yes?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. If you just look at the line above that, at the end of  
25 the previous paragraph:



1            "I asked if I would need to wear my BA gear again  
2            but was told that I would not do so. I had a drink and  
3            returned my BA kit to E371."

4            Can you recall who it was that told you that you  
5            wouldn't be required to wear a BA kit again?

6            A. No, I don't remember who that was.

7            Q. In fact, you weren't called upon to wear BA kit?

8            A. I wasn't, no.

9            Q. Thank you very much, Mr Crowley.

10                                Questions by the Coroner

11            THE CORONER: Mr Crowley, could I just ask you to clarify  
12            a couple of points which arise out of the questions  
13            Mr Hendy's been asking you. The first is in relation to  
14            wearing the BA kit.

15            A. Yes.

16            THE CORONER: If you're wearing BA kit, is it possible to  
17            have a break of three or four minutes within the same  
18            wearing, if I can put it that way?

19            A. Not without actually shutting the set down. I don't --  
20            no, I don't ...

21            THE CORONER: So is there any way in which there could be  
22            a hiatus?

23            A. No. I couldn't explain that, no.

24            THE CORONER: All right. Can I just take you back to the  
25            notes that were made of the interview you had shortly

1 after the incident at page 153. Just looking at the top  
2 of that page.

3 A. Okay, yes.

4 THE CORONER: Do you remember Mr Hendy was asking you about  
5 the date on which the notes had been made?

6 A. Yes.

7 THE CORONER: If you look at your typed statement at the  
8 bottom of page 184, at the bottom of that page of the  
9 typed statement, you say:

10 "I was interviewed by Group Manager M Boden of the  
11 London Fire Brigade on 6 July about the incident. He  
12 took notes during the course of the interview and I have  
13 had had access to these notes while giving this  
14 statement."

15 A. Yeah, I'm afraid I can't explain that.

16 THE CORONER: So in answer to Mr Hendy, you agreed with him  
17 that the notes might have been made on 11 July but in  
18 your typed statement you said that they might have been  
19 as a result of a discussion on 6 July?

20 A. Yeah, it appears so, but I couldn't explain that. I'm  
21 sorry.

22 THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, sorry. Mr Dowden?

23 Questions by MR DOWDEN

24 MR DOWDEN: I ask questions on behalf of Mr Francisquini.

25 Just arising out of that, we know that your statement is

1           made on 11 July. Do you recall whether you made the  
2           notes on the same day, or a day some time after you had  
3           made your notes?

4    A.   Sorry? I didn't quite catch that.

5    Q.   Were the notes and the statement made on the same day,  
6           or was there a gap between making the notes with  
7           Mr Boden --

8    A.   That was done on the same day. That was taken on the  
9           11th -- I've got the wrong end of the stick here,  
10           I think.

11   THE CORONER: Can you clarify your point, Mr Dowden, please?

12   MR DOWDEN: Yes. Your statement, your typed statement --

13   A.   Yes.

14   Q.   -- is dated the 11th.

15   A.   Yes. That's the 16th, isn't it? Yes.

16   Q.   Yes. Do you recall whether it was the same day you had  
17           the interview with Mr Boden, or whether that had been  
18           some days before you made your typed statement?

19   A.   Sorry, the handwritten notes were made on the 11th, but  
20           the other ones, I'm not sure when they -- I can't  
21           remember.

22   Q.   Well, the coroner has just asked you to look at page 184  
23           of your typed statement, which says that you were spoken  
24           to by Mr Boden on 6 July.

25   A.   Yes.

1 Q. Right at the bottom of the page of page 184.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. But when we were looking at the handwritten statement,  
4 at the top it has 11 July written on it. Are you able  
5 to tell us which day it was that you made the --

6 A. I can't -- I can't recall now, no, I'm afraid.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 THE CORONER: Ms Al Tai?

9 MS AL TAI: No, thank you, madam.

10 THE CORONER: Yes?

11 Questions by MS SANDERSON

12 MS SANDERSON: Yes. Mr Crowley --

13 THE CORONER: Could you switch your microphone on, please?

14 MS SANDERSON: Sorry. Leaving aside those dates in July and  
15 when your statement was made, et cetera, I want to take  
16 you back, if I can, just to that memory you said you had  
17 of being on the roof of the building for a 72D visit.  
18 Have you any idea now roughly when that would have been?

19 A. It was some years ago, but I couldn't -- sorry, it was  
20 some years ago, but I couldn't accurately say.

21 Q. So some years ago?

22 A. Yes, yes.

23 Q. And any notes that were taken, can you say what would  
24 have happened to them?

25 A. No, no.

1 Q. Thank you.

2 MR COMPTON: No questions, thank you.

3 THE CORONER: Mr Walsh?

4 Questions by MR WALSH

5 MR WALSH: Yes. So far as the precise dates when the notes  
6 were taken of your meeting with Mr Boden and the dates  
7 of your statement, there being a five-day difference  
8 between the two at the moment, on the documents, if we  
9 were to check with Mr Boden as to the date upon which he  
10 was writing down what you were saying, would you be  
11 happy with that?

12 A. Sorry, could you repeat?

13 Q. Would you be happy with our checking with Mr Boden to  
14 confirm what date he says?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. No doubt we'll do that. Can I just ask you about  
17 page 394. That is the message from control which you  
18 received in the advocates' bundle.

19 THE CORONER: Mr Walsh, I can't hear you particularly well.

20 MR WALSH: I'm sorry. I think I put my arm on something.

21 THE CORONER: It's possible.

22 MR WALSH: I want to take to you page 394 of the advocates'  
23 bundle, because I want to ask you about the message that  
24 you received from control and which you wrote down on  
25 the message pad. I won't read it all again, because

1 Mr Hendy has read it and Mr Maxwell-Scott has read it as  
2 well, but it was timed, according to the transcript  
3 details, at 16.33, 4.33 in the afternoon. You will have  
4 had to have transcribed that as best you could, written  
5 it down in the book. Are you recording that message as  
6 you're listening to it, with the message book in your  
7 hands with the pencil, or do you listen to the message  
8 first and then go and record it?

9 A. I attempt to do it in real time as it's actually being  
10 conveyed to me to write it down, and if there are any  
11 problems I will ask control to repeat it.

12 Q. You're being asked now to remember the time after you  
13 received this message. Can you actually recall now  
14 whether you wrote it down as it was being delivered --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- or whether you wrote it down afterwards?

17 A. As it was being delivered, and in that way -- you know,  
18 to make as little mistakes as possible.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you very much. Then, having received that  
20 message, are you in the fire engine?

21 A. I was driving -- I was reversing it, and just as I was  
22 reversing it, I had to stop to take the message.

23 Q. Right. So having stopped to take the message, did you  
24 then complete the manoeuvre of reversing the fire engine  
25 before you took the message to Mr Howling?

1 A. No. I had pretty much got to where I wanted to be,  
2 stopped, took the message and then went.

3 Q. Thank you very much. How long do you think it took  
4 between the receipt of that message at 16.33 and your  
5 taking it to Mr Howling and showing it to him and  
6 telling him about the contents? Very roughly?

7 A. Very roughly, 15 to 30 seconds, if that. I jumped  
8 straight out of the cab and went straight -- went  
9 straight to him.

10 Q. When you went to Mr Howling at that time, can you  
11 remember what he was doing? Can you remember what was  
12 happening?

13 A. I think he was taking an appraisal of the situation, and  
14 then I interrupted him to pass on the message.

15 Q. Yes, you may have had to interrupt him. Were there  
16 other people standing around him, other firefighters?

17 A. There were, yes, a few people, but I couldn't tell you  
18 who they were.

19 Q. Yes. All right. Thank you very much indeed.

20 THE CORONER: Thank you. Members of the jury, do you have  
21 any questions?

22 Questions by the Jury

23 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thanks, madam coroner. We have  
24 actually quite a number this time round. Mr Crowley has  
25 said that his previous 72D visit was quite time ago when

1 other firefighters have told us that they've visited  
2 more recently. We were wondering if, after their visits  
3 having taken place some time after your own, whether  
4 there was a further form of knowledge sharing, whether  
5 formal or informal, in that your colleagues that had  
6 a more recent visit may have had information different  
7 to your own. So would you have talked about that at any  
8 time so that your knowledge of the site increased or was  
9 more up to date?

10 THE CORONER: Can you help us with that?

11 A. It may have occurred during the visit but not -- not  
12 outside that sort of situation.

13 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Sorry, just to clarify, you said  
14 that your visit, I understand, took place at an earlier  
15 date, and then your colleagues went on a different visit  
16 of which you were not a part. They went at a later  
17 date. So by what you're saying, are you saying that  
18 when they came back that day you may have talked about  
19 it, but you wouldn't have been briefed at a later date  
20 or anything like that?

21 A. No, no.

22 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay. Thank you. On that 72D  
23 visit that you made yourself, do you recall how many  
24 flats you visited and how many colleagues were with you?

25 A. I don't recall an amount of colleagues, and certainly,



1 no, I couldn't remember flats -- visiting flats.

2 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. On the day of the  
3 fire, you said that the bridgehead was moved to the 3rd  
4 floor, as we know. Did you know about the bridgehead  
5 moving before it was moved?

6 A. I knew the first move because I was part of that, but  
7 the second move, no, because we were actually involved  
8 with fighting the fire, so we came out and then we were  
9 directed further down.

10 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. Only a couple  
11 more. You were unsure previously when exactly you were  
12 on the roof of Lakanal House.

13 A. Yeah.

14 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: I was wondering: when you do a 72D  
15 visit to somewhere like Lakanal House -- we've heard  
16 much earlier that the Marie Curie block was pretty much  
17 the same. Would you do a visit to Marie Curie at the  
18 same time as you did one to Lakanal, seeing as they're  
19 on the same estate?

20 A. You would do, but probably not on the same day. It  
21 would be scheduled for different days.

22 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Right, okay, thank you. The other  
23 thing I'm a little confused about: you said that you and  
24 your colleagues took the extension ladder up to the 7th  
25 floor -- I think it was the 7th floor bridgehead -- but

1           then you went down to the 5th floor to put on your  
2           breathing apparatus. Do you happen to recall what might  
3           have happened to the ladder?

4    A.    I don't, no.

5    THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Do you recall when you went  
6           back -- you didn't go back to the 7th floor thereafter;  
7           is that correct?

8    A.    Initially going to the 7th, we went back to the 5th and  
9           then back to the 7th but at that time, we were tasked  
10          with going along the corridor, checking the flats and  
11          then, after that, fighting the fire.

12   THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: So you wouldn't have noticed if  
13          some of your colleagues had taken the ladder in your  
14          absence?

15   A.    No, sorry.

16   THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. I think that's all.

17   THE CORONER: Thank you very much.

18                 Mr Crowley, thank you very much for coming and thank  
19                 you very much for the help which you've given to us.  
20                 You're welcome to stay if you would like, but you're  
21                 free to go if you would prefer.

22   A.    Thank you.

23   THE CORONER: Thank you.

24                                 (The witness withdrew)

25   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, the next witness is Clint Green.

1 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Green, would you look to come  
2 forward.

3 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, his statement starts at page 186  
4 of the statements bundle.

5 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you.

6 CLINT GREEN (sworn)

7 THE CORONER: Thank you, Mr Green. Do sit down and to help  
8 yourself to a glass of water if you would like.

9 A. Thank you.

10 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Before we go any  
11 further, could I just have a quick word with you,  
12 Mr Clark. (Pause) Yes, thank you very much. Mr Green,  
13 if you could give your evidence in a nice loud, clear  
14 voice that would be helpful. Please keep your face as  
15 close as you can to the microphone so that we can pick  
16 up what you're saying, and if you could direct your  
17 answers across the room towards the jurors then that  
18 would help them and also help up to stay close to the  
19 microphone. All right?

20 A. Yes, madam.

21 THE CORONER: Mr Maxwell-Scott, who is standing, will be  
22 asking you some questions on my behalf initially, and  
23 then there will be some questions from others in the  
24 room. All right?

25 A. Yes, madam.

1 THE CORONER: Thank you.

2 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

3 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good afternoon, Mr Green, could you give  
4 the court your full name please.

5 A. My full name is Clint Paul Green.

6 Q. At the time of the fire at Lakanal House in July 2009,  
7 were you based at Brixton fire station?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. How long had you been based there at that time?

10 A. Approximately 12 to 13 years at Brixton fire station,  
11 sir.

12 Q. Were you a firefighter?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Are you still employed by the London Fire Brigade?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. How long have you been a firefighter for now?

17 A. Up to date, approximately 27 years.

18 Q. Before you went to Lakanal House on 3rd July 2009, had  
19 you been there before for any reason?

20 A. I had been to Lakanal House and to the Sceaux Gardens  
21 estates, yes, sir.

22 Q. Had you been there at all in the 12 or so years that you  
23 had been based at Brixton fire station?

24 A. No.

25 Q. I'm going to ask you now about your actions on

1           3 July 2009 itself. Is it right that you were called  
2           out from Brixton fire station?

3    A. Yes, sir.

4    Q. And you arrived, we know, at Lakanal House at  
5           approximately 4.41 in the afternoon?

6    A. Yes, sir.

7    Q. And who was with you on your appliance?

8    A. On my appliance, which was Hotel 242, Brixton's pump,  
9           was Driving Firefighter Wellman, myself, Firefighter  
10           Green and Firefighter Ismail on the back, and Leading  
11           Firefighter Hider, or Crew Manager Hider, was riding in  
12           charge of the machine, sir.

13   Q. When your appliance arrived at the scene, do you  
14           remember where it parked?

15   A. It parked on Havil Street, sir.

16   Q. After you got out of it, what did you do?

17   A. Made my way over to Echo 371, which was Peckham's pump  
18           ladder, which was plugged into the dry riser and was  
19           pumping, sir.

20   Q. That was on the west side of the building, I think?

21   A. Yes, sir, on the elevation facing Camberwell Green. If  
22           that's the west side, then yes, sir.

23   Q. What were your first impressions when you got there?

24   A. My first impressions were that there was indeed a fire  
25           happening. Looking up, I could see smoke and flames.

1 I could see at that time things seemed to be quite calm  
2 and in order.

3 Q. Did you, at some stage, notice any debris, pieces of  
4 material, falling down from the flat on fire?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Can you describe that in any way?

7 A. This was after a time. As I said before, I made my way  
8 to the machine that was pumping and I spoke to the  
9 driver. There was indeed a fire and things seemed to be  
10 under control but very soon after that, there was a loud  
11 bang and a crash and lots of bits and pieces, debris,  
12 came crashing down to the ground, sir.

13 Q. Can you remember whether anything that fell down was on  
14 fire itself?

15 A. No, sir, I can't remember it -- if it was actually on  
16 fire, any of the falling debris.

17 Q. Who did you get your first tasking from?

18 A. The first task was from my crew manager,  
19 Crew Manager Hider.

20 Q. What did he ask you to do?

21 A. He asked us to carry a three-piece ladder up to the 9th  
22 floor.

23 Q. Whom did you enter the building with?

24 A. I was with Firefighter Crowley and Firefighter Ismail,  
25 sir.

1 Q. Crew Manager Willett from Peckham, do you remember him  
2 being around or with you at this time?

3 A. I remember seeing him on the fire ground, sir.

4 Q. But he didn't go into the building with you, as you  
5 recall?

6 A. I think he made his way into the entrance of the  
7 building but I don't remember him following us into the  
8 building, sir.

9 Q. So did you and Mr Crowley and Mr Ismail enter the  
10 building with the three-piece ladder?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. How did you make your way up to the upper floors in the  
13 building?

14 A. We used the internal stairway, sir.

15 Q. Was there any particular reason you used the stairs  
16 rather than the lift?

17 A. The ladder is quite large, and I know that if we use the  
18 stairs then the ladder will definitely get to the  
19 position we were asked to take it to, sir.

20 Q. Were there any particular problem with getting onto the  
21 stairs and starting to go up the stairs?

22 A. I remember a slight delay, but once we'd gained access  
23 I believe it was quite -- we made some good progress up  
24 the stairs, sir.

25 Q. Once you got onto the stairs, what were conditions like

1 at the lower levels?

2 A. Not too bad initially, but it was a changing situation  
3 as we climbed up the stairs. Sometimes it was clear,  
4 sometimes it was smokey, and then it would be reversed.  
5 There was no clear way of making any sense of what was  
6 happening.

7 Q. Did you come across any residents on the stairs?

8 A. I believe I did, sir, yeah.

9 Q. Did you speak to any of them?

10 A. I don't remember actually speaking to anyone, but I'm  
11 sure something was passed between us, like, you know:  
12 "Let's get out", or such things. We're going up,  
13 they're coming down.

14 Q. Was there any conversation with residents that led to  
15 any of them going back upstairs?

16 A. Not to my knowledge, sir.

17 Q. As you made your way up the stairs, did you come across  
18 some of your colleagues from the London Fire Brigade?

19 A. I don't remember coming across colleagues on the way up  
20 to the stairs other than to the point of the 7th floor,  
21 which we were tasked to take the ladder to, sir.

22 Q. So when you got to the 7th floor, you found some other  
23 firefighters?

24 A. I saw a firefighter there I recognised, sir, yes.

25 Q. Who was that?



1 A. That was Firefighter Badger, and he seemed to be in  
2 charge of the dry rising main outlet at that point.

3 Q. Was that the bridgehead?

4 A. That was the bridgehead, yes.

5 Q. Was that set up in the staircase itself or in some other  
6 area?

7 A. That was in the protected stair area, sir.

8 Q. Do you remember who was in charge at the bridgehead?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. Who had made it up there with you?

11 A. Firefighter Crowley and Firefighter Ismail, sir.

12 Q. Between you, did you have the ladder with you?

13 A. Yes sir.

14 Q. Do you remember what happened to the ladder?

15 A. I believe we left the ladder on the 7th floor. I cannot  
16 recollect someone taking it from us, but we definitely  
17 made it to the 7th floor and the ladder was placed in  
18 that position.

19 Q. What were conditions like at the bridgehead?

20 A. I remember it as quite smokey, sir.

21 Q. What were you tasked to do?

22 A. We were tasked to go through and knock on the doors, to  
23 make sure if there were any people inside the dwellings,  
24 and also to fight the fire which was raging on that  
25 particular floor, sir.

1 Q. Did you start up your breathing apparatus on the 7th  
2 floor?

3 A. I attempted to, sir.

4 Q. What was the problem?

5 A. The problem was the smoke, sir.

6 Q. So what do you do?

7 A. I withdrew down a few flights or a few levels, and  
8 started up in the best fresh air which was available at  
9 that time, sir.

10 Q. As best you can, can you remember where you were when  
11 you started up?

12 A. I thought it was on the 5th floor, sir.

13 Q. Were you indoors or outdoors?

14 A. It was quite smokey, the lobby area. I tried to get the  
15 best fresh air I could. There was an opening to the  
16 outside via a balcony, and I tried to get some fresh air  
17 there in order to start up, sir. It wasn't ideal, but  
18 it was the best that we could hope for.

19 Q. Let me show you some photographs that might assist you  
20 to remember where you were. Firstly, that's  
21 a photograph taken on one of the even-numbered floors  
22 from the central staircase of a door that leads not  
23 itself to a balcony but to an area before you get to  
24 a balcony. Do you remember going through a door like  
25 that?

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. That's a photograph taken looking down on a door that  
3 does lead onto a balcony. Do you remembering going  
4 through a door like that?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. That is a photograph taken on a balcony, looking at the  
7 other side of the door we were just looking at. Are you  
8 able to say whether you did get onto a balcony?

9 A. That looks more familiar, sir, that picture.

10 Q. When you started up, as best you can remember, were you  
11 on a balcony or not?

12 A. I believe I was, sir, yes.

13 Q. Who was with you?

14 A. Firefighter Ismail and Firefighter Crowley, sir.

15 Q. As far as you can recall, did you all start up in the  
16 same place at the same time?

17 A. I remember it was quite cramped, but basically, yes,  
18 sir.

19 Q. After you had started up, where did you go?

20 A. We made our way to the 7th floor, sir.

21 Q. Was the bridgehead still there at that time?

22 A. One thing about the bridgehead -- I believe the  
23 bridgehead was on the 5th floor, where entry control  
24 was. We started up there and made our way up to the 7th  
25 floor.

1 Q. Just to take that in stages. You told us that you had  
2 earlier got to the point where you recognised  
3 Mr Badger --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- in the staircase?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. That was the entry control point. Do you remember what  
8 floor that was on?

9 A. Well, I remember seeing Firefighter Badger on the 7th  
10 floor. As far as entry control was concerned, I'm not  
11 absolutely sure it was on that floor, sir. What I do  
12 remember is that from the dry rising main there was  
13 a line of hose from that point going upstairs to the 9th  
14 floor.

15 Q. After you saw Mr Badger, you went down, is that right,  
16 and onto a balcony, as you best remember?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. You started up on the balcony; is that right?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. You then went back into the staircase. Did you find  
21 Mr Badger where he had previously been?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. So you were back on that same floor where Mr Badger had  
24 been in the first place. What were you then tasked to  
25 do?

1 A. To go along the balcony and knock on the doors of the  
2 residents and also we did that in the meantime while we  
3 were waiting for the exchange to be put on the dry  
4 rising main so we could connect a line of hose from that  
5 dry rising main. So there would be a hose which was  
6 going to the 9th floor, which was existing, and a new  
7 line of hose via a dividing breach from the dry riser  
8 main to the 7th floor, where there was a fire  
9 happening -- I think it was flat 63.

10 Q. You just said you were tasked to go long along the  
11 balcony. Did you mean the balcony?

12 A. No, the hallway, the internal hallway, where the  
13 dwellings were either side of that hallway.

14 Q. There are corridors leading in two directions off the  
15 lobby areas. Were you tasked to go down both those  
16 corridors or just one of them?

17 A. Just one.

18 Q. Was that the one in which there was a flat on fire or  
19 not?

20 A. Yes, sir, where there was a flat on fire.

21 Q. Did you then enter that corridor which we know had  
22 within it flat 53, where there was a fire?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Who was with you?

25 A. Firefighter Crowley and Firefighter Ismail, sir.

1 Q. What were conditions like on that corridor?

2 A. They were smokey, but you could see through the smoke.

3 Q. What did you do once you got in that corridor?

4 A. We were very aware there was a fire going on. We could  
5 see there was wisps of smoke and other signs that there  
6 was a fire in that particular flat. We were eager to  
7 get some water into that flat to try and extinguish the  
8 fire.

9 That took some time, because we had the changeover  
10 on the dry rising main, and in the meantime, while we  
11 were waiting for that changeover, that's when we had to  
12 go to the other dwellings, to make sure -- knocking on  
13 the doors to see if the residents were okay if they did  
14 answer their doors.

15 Q. Did you have any contact with a resident at the end of  
16 the corridor in flat 56?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Do you remember your colleagues doing that?

19 A. I do. The situation was we were waiting for the dry  
20 rising mains to make their exchange so we could get on  
21 with the firefighting. While that took place, I was  
22 mainly there with Firefighter Badger trying to assist  
23 him with getting that down, and I believe the other two  
24 firefighters, Firefighter Crowley and  
25 Firefighter Ismail, proceeded along the hallway to knock

1 on doors and to speak to residents if they answered  
2 their doors, sir.

3 Q. Are you able to give any indication of how long it took  
4 to arrange to get that water supply from the 9th floor?

5 A. I'm sure it was a very short time, sir, but it seemed  
6 ages.

7 Q. Once you got the water supply, what did you do?

8 A. We were eager to crack on and extinguish the fire. We  
9 knew which flat was on fire because of the evidence of  
10 the door and the smoke, so -- you could feel the heat  
11 through the door. We were obviously concerned that if  
12 we were to break that door, what would happen next is  
13 the fire could come towards us or there would be another  
14 way of that fire becoming worse, so the door was pushed  
15 through. By that time the door was quite soft. The  
16 door was pushed through, and at that time what was  
17 immediate to me was the speed of the wind. The wind was  
18 very, very intense at that point.

19 Q. Just pausing there to make sure the members of the jury  
20 got it, you were saying you were struck by the speed of  
21 the wind?

22 A. Yeah, and the ferocity, yes.

23 Q. And to what extent was the flat on fire?

24 A. Well, my first impression was the wind and a sight of --  
25 it seemed as though the whole of the side had gone from

1 the building and it was like you could almost touch the  
2 outside, and there was lots of wind and it was a bit  
3 scary at that point there.

4 Q. How far into the flat did you get?

5 A. Just inside the -- moving inside the doorway, trying to  
6 extinguish the fire, because there was fire everywhere  
7 and -- I didn't proceed too far into the flat. I stayed  
8 down low and squirted water onto the fires that were  
9 happening in the flat.

10 Q. Did you notice that there was a staircase within the  
11 flat?

12 A. Yes, the staircase was to my left.

13 Q. Did you go up it at all?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Were there any particular problems that you or your  
16 colleagues had in that flat from a safety point of view?

17 A. As I mentioned before -- excuse me. The wind was quite  
18 intense, there were fires everywhere, we were trying to  
19 extinguish it, and there were cables and strands of  
20 wires hanging down which became entangled in our -- our  
21 sets.

22 Q. Who was caught up in the cables?

23 A. I got caught up. I was at first unaware, but I knew  
24 I had some kind of restriction, and I think Firefighter  
25 Crowley tried to assist me in removing some of these



1 strands of wires and cables.

2 Q. Do you remember if anybody's DSU activated?

3 A. I don't remember a DSU being activated, sir, no.

4 Q. What was it that eventually caused you to withdraw from  
5 the flat?

6 A. The low pressure warning whistle, sir.

7 Q. Is that something telling you you're running on air?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Had you managed to put the fire out when you withdrew?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. Were you aware whether or not any other crew was there  
12 to take over from you?

13 A. At that point in time, I didn't see another crew there,  
14 but I was confident there would be another crew there  
15 very shortly, sir.

16 Q. As you withdrew, did you give any consideration to the  
17 person who was in flat 65, and whether you ought to try  
18 and take her out of --

19 THE CORONER: Do you mean 65?

20 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: 56.

21 A. I must admit, sir, my major concern was getting into  
22 that flat and trying to extinguish the fire as best  
23 I could. I was aware that there was residents within on  
24 that floor, but no, I didn't.

25 Q. After you left that corridor on the 7th floor, where did

1           you go?

2    A.  I went down through the central protected stairwell to  
3           go to the bridgehead and the entry control point.

4    Q.  Did you come across any other crew coming to take over  
5           from you?

6    A.  Yes, sir, I did meet firefighters as I was coming down  
7           coming up the other way, sir, yes.

8    Q.  When you went down to the bridgehead, was it where it  
9           had been when you went to fight the fire or had it  
10           moved?

11   A.  I think it had moved, sir.  I couldn't be absolutely  
12           100 per cent sure of that, but it seemed a very long way  
13           down.

14   Q.  Where did you close down your set?

15   A.  At the entry control point, or around about that area,  
16           sir, yes.

17   Q.  Which of your colleagues closed down their sets at  
18           essentially the same time?

19   A.  I don't think they did, sir, because what had  
20           happened -- my low pressure warning whistle had gone  
21           off.  I didn't -- I don't think the other firefighters  
22           who were accompanying with me -- their low pressure --  
23           they still had air in their sets.  It look us a long  
24           time to get there.  It took us a long time to get things  
25           sorted out.  It took us a long time to get into the

1 flat, so it seemed. We were obviously eager to do as  
2 much as we could with the limited time that we had,  
3 so -- my low pressure warning whistle went off. What  
4 normally happens then is that my crew have to withdraw  
5 with me. Because of the time taken, I decided to go  
6 down on my own. I left Firefighter Crowley there  
7 fighting the fire with Firefighter Ismail, because if  
8 not they would have to come down with me, sir.

9 Q. Just to see if I caught that correctly, you left the  
10 corridor before Firefighter Crowley and Ismail?

11 A. That was my recollection, yes, sir.

12 Q. And you therefore closed down your set on your own?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Did you have any discussion or debrief with a senior  
15 officer at the entry control point?

16 A. I relaid the information to the relevant people at entry  
17 control, sir, yes.

18 Q. As best you can, can you remember what you would have  
19 said?

20 A. I said there's still a fire going on on the 7th floor  
21 and my other crew members are still there.

22 Q. Can you remember whether you were asked any particular  
23 questions in that conversation?

24 A. There was -- it was a very, very busy scene. There was  
25 lots going on with firefighters. There were lots ready

1 to go up. It was quite a chaotic scene at that point.

2 Q. When you got out of the building, did you have any  
3 conversation or debrief with a senior officer outside  
4 the building?

5 A. Not to my knowledge, sir.

6 Q. What did you do once you got outside the building?

7 A. If I can refer to my statement, sir?

8 Q. You're referring to --

9 THE CORONER: Mr Green, if we want to refer you to  
10 a document, we'll hand it to you, so please don't look  
11 at that one.

12 A. Sorry. Yes, I left the building and went outside, took  
13 my set off and cleaned my set down ready to -- and tried  
14 to get a new cylinder on, just in case I was needed  
15 again, sir.

16 Q. What was the next task that you were given, as you  
17 recall it?

18 A. I was tasked to help to cordon off certain areas and to  
19 screen certain areas from members of the public so they  
20 couldn't see what was going on.

21 Q. That was when the ambulance service were trying to  
22 assist people who had been brought out of the building;  
23 is that right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. After doing that, did you then go back to the 3rd floor

1 in the building?

2 A. I believe so, sir, yes.

3 Q. Eventually you were relieved from duty some time around

4 8 in the evening; is that right?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions.

7 A. Thank you, sir.

8 THE CORONER: Mr Dowden?

9 MR DOWDEN: No thank you.

10 THE CORONER: Ms Al Tai?

11 MS AL TAI: No thank you.

12 THE CORONER: Mr Walsh?

13 Questions by MR WALSH

14 MR WALSH: Just one matter. You told us earlier on in

15 answer to questions from Mr Maxwell-Scott that you saw

16 debris coming from the building as you arrived?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. I will ask you to look at your statement in a minute

19 unless you can recall it yourself. Can you remember

20 what that debris looked like now?

21 A. It was just twisted metal, glass, and other debris.

22 Q. Right. I'm going to ask you to look at your statement

23 at page 187, the second paragraph, page 2 of 4.

24 (Handed) Do you can see the second paragraph, Mr Green?

25 Do you have it?

1            "I could see from the service area of Havil Street  
2            that there was fire coming from the 9th floor."

3            First of all, you say:

4            "I knew that crews were up there and was expecting  
5            the fire to be under control ... water coming out from  
6            an area of the 9th floor. It was instead getting  
7            worse."

8            First of all, why did you expect it to be under  
9            control at that stage?

10          A. Because when I arrived at the scene, sir, I spoke to the  
11          driver -- I went over to Echo 371. Everything seemed to  
12          be in order. There was no great panic. Normally, you  
13          can get a feel if there's something going wrong or if  
14          it's getting out of hand or starting to expand or get  
15          worse. Everything seemed to be under control. I could  
16          see water coming out of that floor, so I knew  
17          firefighters were up there, so I was expecting it to be  
18          brought under control quite soon after that.

19          Q. Yes. At that moment, you say in your statement:

20                "... a large piece of facade came crashing down from  
21                where the fire was situated."

22                Was that in one piece or several pieces? A large  
23                piece of facade?

24          A. There was a mighty great crash. That was my first  
25          impression, but I think it was bits of metal and glass,

1 and -- but it seemed like one big chunk had come down.

2 Q. All right. Thank you very much.

3 THE CORONER: Thank you. Members of the jury, do you have  
4 any questions?

5 Questions by the Jury

6 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Yes, we do, thank you, madam  
7 coroner. Our first question: you mentioned the cables  
8 that came down and tangled around -- I think it was your  
9 colleague rather than yourself. Did you see where the  
10 cables fell from at all?

11 A. Sorry, can you repeat the question, please?

12 THE CORONER: The question was: did you see where the cables  
13 had come from that you were caught up in?

14 A. My thought and my focus was on the fire and what I had  
15 seen of the wind that had happened at that time. No,  
16 the cables were -- I didn't see the cables before.

17 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. Also, was the  
18 area above, from the door to the ceiling, on fire, or  
19 was it just inside the flat?

20 A. Sorry, could you speak up a bit, please?

21 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Sorry. I think what my fellow  
22 juror is trying to ask is: the fire that was on the  
23 ceiling, was it just inside the flat, or was it also  
24 above you outside in the corridor?

25 A. Okay, the scene I saw when the door was opened and

1 I gained entrance into the flat which was on fire was  
2 a tremendous rush of air, a high wind, the facade or the  
3 front of the building -- it looked as though it had all  
4 gone, literally. You could see straight outside. And  
5 there was a large area of fire and small areas of fire  
6 dotted around within that flat.

7 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. As you've just  
8 mentioned, the fire inside was fairly advanced by the  
9 time you were in there. Was it apparent at that stage  
10 to you that there were two different bedrooms  
11 downstairs, or was it just appearing to be one big room  
12 on fire?

13 A. It seemed just one big room on fire.

14 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay. You're obviously quite  
15 an experienced firefighter. Was it at all apparent to  
16 you which direction the fire may have come from, whether  
17 it would have dropped down from above or come forward,  
18 I guess, from the windows back towards you?

19 A. Okay, the situation was we knew there was a fire on the  
20 9th floor. It was a great surprise that there was  
21 a fire on the 7th floor but that's what we were tasked  
22 with, so my focus was on the 7th floor. But in the back  
23 of my mind I realised that there was also a fire going  
24 you on above me, so that was very confusing.

25 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. I understand. Thank



1           you.

2   THE CORONER:   Thank you very much.

3           Mr Green, thank you very much for coming.  Thank you  
4           for the help you've given to us.  You're welcome to  
5           stay, but you're free to go if you prefer.

6           We'll have a break now for lunch.  If we continue at  
7           2.05?

8   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  Yes, of course madam.  Subject to other's  
9           views -- and of course, ultimately your own -- I was  
10          wondering whether I should ask Mr Clark to see if he can  
11          get an additional witness here for this afternoon  
12          because the only one who remains on the list is  
13          Mr Ismail, whose evidence will cover similar topics to  
14          that of Mr Green.  So subject to everybody's views,  
15          I was thinking about asking for one of Mr Hydar,  
16          Mr Kayode or Mr Tungatt.

17   THE CORONER:  I think actually by the time we've finished  
18          with Mr Ismail this afternoon, I think that that will  
19          probably be sufficient for today.  So thank you for the  
20          thought, but I think we'll stop after we finish with  
21          Mr Ismail.

22   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  Thank you.

23   THE CORONER:  Thank you very much.  All right, members of  
24          the jury, do go with Mr Graham.

25   (1.02 pm)

1 (The short adjournment)

2 (2.05 pm)

3 THE CORONER: Thank you, do sit down. Yes, could we ask the  
4 jurors to come in, please. Thank you.

5 (In the presence of the Jury)

6 THE CORONER: Thank you, yes. Mr Ismail?

7 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, he is the next witness.

8 THE CORONER: Would you like to come forward, please,  
9 Mr Ismail.

10 STEPHEN ISMAIL (sworn)

11 THE CORONER: Thank you, Mr Ismail. Do sit down. Do help  
12 yourself to a glass of water.

13 A. Thank you.

14 THE CORONER: When you're answering questions, please can  
15 you make sure that you're sitting fairly close to the  
16 microphone so that we pick up your voice. You might  
17 want to move the microphone a little bit closer to you  
18 just so it's comfortable. Please, if you could, when  
19 answering questions, look across at the jurors. That  
20 will help them to hear your evidence and also help you  
21 to keep close to the microphone.

22 A. Thank you.

23 THE CORONER: Mr Maxwell-Scott, who is standing up, is going  
24 to be asking you some questions initially on my behalf,  
25 and then there will be some questions from others.

1 A. Okay.

2 THE CORONER: Thank you.

3 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

4 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good afternoon. Can you give the court  
5 your full name please?

6 A. My full name is Stephen Ismail.

7 Q. In July 2009, were you a firefighter based at Brixton  
8 fire station?

9 A. Yes, I was a firefighter at Brixton.

10 Q. Do you still work for the London Fire Brigade?

11 A. Yes, I do.

12 Q. How long have you served as a firefighter for?

13 A. This is my 26th year.

14 Q. Unless I indicate otherwise, my questions today will be  
15 directed to how things were done on or before the date  
16 of the fire.

17 Before 3 July 2009, had you ever been to  
18 Lakanal House?

19 A. No.

20 Q. In that case I'll turn straight away to asking you about  
21 your involvement on that night. Were you called out  
22 from Brixton fire station?

23 A. Yes, we were.

24 Q. Did you travel to Lakanal House with Firefighter  
25 Wellman, Firefighter Green and Crew Manager Hider?

1 A. Yes, I did.

2 Q. Did anything happen on the way to Lakanal House to give  
3 you any indication of what was going on there?

4 A. Yes, we heard over the radio a message from somebody --  
5 I don't know who: "Make pumps six".

6 Q. What did you understand from that?

7 A. From receiving that type of message, we -- I understood  
8 that this could be a major fire.

9 Q. When you arrived at Lakanal House, do you remember where  
10 your appliance parked?

11 A. I don't remember where we parked. I know that we  
12 entered by Havil Street.

13 Q. What were your initial impressions on arrival?

14 A. On arrival, I got off the machine and I looked up at the  
15 fire, or the flat that was on fire. From what I could  
16 see, it all seemed to be under control. I believe it  
17 was Peckham's machine had set into the dry riser. There  
18 was smoke coming out of the flat, so we knew there was  
19 water being put onto the fire. To me I thought it all  
20 looked under control.

21 Q. You say that it all looked as though it was under  
22 control. Could you see how many flats appeared to be on  
23 fire when you first got there?

24 A. From what I could have see, there was only the one flat.

25 Q. What was the first task that you were given?

1 A. The first task we were given was from a crew manager.  
2 He asked us to take a short extension ladder to the 7th  
3 floor.  
4 Q. Who was that crew manager?  
5 A. Crew Manager Hider.  
6 Q. Your crew manager?  
7 A. Yes.  
8 Q. Whom did he ask you to take it with?  
9 A. Firefighter Green and Firefighter Crowley.  
10 Q. What did you do?  
11 A. Firefighter Crowley obtained the short extension ladder  
12 and we made our way up the stairs.  
13 Q. Was it the three of you going up the stairs?  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. Is there any particular reason why you went up the  
16 stairs rather than trying to use the lift?  
17 A. The crew manager said, "Take the ladder up the stairs."  
18 From experience, we have trouble getting the ladder into  
19 the lift, so we just carried on going up the stairs.  
20 Q. Were there any particular problems in getting access to  
21 the stairs?  
22 A. Not that I can remember.  
23 Q. What were conditions like when you got into the  
24 staircase at the lower levels?  
25 A. Yeah, it was quite strange. One floor there'd be some

1 smoke, next floor it would be -- or, you know, next  
2 stairway would be clear, then we'd come across smoke  
3 again, then clear, then smoke. It was -- it was a bit  
4 strange.

5 Q. Did you come across any residents on the stairs?

6 A. I believe I can remember residents coming down, yes.

7 Q. Did you speak to any of them?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Did your colleagues Mr Green or Mr Crowley speak to any  
10 of them?

11 A. Not that I saw.

12 Q. Did anything happen in your contact with the residents  
13 that led any of them to go back up the stairs?

14 A. No. No, not that I saw.

15 Q. How far up the staircase did you make it? Where did you  
16 stop?

17 A. We went up to the 7th floor.

18 Q. What did you find there?

19 A. As you know, we had the short extension ladder. We  
20 passed that to another crew -- I don't know what they  
21 done with the ladder -- and then we was asked by a crew  
22 manager that we needed to go in to search and fight  
23 a fire on the 7th floor.

24 Q. Who was in charge at the bridgehead?

25 A. I can't remember.

1 Q. Did you recognise him at the time?

2 A. No, no.

3 Q. What were conditions like at the bridgehead?

4 A. Yeah, it was okay. Along -- we looked along the 7th  
5 floor -- well, I looked along the 7th floor corridor and  
6 you could see to the end. There was a bit of smoke and  
7 there was a bit of smoke on the -- the bridgehead as  
8 well, but it was okay. It was breathable.

9 Q. At that point, you didn't have your breathing apparatus  
10 on?

11 A. No, we didn't, no.

12 Q. When you say you looked towards the corridor and you  
13 could see towards the end, there are two corridors on  
14 each odd-numbered floor.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. One heading north from the lobby area, one heading south  
17 from the lobby area. Can you recall which corridors you  
18 looked at?

19 A. I don't know whether it was north or south, but at the  
20 top of the stairs, turn right. Or the right hand  
21 corridor.

22 Q. Did you go into the corridor at that stage?

23 A. No I didn't.

24 Q. What were you asked to do?

25 A. To knock on doors, search and there's a fire -- there

1           was a fire along that floor somewhere.

2    Q.   You mention that there was a fire on that floor, which

3           we know was in flat 53 on the north corridor. Does that

4           help you to remember whether the corridor that you

5           looked down was the one with the flat on fire or the

6           other one?

7    A.   Yeah, definitely the north corridor then, yeah.

8    Q.   So when you first got there, you could see to the end of

9           that north corridor?

10   A.   Yes.

11   Q.   Did there come a time when you started up your breathing

12          apparatus?

13   A.   Yes, yes, there did.

14   Q.   Where did you do that?

15   A.   We went down a couple of flights of stairs.

16   Q.   Why was that?

17   A.   To find -- to try and find some fresh air. A non-smokey

18          condition.

19   Q.   Why did you think that that was necessary?

20   A.   You shouldn't start up the sets in smokey conditions

21          because the smoke will be in the set and it can get into

22          your lungs.

23   Q.   So was the view that the conditions at the bridgehead

24          were not suitable for starting up?

25   A.   No, they weren't, no.



1 Q. With which of your other colleagues did you start up  
2 your breathing apparatus?

3 A. Firefighter Green. And I seem to recollect that where  
4 we started up our sets, which was on some sort of  
5 balcony or landing somewhere, there wasn't much room, so  
6 it was -- to get three of us in there together to start  
7 up together, it would have been very, very tight. So  
8 I think me and Firefighter Green started up first, and  
9 then Firefighter Crowley started up afterwards.

10 Q. Let me show you a couple of photographs to try and help  
11 you to remember where you went. This is photograph 15,  
12 and that's taken on an even-numbered floor, and that  
13 shows a door that leads off the central staircase. It  
14 doesn't itself lead to a balcony; it leads to an area  
15 that is on the way to a balcony, okay?

16 Next I'll show you photograph 41. That is a view  
17 looking down from an odd-numbered floor to  
18 an even-numbered floor, so the door that you see below  
19 is one that leads onto a balcony.

20 Now having looked at those two photographs to  
21 refresh your memory, can you recall going through doors  
22 that looked like either or both of those?

23 A. No, I can't, I'm sorry.

24 Q. Perhaps more fundamentally, if I could ask you this:  
25 when you started up, were you outdoors or indoors?

1 A. What I can remember is a little balcony and some --  
2 maybe some wired glass on the balcony. It could have  
3 been that balcony there, but ...

4 Q. I'll show you what an outdoor balcony looks like.

5 A. No, it wasn't -- it wasn't -- what was the picture  
6 before that, sorry?

7 Q. I was going to show you that one next. So just to be  
8 clear, photograph 37 is an outdoor balcony.

9 A. I don't think it was outdoors. That is more like it.

10 Q. That is an area where you can see some ventilation  
11 grills.

12 A. Yeah, that's -- it could be that. There was definitely  
13 something there, whether it was wired glass or -- you  
14 know, or grating. It could have been that. It was just  
15 somebody -- somewhere where there was less smoke than  
16 where we were.

17 Q. I imagine you remember that you made a witness statement  
18 shortly after the fire, on 13 July 2009?

19 A. (The witness nodded)

20 Q. Is it likely that your memory of events then was better  
21 than it is today, some three and three quarter years on?

22 A. Yeah, I think so, yeah.

23 Q. If I could ask you to be shown that statement, which  
24 starts at page 190 of the statements bundle. (Handed)  
25 If you just take a moment and look at that first page.

1           You see your name and the date, 13 July 2009.

2    A.   Yes.

3    Q.   Can you confirm that that's your statement?

4    A.   Yes, it is, yes.

5    Q.   If I ask you, then, to turn over the page to page 191.

6           In the first paragraph, picking it up about six lines

7           from the bottom, you say:

8                    "We went to the 7th floor and passed the ladder to

9                    another crew. It was at this point we told to start up

10                   in BA. This meant we were going to use full BA oxygen.

11                   As we had been breathing smokey air we had to clear our

12                   lungs. We went down a couple of floors and went into

13                   an outside balcony. We set the BA systems working."

14                   You've seen the photographs. I'll just remind you

15                   of them again. That is an indoor area, photograph 40,

16                   albeit one where there is some ventilation provided

17                   through those grills. This area in photograph 37 and

18                   also photograph 38 is an outdoor balcony. Your

19                   statement made on 13 July 2009 refers to going onto

20                   an outside balcony. What do you think you were

21                   referring to?

22    A.   I don't think it was that outside balcony, that picture

23                   you've got there. I think it was the one with the

24                   grated -- the vented windows.

25    Q.   That one there? Even though it is not an outside space?

1 A. It definitely wasn't the other one, so if that's the  
2 only balcony there, I'm saying it could be that one.

3 Q. Thank you. After you had started up your BA sets, where  
4 did you go?

5 A. After we started our BA sets, we went back up to the 7th  
6 floor.

7 Q. What did you find there?

8 A. We was asked by a crew manager to carry on searching  
9 along the 7th floor.

10 Q. Strictly speaking, you hadn't started searching yet, had  
11 you?

12 A. No, not yet.

13 Q. So now you were ready to start the task of searching?

14 A. Yes, sorry.

15 Q. Was that going to be the north corridor, where the fire  
16 was, or was it going to be both north and south?

17 A. No, it was just the north corridor.

18 Q. What were conditions like now on that corridor?

19 A. Yeah, it was still okay. It wasn't too bad. You could  
20 still see to the end of the corridor.

21 Q. I have up on screen there -- that is a ventilation grill  
22 at the end of a corridor at Lakanal House. Are you  
23 saying that as soon as you got onto the corridor you  
24 could see all the way to the end, to that ventilation  
25 grill?

1 A. Yes. It was a little bit smokey, but you could still  
2 see to the end. But I don't remember that.

3 Q. Who was with you at that time?

4 A. I was with Firefighter Green and Firefighter Crowley.

5 Q. Just recapping, who had given up the instruction to go  
6 there?

7 A. I can't remember.

8 Q. Had you been told that there was or might have been  
9 a flat on fire in that corridor or did you know that  
10 already?

11 A. I think from the smoke we could tell there was a flat on  
12 fire.

13 Q. We know that that was flat 53. What did you do when you  
14 got onto the corridor?

15 A. We had to lay out the jet and the branch for the water  
16 to fight the fire. I had the sledgehammer. I smashed  
17 the door in and Clint -- Firefighter Green and  
18 Firefighter Crowley began to fight the fire. As soon as  
19 the door went in, there was so much smoke come through  
20 and the corridor -- the corridor just filled with smoke.

21 Q. Did you go into the flat with them?

22 A. No, there wasn't much I could do. Two people was enough  
23 to fight the fire, so I began knocking on doors, and  
24 somebody answered the door on flat number 56.

25 Q. Did you speak to that person?

1 A. Yes, I spoke to the lady. I went in and shut the door.  
2 I can't remember whether I took me mask off when I spoke  
3 to her, but I spoke to the lady. She was very calm.  
4 I'm sure that if I'd asked for a cup of tea she would  
5 have made me a cup of tea. She just seemed that calm.  
6 I said, "Are you okay?" She said, "Yeah, I'm okay."  
7 She said to me: "I've been told to stay here." I didn't  
8 ask who told her that but she said she was okay and she  
9 was fine, so I went out and closed the door behind me.

10 Q. Just pausing there, was that the first time you had gone  
11 to spoken to her?

12 A. That was the first time.

13 Q. Are you able to say whether either Mr Green or  
14 Mr Crowley had spoken to her before?

15 A. I know that now but I didn't at the time. And Mr --  
16 I believe Mr Crowley had already spoke to her.

17 Q. So you went back into the corridor. What was happening  
18 in the corridor and in flat 53?

19 A. Firefighters Crowley and Green were still fighting the  
20 fire in the flat. I knocked on a few more doors with no  
21 reply. I checked through the letterbox looking for  
22 fire. No sign of fire in the other flats. The corridor  
23 was black with smoke now. You couldn't see a thing.  
24 I actually went to the vents at the end, which I presume  
25 were those vents the picture, just to see if I could

1 open the vents any more to -- to help get rid of the  
2 smoke, and while I was doing that, I heard somebody  
3 calling out, and flat 56 is right by the vents, so  
4 I presume it was the lady -- presumed it was the lady in  
5 56. So I knocked on the door again and she opened the  
6 door. I then proceeded into the flat and she was  
7 a little bit more agitated and there was a little bit of  
8 smoke in the flat.

9 Q. So that was the second time you'd gone into her flat?

10 A. That was the second time, and now I believe in total the  
11 third time this lady has had a visit.

12 Q. What conversation did you have with her?

13 A. Again, I asked her if she was okay. She said to me she  
14 would like to get out. Just at that moment, on the  
15 radio, I got a message saying that one of my colleagues,  
16 Firefighter Green, his low pressure warning whistle was  
17 going off so he was low on oxygen, so he started to make  
18 his way out the building. Now I'm thinking my other  
19 colleague, Firefighter Crowley, is on his own fighting  
20 the fire. So at that point I had to make a decision.  
21 The corridor was full of smoke and heat from the fire.  
22 There were still flames coming out of the flat that was  
23 on fire. The lady's flat, number 56, was on the  
24 opposite side of the building, and there was only  
25 a little bit of smoke in her flat, so I said to her --

1 I said, "I know what flat you're in, I know you're here,  
2 I will not forget you." She was still okay. She was  
3 a little bit agitated. She did want to come out but she  
4 was okay. I didn't have enough oxygen in my cylinder --  
5 if I tried to take her out and there was problems,  
6 I didn't have enough oxygen in my cylinder to deal with  
7 that problem, so I said to her: "Stay in the flat. Go  
8 to the rear of your flat by the windows. I know you're  
9 here, I will tell somebody you are here and we will come  
10 back and get you out."

11 Q. What did you do after that?

12 A. I went back to the flat that was on fire, met up with  
13 Firefighter Crowley, and I -- do you know what? From  
14 that point, I really can't remember, but I presume we --  
15 we maybe done a little bit more firefighting but then  
16 our low pressure whistle were going off and we had to  
17 come out.

18 Q. Just looking at your statement -- this is page 192.

19 About seven lines down, it says:

20 "I came out the front of the flat, shut the door..."

21 That's flat 56?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. "I returned to Firefighter Crowley, who was still  
24 fighting the fire. After a few minutes I checked my  
25 gauge for my air supply. This indicated I was getting



1 low on oxygen. I do not remember the reading. Myself  
2 and Firefighter Crowley returned to the landing, where  
3 I saw watch manager Chris Payton."

4 Just looking at that, does that suggest that if you  
5 had wanted to, you would have had enough air to get the  
6 occupant of flat 56 to safety if that had been the  
7 choice you made?

8 A. I had to make a decision and because of the -- the  
9 smoke-logging in the flat, the heat -- sorry, the  
10 smoke-logging in the hallway, the heat coming out of the  
11 flat that was on fire, and at the time there was still  
12 some flames coming out as well, I made a decision that  
13 the lady was safer to stay in her flat, being the  
14 opposite side of the building as well. I made that  
15 decision.

16 Q. When you met up with Watch Manager Payton, was he now in  
17 charge at the bridgehead?

18 A. I don't know. I don't know.

19 Q. What did you say to him?

20 A. I -- straight away, I told him there's a lady in flat 56  
21 and she wants to come out.

22 Q. Your statement says that it was at this point that your  
23 whistle blew to indicate low oxygen in your cylinder,  
24 and you and Firefighter Crowley then made your way down  
25 to the bridgehead. Do you remember if that was where it

1 had previously been or whether it had moved?

2 A. No, I'm sorry, I can't remember.

3 Q. Did you retrieve your tally and shut down your BA set at

4 the bridgehead, wherever it was?

5 A. I can't remember, but I would say yes.

6 Q. Do you remember if there was anyone you shut down with

7 at the same time?

8 A. I can't remember.

9 Q. Did you have any conversation or debrief with anyone at

10 the BA entry control point?

11 A. Yes, again, I passed on the information that we'd

12 knocked on a number of doors on the corridor at the top

13 of the stairs on the right, which I now know to be the

14 north corridor, and obviously told them about the

15 firefighting in flat 53 and the lady in flat 56.

16 Q. At this point in time, had you been into either of the

17 flats, 53 or 56?

18 A. I'd been into both, yes.

19 Q. Had you noticed that there were internal stairs within

20 them?

21 A. I'm sorry, no, I didn't notice.

22 Q. The person who debriefed you at the entry control point,

23 did they ask you any particular questions that you can

24 remember?

25 A. I'm sorry, I can't remember.

1 Q. Did you then make your way down out of the central  
2 staircase?

3 A. Yes, I did, yes.

4 Q. On your own, or with anyone?

5 A. With Firefighter Crowley.

6 Q. Given that you made your way out with him, do you think  
7 it's probable that you and he shut down your BA sets at  
8 approximately the same time or would you not like to  
9 say?

10 A. I would have thought that we would have done but I'm not  
11 100 per cent sure.

12 Q. When you got out of the building, did you have any  
13 conversation or debrief with any senior officer?

14 A. No.

15 Q. So what did you do?

16 A. I went back to the Brixton fire appliance, changed my  
17 cylinder, ready to go in again.

18 Q. Where did you go once you were ready to go in again?

19 A. We was then -- if I remember right, we was all -- we was  
20 then asked to stand in an area -- all BA wearers to  
21 stand in a certain area outside the building.

22 Q. Waiting to be called upon?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Did there come a time when you saw the woman from  
25 flat 65 come out of the building?

1 THE CORONER: I don't think you mean 65.

2 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: 56.

3 A. There was a time I saw a lady come down with  
4 an ambulance man, and I went over and I said to this  
5 lady: "Are you the lady from 56?" and she said, "Yes  
6 I am", but seeing the lady there today, it doesn't look  
7 like the lady I spoke to, but it was a long time ago.

8 Q. But at the time --

9 A. At the time she said yes.

10 Q. -- you were satisfied --

11 A. Yes. Yes, I was.

12 Q. -- that the person you'd spoken to and said, "Wait in  
13 your flat, others will come and get you" had been  
14 successfully taken out of the building?

15 A. Yes. Yes, I was.

16 Q. Were you ever required to wear breathing apparatus  
17 again?

18 A. Yes, I was, yes.

19 Q. Before that, was there a point when you saw some  
20 casualties being carried out of the building and taken  
21 to an area where ambulance staff were working?

22 A. Yes, there was.

23 Q. Did you help to carry one of them to the ambulance?

24 A. Yes, I believe it was an adult female. I helped get her  
25 into the ambulance.

1 Q. You helped carry her?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. When you went back into the building, did you get taken  
4 to go to a bridgehead which was now on the 3rd floor?

5 A. Yes, we was asked to go in and wait on the 3rd floor.

6 Q. Can you remember whom you were with when you were asked  
7 to start up your breathing apparatus and go up to higher  
8 floors in the building?

9 A. I can't remember without looking at my statement.

10 Q. If I show you page 193.

11 A. The reason being that they're not from Brixton, they're  
12 from another station.

13 Q. Exactly. The second paragraph refers to  
14 Crew Manager Willett and firefighters Badger and Sharpe.  
15 Do you see that?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. I'm just going to try and help you with when that might  
18 have been. This is at page 1031 in the advocates'  
19 bundles, file 3. It's on screen but you'll get a hard  
20 copy as well. While it's coming, let me just explain.  
21 I imagine this is not a document you've ever seen  
22 before?

23 A. No. No, it's not.

24 Q. And it's probably not a format that you're familiar  
25 with?

1 A. No.

2 Q. What happens is that the bodyguard system on your  
3 breathing apparatus records certain information,  
4 including when you start it up and when you close it  
5 down, and this page summarises that information for  
6 crews in Brixton. Your name is the second one down.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. You can see that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Your information is in yellow, which is because there  
11 was a battery change on your set which makes the results  
12 less reliable than they could be because somebody has  
13 had to estimate how long it would take to change  
14 a battery. The estimates show that you first used  
15 breathing apparatus around 17.03 for about 20 minutes,  
16 and then again at 19.15 for about 20 minutes, okay?

17 If we then look at the Peckham figures, because on  
18 each use you were with people from Peckham as well.  
19 Mr Crowley we have from 16.56 until 17.16, and then if  
20 we think about your second use of breathing apparatus,  
21 we have Mr Willett at 19.09, Mr Badger at 19.58, and  
22 then, at the top of the page, Mr Sharpe at 19.09. That  
23 suggests that your second use would have been around  
24 7.10 in the evening. What was your task at that time?

25 A. My task then was -- we was asked to go to the 11th floor

1 to take over from the EDDBA crew, extended duration  
2 breathing apparatus crew. When we got to the 11th  
3 floor, there was no sign of this crew. Presumably  
4 they'd already come out, so we started to search and put  
5 fire out on the -- I believe was the south corridor on  
6 the 11th.

7 Q. There was still fire to put out at that time?

8 A. Yes, there was.

9 Q. Did you succeed in putting it out?

10 A. I believe there was one flat, the stairs had burnt away  
11 so we couldn't get to the upper floor.

12 Q. Did you carry out any other tasks on that corridor?

13 A. That's all I can remember.

14 Q. Your statement suggests that you also searched some  
15 flats?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Does that sound right?

18 A. Yes, it does, yes.

19 Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions, but others  
20 may have some.

21 A. Thank you.

22 THE CORONER: Mr Hendy? Mr Dowden? Ms Al Tai?

23 MS AL TAI: No, thank you.

24 THE CORONER: I don't see Mr Walsh. Is he -- he isn't here.  
25 Members of the jury?

1           Mr Ismail, can I just take you back. You were  
2           telling us about the time when Firefighter Green was  
3           running out of air so he went down by himself, as you  
4           described it. You realised that Firefighter Crowley was  
5           therefore on his own fighting the fire, and you made the  
6           decision to leave the resident in flat number 56 and go  
7           and help Mr Crowley.

8    A. Yes.

9    THE CORONER: Yes. Did you have a radio in your breathing  
10        apparatus?

11   A. Yes, I did.

12   THE CORONER: You did. So you were able to communicate with  
13        others?

14   A. Yes, I was, yes.

15   THE CORONER: Did you give any thought to passing a message  
16        to anyone to say that there was a resident in flat 56  
17        who was wanting to get out but you weren't in a position  
18        to help her at that point?

19   A. I must admit I didn't think it at that time. I was  
20        concerned about my colleague who was fighting the fire  
21        on his own.

22   THE CORONER: All right. Thank you. Thank you very much,  
23        I think that's all we have for you, so thank you very  
24        much for coming and thank you very much for the help  
25        that you've been able to give to us.



1 A. Thank you.

2 THE CORONER: You're welcome to stay if you want, but you're  
3 free to go if you would prefer.

4 A. Thank you.

5 THE CORONER: Thank you very much.

6 (The witness withdrew)

7 THE CORONER: Yes, Mr Maxwell-Scott.

8 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, that concludes the witnesses to be  
9 called to give evidence today.

10 THE CORONER: Thank you.

11 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I propose to read the witness statement  
12 of PC Jones.

13 THE CORONER: That would be very helpful. Thank you.

14 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: It's at page 18 of the statements to be  
15 read bundle. The statement is dated 17 July 2009.

16 THE CORONER: Sorry, give me a moment. (Pause) Yes, thank  
17 you.

18 Witness statement of PC JONES read

19 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: It says:

20 "On Friday, 3 July 2009, I was on duty in full  
21 uniform as operator in marked police car MM22 on a day  
22 duty shift. PC Crossley 319MD was the driver of the  
23 vehicle and also in full uniform. At about 1630 hours  
24 we were on routine patrol when a call came out to  
25 Lakanal House in Dalwood Street to reports of a fire by

1 London Fire Brigade (LFB). We accepted the call and  
2 made our way to the location, arriving shortly  
3 afterwards. We approached from Havil Street, junction  
4 of Dalwood Street, and I looked up and saw a fire in one  
5 of the flats about the 6th floor and could see flames  
6 coming out of the windows. There were a lot of people  
7 along Dalwood Street and due to the fire and the fire  
8 engines we decided to block off Dalwood Street at the  
9 junction with Havil Street with the car so cars could  
10 not go down Dalwood Street.

11 "I then made my way along Dalwood Street towards  
12 Lakanal. There were a large amount of people lining the  
13 street, including lots of young children. I tried to  
14 move these people away from Dalwood Street, back to  
15 Havil Street and also up to Sedgmoor place. I shouted  
16 at everyone to move but it was noisy there due to the  
17 fire and fire engines and the number of people. There  
18 were a large amount of people and no-one seemed to be  
19 listening to me and few people moved away. As I was  
20 trying to move people on, especially from around the  
21 junction of Dalwood Street and Sedgmoor place, I could  
22 feel the heat from the fire and also heard things  
23 popping inside the building. There were small items  
24 being thrown out from the flats due to the fire which  
25 were landing on the road and pavements. Due to this,

1 I knew it was important to move the people off as soon  
2 as possible for there safety and also to allow the LFB  
3 to be able to work. I carried on trying to get people  
4 to move on with little success. PC Esangbedo then  
5 joined me and assisted with moving people back. People  
6 gradually started to dissipate and move back.

7 "More units began arriving on scene and put cordons  
8 up to stop people from reentering the area once they had  
9 moved out. I began moving people back up Sedgmoor Place  
10 so that I could put a cordon in further back, as  
11 directed by London Ambulance Service (LAS), behind their  
12 vehicles so they had access and the crowds were kept  
13 back. I started to move people back but still people  
14 were generally uncooperative and slow to move back.  
15 Because of this, I asked for another unit to help me,  
16 and PC Sheppard 520MD came and assisted with moving  
17 people back.

18 "There were lots of people asking questions and  
19 I tried to assist where possible, but there was a large  
20 amount of noise and it was difficult to deal with so  
21 many people. At one point I think something fell off  
22 Lakanal House and lots of people behind the cordon  
23 screamed and about 20 people pushed through the cordon  
24 and ran forwards, most running off through Stanswood  
25 Gardens. PC Parkes 899MD then arrived and assisted me

1 with a cordon at the junction with Stanswood Gardens and  
2 Sedgmoor Place behind the public house to stop people  
3 from coming round there. An IC3 male came and  
4 approached us and told me that he was on the phone to  
5 his wife, who was hiding in the toilets with his young  
6 baby in flat 81. I immediately called up the control  
7 room and informed them of this and where she was in the  
8 flats so it could be relaid to LFB. At the same time,  
9 a group of other people came up and were asking  
10 questions and people were trying to push through the  
11 cordon. I went to speak to the male who had approached  
12 me regarding his family, but due to the amount of people  
13 he had walked away from me and I could not see him so  
14 I could talk to him more.

15 "I stayed at this cordon for a while and then I was  
16 relieved and redeployed to a cordon on Sedgmoor Place at  
17 the junction with Southampton Way to assist with traffic  
18 control so the LFB and LAS could access the scene  
19 easily. PC Crossley 319MD and PC Sheppard 520MD  
20 assisted at this junction.

21 "A short while later, I was relieved from there and  
22 went to another cordon on Dalwood Street, where the  
23 Fire Brigade engines were to be lining up. I assisted  
24 here with PC Crossley 319MD in keeping the road clear so  
25 the fire engines were safe and could gain easy access.

1 I remained on scene here until I was relieved and then  
2 returned to Peckham police station for debriefing."  
3 That's the end of the statement.  
4 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Yes, that's all then for  
5 today?  
6 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, it is.  
7 THE CORONER: All right, thank you very much.  
8 Members of the jury, thank you very much for coming  
9 and thank you for your patience and concentration.  
10 We'll continue tomorrow at 10 o'clock, please. Thank  
11 you very much.  
12 (In the absence of the Jury)  
13 THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, so tomorrow,  
14 Mr Maxwell-Scott, we're looking at?  
15 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Mr Kayode.  
16 THE CORONER: Good.  
17 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Then firefighters Miller and Mullins,  
18 Watch Manager Payton, Queen Ogbeifun and police officer  
19 Nick Tungatt.  
20 THE CORONER: Thank you.  
21 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: That won't necessarily be the order  
22 though.  
23 THE CORONER: No.  
24 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: But those are the six people who are due  
25 to give evidence tomorrow.

1 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. That's excellent. Good.

2 Does anyone have any issues that they want to raise  
3 before we finish this afternoon?

4 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: All I would say is that we circulated  
5 a draft and updated sequence of events which takes into  
6 account some of the evidence we've heard thus far.

7 THE CORONER: Yes.

8 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: We're proposing to add it to the jury  
9 bundle at 10 am tomorrow. If there are any  
10 representations or submissions then I would suggest we  
11 deal with those at the end of the day tomorrow, but if  
12 there are none, then we'll add it to the jury bundles  
13 first thing tomorrow morning.

14 THE CORONER: All right, so first thing tomorrow it's either  
15 no-one has any comments, in which case we'll add it to  
16 the bundle, or if someone does, we'll postpone  
17 discussion on that. Does anyone have any comments on  
18 that? Then we'll adjourn until 10 o'clock tomorrow,  
19 thank you.

20 (2.51 pm)

21 (The Court adjourned until 10 o'clock the following day)

22

23 JULIA BURRELL (sworn) .....1

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