Housekeeping

THE CORONER: I think you may have heard that we're still waiting for some jurors to arrive but I think there might be some administrative matters to deal with in the meantime.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: That's right, madam. There are two matters relating to the smooth management of the evidence to be given today, and they are firstly how to deal with the risk assessment dated 20 October 2006, which is at page 1676 of the advocates' bundles.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I simply introduce the matter because Mr Walsh wants to address you on it.

THE CORONER: All right.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: In short, the disclosure of this document which was referred to at paragraph 16 of Station Manager McGurran's witness statement understandably led to a request for further related documents.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: As I understand it, there will be some additional documents but they're being gathered, and so the question will be how best to manage the questioning about this document today, given that the picture is...
only partially complete. I'll leave Mr Walsh to address on you that.

The second matter relates to adducing evidence about the contents of the operational information folders which were on the Peckham pumps in July 2009.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: If you have a look at page 1668 of the advocates' bundles, so a few pages earlier.

THE CORONER: Right. I've managed to take that out of my bundle somehow.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I can put it up on the screen or I can hand up a copy as you prefer.

THE CORONER: Putting it on the screen will be fine. Yes, I remember this, of course, yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: This is a schedule prepared by me summarising, in respect of each of the two Peckham pumps, the names of the premises where there is information in the folder and a one-line summary of the nature of those premises.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: What we then have at page 1672 is an example of a completed form, in this case in relation to the Camberwell College of Arts.

THE CORONER: Yes, Mr Hale was taken to that.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Exactly. What I would like to do is to
ask someone -- and I think Station Manager McGurran's probably the best person -- to explain in generic terms the reason, to the extent that he can deduce it, why the premises that were included in the operational information folder were so included, and my recollection is that most of them were included because of the nature of materials held on site, be it chemical or other hazardous materials.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Obviously there are some security and confidentiality concerns around giving more details than that.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: And it's for that reason that the folders themselves, other than the example sheet at 1672, have not been disclosed.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: So what I would like to do is to ask him, in generic terms, the reason why, for example, Camberwell baths was included. Is it the layout, is it the materials held on site, or is it some other reason?

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: But what I'm not sure is whether he would need to have the folder in front of him in order to enable him to answer that, and it seems to me that if he
would need to have it in front of him, then it would be
fair and appropriate for him to have it in front of him
but for others not to have it available to them. That
would be my proposal.

THE CORONER: Yes, I'm quite anxious that when we're talking
about other premises that we should be dealing as
sensitively as we can with the reasons why they were on
that particular list or considered to be of a particular
concern, yes.

All right, well, that's helpful. Shall we take the
first point, the risk assessment with Mr Walsh.

MR WALSH: Yes, madam. So that there is no mystery about
what that document is at page 1676, I have explained,
I think, to everyone -- I apologise if anyone hasn't had
the information from the properly interested parties --
that that document which is referred to in the statement
of Mr McGurran is an example of a risk assessment
carried out in 2006 which was part of a pilot scheme in
Southwark and, I think, Lambeth to assess the
predetermined attendance, the PDA requirements, for high
rise blocks. At the time, there was a question mark
about whether the PDA should be two pumps or three
pumps, and so there was, for a period of time, some
consideration about whether it might be appropriate to
carry out risk assessments of particular blocks to
determine whether some should be a two pump attendance
and some a three, and there is a score.

In fact, the pilot scheme was overtaken by
a decision brigade-wide that the PDA for a high rise
should be three pumps, and so the risk assessment
scheme, the pilot scheme was shelved. Nonetheless, this
document at 1676 is one we considered to be disclosable.
That's why it was disclosed and why it's in
Mr McGurran's statement, because it relates to Lakanal.
It has prompted requests for further information about
other risk assessments for other buildings and the
extent to which -- or where the Lakanal risk assessment
fits in the scheme of things. When we received that
request, we have been busy obtaining information so far
as we can to satisfy the request. We haven't finished
it yet and it's going to take a bit of time.

The reason why we raise it now is that Mr Snazell,
who is the borough commander who will give evidence
later, will of course be in a position to answer
questions within his knowledge, but it is far better, we
feel, that such questions as there are about this, and
the contextual information which will be served in due
course, should be asked in one go, rather than asking
Mr Snazell some of the issues today and then reserving
issues until later. So we undertake to provide, as soon
as we can, a bundle of documents satisfying, insofar as we can, the requests, particularly of Mr Hendy's team, and we say that Mr Snazell, when he gives evidence -- again, as he must do -- on other issues, will be in a position to answer questions about it. So I suppose the request really is that we deal with those issues as and when we have the material together and served it.

THE CORONER: I see. All right. Does anyone have any objections to the proposal made by Mr Walsh? I see shaking of heads. Well, that seems to be a sensible way forward, and plainly it's undesirable for a witness to be dealing with a topic twice over. It's just muddling for everybody. So I think that sounds like a sensible approach.

All right. So, Mr Maxwell-Scott, when you're taking him through evidence, if you could bear that in mind, please, and for those of you who are asking questions. That sounds like it will go quite smoothly. Thank you for that.

MR WALSH: Madam, just very briefly, in relation to the other issue, which is the contents of the operational information file, again, the particular contents of the Camberwell Art College file have been disclosed and put up because we've obtained the relevant consents. There are indeed difficulties about obtaining consent from
other premises because some of the matters are relatively sensitive, for perhaps obvious reasons. So Mr McGurran will be able to answer the generic questions, but certainly we wouldn't be in a position to be able to go to any of the other files.

THE CORONER: Yes, well, I hope that I've been alive to the sensitivity of this. Indeed, when I was looking at the transcript last night, I actually suggested that the relevant quotation from page 1676 be marked as redacted so that the nature of the materials was actually removed from the transcript. It seems to me we can deal with it in this room so the jurors understand what it is that we're talking about, but possibly any redactions could be made in the transcript. But I hope that everybody will deal with it sensitively in asking their questions.

MR WALSH: I'm very grateful.

THE CORONER: All right. Does that sound workable? Mr Maxwell-Scott, are you content with that? Does that sound like a sensible forward?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: It does. The practical problem which I wasn't sure of the answer to was whether Mr McGurran would be able to give the answers from memory or whether he had need to have the folder in front of him.

THE CORONER: Just remind me, where is the folder?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I have it electronically and I could
print a copy for him if necessary.

THE CORONER: Right.

MR WALSH: I have to say it's not entirely clear. If the question to Mr McGurran is, in respect of that entry on the schedule, that particular premises: "What is it about those premises which requires an operational information file entry?" then of course he may be able to say, "Well, it's because it has X, Y and Z on the premises." That immediately steps over the mark which we're concerned about, so I'm not quite sure what the question might be.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Well, to clarify -- if I put it back up on the screen, 1668.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Just taking the first one for an example, I might say, "Why was it thought necessary for there to be a file on the operational information folder for Camberwell baths? Was it to do with materials held on site or complexity of layout or some other reason?"

Then I would expect him to answer by choosing from that list, but if he needs the form to do so then we can print it off for him and he can have it in the witness box.

MR WALSH: I think if that's the nature of the questions, I'm pretty sure that Mr McGurran will be able to answer.
1 THE CORONER: Okay, that sounds sensible.
2 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: It will be no more specific than that.
3 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Yes, Mr Hendy?
4 MR HENDY: Madam, the only slight reservation I have is that
5 I just feel uncomfortable, as a matter of principle, if
6 a witness has a document that's not available to the
7 advocate examining the witness. That doesn't seem to be
8 consistent with open justice. I can't imagine for
9 a moment that we're going to get into any detail, and
10 certainly from this bench, we are only concerned with
11 multiple occupation buildings and the risk posed by lots
12 of people living together. We have no interest whatever
13 in chemicals and so forth being on premises, but I just
14 note --
15 THE CORONER: No, I understand entirely the point you're
16 making.
17 Just remind me, Mr Maxwell-Scott, what it is that
18 you're proposing might be shown to Mr McGurran that
19 others won't see.
20 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Well, it sounds as if he won't need to
21 see it from Mr Walsh.
22 MR WALSH: I agree with Mr Hendy. I would much prefer that
23 the witness doesn't have documents before him which
24 interested parties don't have.
25 THE CORONER: Well, I quite agree. I wouldn't want any
witness to have documents that all interested parties
don't have. That goes without saying, I think, unless
there are really exceptional circumstances. So yes,
let's take it forward as has been proposed, and if
problems arise then we'll deal with them as they crop
up. All right?

All right, thank you very much. The jurors are
here, are they? Lovely. In that case, if they could be
asked to come in, thank you.

Sorry, is there any other point anyone wants to
raise? No, okay, thank you.

Yes, Mr McGurran, would you like to come back?
Sorry, you're there. I do apologise. Help yourself to
a glass of water and do switch the microphone on, thank
you. Mr McGurran, you're giving your evidence on oath.

(In the presence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Yes, good morning, members of the jury. We're
going to continue with Mr McGurran's evidence initially,
and then we're going to go onto Mr Snazell. If all goes
well, what we're planning for tomorrow is a preparation
day for all of the parties so that will mean that you
will not need to be here tomorrow. So we hope that
we'll be able to achieve that. Thank you. Yes.
MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good morning, Mr McGurran.
A. Good morning.
Q. You were telling us yesterday afternoon about how whilst you were station manager of Peckham Fire Station you personally, on average, took part in four 72D visits a year?
A. Correct.
Q. And you told us about how you would go about such a visit and your expectations of how your crews would conduct such a visit. What I wanted to ask you next was: for a block like Lakanal House, how long you would expect a 72D visit to take?
A. Approximately 30 minutes.
Q. If I ask you now to turn in the advocates' bundles to page 1518. (Handed) This is the first page of London Fire Brigade policy number 633 on high rise firefighting, which I imagine you're familiar with.
A. Yes.
Q. Then if we turn in it to page 1529. For ease of reference, this is also in the jury bundle at tab 19. This is appendix 5 on pre-planning. Towards the middle of the page, there's a heading: "During 72D visits, personnel should ensure they are
familiar with the following."

Then there is a list of over ten bullet points. Are you familiar with those?

A. Yes.

Q. Let me ask you this: do you think that it's realistic to achieve all of those at a block like Lakanal House in half an hour?

A. If you're walking round a block -- don't forget they would be probably familiar with the block anyway, so it would be like refreshing their memory, other than any new people that might be with the crew. So they would know -- they would generally know where the hydrant was, they would know where the fire fighting lifts were, they would know the access to the inlet. The block would be probably familiar to certainly half the crew, so I wouldn't say it was unreasonable to take that amount of time.

Q. You made the point yesterday that there would be nothing wrong with the crew of eight splitting up into various groups to carry out the tasks?

A. That's correct.

Q. If I could ask you to give us your understanding of what a small number of these bullet points mean. Firstly number one. What do you understand by "location and accuracy of information available on site"?
A. That might be that if -- if it was a certain block --
some blocks -- certainly not on Peckham's ground, but
some blocks have a premises information box on the front
of them. This 72D relates to not only domestic high
rise but it would also relate to commercial premises, so
location and accuracy of information on site, that would
be plans that might have been available. There might be
a concierge there, there could be a desk. There's other
things other than you would find on a residential high
rise, say, on Peckham's ground.

Q. So would it be fair to say that that bullet point would
be more relevant in some other commercial premises or
more modern premises than in Lakanal House?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the fifth bullet point is "means of access and
egress from the building", in other words how you get in
and out of it. Is that essentially covering the ground
that we covered in questions yesterday about your
expectation of crews working out, for example, that the
balconies are escape routes?

A. That -- that would be part of it.

Q. And also the fact that there's a single central
staircase?

A. Single staircase.

Q. If you look about another five further down, there's
reference to "floor layouts and fire-resisting compartmentation". Can you explain what that means specifically in the context with a building like Lakanal House?

A. That would be just a -- an awareness of the fact that they were maisonettes and that the dry riser, for instance, was accessible on the odd floors and not available on every floor. The other thing might have been that there might have been -- not on Lakanal, but there's -- some blocks have a basic plan of, say, flat numbers. Certainly Lakanal has the information by the lifts of the -- where the flats actually relate to the floors.

The fire-resisting compartmentation, that would be -- that's kind of, I suppose -- in terms of firefighters doing a 72D, that's kind of just looking for basic problems that -- say if lobby doors were not secure so the -- that would affect the -- the fire-resisting compartmentation of, say, the central staircase, the firefighting shaft. I wouldn't expect them to be looking at individual flats and seeing if there was any problems with the flat.

Q. You've explained yesterday you wouldn't expect them to go into individual flats?

A. No.
Q. Then, four from the bottom, there's reference to "evacuation arrangements". Can you explain what that means and what, if anything, that adds to the bullet point "means of access and egress from the building"?

A. In terms of this list, I'd say that was more relating to a commercial premises, ie one, say, like an office block where they had specific evacuation arrangements, fire marshals, floor marshals, directing people to evacuate the building. I wouldn't say this was particular to a residential block.

THE CORONER: How would you know if there were fire marshals, for example?

A. Just that, you know, some commercial buildings appoint people within the building to look after a floor, and in the event of a fire they assist people in -- in evacuating.

THE CORONER: Had you ever come across that in relation to a residential block?

A. No.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I asked you yesterday, at the beginning of your evidence, whether your personal practice when conducting a 72D visit in your time as station manager between 2003 and July 2009 had changed, and you said it had not. What I want to ask you about now is the practice in terms of recording information following
Firstly, let me ask you this: was there any change in your personal practice in how the results, if I can put it that way, of a 72D visit were written up or passed on between 2003 and July 2009?

A. The practice did change within that time. In 2003, we carried out what were called G9 visits to, say, high rise premises, where we would inspect -- inspect fire lifts, dry rising main, and all this information was recorded on a form and the form would have been signed by me and sent off to, say, the local authority if there were any defects, and it would request a -- like a reply within a certain time.

Q. If I ask you to pause there and look at page 1098. (Handed) This is a document relating to an inspection of Lakanal House in May 2004, and if we look over the page we see your name on it, so it is said to be sent from you. As far as I'm aware, this is the latest in time such document that we have in relation to Lakanal House and it relates to an inspection under section 1(1)(d) of the Fire Services Act 1947. Without going too much into the law, is it right that when we talk about 72D visits, we're referring to section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004? In other words, the 11D visit was the fore runner...
of the 72D visit?

A. That's correct.

Q. Does this document help us to understand the answer that you gave a few moments ago about what the practice was earlier on in the period 2003 to 2009?

A. Yes, it would.

Q. Can you explain that practice to us and what this is.

A. Like I said, once a visit had been completed, any -- any defects found would be recorded by the officer that did the visit, and if you look at this document, you can see that -- the first page -- they highlighted that they found defects on their visit, and then if you turn over to page 1100, you can see that the defects are listed as "outlet obstructed by rubbish" on 13th floor and "no padlock" on 5th floor. "No padlock", that relates to what would have been on the dry riser outlet.

Q. It seemed certainly to me that the focus of this document was very much on whether or not there were defects to the dry rising man or the firefighting lift; is that right?

A. Yes, but it would -- could contain any defects found on the visit.

Q. After 2004, what happened to documents like this? I ask that because, of course, we don't have anything similar for Lakanal after May 2004.
A. There was an authority decision that we went away from carrying out a visit such as G9, which was a dry riser inspection, and the responsibility went over to private companies to test the dry riser and check its function. That didn't stop us, though, going back, as we did, and doing 72D visits to the same premises, looking at the same kind of things as we did on a G9 visit. But the only difference was the recording of them. There was no requirement to record them formally like this, instead of which, in our borough in Southwark, we started liaising directly with Southwark Council in term of getting defects corrected.

Q. So if we move on, then, to the period of 2008 and the first half of 2009, we shouldn't expect to find documents like this?

A. No.

Q. So what instead was the practice in 2008/2009 in terms firstly of writing up any outcomes or findings from a 72D visit?

A. Any -- basically we had -- in terms of residential blocks, we would have spoken to the council. We'd have emailed our fire liaison --

Q. Just pause there. Let's take it right back. You've been going round the building with a notepad and pen --

A. Yeah.
Q. And the gist of your evidence, as I understood it yesterday, was that your crews would write down defects that they spotted but they wouldn't be expected to write down other things that one wouldn't categorise as defects; is that right?

A. They would record anything unusual or defects. So that could be that -- if there was an access problem or there was a problem with the actual structure of the building in terms of firefighting, the lifts, the lobby doors. They would record all that information.

Q. Let's get a practical example then. If you had a building with an unusually complex layout, that's not a defect, is it?

A. No, that's not a defect.

Q. So was that something that you would expect the crews to record as they went round?

A. If -- if they felt it was so unusual, then they might have created a plan to reflect that.

Q. So that would be in their discretion?

A. That would be at their discretion.

Q. But you would expect them to write down defects. They might write down other things. What would happen to the notes afterwards, immediately after the visit? What would you expect?

A. On -- if they were substantial -- if there were
substantial defects, then maybe I would have expected
the notes to end up in the station file on the premises.
Otherwise I would have expected an email to myself
telling me what the defects were, or to -- if it was of
particular concern, to a fire safety officer.
Q. So summarising that, you would expect any difficulties
to be brought to your attention in writing, whether in
a written memo or an email; is that right?
A. Yes.
Q. The original handwritten notes made as the crews went
round, would you expect ever to see those?
A. I wouldn't necessarily expect to see them again.
Q. Do you recall instances of being sent written
information about matters that one wouldn't call
defects, so matters like unusually complex layouts?
A. Not -- not in relating to layouts, no.
Q. After you received written notification of any defects,
what would you do with that information?
A. I'd make sure that the information was passed on to the
relevant person. So in terms of a building defect,
tower high rise, it would have been passed on to
Southwark Council by the -- by our fire liaison officer
within Southwark.
Q. Would that be done on a standard form like the one we
see on the screen or some other way?
A. It would be done just by an email listing the defects.

Q. What about records-keeping within the fire station for the benefit of crews who might need to go back for the purposes of an operational incident?

A. Again, if -- if it was a -- a serious defect, ie damage to the dry riser, then we've got a specific procedure we would follow. Say, for instance, a -- there was a lot of metal thefts and say part of the dry riser had been stolen which would have made the dry riser infective in the event of a fire. Then there would be a procedure where the crew would inform the council that the dry riser was defective, they would put a note in the station handing-over book, they would email the local stations so they were aware, if they came onto the incident, that the dry riser was not defective -- was not in use. They would also have contacted our resource management centre to inform them and our predetermined attendance section would have been informed, because if the dry riser is not working then we would require more fire engines to deal with that incident. That does happen from time to time.

Q. Looking at some of the points you made there, firstly, does it follow that there might be situations in which a less serious defect was notified to, for example, a landlord, but wasn't noted internally at the fire
A. I wouldn't say that. It's easy to make a note of a -- in the station handing-over book or an email. It's quite simple for anybody who does an inspection to record that information.

Q. Where would be the appropriate place or places to record it?

A. A minor defect would have been an email to -- to the landlord or the council --

Q. I'm thinking about internally, in the fire station.

A. Internally, in the station handing-over book or an email to the other watches.

Q. Was there any practice of informing other watches verbally about matters identified on a 72D visit?

A. On a change of watch, when one watch is going off duty and the other watch is coming on, there might have been a discussion about what had happened that day and where they'd been and what they had found on their visit, for instance, but it would have been recorded -- because they'd only be seeing one of three watches, they would have recorded it in the handing-over book -- station handing-over book.

Q. The system is based upon the use of a handover book; is that right?

A. The handing-over book and the email system.
Q. And any verbal handover would be informal and at the choice of those involved?
A. That would have been an informal discussion made, and that's -- that's it, really.
Q. Do the watches shift times overlap to allow for any handover period?
A. There's always -- there's always a handover between watches, certainly the officers on the watch, and that handover is -- is recorded in terms of it taking place in the station logbook.
Q. Are there periods of time when both watches are paid to be on duty so the handover can take place?
A. No, they're not -- they're either on duty or off duty, but they would be there, say, ten/15 minutes beforehand, and the information would be passed over then.
Q. At the choice of those involved?
A. At the choice of those involved.
Q. You explained to us the system in relation to the identification of defects on a 72D visit. What are the other purposes, if any, of a 72D visit, other than looking for defects?
A. Familiarisation. 72Ds might not necessarily even be a -- they can be an area, rather than an actual building. You could be looking at water supplies, even -- even, say, water supplies in a park, things like
that. So they're not restricted to buildings.

Q. Can you explain what you mean by "familiarisation"?

A. An awareness for the crews of buildings and areas on
their station ground. It could be, like, an access. If
a building was down an alleyway, for instance, they
might want to know how to get to it. So just access
and -- and looking around in -- in general terms. We've
now changed -- when we carry out that practice now, we
call them a visual audit.

Q. Can I ask you to have a look at your witness statement
at page 678. This is in the witness statements bundle.
Firstly, let me just identify the first page of it with
you on 676. Is that your statement?

A. I can see that.

Q. Thank you. Mr Clark will pass you a hard copy.

(Handed) In paragraph 10 on page 678, you say:

"Additionally, crews will, on a daily basis, carry
out ad hoc visits to premises that are not formally
recorded as 72D familiarisation visits. The visit could
be generated because of the need to familiarise members
the crew who hadn't been there before ..."

You go on to say:

"... or if they had received reports of rubbish
being left around which may pose a fire risk."

Is it right that that makes the important point that
a 72D visit or a familiarisation visit is just that?
It's not just about spotting defects; it's about
familiarising crews with buildings where they may have
to fight fires?
A. That's correct.
Q. Part of the point of that, I assume, is so that they
build up some familiarity with the layout of the
building?
A. That's correct.
Q. In terms of other possible purposes of a visit, is it
right that one of them is to see whether a building
should be on what's called the central risk register?
A. Yes.
Q. It was at the time?
A. Around -- around that time, before the computers were
put on the fire engines, we did have a central risk
register, which was a -- a risk which was -- basically
looked at streets in London and any unusual risks that
you might find within that area. It was important
information for crews around 2009 at that time.
Q. To summarise, was that focussed very heavily on whether
there were unusual materials, flammable materials,
chemicals, on site?
A. Yes.
Q. Would a familiarisation visit have as one of its
purposes checking the predetermined attendance for the 
building and whether it needed to be altered?

A. That could be the case, especially if you're looking at, 
say, a higher -- a higher building that might have 
required an aerial appliance to attend.

Q. Would you expect crews carrying out a familiarisation 
visit to have with them information about what the 
current predetermined attendance of the building was?

A. Not necessarily on a -- on a 72D -- on a 72D visit or 
a familiarisation visit.

Q. They can't check it unless they know what it currently 
is, can they?

A. They could only check it when they got back. If they 
came back from a visit and they thought that there were, 
say, water problems there, access problems, or the 
building was difficult to get to or it was a higher 
building than -- or a new building, then they might 
speak to our PDA section and request information about 
how many fire engines would -- would go on that.

Q. Just on this topic, I've just put up on the screen 
page 945 in the advocates' bundles, file 3. This is the 
initial mobilisation to the fire on 3 July 2009. You 
can see at 16.21.21, it says:

"Mobilise, mobilise, mobilise."

Then we see that the initial mobilisation was four
pumps and an aerial ladder platform. Do you see that?

A. I can see that.

Q. Are you able to assist us with whether that was the
predetermined attendance for Lakanal House at the time?

A. I would say it was. If you look at the -- the top line,
it says Echo 35 as watch manager. I would say Lakanal
House was three appliances and an aerial appliance due
to the building, and as there wasn't a substantive watch
manager on duty at Peckham on that day, a watch manager
was sent from the Old Kent Road for officer cover.

Q. So your interpretation is that the predetermined
attendance was three pumps plus an aerial ladder
platform, but a fourth pump was sent in order that
a watch manager could attend?

A. That's correct.

Q. Would you, as Peckham fire station, ever do
familiarisation visits to a building on another
station's ground, so for example on Old Kent Road's
ground?

A. That -- that's possible. I would say the more likely
reason that would occur would be if you were carrying
out, say, an exercise. If there was a -- like
an event -- a training event arranged by Old Kent Road
in a particular premises which might have been because
it was a particular risk, that we would have taken part
in a exercise. But you wouldn't normally go and visit buildings on another station's ground.

Q. The reason I ask is because one can see from this incident and from the predetermined attendance that there is an automatic requirement for Lakanal House in July 2009 that appliances attend from two fire stations.

A. That's correct.

Q. Presumably there would be similar buildings on Old Kent Road's ground where there would be a requirement for Peckham immediately to attend?

A. That's correct.

Q. Presumably there would be occasions when a watch manager from Peckham would become the incident commander for an Old Kent Road incident?

A. That's correct.

Q. And as in this case, where a watch manager from Old Kent Road became the incident commander on a Peckham incident?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you just help us with how unusual that is, that the watch manager who becomes incident commander -- and of course, in this case, was incident commander for about 25 minutes -- comes from a different fire station?

A. I would say probably a quarter of the time. That would
be due to the watch manager at Peckham not being -- being on leave or training -- going on training events. So they would -- our control would send someone -- they wouldn't necessarily be from the next station anyway. They could be from two stations away.

Q. You mentioned that one of the things they might think about on a familiarisation visit when thinking about how to fight a fire, should one arise, is the use of an aerial ladder platform. Now, of course, Peckham didn't have an aerial ladder platform.

A. No.

Q. But the predetermined attendance required one to attend from another station?

A. That's correct.

Q. And in normal circumstances, it would then fall under the command of a watch manager from Peckham?

A. Yes.

Q. To what extent would a watch manager from Peckham be able to think about how he was going to use an aerial ladder platform that came on a predetermined attendance if Peckham didn't have its own?

A. Well, part of our training regime within the station would be to familiarise ourselves with different appliances from other stations. So we would routinely get the -- an aerial appliance, such as the one from Old
Kent Road, to visit Peckham for a training event. Other appliances -- say a fire rescue unit -- would also be required to attend Peckham, so even though they're not at our station, we would make sure that the firefighters were familiar with the appliances.

Q. Then I think another possible purpose of a familiarisation visit would be to consider whether or not to complete a form about the premises to put in an operational information folder; is that right?

A. That's right. The -- the operational information folder is -- which I don't know if you're aware or not -- is a folder which was -- in 2009, was carried on appliances which contained information relating to, say, a premises that would have a risk, that would be a risk to firefighters if they turned up.

Q. I'll ask you some more questions about operational information folders a little later, if that's okay.

A. That's fine.

Q. Are there any other purposes of a familiarisation visit that I've missed in the questions I've asked you?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Now, in the course of these inquests, we've asked a number of witnesses whether, as a result of their presence at the fire ground on the day of the fire, they gained knowledge of certain features of Lakanal House.
There's a shortlist I asked you about. What I want to ask you about is whether you would expect crews to have gained knowledge of these features in the course of a 72D visit, okay?

A. Yes.

Q. So firstly, in the course of a 72D visit, would you expect crews to become aware that there was no central corridor on even-numbered floors?

A. I -- I would expect them to have a basic knowledge of the building, yes.

Q. From the answers you gave yesterday, the answer must be yes, because you would expect them to look on each floor?

A. Yes.

Q. Again, following on from yesterday, you would expect them to work out that the flats were maisonettes?

A. Yes.

Q. I'm sure you now know that on the upper floors of each flat, the flat extended the full width of the building, with windows over both the east and west sides. Would you have expected crews to work that out on a 72D visit?

A. I would have expected them to work out that, yes.

Q. You would?

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. I think it follows from your evidence
yesterday you would have expected them to work out that
the balconies are escape routes?
A. Within -- yes, because like I said, we carried out home
fire safety visits in four blocks in Peckham's ground
that are all similar --
Q. Just pause there. I'm not asking about home fire safety
visits at the moment. Just recapping from yesterday,
you made it clear that you would have expected those
conducting a 72D visit to work out that the balconies
are escape balconies?
A. They -- yes, they have keys and the idea of the visit is
to check the keys work, so they would have opened the --
the doors to the lobby where the escape balconies are.
Q. To what extent would you have expected crews to build
up, at least at the time they were on site, some
understanding of how the flat numbering system worked?
A. I might not have expected them to retain that -- that
knowledge on a 72D visit.
Q. Well, I can certainly understand that wouldn't retain it
in their long term memory, but would you expect them to
note signs at the time, or develop some understanding so
that if they went back to the building later they would
have something to draw on to know how to find quickly
where particular flats were?
A. I -- I would have expected them to notice, for instance,
the -- an indication available in terms of where flat
digits are. Don't forget, we go -- we go to these
blocks operationally on a fairly regular basis, and they
will be looking for a specific flat possibly at that
time, so they would need to have some sort of
understanding of the flat numbers or where to find them.

Q. Those sorts of matters I've been asking you about -- the
fact that they're maisonettes, the fact that escape
routes are provided by balconies -- I assume that you
wouldn't regard any of those as being categorised as
defects in any way, and so what I wondered was whether
you would have expected a crew who got back from such
a visit, having discovered those things in the course of
it, to have passed that information on in any way to
other watches?

A. In terms of the fact they had balconies or were
maisonettes, no.

Q. If I ask you then about home fire safety visits.
I think you had a specific responsibility for that in
the borough at the time; is that right?

A. That's correct.

Q. You were responsible for the home fire safety visits
programme at the time?

A. Yes.

Q. Briefly, what's the purpose of a home fire safety visit?
A. A home fire safety visit is basically a -- a kind of
a mini-risk assessment of somebody in their home,
informing them of the dangers of fire within their home.
So if they were a smoker, we'd be talking about ways to
manage their smoking. If they used hot fat oil, we'd be
talking about how to manage cooking. Basic
housekeeping, if you like, around the -- around the
person's home. A brief look at how they managed their
electrical wires, making sure that they used the correct
type of adaptors and advising them appropriately, and
also if they didn't have a smoke alarm, it would involve
fitting a smoke alarm in the house or home.

Q. Would one or two firefighters go to a block or would the
whole crew go and go to different flats within it?
A. We've -- in our borough over the last few years, we've
carried out --

THE CORONER: Mr McGurran, we need to know about before
2009.

A. Even in 2009, we had started doing group visits, so the
whole -- both appliances from the station would turn up
and they would do more than one visit at that time. So
they would be visiting several flats, if you like,
several maisonettes.

Q. Would any records be kept other than the fact that
a visit was made to flat number 27, or whatever it may
be?
A. There is a -- a database which the crews have to
complete on returning to the station, an electronic
database, where they have to record the information that
was given, whether smoke alarms were fitted and the
person's personal details.
Q. Can I ask you to go to page 1102 in the advocates'
bundles. This is a document provided by the
London Fire Brigade to summarise home fire safety visits
carried out at Lakanal House and Marie Curie. You can
see that there were just over 25 in Lakanal House in
2005.
A. I can see that.
Q. And one more in January 2008. There were, again, about
25 in Marie Curie in 2005 and also about 25 in
Marie Curie in 2008.
A. Yes.
Q. I think you can probably ignore July 2009 because
I think they would have been done after the fire at
Lakanal.
A. That's correct.
Q. Taking this fairly quickly, would it be fair to say that
a firefighter who went into a flat in a block like
Lakanal to carry out a home fire safety visit would
notice, while doing it, that it was a maisonette?
A. Yes.
Q. That on the upper floor it extended the full width of the building?
A. That's correct.
Q. And that it had balconies that were escape routes?
A. Yes.
Q. If I take you then in your witness statement to page 679. Just for completeness, paragraph 17 identifies another type of visit that might be conducted by a different part of the London Fire Brigade, where you say:

"The regulatory fire safety team also have certain buildings that they inspect on our ground and this process was in addition to operational visits. If there were any problems that crews should know about from an operational point of view they would notify us ... if any information came in from fire safety, that information would be passed on to all watches."

But you say:

"This did not happen very often."
A. That's right. That's -- for instance, if you -- fire safety had been asked to visit a premises where there was a specific problem in terms of compartmentation, fire separation, or the use of the premises, then they might have issued a notice on that building prohibiting
its use or part use, and then that information would be
passed on to the local station and the local station
would be requested to go and visit that premises from
time to time to make sure that the measures put in place
by the fire regulatory team were still current.

Q. What I'm going to do now is show you briefly some
documents from 2008 and the first half of 2009 which
seem to indicate a drive by the brigade to focus on high
rise buildings.

So firstly if you could look at page 1493 in the
advocates' bundles. That's the first page, the front
cover of the document that we saw for the first time
yesterday in court, "Generic risk assessment 3.2". Just
to be clear to everybody, that is a national document,
not a London Fire Brigade document. Is that something
you would have seen at the time?

A. No.

Q. You would have focussed on London Fire Brigade
documents?

A. Correct.

Q. Then if I ask you to look at page 1112. Do you have
that?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that a document that you would have seen at the time?

A. Yes.
Q. If you look on in it just to refresh your memory, you'll see at page 1121 that one of the aims, one of the things that "we will do in 2008/2009" is:

"We will inspect high risk buildings to gain information to assist with firefighting and other emergency events."

Then if I ask you to look at page 1127.

Members of the jury, we're now in the jury bundle at tab 15. Mr McGurran, you may find this easier to take from the jury bundle, which Mr Clark will pass you.

(Handed)

A. I've got that.

Q. I imagine this is something you will have read at the time?

A. Yes.

Q. The jury have seen this before, so I'll take it fairly quickly. The first page is all about high rise incidents. It refers to the publication of generic risk assessment 3.2, a national document that we've now seen. It sets out key elements of the operational procedure and then, in the second column, it has a section on pre-planning and says:

"Fire crews should be familiar with all high rise premises on their ground."

It goes on to say, a few lines below:
"Building layout can be of particular importance. In some blocks of flats, the front door can lead into the flat, up to the flat or down to the flat, all from the same level. Where appropriate, pre-planning information should be recorded in the operational information folder and shared with adjoining stations."

Would you agree with me that that last sentence that I read raises at least the possibility that it would be appropriate in the case of some high rise buildings to include them in the operational information folder?

A. I wouldn't have said that the buildings in question, ie the ones at Lakanal, would have --

Q. That wasn't what I asked you.

A. No.

Q. The point I'm making is this: that this document seems to assume that it will sometimes be appropriate to put information about high rise buildings in an operational information folder.

A. Possibly, but in the context of the fire station at Peckham, where we have 125 high rise buildings, to include -- what to include and what not to include would probably be difficult, and the operational information folder is about risks to firefighters, and I would expect the firefighters from Peckham to be aware of those types of buildings, and indeed the surrounding
stations have similar blocks of similar construction.

Q. If I ask you then to look at page 1137. This is further on in the same part of the jury bundle. Do you recognise this as the training package that was delivered to all watches after the Operational News for November 2008 encouraged further training?

A. Yes.

Q. Then if you look to page 1172. This was an email from Assistant Commissioner Dave Brown, importance high, subject "High rise"?

A. I can see that.

Q. It draws attention to the earlier Operational News article we've just looked at. Then, under "72D visits", it says in the third line:

"As part of the ongoing familiarisation training for station-based staff, station managers are to ensure that watch and crew managers diarise, book and visit the high rise premises on their station's ground during 2009/2010. This process should begin with immediate effect and then be undertaken annually thereafter."

It also says, lower down:

"There should be a training exercise to test on-arrival tactics at high rise premises ..."

And that exercise should be completed by 31 July.

A. That's correct.
Q. Then if I show you, over the page, 1173. This is Operational News of May 2009, and it makes the point that pre-planning can often increase the likelihood of a successful and effective outcome to the incident. That's in the second paragraph.

A. Yes, I can see that.

Q. I started this line of questioning by suggesting that there was a drive in the brigade in 2008/2009 to give greater priority to high rise buildings and pre-planning for high rise incidents. Is that a fair point for me to make?

A. The drive wasn't just around pre-planning; the drive was how we deal with a high rise incident, and the second part of the email from AC Brown referred to the training exercises, and all the crews at Peckham -- well, all the crews in the borough were tasked with arranging an exercise at a high rise, and I think in my witness statement I've detailed where the exercises were carried out and when.

Q. That's what I'm going to take you to next, and to introduce it by saying that, as I understand it, the thrust of your evidence will be that this drive, as I've called it, had an effect on the frequency of visits to high rise buildings and the provision of training?

A. It -- it did have an effect on the -- on the training.
Obviously, we carried out the training within a --
a reasonable time of the email being circulated.

Q. So if we look in your witness statement to refresh your
memory, starting on page 678.

THE CORONER: Before you do that, Mr Maxwell-Scott, I see
the sun is shining in people's eyes. Would it be
helpful if we closed the curtains just for a short
while, just until the sun comes round? (Pause) Thank
you very much.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Paragraph 12 of your statement says that:

"Each [watch had] a number of visits to carry out
from the master schedule."

There would be one outside visit per day by the
watch on duty. Then, in the final five lines:

"Typically, each watch inspects a quarter of the
premises each year. Inspections could be every three
months, six months, or yearly. The frequency of visits
could be increased or decreased depending on the risk
posed by the building and whether any new risks were
present. At the time of the fire, I believe that we had
approximately 150 visits on our schedule."

Before moving on, I didn't quite understand how the
sentence about "each watch inspects a quarter of the
premises each year" related to the next sentence about
"inspections could be every three months, six months, or
yearly”.

A. That -- that relates to the -- the visits are generated electronically into the station diary, so the watches will automatically visit all premises over a four-year period. Now, that could be less than four years if the frequency to visit that premises was, say, three-monthly or six-monthly.

Q. Just pausing there, if an inspection is yearly, that means one watch each year; is that right?

A. That's correct.

Q. So in the course of a four year period, each watch will have been there once?

A. That's correct.

Q. Whereas if an inspection is every three months, then each watch will go there in the course of one year?

A. Yes.

Q. Then at paragraph 13, you make the point that you inherited the list of frequency of visits from the previous station manager but it would have been open to you to change the frequency.

A. That's correct.

Q. Paragraph 14 says that:

"Visits were set out at the beginning of the year for the entire year and added to the electronic station diary."
Does that mean, by "the beginning of the year",
January of each year?
A. Yes.
Q. "If there was a direction from headquarters to visit a certain type of premises, then this would influence the premises to visit."

Then if we go over the page to paragraph 15, you refer to the email from Assistant Commissioner Brown that we looked at a few moments ago, and then we see what happened as a result of it. In the fourth line:
"Lakanal was visited by the white and blue watches in May 2009."
We've heard about that. That was 2 May and 30 May.
Then you say this:
"The other two watches would have diarised to visit later on in the year."
Let me ask you this: as at 3 July 2009, was there a date for Green Watch and Red Watch to visit Lakanal House?
A. I can't answer that now. I don't know now whether there was or not. The request to -- for them to diarise was handed down to watch managers to deal with actually when they were going to visit the high rise premises. It might have been that one of the other watches would have visited Lakanal as part of their schedule of visits
routinely so that it would have been only necessary for one other watch, say, to visit at some point. The other point with that email -- like I said a few times, we've got 125 high rise premises and in the course of our normal work, we carry out home fire safety visits, and when they carry out a home fire safety visit in a -- a tower block, for instance, or a high rise premises, they are all -- they are, if you like, automatically carrying out a type of 72D visit where they're looking at the building. If they noticed any defects then they would be bringing them forward. So for us to visit -- for instance, we've got 125 high rise, say. That would require about 1,000 visits to complete the task within that email, which would -- that's assuming that each watch would visit a premises twice. I say that because when a watch visits a premises, there wouldn't be, say, the whole watch on the appliances at that time. Some would be on leave, some could be sick, some could be on out duty, some could be training. So to effectively visit a premises it might require two visits, so you'll be looking at 1,000 visits for Peckham to visit all their high rise premises.

Q. All I was asking you was a question of pure fact. Looking at your sentence in paragraph 15, "The other two watches would have diarised to visit later on in the
year" -- all I was asking you was this: as of 3 July 2009, had they diarised to do so? I think your answer was you don't know?

A. No, I don't know.

Q. If we look back to what you said in paragraph 14, their visits would have been pre-diarised for the entire year back in January 2009, wouldn't they? That is the effect of the first sentence of paragraph 14.

A. I think what you're looking at here is two layers of visits. You have the visits they would be automatically -- or premises they'd be automatically diarised to go and see, and then you've got a request for, if you like, more visits to be made in terms of the email from AC Brown.

Q. To the best of your recollection, as at 3 July 2009, what steps had you taken to ensure that Green Watch carried out a 72D visit at Lakanal in 2009?

A. I -- I wouldn't have taken any steps personally at that point in time. The -- like I said, the task was given to the watch managers.

Q. By whom?

A. By me. I emailed them to ask them to diarise visits for the tower blocks on Peckham's ground.

Q. So that's the answer. The step you took was, you say, to email your watch managers asking them to diarise such
visits?

A. That's correct.

Q. Thank you. Then if you look at paragraph 21, which is on page 680, you make the point that there was a system for ensuring that visits that were diarised were in fact carried out. If they weren't, they were flagged up as red on the computer. You're confident that visits that were diarised to be carried out were in fact carried out?

A. That's correct.

Q. Again, for completeness, look at paragraph 11 of your statement. You make the point that in a familiarisation visit there would be an opportunity to spot if it was the type of building that had perhaps antisocial problems like rubbish in corridors or vandalism to dry risers, and that that could then cause crews to flag it up to be visited more frequently?

A. That's correct, and to that end they could have been -- if a crew had identified a problem with a block, then it would be usual for them to go back, say, a week later to see if the defects that they'd highlighted had been repaired, and if -- and see if -- or see if the situation was the same.

THE CORONER: So it would be the same crew, generally?

A. It would be the same crew who would go back.
MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: You say at the end of that paragraph:
"I do not think Lakanal came up as having any
specific issues around that time regarding these type of
risks."

A. That's right.

Q. So we've looked at how the brigade policy in 2008 had
an impact on the frequency of visits to high rise
buildings like Lakanal House and how the visits
in May 2009 were triggered by the email in April. What
I want to ask you then is this: do you think that the
brigade policy had any effect on the way in which visits
were carried out as opposed to frequency of them?
I think your answer would be: probably not?

A. It would have had an effect, because the firefighters
who undertook -- well, they all undertook the
training -- the practical training in what equipment to
do when they did their exercises, say, in a high rise,
and also the lectures that they had -- there was a lot
of information given to them and like you said, it was
about an awareness of -- be aware of the layout of the
floors, say. So they had had that training given to
them, and it was assessed, if you like -- briefly,
I think there were assessments within the training. So
you kind of tried to make sure that they were paying
attention during that time.
Q. So because they had training as well as there being an increase in the frequency of visits, the training may have caused them to approach the visits differently; is that what you're saying?

A. That's what I'm saying.

Q. But you wouldn't personally know one way or the other; is that fair?

A. No, other than observing them operationally at incidents and the way they -- or the equipment they would carry and the way they set about dealing with an incident in high rise premises. I did observe that.

Q. Did you observe a change after the training?

A. I certainly observed a greater awareness of -- of, say, the equipment they would be required to -- and how they would set up the, say, bridgehead at an incident.

Q. Did this brigade-wide policy, as far as you recall, back in the first part of 2009, have any effect on the way in which information was recorded after a 72D visit?

A. No, I don't -- don't recall any -- any specific change there.

Q. Madam, I probably have about another 15 minutes of questions.

THE CORONER: All right. It would be sensible to have a break now then. Thank you very much.

Would you like a break now, members of the jury? If
we could be back in ten minutes. Do leave the papers on
the desk if you like.

Mr McGurran, we're going to have a ten minute break,
so you're welcome to leave but please be back in ten
minutes and please, in the mean time, don't talk to
anyone about your evidence in this matter. Thank you.

(11.28 am)

(A short break)

(11.40 am)

(In the presence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Yes, thank you.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Mr McGurran, I'm going to ask you next
about the policy I've put up on the screen,
London Fire Brigade policy number 521 on information
gathering. I asked Crew Manager Willett about that some
weeks ago, but at the time we didn't have it up on the
screen, so it will be much easier for the members of the
jury to follow now.

If I ask you to turn in it to page 1554. There's
a section headed "The hazards", section 7, and it says:

"It is important when identifying premises to carry
out information-gathering visits that the points listed
below are considered. This information will form the
basis for completion of the A010."

Just pausing there, is that a reference to A010, to
the standard form that's used when a form is put in the
operational information folder?

A. Yes, it refers to -- I think it's -- "A010" is the
correct terminology for it.

Q. Thank you.

A. This form was a precursor to the current system we use
now, the operational risk database. At this time when
this came out -- around the time of the Lakanal fire, we
were in the process of visiting premises and starting to
look at how we're going to put information onto the A010
form. The A010 form was designed -- if you read the
whole note, it talks about large major accident hazard
premises and basically it was to simplify the amount of
information onto an A4 sheet of paper.

Q. Can I just pause there and show you a document, and you
can tell me if it is an A010 form. This is 1672.

A. That's not an A010.

Q. It's not an A010?

A. That was an original -- that relates to the Camberwell
College of Arts, and that was the form that was on the
appliance in 2009, which was the original type of -- way
we recorded information.

Q. Did the A010 replace this form at 1672?

A. The A010 -- in terms of Peckham, what happened, this
instruction came out for us to go and complete A010s on
premises. There was -- within the brigade, if you like, or certainly within our borough, there was discussion about how we were gonna train people to change how they were gonna record the information. The new form was an electronic form, and shortly after Lakanal, there was a decision made brigade-wide that a team would be sent out to each station and they would record the information onto -- they would capture the information electronically and prepare it for the new electronic database to go on fire engines.

Q. If I can try and keep you to matters before the Lakanal fire. If we go back to 1554.

A. Yes.

Q. I'm not quite sure why this is but the version in front of me gives an issue date, although the one on the screen doesn't. We have it here, anyway, on the first page, 1552. This policy was issued in July 2007, so approximately two years before the Lakanal fire. What I'm not clear on is if the document I showed you wasn't an A010, why it was that A010s weren't being completed in Peckham between July 2007 and July 2009, if that is the case.

A. A010s had been completed and had been sent -- I think our PDA -- our predetermined attendance section -- there was a section collating information centrally and forms
were completed and sent off within that period. The information on the operational information folder, though, had remained the same and was still valid information for crews relating to those premises.

Q. The guidance on hazards at section 7 on page 154, is that relevant to how one decides what should go in an operational information folder or does it relate to some other function?

A. I would say that this was a different remit. This was looking at hazards at any -- any premises. The operational information folder was designed to reflect premises where you wouldn't necessarily expect to find a risk, i.e., the Camberwell College of Arts, which you have as an example up there. That premises had redacted] and also --

THE CORONER: We don't need to go into the detail of what was at the college of art, thank you.

A. Okay. Well, certainly it was designed to show something you wouldn't expect to find as a -- as a firefighter in a premises.

Q. Section 7 lists points that might be regarded as hazards. It doesn't specifically identify high rise residential buildings as hazards. What I'm trying to understand is what guidance, if any, applied to deciding what premises should have information on them in the
operational information folder held by the pumps.

A. I can't recall the guidance that was put in place, which I believe was in 1994, relating to operational information folders, but like I said, it was to do with a premises where if you turned up there might be a hazard that you wouldn't have expected to find from a firefighter safety point of view.

Q. If I then ask you to look in your witness statement on this point. Paragraph 19 on page 680.

A. I've got that.

Q. In the second line, you say:

"Whether information was recorded on a residential high rise building may be decided by asking the question: 'Is there anything unusual in this premises which I would not normally expect to see in a high rise premises?' You would not generally expect to see the type of risks and hazards that are ordinarily identified within an operational information folder at a residential building. As identified above, such risks may be radiation, chemicals, biohazards and explosives. Therefore, for these reasons, information in relation to residential high rise premises would not ordinarily be included in the operational information older."

Does that reflect the position in the first part of 2009?
A. I would say so.

Q. Then, on the same point, in paragraph 9 of your statement at 677, you say in the second sentence:
   “However, I would not generally have thought of Lakanal, or any other residential high rise, as high risk operationally prior to the fire.”

A. That’s correct.

Q. Then if we look at what was in the operational information folders for Peckham at the time of the fire. If we look firstly at the example at 1672. Is that an example of the standard form used on Peckham appliances at the time?

A. That’s right.

Q. What one tends to get on the back of the form is a sketch plan; is that right?

A. Yeah.

Q. And that’s the standard way of completing these documents at the time?

A. That would be, yes.

Q. Then if I take to you 1668. This is the beginning of a schedule that summarises what premises did have information forms like that on them on the Peckham pumps at the time in July 2009.

A. It's not in the bundle, so I'll have to look at the screen.
THE CORONER: Can you see it sufficiently on the screen?

A. I can see it, yes.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

A. Yeah, I would say that was reflective.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: One short point to start with, which is that the pump ladder, E371, seems to have had more information, several more premises on it, than E372. Is there any particular reason why that might have been?

A. I think that's -- that's historic. I mean, this document -- this document has been, if you like, from 2009 to now. One, we now use the operational risk database, which is the most up-to-date information for firefighters from any station attending a -- an incident. The operational information folder had remained on the run until recently, but the most up-to-date information from 2010 was the operational risk database. So the forms within this folder, I would say -- I couldn't say what was in there or what wasn't in there now.

Q. So we're looking at historic information that has ceased to be of practical use because of some changes made. So it may be whilst we're getting a flavour here --

A. That's correct.

Q. There may have been more pages and there may have been a better fit between what was on each pump at the time?
A. I think that's -- that's fair to say.

Q. We'll bear that in mind, but if you could look at this and give us a very general flavour of why premises were in the folder. The first point to make, which we've heard already, is that there are no high rise residential blocks in here.

A. That's correct.

Q. If we look at the list on this page -- just keep it to this page -- and if you could tell us very generally whether, as you understand it, the premises was included because of complexity of layout or the nature of materials held on site or some other reason. That will just help us to get a sense of the principles that lie behind what does or does not go within the folders. Do you understand?

A. Yes.

Q. If you could be as general as possible.

A. Again, it was about what risks you'd expect to find within a premises. One of the premises there, which is a --

THE CORONER: Well, Mr McGurran, Mr Maxwell-Scott has asked you to keep it general. He's identified, for example, complexity of layout or the nature of materials on the site. So perhaps you could just focus on those two possibilities. There may be another possibility,
another broad category, but rather than looking at
specific examples, unless we actually need to, I'd like
to keep it general.

A. Okay. Going down the list, on the right-hand side, if
you like, it could be that there were specific chemicals
or storage of chemicals, the layout, difficulty in
gaining access, general -- all the reasons specific to
how we would deal with a fire in those premises, and the
operational risk -- operational information folder was
around firefighter safety, and identified to
firefighters who might turn up at a premises that there
could be something there that they wouldn't necessarily
expect to find, or it could be the layout or the
distance involved. So --

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Certainly my recollection of looking at
these was that the majority of the premises held some
form of substance or material on them which was the
focus of the contents of the form. Can you confirm that
that's correct?

A. I would say that was correct.

Q. What I'd like to ask you now, just to finish off my
questioning, is: thinking now about when a crew turns up
to fight a fire at a premises like a tower block, to
what extent is the system, if I can call it that, for
effectively fighting the fire dependent on the fact that
the crew will have been there themselves not all that long ago and therefore have some recollection of the nature of the premises and its layout from their familiarisation?

A. That -- that's like -- obvious, I suppose, that, yes, you would hope that they would remember -- if they had been to a premises, they would remember what it was like the next time they -- they turned up if there was a fire there.

Q. Because unless there's a specific defect noted on a previous visit, as I understand your evidence, a crew that turns up isn't going to know about what was discovered in terms of layout by another crew on a different familiarisation visit.

A. Not necessarily.

Q. And indeed an incident commander, such as a watch manager from another fire station, is very unlikely to have done a familiarisation visit at a high rise residential building on another station's ground?

A. That's correct.

Q. So he will be wholly dependent on what the local crew can tell him?

A. Absolutely.

Q. If you don't think this is a fair question for you then just say so, but I'm interested in to what extent the
system of fighting the fire effectively is dependent on firefighters being able and expected to work out the layout when they arrive.

A. I wouldn't -- I wouldn't say it was -- obviously, when firefighters arrive at a building they've got to make a decision on -- on effecting entry into the premises, accessing the systems within the building -- say, for a high rise, dry riser, fire lift. The procedure in place would take them to a -- a level within the building to fight the fire. Hopefully, there'd be other information there like -- in terms of talking to residents about where flats are, where the fire is, possibly some -- something outside for them to indicate where the flat numbers would be. So in the initial stages of fighting a fire, I would say actual plan layout wouldn't be the first thing they would be looking at.

Q. Just two short practical points on Lakanal, if you can help us. I'll show you a couple of photographs. We looked at these yesterday. Firstly, the sign above the lifts. If a crew hadn't been on a recent familiarisation visit but was involved in an operational incident, would you expect someone to go and look to see if there was a sign like that?

A. I would have expected, when they actually went to the
fire lift to activate it so it became a fire lift, that it would be apparent to them there was a -- a sign above the lift indicating what floors and where.

Q. Then if I show you an external picture. You've seen this before, photograph 44. Would you expect a crew that hadn't been to the building recently to work out quickly that those balconies are fire escape balconies, or at least may be fire escape balconies?

A. I would have thought if someone stood back and looked at the building from a distance, they will see the pattern, see that there were balconies on certain floors.

Q. And what would you expect them to think that suggested?

A. That they possibly were an access route.

Q. If I could ask you to look at a document that you probably haven't seen before, which is at 1703. The front cover just explains what it is, because the document instead of doesn't give a clear date. It's a training document created by the Home Office for people who work in brigade control from 1994. This is the first page of it on 1704. If you have seen it before, do say so, but I doubt you have.

A. I haven't seen it.

Q. There's a short point I want to ask you about on 1711, where on, the right-hand column, just above the section 6, it tells us something about maisonettes. It
"A maisonette has two levels and its own staircase within the individual dwelling ..."

And then this:

"... and some alternative escape route is normally provided from the level which does not contain the main entrance. These alternative exits may lead onto a balcony or corridor giving access to a common stairway."

The point I was interested in was whether, based on your experience -- and you've told us that there were a number of flats with maisonettes on Peckham's ground -- whether it would be your experience that maisonettes did normally offer a separate escape route from the level other than that which the front door was on?

A. I thought in blocks they had to.

Q. You thought they had to?

A. Had to; not "normally".

Q. Because we've heard a lot about firefighters having a built-in belief that compartmentation is part of the design of a high rise building. I understand that. Do I understand from your answer that there is also a belief that maisonettes will have an escape route on the level other than that on which the front door is?
A. Yes, I believe they're meant to have two means of escape.

Q. Thank you. Two small points of detail just to finish up. When I asked you earlier about whether, in the course of carrying out a 72D visit, you would expect one of your crews visiting Lakanal to work out that the upper floors of the flats extended the full width of the building, you said yes. Unambiguously, you said yes. I just wanted to ask you why you said that and how you would have expected them to work that out.

A. I suppose it's a -- myself having carried out home fire safety visits within those types of buildings, it's kind of obvious to me.

Q. Well, I agree with you. It's certainly obvious if you do a home fire safety visit, but what I was slightly less sure is how you would expect a crew to work that out without going into a flat?

A. They -- they would have difficulty working it out without going into a flat, but then they had carried out home fire safety visits in -- in four similar types of blocks over that time, and even until now.

Q. We are certainly agree with each other that they would spot it during a home fire safety visit.

A. Yes.

Q. Finally, a point about aerial ladder platforms. You
told us that you did not think that high rise buildings
would ever be high risk operationally before the fire.
Obviously high rise buildings are of different heights.
At what height does the information "high rise" first
apply?
A. "High rise" comes in at 18 metres.
Q. How many floors would that be?
A. That would be say between five and six floors.
Q. Because what I'm interested in is --
A. Sorry, the "high rise" -- the other definition of "high
rise" is a building which is outside the means of normal
equipment.
Q. Do you mean outside the means of --
A. Fire brigade normal equipment.
Q. An aerial ladder platform?
A. And also an aerial ladder.
Q. That's what I wanted to ask you about. What I wanted to
ask you about was whether the risk changes when you have
a building that has upper floors outside the range of
an aerial ladder platform.
A. The risk doesn't change, to my knowledge.
Q. You wouldn't regard such a building as being of higher
risk than a residential tower block of, say, eight
floors, all of which were within reach of the aerial
ladder platform?
A. No, because even though you say an aerial ladder platform, because it's eight floors, might reach it, often with blocks you wouldn't be able to get an aerial ladder platform near to a block to effect a rescue or use it for firefighting purposes, so -- any building of 18 metres and above has to have certain features built into them under the building regulations, ie --

THE CORONER: Well, don't worry about that. We'll be asking others about building regulations.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Thank you very much. Those are my questions, but others will have some.

THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Edwards.

Questions by MR EDWARDS

MR EDWARDS: Thank you. Mr Edwards, on behalf of some of the families. I don't have very many questions for you, because Mr Maxwell-Scott has covered much of the ground I was going to cover. I just want to clarify some of the points that he raised.

Home fire safety visits. How many firefighters would you expect to go on each visit?

A. We'd normally have two firefighters carrying out a home fire safety visit. Like I said, we try and use our time smartly, if you like, when we carry out visits now. Originally, we would have had the whole crew in the premises carrying out visit, but to try and effect more
visits across London and across the borough, we would generally break crews down into two or three people.

THE CORONER: Can you just tell us what the position was prior to 2009, May 2009?

A. I think around that time we were in the process of -- of getting crews to break down into twos or threes to carry out a visit.

MR EDWARDS: The jury has also heard about 72D visits. That's where a whole watch goes or most of a watch would go. Are the two combined ever, so you do a 72D visit and at the same time the watch will split up into twos -- or perhaps were they in 2009 combined -- so that they then do home fire safety visits?

A. Like I said, one of the ways we -- when I've mentioned ad hoc visits or ad hoc familiarisation visits -- when a crew would go to a tower block to carry out a home fire safety visit, they, in effect, will be carrying out, for all intents and purposes, a 72D visit. They would be looking round the block. They wouldn't walk past lobby doors that were broken or dry riser outlets that were missing.

Q. I understand that, but when they're carrying out a 72D visit, they're not carrying out a home fire safety visit?

A. That's correct. They're there -- like I said, we have
the outside duty schedule electronic diary which
generates visits on a daily basis for crews to do, and
the home fire safety visits are generated elsewhere.

Q. Something the jury may be wondering is that when crews
are performing a 72D visit and they don't go into flats
because it's not a communal area, is there anything just
to stop them knocking on the door of a flat and saying,
"Do you mind us coming to have a look round so we can
familiarise ourselves with the building?"

A. There is nothing wrong with that, and I would say that
a few weeks ago, I had a new watch manager at Peckham
who had not visited one of the scissor-type construction
blocks, and we did a 72D visit at Marie Curie House,
sister block to Lakanal, and we did just that. We
knocked on one of the flats and they allowed us in to
look at the escape balconies. But that is obviously
down to the flat holder to allow us in.

THE CORONER: Well, Mr McGurran, from the way you've
answered that question, that's the position now. To
your knowledge, did that ever happen at the times that
we're looking at?

A. Not to my knowledge.

MR EDWARDS: Forgive me, Mr McGurran, I'm probably not
making my questions clear. Everything I'm asking you
about, unless I say otherwise, I'm asking about before
the date of the Lakanal House fire.

You refer in your witness statement -- we don't need
to call it up for the moment, but you talked about
different frequencies of visits. So some buildings were
visited every three months, some high rise buildings
every three months, some every six months, some every
year. Is that because they present different risks? To
put it bluntly, were the three months riskier than the
one-yearly visits?

A. Yes, and also brigade-wide, we had some direction --
I think after the King's Cross incident, undergrounds
were and still are visited three monthly, and we were
visiting railway stations three monthly. So there is
some direction, and also, like you said, if there's
a particular risk or if a premises continually changes,
or, you know, the local knowledge is that the premises
changes, the frequency would be increased.

Q. Do you know whether Lakanal House was on
a three-monthly, six-monthly, or yearly rota?

A. It was on a yearly.

Q. Mr Maxwell-Scott also asked you briefly about ALPs, the
aerial platforms. He suggested to you that if
a building's taller than a certain height and the ALP
can't reach a certain floor, it might be riskier. You
said: well, you can't say that because you don't even
know about access, whether you can get the ALP up to the building. Are you able to say what, if anything, was done to work out in advance whether an ALP could reach a building?

A. I can't say in relation to Lakanal. Other buildings where we've carried out high rise exercises, we could have included an aerial vehicle to attend and they could have checked their access and they would have looked at what they could have got to, what they couldn't get to around that building, from their own operator point of view.

Q. Is that something you'd physically need the aerial present at the building to do?

A. Yes, you would need the expertise of the people who operate that -- that vehicle to know what they could do with it.

THE CORONER: To your knowledge, was there ever such an exercise in relation to Lakanal or, for example, Marie Curie?

A. There was -- there wasn't an exercise -- there was an exercise at Castlemead, which was a similar scissor construction type block, which two crews from Peckham chose to use for their high rise exercise.

THE CORONER: Using an ALP?

A. I don't believe they used an ALP there, no.
THE CORONER: Mr Edwards was asking you specifically about an ALP.

A. I think you'll find, though, if a station has an aerial appliance, they will generally try and include it when they carry out an exercise.

MR EDWARDS: But you don't know personally?

A. Personally, I don't know.

Q. You've also said in your statement that there were 72D visits effectively daily. I appreciate that's not every watch daily because every watch isn't always on duty. You also said there were something like 125 high rise buildings in your area. Is each watch expected to remember what they've learnt from year to year on one of these 125 different buildings?

A. I suppose it comes down to that -- that word "familiarisation" and local knowledge and -- crews would assimilate a certain amount of knowledge regarding buildings and they would be looking at access, they would be looking at where the dry riser was, they would be looking at water supplies, so they would be looking at a building from the point of: if there was an incident there, what would they do, how would they get there.

Q. What I'm getting at -- perhaps it would help you if I showed you a picture of the lift lobby sign. Can we
bring this up on screen, please?

THE CORONER: Photograph 7, isn't it?

MR EDWARDS: You can see there's a sign with different floor numbers and flat numbers at the top of that. If there's 125 buildings on your patch and different watches are conducting almost daily, for each shift, familiarisation visits, are they expected just to remember that that sign is there, telling you where flats are?

A. I wouldn't say they would remember where it was but I would say they would expect to see a sign.

Q. You talked about what you did yourself on a 72D visit to Castlemead, which is -- I think you said is a similar block to Lakanal House? Am I right to say it's not an identical block?

A. No, the -- the outer cladding on Castlemead, I believe, is brick, but the internal, if you like, mechanism of the block is the same, ie balconies and a central staircase and two bedroom maisonettes.

Q. Can I ask you to open the jury bundle at tab 13, please. Photo number 36 I'm going to start you with. (Handed) What we can see here is a photograph of a balcony and the escape door. 37 is a bit closer. You can see the little window through the escape door. 38, what you can see is if your back's to the escape door looking down the balcony. Then 41 -- you were shown this photo
yesterday, but it's a bit tricky to work out. This is
the other side of the escape door. Again, you can see
that little window.

What you said was that you would expect crews on
a familiarisation visit to get to this escape door and
have a look through it to see down the balcony?

A. That's correct.

Q. Down the escape balcony. So if crews performing
familiarisation visits don't even get to this escape
doors, they haven't performed the familiarisation visit
properly?

A. Not a complete visit, no.

Q. Not completely?

A. No.

Q. Just looking at this escape door -- I appreciate you've
not seen this particular one -- you probably can't tell
how much you can actually see through that little
window, how clear the view of the balcony is.

A. No, you can't.

Q. Well, then it's not fair for me to ask you to speculate
what you might be able to tell by looking through that
window.

Just looking at the outside of that door, you can
see there's some type of handle. This is a security
door. If that handle didn't have a key -- so, for
example, there was no way of opening it from the side
you're looking at --

THE CORONER: Sorry, are you looking at photograph 41?
MR EDWARDS: 41 still, yes.
THE CORONER: Yes.
MR EDWARDS: Is that a defect you'd expect to be noted or is
that a design feature of the building you wouldn't
expect to be noted?
A. If it didn't have a way of opening it, you're saying?
Q. Yes.
A. I would say possibly, ie like I said, crews -- because
they were balconies to people's homes, I would have
expected them to get as far as that door and then look
through the vision panel down the balcony. The only
reason I would have expected them to maybe gain access
is if there'd been a specific issue that had been
highlighted to the Fire Brigade by a neighbour or there
was a concern about rubbish or personal belongings left
on the balcony itself.
Q. It probably follows from what you've said that if you're
looking at that door and it can be opened with a key but
the crews don't have that particular key, would you
expect them to note that as a defect?
A. I'd have expected them to note, yes, that they didn't
have a key for that area.
1 Q. But obviously they have to get to that door?
2 A. They would have gone through one, if you like, multi-lock key door anyway to get to that door.
3 Q. So if crews were attending Lakanal House to perform familiarisation visits and they were only looking on the even floors, they weren't getting to that door we've looked at at page 41 and they're not looking around the even-numbered floors at all, they're only looking at the odd floors with the central corridors, I think you'd agree they've not performed the familiarisation visit completely?
4 A. Not completely.
5 Q. Thank you.
6 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Dowden.
7 MR DOWDEN: No thank you.
8 THE CORONER: Ms Al Tai?
9 MS AL TAI: No thank you, madam.
10 THE CORONER: Mr Compton?
11 Questions by MR COMPTON
12 MR COMPTON: Mr McGurran, just one or two matters, please.
13 Ben Compton. I represent Apollo Property Services.
14 THE CORONER: Sorry, could you just get your microphone a little bit closer, please. Thank you.
15 MR COMPTON: Can we start by just going back to basics and 72D. The jury have heard quite a lot about 72D. 72D is
the requirement that a fire and rescue authority must make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purposes of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property. Would you agree with that?

A. I'd agree with that.

Q. Yes, it's mandatory isn't it?

A. It's mandatory that we --

Q. Thank you. In your statement, page 676 -- if we just have a look at this, please, at paragraph 3. You say this:

"I've been asked how, at Peckham Fire Station, I sought to implement the task of inspecting high risk buildings to gain information to assist with firefighting and other emergency events."

In this case, we're talking about high rise buildings. I don't know if that's a typing mistake -- I haven't looked at the original -- but do you understand that this is about high rise buildings, although there may be an overlap with the risks in high rise buildings?

A. There may be an overlap but that question was about high risk, and that relates to the borough plan, which says that we will visit so many -- we will visit high risk buildings.

Q. These are not criticisms aimed at you. This is really
just going back to basics of what the requirements are. Do you accept that there are specific features about high rise building fires that are very different to general firefighting?

A. High rise buildings will obviously create a challenge to any -- any -- if there's a fire in a high rise building, it becomes a challenge in terms of resourcing, equipment, making sure you've got enough people to deal with the incident.

Q. Yes.

A. But I couldn't say they would form a particular high risk.

Q. Well, over the years, they've generated quite a lot of documentation, haven't they?

A. They have.

Q. Yes, and if one thinks about it -- and the jury have already heard about the construction, the height, falling objects and the wind and so on. We don't need to go back over that, but ever since the development of high rise buildings, going back to the 60s, as a result of the number of very serious incidents, there have been a raft of documents produced to warn firefighters about the risks of fighting such fires. Would you agree with that?

A. I'd agree with that.
Q. And it's come through national guidance. I know that you've said that you haven't seen the generic risk assessment documents -- again, that's not a criticism -- but you were taken specifically by Mr Maxwell-Scott to 633. If we can just go back to it. It's at page 1521, please. As we know, this is the LFB's own --

THE CORONER: Sorry, could we just wait a moment while Mr McGurran gets it. Thank you.

MR COMPTON: Yes, sorry.

A. Okay, I'm there.

Q. This is the London Fire Brigade's own document as it had been at the time. Paragraph 3 deals with pre-planning, and it says that pre-planning is essential "when dealing with a fire in a high rise building". Would you agree with that? Do you have that? At the top of the page, paragraph 3, "Pre-planning", 3.1:

"Pre-planning is essential when dealing with a fire in a high rise building."

A. Yes.

Q. "Station personnel should be familiar with all high rise buildings on their ground."

My emphasis on the word "all". Would you agree with that?

A. I would agree with that aspirational in that sense. It depends on how many high rise you have on your ground.
Q. Well, I wanted to ask you about that, because if you have a large number of high rise buildings on your watch, that shouldn't negate in any way your duties under section 72D, should it?
A. It -- it shouldn't negate your -- your duties, but it's achieving them.
Q. I mean, if one looks at your statement, did you actually know how many high rise buildings were on your watch, going back to the time of this tragedy?
A. Did I know how many?
Q. Yes.
A. I couldn't tell you precisely now how many in terms of the total number of high rise. Peckham has 367 blocks over three floors and that's just local authority. So basically at a station ground we'll have a lot of blocks. Every few months, say, it may be a new building could appear, and we endeavour by -- currently by visual audits to go out and look at new buildings and see where they are and gather information on them. But it's a -- like a live thing.
Q. If we could just look at your statement, page 677, paragraph 9. You were taken to this by Mr Maxwell-Scott, but I just want to read on a little bit further.
THE CORONER: Sorry, you were just --
1 A. I'll look at it on there. It's fine.

2 THE CORONER: Are you happy to read it on the screen?

3 A. (The witness nodded)

4 MR COMPTON: Can you see that? He read through that you said:

5 "However, I would not generally have thought of Lakanal or any other residential high rise as high risk operationally prior to the fire. There are a large number of high rise buildings over six floors within the borough ..."

6 And you put in brackets "circa 300":

7 "... and crews at my station are used to dealing with high rise incidents."

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. I think you mentioned 125 today in answer to Mr Maxwell-Scott. Again, did you actually know how many of these were over six floors at the time of the fire?

10 A. I knew -- I didn't know exactly how many at the time of the fire. I knew we had around 50 over six floors.

11 Q. Again, would you accept that simply because you say that your crews are used to dealing with high rise incidents, that shouldn't in any way negate your duties to collect information in accordance with section 72D, and of course with the London Borough's own policy 633?

12 A. No, we -- every day we endeavour to improve the amount
of information we have on familiarisation visits.

Q. Would you also agree on the importance for an audit trail to understand that information that is gathered on particular buildings comes back and, if necessary, goes to the operational files, going back to those days?

A. Well, we've -- as a brigade, we've now gone over to a more robust system of recording information and recording it electronically on fire engines and it's available for any fire engine. Should a fire engine from anywhere turn up on Peckham's ground, they will have a certain amount of information available for them now.

Q. Yes. You'll understand I was asking you questions about the time of this tragedy. Of course, things appear to have substantially changed since then; is that right?

A. That's correct.

Q. I have no further questions.

THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Walsh.

Questions by MR WALSH

MR WALSH: I won't ask you, Mr McGurran, about whether high rise is high risk, because I will ask other witnesses about that in due course, but I just want to ask you to clarify one or two matters. Could you please have a look at page 1172, which is behind divider 15 of the jury bundle, please.
This is the email --

THE CORONER:  Sorry, wait for Mr McGurran to find it.

MR WALSH:  I'm so sorry. Do you have that, Mr McGurran?

A.  I've got it.

Q.  Yes, that's the email from Mr Brown, the assistant commissioner, in April 2009. Mr Maxwell-Scott has been through it, but just to remind you, that was the email concerning high rise buildings and the request to ensure that 72D visits are done, and I just want to contextualise it. If one looks at the third line down after the heading "72D visits" in bold, the beginning of the sentence at the end:

"As part of the ongoing familiarisation training for station-based staff, station managers are to ensure that watch and crew managers diarise, book and visit high rise premises on their station's ground during 2009/2010."

So that was what you were asked to do, and you've already told us that you diarised and ensured that the white and blue watches did theirs in May of 2009. We've heard evidence in relation to that.

But effectively the requirement was that you were to make sure that the watches concluded it by the end in 2010, in essence. You were also asked, in relation to that email, to ensure that high rise training is carried
out, and I'm not sure whether the -- I just want to be
e entirely clear about this as to what you did.

Would you mind now having a look at page 679 of your
statement in the statement bundle, paragraph 15.
I think we've touched on this, but I'd like to make sure
it's clear what you did. Paragraph 15. Halfway down
that paragraph, in the middle, after you speak of the
white and blue watches doing the 72Ds in May of 2009 and
others being done around this time -- I'm going to ask
you what was done after we see where it was done:

"Each watch also carried out the training exercises
required in the email."

That was high rise training; is that right?

A. That relates to this email.

Q. Yes, indeed, but the training exercises which were
required were high rise training?

A. High rise training.

Q. Yes. Green Watch carried out a training exercise at
Castlemead in Camberwell Road on 9 June, Blue Watch at
the same premises on the 15th of that month, Red Watch
organised a training drill with appliances from New
Cross and a training exercise with Southwark fire
station on 23 July, and White Watch organised a training
exercise with appliances from Southwark on 5 July at
Burwash House in Weston Street.
That was all in compliance with the request and requirement of Assistant Commission Brown. Did you personally, by the way, attend any of those high rise drills?

A. I attended the drill at Castlemead. I can't remember which watch it was now, but I did do one of the exercises at Castlemead.

Q. All right. So that was in compliance with the request of Mr Brown at that stage?

A. Correct.

Q. Thank you. Just very briefly, I want to ask you about communications with occupiers of buildings when there are concerns, following a 72D visit, about something which is observed on the building. You've told us that there was a system by which letters would be written up until about 2004, and after that time you speak of contacting by email?

A. That's correct.

Q. In relation to a building which is occupied and owned, if you like, by Southwark Council, there is a liaison officer; is that right?

A. That's right; Yvonne Drake.

Q. We needn't speak about the particular person but I'm just asking you about the system that would operate before the Lakanal fire in 2009. So let us say
2008/2009, if you or any of your crews identified
an issue following a 72D visit in a council-occupied
building, was there a system in place by which
a communication could be made with Southwark's liaison
officer?
A. Yes, the crew would have emailed the liaison officer
from Southwark and then they would have actioned that
request, and to our experience really promptly.
Q. Yes.
A. So we'd have had a good result in terms of getting
the -- and we would get feedback that the request had
been dealt with and there is some sort of audit trail
for that.
Q. Yes. So you were impressed with how promptly
Southwark's officer would deal with your requests if
they were made, and there was an audit trail of those
requests by way of email?
A. That's correct.
Q. All right. Apart from that, apart from that mechanism
by which those communications were carried out by the
Southwark liaison officer -- let's say there is an issue
like a defective dry riser. You've told us about who
gets emailed and what happens, but I just want to be
clear about the contact which can then change the
predetermined attendance in relation to an individual
building. So say the dry riser's not working. Please help us all with what might happen to the PDA which emanates from control when a fire takes place in the building?

A. I think I -- I did say earlier: if we have a specific issue like a defective dry riser, then obviously if we have a fire there we won't be able to use that dry riser, so we would have to increase the amount of resources at the scene initially so that the predetermined attendance would be increased to -- if you like, maybe one or two more fire engines would be sent on on the initial call, so there were more personnel to deal with the issue of not having a dry riser.

Q. Right. So that is communicated right at the heart of brigade and that comes up on the call slip, therefore, if there happens to be a fire in the building during the time there's a defective dry riser?

A. That's correct. The crews that would receive the call would have on the bottom of the call slip: "Defective dry riser, two additional pumps", so two more fire engines. So en route they would know that they were dealing with an issue when they got to that particular premises.

Q. All right. Thank you very much.
Questions by the Coroner

THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr McGurran, we have on the screen at the moment paragraph 15 of your statement, and Mr Walsh has just taken you to the last couple of sentences, starting with:

"Green Watch carried out a training exercise at Castlemead on 9 June 2009."

Do you see that?

A. That's correct.

THE CORONER: When was that exercise planned?

A. That would have been planned after the email asking for crews to carry out -- I think that was April.

THE CORONER: That was April.

A. And crews were asked to identify a suitable premises and gain some sort of permission from the -- the building owners to carry out the exercise.

THE CORONER: Because all of the exercises referred to in this paragraph postdate the fire at Lakanal.

A. That's correct.

THE CORONER: Are you confident that these had all been planned prior to the fire at Lakanal and weren't planned as a consequence of the fire at Lakanal?

A. No, they were all planned before the fire, in terms of the email from AC Brown asking for exercises to be carried out. The -- two were on the fire station ground
and there was a training exercise at New Cross and one at Southwark, and the reason --

THE CORONER: Yes, I can see the detail. It's the date of the planning I wanted to ask you about.

A. They were pre-planned.

THE CORONER: I see. Let me just take you back to the evidence that you gave about home fire safety visits. You told us that you would talk to the occupants about, for example, whether they were smokers, how they would deal with cooking, for example fat and oil, and you would have a look, for example, for smoke alarms and advise on fitting those. Indeed, I think you said you would fit smoke alarms?

A. Yes.

THE CORONER: Would any part of the home fire safety visit involve discussing with the occupants the means of escape?

A. It would. I think there's about nine points covered in a home fire safety visit, and one of them is about -- there's bedroom routines, so shutting doors before you go to bed and also your means of escape in case of a fire, so it would be discussed with someone on a home fire safety visit, how they would evacuate, should they have to in the event of the fire.

THE CORONER: So these nine items, are they included in
a list somewhere?

A. There is a list --

THE CORONER: I'm talking about prior to May 2009.

A. Yeah, basically when the firefighters complete a home fire safety visit, they take with them a proforma which covers certain areas and they have to like tick that area off when they've discussed it with the person in their home. They always also used to hand out a booklet -- I am not sure if it was prior to 2009 or not -- like, from the Home Office or community local government.

THE CORONER: Well, if you don't know, don't guess, because otherwise you'll just muddle everybody.

A. But certainly there was nine points on the home fire safety visit that were discussed with the person in their home.

THE CORONER: I see.

A. And escape would have been one of them.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

Members of the jury, do you have any questions?

Questions by the Jury

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you, Madam Coroner, we do have a number. In regard to the keys taken or not taken to 72D visits, I realise that they've not always been taken on these appraisal visits but I'm just wondering
about the keys themselves. I believe there's
a collection of keys kept on the fire engines when you
head, for instance, to a high rise incident. Is this
a collection of master keys that open all escape doors,
that sort of thing? I'm just trying to work out how the
keys work on a practical basis. Do you turn up with
a dozen keys and try and find out the right one for the
door, or is there one key that works on all types of
doors?

A. Sorry, was your question about the gathering information
about escape doors and escape routes?

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Somewhat. We've heard quite
a large amount of evidence from the firefighters at the
scene that something that impeded their access was
things like drop keys not working and not being able to
access various doors. You've mentioned that you would
expect your firefighters to check doors and that sort of
thing as far as access was concerned, but you also
mentioned that they might not have the right key with
them so they couldn't check the door.

A. My point there was, I suppose, that they do have keys
and one of the -- one of the -- if you like, a kind of
an ongoing issue will be to make sure that we have the
right keys for the right blocks, and that the -- the
keys are, as far as possible, universal, so that the
local crews will have a key to that actual block.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: And is that something that you
work out with the council?

A. It's something we work out with the council on a -- like
a weekly basis, I suppose.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. You've also
mentioned that the various types of appliances do visit
other stations so that everybody is familiar with the
pump ladder. Does that happen with the control unit as
well?

A. Yes, certainly the -- the command unit --


A. -- the command unit would visit stations for training
exercises on a regular basis.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. With the home safety
visits, I'm just wondering who takes the initiative to
set those up. Is that down to the Fire Brigade to
contact a group of residents and offer the service, or
do the council suggest it?

A. There's multiple ways that a home fire safety visit can
be -- a person could ask for one personally, so turn up
at a fire -- any fire station and ask for a home fire
safety visit. We generate some visits by working with
the council and liaising with them where
they leaflet-drop or -- a block, say, and say, "The
Fire Brigade will come along and do some home fire safety visits next week. Do you want one?"

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, so it's a real mixture?
A. Yeah.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: We've heard earlier about how some of the follow up, when there's faults and that sort of thing, takes place by email. It's also been covered slightly -- you've mentioned an audit trail. I was just hoping to clarify: we've seen the message from AC Brown and I notice that that's actually been sent from a communications team mailbox. As far as establishing a clear audit trail for the emails that a firefighter or watch manager might send to the council liaison officer, would he or she be sending that from their work email, or do things always come from that central communications team mailbox, or similar, something that's accessible to everybody?
A. I don't quite understand your question. Do you mean if you get a direction from above, if you like?

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: It seemed that the email that we saw before from AC Brown --

THE CORONER: Do you want to look at that? It's page 1172.
A. I've got that email.

THE CORONER: You have that open?
A. Yes.
THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: It doesn't seem to me that was sent from AC Brown's own email. What I'm trying to figure out is that if Bob Jones the watch manager decides this fault needs to be followed up with the council, is that something that only he can keep track of or are all the emails passed through a central mailbox so that you yourself could come on at a different point and see that Bob Jones has sent this email from a mailbox that you can see? Can you keep track of the emails coming and going, I guess, basically?

A. Certainly emails -- this email was sent to me, for instance, and I passed that on to the watch managers to action the requests in it, and also we arranged the exercises as borough-wide.

As regards somebody, say, finding a defect and sending an email to the council liaison officer about getting something fixed, they would almost certainly cc me in on that email.

THE CORONER: Sorry, from which computer would that be sent? From which mailbox would that be sent?

A. It would be sent -- everybody in the -- every firefighter's got their own personal mailbox, so they would send that email from their account, and then it would -- they would cc in their line manager or station
THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Right, so it wouldn't be an automatic thing. They'd think: "I'd better cc the watch manager in"?
A. Yeah.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Again, in regards to identifying the defaults and hazards, is there any distinction drawn in reporting as far as issues that can be addressed, such as rubbish, as opposed to those which can't be addressed, such as poor access or that sort of thing because the road is not planned properly, for instance?
A. If there's a -- if there's a defect -- say, simple defects, then you'd expect them to be addressed fairly quickly. If there was something more ongoing, then you would just have to consider whether we need more appliances to attend that incident while that defect or access issue was dealt with.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: So that's quite clearly -- the thing is that if it's a set-in-stone fault, then the response is: "Well, we'll need more appliances then"?
A. That's right. There's nothing set in stone in that sense. You can --

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: I just mean if there's something that you can't actually address, you cope with that by changing how many appliances need to go to the job?
A. (The witness nodded)

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Don't worry. We're almost there.

The central risk register that you've mentioned, is this central to just the station that contributes to it or is something on a wider basis, say, held by brigade control?

A. It was a register held by brigade control and -- I don't know if it's been explained to you how it worked. If there was a -- when a fire engine would get a call, the call slip might have a code down the bottom saying "CRR code" --

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: And that's where the information comes from. Okay.

I think it was yesterday's evidence when you mentioned that the 72D visits that you were on often were associated with a building being assessed for coming off the central risk register. We were wondering: what sort of circumstances would suggest to you that the building no longer needs to be on that register?

THE CORONER: I'm not sure whether it's really going to be central to the issues that we need to be looking at in these inquests, so I'm not sure that we really need to follow that one up. Thank you.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. I don't know if
you'll feel this is the same question or something slightly different: what are the criteria which determine whether a certain building receives three-monthly, six-monthly, or annual visits from the different watches of the Fire Brigade?

A. What determines it? It could be -- like I said, it could be like mandatory within the Fire Brigade, where it was decided that all underground premises would be visited every three months, and railway stations, and in fact that was one of the items which was removed from when I went visiting. We took that system off for visiting railway stations --

THE CORONER: Just keep to the broad categories, please, Mr McGurran. So that's one possibility, that it's mandatory?

A. Yeah.

THE CORONER: Any other possibility?

A. And if it was felt that the premises was undergoing change, you might want to go back more frequently, and if there was a specific risk that might have required that more visits to be done.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay. Thank you very much.

THE CORONER: Thank you. Shall we break now for lunch and continue at 2 o'clock? I think the evidence we have now is Mr Snazell; is that right? Thank you very much.
MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, that's right.

THE CORONER: Members of the jury, do you want to be back for 2 o'clock, please? Thank you.

Mr McGurran, thank you very much for coming and thank you very much for the help that you've been able to give us. You're welcome to stay if you would like, but you're free to go if you would prefer.

A. Thank you.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

(In the absence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Mr Walsh, we've heard from Mr McGurran about the nine-point proforma list for home fire safety visits. I'm not sure that I've seen that.

MR WALSH: Neither have I. I have to say I noted it as well and so over the luncheon adjournment, it's another document which I will be asking people to see if they could get hold of.

THE CORONER: It would be very helpful if we could show that to the jury. I think that would be helpful. 2 o'clock then.

(12.57 pm)

(The short adjournment)

(2.00 pm)

THE CORONER: Yes, thank you. Mr Snazell, are you in court?
Would you like to come forward.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Just before he starts, the London Fire Brigade have very helpfully obtained over the adjournment the checklist for home fire safety visits.

THE CORONER: Oh, well done. Good, thank you. Thank you very much.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Perhaps I could pass one. I haven't looked at it yet, but it's here and I can pass one up.

THE CORONER: All right. Mr Clark, could I just have a copy of the document? Thank you.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I'm also passing up a loose document that I may refer to with the witness. (Handed)

THE CORONER: Thank you.

(In the presence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Thank you.

ANDREW SNAZELL (sworn)

THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Are we pronouncing your name correctly, Mr Snazell?

A. Mr Snazell.

THE CORONER: I'm so sorry. We'll try and get that right. Please sit down. Do help yourself to a glass of water.

A. Thank you.

THE CORONER: When you give your answers could you keep your voice up and stay close to the microphone. If you speak
across the room towards the jurors that will help them to hear and help you keep close to the microphone.

Mr Maxwell-Scott, who is standing, will ask you questions on my behalf and then there may be questions from others.

A. Thank you.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good afternoon, Mr Snazell.

A. Good afternoon, sir.

Q. Could you give the court your full name please?

A. My full name is Francis Andrew Snazell.

Q. What is your current position?

A. My current position is I'm a group manager of the London Fire Brigade and my current role is borough commander for the London Borough of Southwark.

Q. Were you the borough commander for the London Borough of Southwark back in July 2009?

A. Yes, sir, I was.

Q. When did you first take up that role?

A. Early 2006.

Q. Can you explain briefly to the jury what being a borough commander involves?

A. As a borough commander, I'm responsible for the operational response and training of all the personnel
within the London Borough of Southwark. The London Borough of Southwark contains four fire stations within its boundaries, although a Fire Brigade boundary and a local authority boundary may not line up exactly. So around the periphery, around the edges of the borough, we have stations such as Deptford, Forest Hill, Brixton, Lambeth, to the north Dowgate, that will all become involved in different areas of the borough. So for instance Forest Hill, although it's administered by the borough commander of Lewisham fire, does cover an area of Southwark. So it's just to illustrate that although I'm responsible for everything within the borough, I have other resources from other boroughs that I have to try and coordinate.

THE CORONER: Thank you.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Could I ask you to look in the advocates' bundles at page 1112. (Handed)

A. Yes, sir, I have that.

Q. That's the first page of the borough plan which we understand was created in around September 2008.

A. That would be correct, sir.

Q. Was this written by you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. If we look fairly quickly through it, we see the Fire Brigade's overall main aims, values, the five-year
London-wide headline targets, performance highlights, learning points and challenges, and resources available. That shows how you fit into the picture in the borough as a whole. There were four fire stations that fell within the borough; is that right?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. And you were the line manager for the station managers of each of those four fire stations?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then there's a list of key targets and activities, "activities in support of our main aims", and in your witness statement you made the entirely fair point that there are a wide range of aims set out in this plan, one of which we see on page 1121, which the jury have seen before, which is "to inspect high risk buildings to gain information to assist with firefighting and other emergency events". That was one aim amongst many; that's right, isn't it?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. As I understand it, that aim was also in the previous borough plan for 2006/2007?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just to set out, for your benefit and the members of the jury, what I am going to be asking you about, firstly I think it's right that on the day of the fire at
Lakanal House you attended at around 6.15 pm?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And that you were tasked with responsibility for borough liaison?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. Given the nature of that task and, perhaps more importantly, the time at which you arrived at the scene, I'm not going to ask you any more questions about your involvement on the day of the fire. What I'm going to ask you about is two topics: firstly, about the fire that occurred at Lakanal House in 1997 -- because my understanding is that you attended it, and we'll go into that in a little bit more detail -- and then secondly, without repeating the questions that I asked Station Manager McGurran, I'm going to ask you some more thematic is questions about familiarisation visits and recording of them.

A. All understood.

Q. So let's start firstly with the 1997 fire, and ask you to look at page 1080 in the advocates' bundles. Turn over the page to 1081, please. This is the report of the fire. The date of the fire was 4 September 1997. I think I can introduce it by saying that our understanding is that over the years there had been quite a number of fires at Lakanal House, but before
3 July 2009 this one was the most serious?

A. I couldn't confirm that, but I'd take that as read, sir, that that would have been the most serious one.

Q. Can you confirm that you attended this incident in 1997?

A. I did, sir.

Q. And that you attended on one of the first pumps to arrive?

A. No, sir.

Q. Tell us then when you arrived --

A. Okay. Can I put it in context?

Q. -- and what your involvement was.

A. Absolutely. I attended that incident as a result of an injury to a firefighter. One of the firefighters who was in attendance sustained an injury to his head and as is common practice with any injury to a firefighter, an officer is tasked to investigate that incident, to attend to -- not necessarily to attend the incident but as it was current at the time I was notified I went onto the incident.

At the time, I was a station manager at the adjacent station, Old Kent Road, so a local station manager would have been in attendance for the operational aspect of the incident. I went on to do the -- the support and the accident investigation. So subsequently I wasn't there in the initial stages.
Q. In that case, I'm going to ask you to look at a document which I'll give you a hard copy of. It has page numbers 19 to 24 in the bottom right-hand corner. I'll also put it up on the screen. (Handed) This is, as I understand it, some of the mobilisation records?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. I think you've had an opportunity to look at this?

A. No, this is the first I've seen this for many years.

Q. Okay, but you recognise the format?

A. Absolutely, sir.

Q. We can see on this page it's a six-pump fire. Persons reported, flat 81. There were 27 duplicate calls. The time of the first call was 1816 hours. There was then a mobilisation at 18.17. If you help us with what's underneath that in terms of who was initially mobilised.

A. 1817. It's Echo 371, Echo 372, Echo 353. So that's the pump ladder and the pump from Peckham Fire Station.

THE CORONER: Sorry, could you just repeat that? We just lost you from the microphone.

A. Sorry. On that initial mobilising message at 1817 hours, the first line says "mobilising message". The next line down, "53UB/105", that's a route card reference which gives us a grid map reference of the address locally, and the station's ground, E37, which is
Peckham.

The next line down, it says "E37PL", which is Echo 37, Peckham's pump ladder, Echo 37's pump. The following line is Echo 353, which is the turntable ladder at Old Kent Road fire station. "Fire in a flat" is the type of call, "B1" is incident classification, and the rest -- "Lakanal, Sceaux Gardens, SE5, Camberwell" -- gives the remainder of the address.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Pausing there, I suspect it may not be "B1". It may be "81", because it was flat 81.

A. My apologies.

Q. No matter, but what I wanted to focus on is: does this indicate that the response by way of predetermined attendance was two pumps and an aerial ladder platform?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you were not on those pumps?

A. No, sir.

Q. Looking then towards the bottom of the page, it was -- it's difficult to read at the bottom of the page, but "make pumps four" was made at 18.23 with persons reported; is that right?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. Then over the page, at 18.24, there was an additional mobilisation; is that right?

A. Yes, sir.
Q. Can you just tell us what is indicated there by the mobilising message?

A. Yes, sir. Same route card reference, same station's ground. Hotel 224 pump ladder is the pump ladder from Brixton. Foxtrot 20 command support unit is the command support unit from, I believe, Stratford. I'll stand to be corrected if I get the designations wrong. Echo 20 FRU is a fire investigation unit, by paging at Echo 38 which is at New Cross. So it's the fire investigation unit mobilised from New Cross via pager.

Q. The one above that, was that a command unit?

A. That's a command unit, sir.

Q. Then under that it says "H241 for station officer cover", is that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was that you or not?

A. No, no, sir.

Q. Okay. Then below that, 18.37, is this more resources being mobilised?

A. No, sir. What that is is Hotel 241, that has sent a message saying "unable to proceed", and they've replaced it with Hotel 22 pump ladder, which is -- would have been Lambeth's pump ladder. So again, one replacement machine. So Brixton are unable to attend, Lambeth have been ordered as an alternative.
Q. Then over the page, there's reference at 18.31 to
an ambulance being required because a member of the
brigade -- I think that was Firefighter Sharpe --
suffered cuts from falling glass?
A. That's correct, sir.
Q. Is that what then triggered your mobilisation?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Just for completeness, we can see towards the bottom of
that page that there was a need for urgent police
attendance for crowd control, and at the top of the next
page, it was made pumps six?
A. Yes sir.
Q. Then on page 23, it seems that the incident was brought
to a close. Towards the top of the page, it says:
"Stop. Five-room maisonette on 11th and 12th
floors. 100 per cent damage by fire. One jet via
dry riser, one jet via TL."
That's turntable ladder, yes?
A. Yes.
Q. "BA", so crews wore breathing apparatus. "All persons
accounted for"?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. What does that mean?
A. When a -- when a message is sent "persons reported", at
the conclusion of an incident or at the relevant point
of an incident, a message saying that all the people
that we've been searching for have been accounted for is
sent. Now, that indicates to monitoring officers and to
other people on the fire ground that we've -- we've
either rescued or identified the location of all the
people that we believe to be involved.

So for instance, if there was a flat on fire and
someone said there was a person in there, and we
subsequently searched the flat and we've -- we've
determined that the flat is clear, or the person's
actually arrived and said, "No, I'm not in there", we
can send that message to say that we are no longer
actively searching for people.

Q. Thank you.

Then finally page 24. Does this help us with when
you arrived? Do you have a call sign on here or not?
A. Yes, sir, I'm at 18.37. My call sign at that time would
have been Echo 35. I mobilised at 18.41, arrived at

Q. At the bottom, in the summary of numbers of appliances
attending -- I found this slightly hard to follow
because it seems to refer to seven pump ladders, three
pumps and one turntable ladder?
A. I can explain that, sir.

Q. Please do.
A. That final summary will have been all the appliances that have attended the incident in its entirety. So if an incident was not dealt with by the initial attendance and required a relief attendance -- so if crews had been in there for some time, we order on a relief after three hours, or an appropriate time. That's -- that is the normal process, and that final incident total is all the appliances that have attended. So if we have a significant incident -- so, say, Lakanal, if I showed you the bottom of the incident call for that, that will have numerous machines on it, probably 50/60. Without looking at it, I don't know, but it's the total appliances that attended the entire incident throughout the -- until it's finally closed and the last brigade appliance leaves.

Q. So does the phrase "make pumps six" give a better reflection of what was thought to be the necessary resource to deal with the fire?

A. Yes, sir. On that total, it says seven pump ladders, three pumps, so I'd guess in addition to the six there's probably four relief machines attended.

Q. But in terms of actual firefighting, going back to 23, we see reference to just two things, one jet via dry riser and one jet via turntable ladder?

A. Yes, sir.
Q. How does that fit in with the fact that it's "make pumps six"?

A. With a -- an incident, a number of fire appliances doesn't equate to the number of main jets used. So because there's six pumps in attendance doesn't mean we'd be using six jets or -- the inference from there is that to get a working safe system of work on an upper floor, you would require that number of machines to effectively do all the tasks associated with it. So six pumps was the resource requirement to get two jets to work at that level at that time.

Q. If I take you then back to page 1081, the column "Incident information" captures what we've looked at in the raw data. First call to brigade, 18.16, mobilisation, 18.17, arrival of brigade, 18.19 -- so three minutes after the first call -- and then "under control", 18.58.

If I show you then photographs at 1084. You can see in the bottom photograph flames. We're looking here at the east side of the building, and in the bottom of the photograph you can see the aerial ladder platform in the access road on the west side of the building.

A. It's a turntable ladder, sir, but yes.

Q. So this is a different appliance to the Old Kent Road aerial ladder platform, 355 we've heard about in this
case, is it?

A. Yes, sir. Can I explain?

Q. Please do.

A. The London Fire Brigade has a range of --

THE CORONER: Sorry, can you get closer to the microphone,

Mr Snazell, sorry.

A. Sorry. The London Fire Brigade has -- and had at that
time -- a range of different aerial appliances. Old
Kent Road has by default a turntable ladder.

A turntable ladder is, as it says on the description,
a ladder affixed to a turntable that can rotate through
360 degrees, but it purely elevates in a straight
direction, it has no elbows or ability to drop.

So that's a turntable ladder. We have hydraulic
platforms which are -- in common terms people, refer to
them as cherry pickers, and they're the kind of vehicle
you'll see being used to maintain lights, that kind of
thing. There's a cage capable of taking one or two
operatives to a higher level.

We also have an aerial ladder platform. The aerial
ladder platform was the biggest of the three machines.
That is a combination of a turntable ladder and
a hydraulic platform. So it has a ladder and it has the
ability -- it's got two booms on it so it's got more of
a range of movement. But it's a much bigger vehicle.
It's in the range of 28 tonnes and we -- at the time, I believe we had one at Forest Hill and one at Wimbledon, but Old Kent Road certainly had a turntable ladder. And they're differentiated by the call signs. 3 is a turntable ladder, 4 is a hydraulic platform, 5 is an aerial ladder platform.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: That's the number at the end?

A. That's the number at the end, sir.

Q. Then I'll show you a photograph on page 1085, over the page, where the flames are again on the east side of the building and you can see smoke coming out of the vents at the north end of the building.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Firstly, can you help us with whether you went into the building at any stage?

A. No, sir, I did not.

Q. I've shown you the photographs so that you can draw what inferences you can from them, but if I then show you page 1082. I'll ask you about the box on the top right of the page. We see there's an opportunity to say whether or not there was abnormal rapid fire development, to which the box ticked was "no". Then there's a more complicated box about percentage of damage caused. I was hoping you might be able to help explain that to us. Is that in a format you're familiar
with?

A. I recall it, sir. We've moved on since, but if I can just take one moment to ...

Q. I think that would be very helpful. (Pause)

A. Sir, are you referring to the paragraph 5.8?

Q. I am, yes.

A. Okay.

Q. What I'm trying to get from you is your assistance, using that table and the photographs showing smoke coming out of the north end of the building, with the extent to which parts of the building other than flat 81 were affected by fire or smoke on this occasion.

A. Okay. On this old form, which was called FDR1, you'd only record actual fire damage, so --

Q. So pausing there, box 5.8 doesn't tell us anything about the extent of smoke damage?

A. Smoke travel and smoke damage, no. It's predominantly fire damage, sir.

Q. Okay. What does it tell us about fire damage here?

A. Looking at that -- also, I've not used these for a number of years -- it tells me that the fire, in the room that it started, the compartment it started, the remainder of that compartment being 100 per cent damaged by fire. It then tells me at the bottom left that approximately 2 per cent of the structure of the
building has been damaged by fire.

Q. Is that saying anything other than that flat 81 was damaged?

A. By inference, it could be that it's spread slightly, either when they've opened the front door, or possibly outside. Without a recollection, sir, I'd be surmising. I wouldn't want to say what that additional damage was.

Q. If one was going to be very precise about it, there are 98 flats in the building, so 2 per cent, if one were being very precise, would suggest damage to more than simply one flat, but it may be that one shouldn't interpret the 2 per cent in that way. Can you assist at all?

A. No, I -- it would be surmising, I think. I'd rather withhold comment without further information, sir.

Q. So to be fair to you, you can't provide any further assistance on the extent to which fire or smoke spread outside flat 81 on this occasion?

A. On that occasion, from this information, it indicates to me that that complete maisonette -- and from the message -- the stop message that you showed me earlier indicates to me that the whole of that maisonette was -- was damaged by that fire, but no further. If there was further damage to the remainder of the building, the stop message would have reflected that as well, sir.
Q. That's helpful. Thank you. Well, I won't ask you further questions about that fire.

I'm going to ask you now about my final main topic, which is to do with familiarisation visits and 72D visits. I'll try and ask it more thematically. As you may be aware, we've been asking a number of witnesses who were involved on 3 July 2009 about whether they gained knowledge of certain features of Lakanal House in the course of the incident. Just to summarise for you, for example, we've asked them whether they found out that the flats were maisonettes, whether they found out that on the upper floors of the flats they extended the full width of the building, whether they found out that the balconies provided escape routes to the central staircase, whether they built up a mental picture of where the flat numbers were in the building, and whether they became aware of a sign at ground floor level by the lifts that gave an indication of the flat numbering system.

I'll just show you that photograph. This is photograph 7. You can see in it the sign above the lifts, and photograph 8 is a close-up of that sign.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. By way of generalisation, at the relevant time -- by which I mean essentially before 6 pm in the evening on
the day of the fire -- no incident commander had had
that sign drawn to their attention. The knowledge of
the flat numbering system within the building was
limited. Incident commanders were not aware of the
balcony providing escape routes. They were not aware
that on the upper floors of flats, the flats extended
the full width of the building, and knowledge that the
flats were maisonettes was patchy and came quite late in
that timeframe. So that's the background to introduce
the topic.

At the same time, as we've heard today from Station
Manager McGurran, he would have expected a crew that did
a familiarisation visit to have discovered many of those
features in the course of such a visit. Were you here
to hear his evidence?
A. I was, sir, yes.
Q. And so summarising, as I understood it, a crew that did
a familiarisation visit would be expected, in the course
of it, to notice that the flats were maisonettes, that
they had balcony escape routes, and that there were
indications within the building that would help you to
work out the flat numbering system, and if one didn't
notice or couldn't work out, in the course of a 72D
visit, that the flats on the upper floors extended the
full width of the building, that is something you would
work out on a home fire safety visit.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, we know that the Green Watch which attended the Lakanal House fire had not done a recent familiarisation visit, and so having given that introduction, I'm going to ask you questions on the assumption -- say if you disagree with it -- that it would have been helpful for those on the day of the fire to have known things such as the fact that the flats were maisonettes, that the balconies were escape routes, and where flats 79 and 81 were.

A. Without a doubt, sir, if that's -- if that information is available.

Q. Yes, so that would obviously have been very helpful. So my three topics on this theme are about what the systems were at the time for crews having that sort of information, and I'm going to ask it in three separate ways. The first is this: that obviously one way of ensuring that crews have that sort of knowledge would be for all watches to visit every relevant building. I'll come back to that. So that's one way of looking at this issue.

Another way of looking at this issue is to say that it's not necessary for all watches to visit, but a representative watch would visit and then the
information can be shared with other watches within the station. Okay?

Then a third way of looking at the issue is perhaps to say that it's not necessary to have that much pre-planning information because crews could be reasonably expected to work some of these things out from scratch when they arrived at the fire ground. Okay?

What I'd like to do is ask you about each of those possibilities, and if you think there is a fourth one which I'm overlooking, then please say so at the end. Okay? I'll take them in a slightly different order, because as I understand your witness statement, the system at the time did not think that more record-keeping to share information was the answer. It didn't expect records in writing that crews could draw on on arrival at the scene to a high rise tower block fire; is that right?

A. That's right, sir, due to the practicalities of that system.

Q. So let's look at that briefly. Firstly, the high rise firefighting policy in the jury bundle at tab 19. (Handed) The first page is 1518. If I ask you to turn on to 1521. This is a section on pre-planning, which Mr Compton asked Mr McGurran about this morning. 3.1
"Pre-planning is essential when dealing with a fire in a high rise building. Station personnel should be familiar with all high rise buildings on their ground. Information should be gathered and recorded in accordance with policy number 521, information gathering, where appropriate."

I asked Mr McGurran some questions about the records that would have been made at the time following a 72D visit, and one point that remained unclear was what policy would drive the question whether or not to record something in an operational information folder. I had assumed that it would be policy number 521, information gathering. Tell me if I'm wrong about that.

A. That's not correct, sir. 521 came out after the guide as to operational information folders, and again, direct me if I -- I go away from your line of questioning. An ops info folder -- they were introduced back in 1994. They were introduced as -- in reaction to a number of safety events. I believe notice was served on the fire authority as a result of incidents and they were specifically as an interim measure to provide firefighters with operationally important information that would assist them with dealing with a premises of unexpected or high risk.
At the time, there was guidance on what should be included in that operational folder, and it was around the storage of chemicals, the type of -- use of the premises, unexpected risks to be found within the premises, and that -- that's what the ops info folders were at the time. When they were introduced, they pointed the way forward to -- did the microphone go again there, madam? Sorry.

THE CORONER: Yes, just keep close to it.

A. They pointed a way forward to a better way of sharing that information, because clearly if the information's only carried on the front of the local appliances it's not going to be of benefit to anything or anybody coming from a distant station or another station where that information's not held.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: If you look at page 1672 in the advocates' bundles. (Handed) This is an example of the type of document that, as a matter of fact, appears to have been held on the Peckham pumps in their operational information folders in July 2009.

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. Is that the sort of document that ought to have been in there in terms of the format at that time?

A. Again, sir, if I can explain, and stop me if I go away from your line of questioning. As I say, the
operational information folder introduced back in the early 1990s, when that was introduced, this proforma operational information form came out as well as the appendices to that as guidance, together with how to fill that form in, how to do the grid on page 1673, even with the guidance of what colours to use.

After it was issued, operational information folders evolved, I think would be the term, to hold not only that operationally important information in those formats but a range of other information. So typically, a station would include in that folder things that they would find useful operationally. So door entry codes, different maps, different guidance on a particular procedure. So it would not only contain what the original guidance specified but anything that would assist firefighters in the early stages of an incident or to give them guidance on a policy or procedure may have been included. But that is the original template that the -- the guidance was required to be -- sorry, that the guidance required to be filled out and included, was that form there.

From around about 2000 and -- forgive me, sir, if I get the dates wrong, but we moved from that format into the A010 format, and the idea of that was because there were so many, across the fire -- whole
Fire Brigade, so many different formats of recording information that they wanted to standardise it, not only so that it became common so that everybody on every fire station could read it in a similar way, but also with a view to including it on the new data terminals that were being introduced on fire appliances.

So the A010 format was a standard format that -- guidance was issued that you should migrate this information onto the new format, which would then lend itself to the data collection and later inclusion onto the mobile data system or the -- it's referred to as the operational risk database. So there's a transitional period between how the data is recorded administratively on either this form or an A010, but the data -- in essence, the data is the same. Apologies if the microphone's cutting out, sir.

Q. I showed Mr McGurran earlier policy 521 on information gathering that referred to the A010 document, and without getting too caught up in the detail, I think it's your view in any event that there was not a requirement -- you wouldn't have expect a high rise building like Lakanal House to have any documentation on it in the operational information folder?

A. No, sir. A residential high rise wouldn't have met the criteria for inclusion in an ops info folder. Sorry,
I will quantify that -- in an inner London station. If you move to an outer London station --

THE CORONER: Well, let's not complicate matters. We just want to concentrate on what the position was at the relevant time in this area.

A. I understand.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Would there have been separate matters about 72D visits back in the fire station?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You talk about that in your witness statement -- I'll show you -- at page 683. I should just identify with you the first page of it, which is 681. Then at 683 you deal with this in paragraphs 11 and 12. You say:

"In 2009, each station would have had a paper or electronic folder in relation to each premises on their outside duties list."

Then the same point is made in paragraph 12, the second sentence:

"All stations maintained paper or electronically-based files containing the information from each of the premises on their outside duties list."

Then separately:

"Each appliance also carried a folder ..."

That's the operational information folder,
... with the records of around 20 premises on their station's ground."

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. What was the paper or electronic folder and why was it perhaps paper or perhaps electronic?

A. Okay. A station's outside duty list, again, this evolved over -- over the lifetime of that station's ground, and it will reflect previous statutory duties, identified risks and identified new risks. We used to carry out a series of statutory visits. At one time, we actually physically tested dry raising mains by charging them with water, checking we could get the required pressure at the highest level. That requirement's been withdrawn now, so we are know no longer --

THE CORONER: Sorry, can you just focus on Mr Maxwell-Scott's question, which was a fairly straightforward one about what was in the files.

A. Certainly, madam. Where I was going with that was to say that we used to keep records of all of that in a paper file. So when each visit was completed, we would complete a paper record and keep it in an old-style paper file. So each station would have those files.

As we introduced computer systems and different levels of computer skills became apparent at stations,
some stations would transfer a number of that off their own volition onto an electronic based system. Others would still use a simple system such as a T card system with each premises identified and you’d simply turn it round when a visit was done.

So it's now moved all onto electronic, but that was the point around either a paper system or an electronic system. But it's since all standardised as electronic diary now.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: In paragraph 11, at the end of it, you say, about five lines from the bottom:

"If a visit is conducted and there is nothing out of the ordinary or the risk present is obvious: the information would not necessarily be recorded in detail or at all."

A. That's correct, sir, other than that a visit had taken place.

Q. So back in July 2009, would there have been either a paper or electronic folder in relation to Lakanal House?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know what it had in it?

A. It had old records back to the 80s for dry riser tests and inspections. It had -- any other reference to Lakanal would have been included in that folder. But
I believe you have some of it in -- in these --

THE CORONER: Sorry, we're losing you. Can you face this way when you're answering, because we're losing you.

A. Sorry.

THE CORONER: You said that it would have old dry riser tests, and then I lost you. What else?

A. It would have any associated paperwork with that particular premises or inspection. So if there was a record of inspection, a premises inspection card, it would have copy of that in that file.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I think I've seen that file. I'm sure Mr Walsh will correct me if I am wrong, but my recollection is that the document I've just put on the screen at 1098 was, in date order, the most recent document in the file, dated 4 May 2004. My recollection is that that file had a number of similar documents like this every year or two years, but then that stream of documents ended in May 2004. Does that sound right?

A. About right, sir, because we -- as I said, we then started to move into emailing and electronic exchange of information.

Q. So if that were the case, it wouldn't surprise you?

A. It wouldn't surprise me, no, sir. If there wasn't actually a paper copy to put in there, I doubt they'd have printed it and included it, sir.
Q. If I take to your statement on page 684. You make the
same point in several places. Firstly, at the end of
paragraph 14:

"The vast majority of attendances to incidents in
high rises are dealt with by the predetermined
attendance."

Then paragraph 15:

"High rise buildings are not normally classed as
high risk."

In paragraph 16:

"Plans of high rise residential premises would not
normally have been kept within the operational
information folder."

Finally, paragraph 18, you say:

"Purposefully, not all of the premises on the
schedule of 72D visits would have information contained
within the operational information file. If too much
information was contained within the file, this would
reduce the effectiveness of the folder to crews
attending an incident and it would become very difficult
to maintain the information."

Does what I've taken you through fairly summarise
your view -- I say your view; the system's view -- that
at the time more information about high rise tower
blocks in operational information folders was not the
answer?

A. That's correct, sir. I believe Station Manager McGurran touched on the number of premises on his own station's ground, and I could elaborate that across the borough in terms of numbers across the borough, but the points remain the same.

Q. Then in terms of the other two ways I wanted to look at this --

THE CORONER: Sorry, just before you get onto that, I wonder if we might try swapping the microphone. Poor Mr Snazell is struggling with this one. Let's try swapping that one and see if that's any better. I hope that's better. Yes, thank you.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: In terms of the other two topics of things that might have been an answer, if we go back to the high rise firefighting policy at tab 19 of the jury bundle. We had previously seen, at page 1521, the comment:

"Station personnel should be familiar with all high rise buildings on their ground."

Then if you look to appendix 5, which is at page 1529, we see:

"Pre-planning for fighting fires in high rise buildings should include station personnel familiarising themselves with all high rise buildings on their
station's ground."

Then, about halfway down the page, there's a long list of things that personnel should ensure they are familiar with during a 72D visit. The short point, which I'm sure you will agree with, is that the system at the time envisaged crews carrying out a 72D visit gaining a lot of helpful information which they would not record.

Q. The system at the time -- we've seen what is expected by way of record-keeping after the visit?

A. I'm sorry, sir, if you could just repeat the question?

Q. The point I'm making is that here we see what the system expected by way of looking at things during the visit, and there's a big difference between the two. Therefore what I'm suggesting is that the system expected that a visit would look at a lot of aspects of the building, would gain useful information about a lot of aspects of the building but would not formally record many of them in writing.

A. Yes, sir. The -- the policy, the high rise policy, is a generic policy for all high rise, both residential, commercial, complex buildings such as Strata on the Elephant, or the Shard -- the policy covers all types of high rise building, not just residential, so many of
those aspects on that list -- fire control rooms, automatic fire detection, automatic events -- wouldn't be applicable to a high rise residential building. So it would be the parts that were applicable would be the ones that were relevant to a high rise residential inspection, sir.

Q. No, I fully appreciate that, but we've heard Mr McGurran's evidence -- of course, say if you disagree with it -- and he said that in the course of a 72D visit, his crews would work out that, for example, the flats at Lakanal House were maisonettes and work out that the balconies provided escape routes from the upper floors of maisonettes that had their front doors on lower floors, and all of that would be useful information which I suggest a policy would expect them to find out but would not expect them to record.

A. Yes, I agree, sir, yes.

Q. We then come to the question of what the system expected by way of knowledge within a fire station as a whole, because if you send one crew on that sort of familiarisation visit and they get all that information but it turns out to be a different watch that has to go and fight a fire in that building, then that later watch is at a disadvantage, isn't it?

A. Yes, sir.
Q. So what I ask you to comment on is, looking at the
system at the time, the extent to which the solution was
to ensure that all watches went to buildings, because
that way they don't need to share the information with
each other -- you just diarise them all together -- or,
on the other hand, the extent to which you would take
the view that it wasn't necessary for all watches to go
because they would be able to work out some of these
things from scratch whilst at the incident ground.

A. The -- the question there is available resources and
time, sir. With the numbers of premises and variance of
premises across the borough, and indeed just the
station's ground, it's simply -- it's not impossible --
I don't like that word -- but it's -- to achieve that
level of familiarisation with a high rise block for all
four watches would be a -- it would be the only thing we
could achieve, balanced against the training
requirements, the multitude of other, more complex risks
on the ground. It just simply wouldn't be achievable
for all four watches to visit all premises across the
whole borough. I have to prioritise the resources
I have and use them for the best effect that I've got --
that we can.

Q. I follow that. I mean, it might be thought -- and I ask
you to comment on this -- that it would be more
resource-efficient to have some form of more extensive
information sharing after one watch has visited
a premises, thereby removing the urgency for all four
watches to go, eight persons on each occasion, to visit
a premises?
A. Absolutely, sir. We've moved towards that now.
Q. But that wasn't the system at the time?
A. No. At the time, the 72D system, which superseded
11Ds -- the original guidance was that an 11D, which was
under the old legislation, was completed, the records
were available for all station personnel to either
familiarise themselves with or, if time allowed, to
complete lectures on them. But the practicalities of
achieving that, again, are time-dependent and
resource-dependent.
Q. Thank you, Mr Snazell. I think I'll end my questions
there to leave time for others to have their share of
the opportunity to ask you questions.
A. Thank you, sir.
THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Edwards.

Questions by MR EDWARDS
MR EDWARDS: Thank you. Mr Snazell, you're now the borough
commander; is that correct?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Who was the borough commander at the time of the
Lakanal House fire in 2009?

A. Myself.

Q. In 1997, what rank were you? Do you remember?

A. The same, sir, group manager.

Q. Group manager. Were you also the borough commander?

A. Yes sir, it's -- a group manager -- the old term was division officer, but group manager, borough commander.

Q. I'm going to start by asking you a couple of questions about the 1997 fire. Firstly, Mr Maxwell-Scott mentioned turntable ladders, and you gave a fairly long explanation as to what they were, how they relate to aerial ladder platforms. A simple question: did the 1997 turntable ladders reach as high up as the 2009 aerial ladder platforms, do you know?

A. Yes, I do. I just have to recollect. Turntable ladder is about 100-foot, 33 metres, ALP slightly higher, hydraulic platforms slightly lower, about 90-foot.

Q. Can I ask you to open the advocates' bundle at page 1083. That's volume 3. If that can go on screen as well, please.

What we're looking at here is the report of the 1997 fire. You can see about halfway down the page in that section 5, 5.1(c), it gives what I think must be the cause of the fire:

"Other misuse of appliance: stew pot left on
cooker."

A. Yes, sir, I see that.

Q. We can see some photographs of the damage caused by the 1997 fire. 1086. That's inside. There we have the upper level of the flat, and then we have the lower photo on 1068. I don't know if that can be made a little bit bigger, please. We've got what looks like the cooker. I don't know whether you know this or not, Mr Snazell, but the upper level of every flat in Lakanal House is the level that has the kitchen on, and the lower level is the level that has the bedrooms on.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So flicking through the photographs we have here to page 1091, the upper photo there shows the stairs from the upper level of the flat leading down. I say the stairs, but what it actually shows is a ladder placed where the burnt out stairs would be.

Then we can go over the page to 1092, and we can see two photographs of the lower level, the bedroom level. It's probably a point that's so obvious it may not even need saying, but the fire in this flat in 1997, it started on the upper level, the kitchen level, and then it moved down to the lower level of the flat.

A. Understood, sir.

Q. So within a compartment, at least, fires sometimes move
down, don't they?
A. Yes sir.

Q. The difference you can see in the photographs from the 1997 fire, though -- if I can bring you back to page 1089, please. I wonder if Mr Maxwell-Scott could make the lower photograph slightly larger, please.

What you can see, looking out the window there, or the remains of the window, is -- do you see the bar just to the right-hand side of the photo in the middle of the window area?
A. Yes, sir, I can see that.

Q. You can see there's a gap there where the window would be to the left and underneath that there's a little wall area. Immediately under the gap of the window, there's a bit of wall standing. It's perhaps something so obvious that I'm pointing out that it might not need -- the wall's there. Page 1090, the lower photo, please. It's probably a bit more visible there. You can just about see some breeze-blocks, and you can see the wall underneath the window area. You can see the wall's still standing?
A. Yeah, looks like a breeze-block wall, sir.

Q. Yes. We can compare that to the 2009 fire. Could I ask you to open the jury bundle, please, at tab 12. This is the sequence of events, page 30. If I can trouble
Mr Maxwell-Scott to put this on the screen as well.

It's 20.10, photograph number 40. Can that be made a bit bigger?

I don't know whether you can make this out, Mr Snazell -- it may be easier from the printed copy -- but if you count down there are two gaping empty compartments on that building, about a quarter of the way from the top. Do you see them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I don't know whether you can make out, but there's certainly no standing, breeze-block-type wall left in 2009, but that is left after the fire in 1997.

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. Moving on from the 1997 fire, I just want to ask you fairly briefly about your involvement in the 2009 fire. Could we bring up advocates' bundle, page 240 onto the screen. You may find that easier to look at. The first volume, page 240.

A. Sorry, could you repeat the number?

Q. 240.

A. I haven't got that one. (Handed)

Q. Just to identify this document, what you're looking at is a proforma with 18 questions on that's given to most of the London Fire Brigade personnel who attended the scene of Lakanal House. They filled it in shortly after
the fire. Do you remember completing this document?

A. Yes sir.

Q. In answer to question number 2, "Did you have any previous knowledge of these premises via 72D visits or previous incidents", you say:

"I know the blocks from local knowledge, and I attended the previous fire in Lakanal a number of years ago. I can't remember what role I undertook at the previous fire ..."

Et cetera. Presumably when you said "I know the blocks" not long after the 2009 fire, you didn't remember that -- were you aware that you didn't know the blocks were maisonettes inside when you attended the 2009 fire, and that was something you only found out when you were on the scene?

A. Yeah, the Sceaux Gardens estate has eight blocks on it. Some are similar, some are very dissimilar. There's low rise, there's a number of blocks that are classed as high rise but not as high as Lakanal and Marie Curie, which are the two biggest blocks on the estate. I had personally been -- completed targeted calling with actually the Green Watch to a number of the other blocks on that estate prior to Lakanal. So I'd done the low rise and I'd been out to -- I think it's about 10 floors on the other blocks. So I knew the estate, both from
recently completing targeted calling with the Green
Watch and from previous knowledge of the station's
ground.

Q. It's not a criticism of you, but it's probably fair to
say that to know a particular tower block in an estate
you have to have been into that tower block, or had
information about that tower block. Having visited one
that is on the estate but isn't the same probably isn't
good enough to give you that detailed information about
the inside?

A. No, sir, and the point I was making there that -- is
just that, that all tower blocks and all blocks may have
slight differences, albeit externally they may appear
the same.

Q. To put it bluntly, to know it's maisonettes, you
probably have to have gone inside and had a look around?

A. That or the sister block, sir.

Q. Would you turn to the witness statement bundle,
page 509, please. So the jury and you are familiar,
this is a witness statement you gave to the police on
27 May 2010, so it's some time after the fire.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You say what you did. We can see at page 510, so over
the page, the second paragraph, you say:

"On arrival, at approximately 18.15 ..."
So you arrive at 6.15 to Lakanal House in the 2009 fire. Then you talk about what you did. At the bottom paragraph of page 510, you say you made your way to the incident command unit -- this is the first line:

"I made my way to the incident command unit. I met with ORT colleagues who provided me with a briefing and advised that persons were still unaccounted for."

Sorry, that should say:

"As I then made my way to the incident command unit..."

So it's before you get there.

Over the page to 511, please. About halfway down, you say -- this is when you're in the command unit:

"We started with little or no information and so I decided that we needed to establish a system for gathering and recording information. I had a piece of paper with numbers of flats located on each floor and I drew a rudimentary map on the whiteboard which included this information. At that time, I was still unaware that it was a block of maisonettes but this became apparent as the incident progressed."

I appreciate I'm asking you some three years later, but it's something I want to try and clarify. Do you remember how you drew a map? If you didn't know that the flats were maisonettes, I'm struggling to picture
what sort of map you might have drawn.

A. Very rudimentary, sir. On a command unit, as I believe you've heard, there's a whiteboard.

THE CORONER: We've heard about that.

A. Very simply -- I knew the number of floors. I simply drew a two-dimensional representation of -- the block, put the number of floors in, and started filling in the numbers of the floors which I'd got from the piece of paper. So I was able to formulate a schematic plan of the block, together with the numbers on each floor.

MR EDWARDS: Then underneath that, the final paragraph of 511, you say:

"I would describe our role as non-critical, in that our primary function was information-gathering regarding the systematic searching of the block as opposed to an operational role involved in coordinating rescue efforts."

I just want to ask you what you mean by "non-critical" there. Are you saying that was a less important role?

A. No, not less important, sir. At incident command -- well, the incident command structure is very formal and very -- and established by the time that I arrived and was tasked with a particular role. I was conscious that my role was to gather information, collate it, to make
it available for the incident commander so he could confirm what had actually been done and where it had been done. The actual direction of operational crews was being completed from the command unit and from the bridgehead, so the role that we were completing was to support those roles.

Q. But isn't it vitally important to know what's been done, what's been searched?

A. Yes, sir, but I was also conscious that if -- the priority was for the information to be acted on in the command unit and in the bridgehead. The two sources of information that we were gaining information from were those two points. So they clearly had the information, because we were only taking the information from them, if that makes sense, sir, and collating it so it was all in one place. So if I had something that was critical, that would have been passed as a priority, but what I didn't want to do was place an additional drain on the resources already in those two points.

Q. I'm now going to ask you a little bit more about pre-planning or 72D visits in general. Would you open the jury bundle at tab 19, please. This is the high rise firefighting policy number 633 from the London Fire Brigade. The jury have seen this quite a few times.
"Issue date: 26 November 2008."

"Issue date", does that mean the policy comes into force then? That's when you're meant to start acting on that policy, November 2008?

A. In general terms, yes, sir. We will sometimes have a policy that says "to be effective from", but in general, once it's issued it's effective.

Q. Mr Maxwell-Scott turned you to page 1521. Can I just turn you back to that page, please. The top entry, 3.1 -- this is under "Pre-planning" -- it says:

"Pre-planning is essential when dealing with a fire in a high rise building. Station personnel should be familiar with all high rise buildings on their ground. Information should be gathered and recorded in accordance with policy number 521, information gathering, where appropriate."

Correct me if I am wrong, but what that paragraph 3.1 is telling you to do is gather information in accordance with policy 521?

A. Where appropriate, yes, sir.

Q. Where appropriate. We've got policy 521 at the advocates' bundle, page 1552. Can I ask firstly that that's brought up on screen. It's the fourth file. You can see that this was in force, or issued from
19 July 2007, so this is obviously being acted on at the
time of the Lakanal House fire.

Page 1553, introduction, 1.1, the very first thing
in this policy:

"The purpose of this policy is to help station
personnel identify, gather, and record operationally
important information and record it on the A010
template."

Now, it may be I misunderstood what you are saying
to Mr Maxwell-Scott, but I thought you said that at the
time of the Lakanal House fire, things shouldn't be
recorded on the A010 template. Did I misunderstand what
you said?

A. No, sir, what I intended to be understood was that we
were in a transitional period. In a ideal world,
everything would have been transferred onto the other
form, but these things sometimes take time and with
other priorities, it is not an instant process.

Q. I understand.

Then, under "Action", number 4, 4.2:

"Sites which have been designated by the borough
commander as warranting inclusion in this series will be
produced in the new format and as existing sites are
revisited/reviewed they should be updated into the new
format."
I think this probably follows on from some points you've already made. For information to be gathered about a site, that's down to the borough commander to decide whether it's the right kind of sight that information needs to be gathered and recorded; is that correct?

A. No, 4.2 refers up to 4.1, which is major sites: COMAH sites, major accident hazards and old operational note 300 series, which is the most significant risks in any one area or borough. So for Southwark -- well, do you need details, madam?

THE CORONER: Please.

A. We have a number of significant sites that would warrant inclusion at that level and have a specific plan for how we deal with those when we arrive. Those ones will be given priority and transferred to the A010 format, none of which are actually on Peckham's ground.

MR EDWARDS: Is the point I made, perhaps not specifically in relation to this document but more generally, accurate, that to gather information about sites such as Lakanal House, the borough commander in 2009 has to say, "This is the kind of site we need to keep information on"?

A. No, sir. At station level, a station commander would decide which sites may be included in the ops info file.
I would, in conjunction with my station managers, constantly review those lists.

Q. So putting it very simply, who decides a site is high risk and information ought to be gathered about it? You or the station manager or both of you?

A. Both, and if a decision needs to be made, then I would make that decision.

THE CORONER: But the station manager would identify it and then you would review it, if appropriate?

A. Absolutely, madam.

MR EDWARDS: And only if it's identified as needing this information gathering is there then an inspection which will formally gather information and write down that information, in July 2009?

A. Yes, sir. Each visit that we identify then -- or each premises that's identified then creates a -- a yearly inspection programme for it, or a routine inspection. We can set the frequency of that. Once a premises is on that list, it then becomes a routine visit.

Q. If we look at hazards back at 1553, the page where we were, under number 5, hazards are defined:

"Hazards are anything with the potential to cause harm. This can include substances or machines, methods of work and other aspects of work organisations."

Then under that we have "Information gathering",
6.1:

"It makes pre-planning possible for each trade/business/process considered to comprise a hazard."

Forgive me for taking you through it quite slowly, but it is important. Then page 1554, just over the page, the third bullet point down from the top:

"The purpose of visits is to make personnel aware of those hazards that may or may not be obvious, and efforts should be concentrated on those sights/locations. This is not intended to detract from obvious major hazards ..."

And it gives an example of LPG storage areas:

"... but to focus attention on less obvious hazards."

Then, under 6.2:

"The importance of prior knowledge (information gathering) is crucial if firefighting or other operations undertaken by the brigade are to be successful."

As I understand your evidence and the evidence of Mr McGurran, there would be no written information gathering of Lakanal House in 2009 because it wasn't considered a high risk site; is that right?

A. That's right, sir. High rise does not equate to high risk.
Q. You yourself had never been inside Lakanal House; is that right?

A. Not that I can recall, sir, no.

Q. So you're going to struggle to be able to review or check the decision any station manager has made as to whether or not to include Lakanal House on a high risk register because you've never been inside it. You just don't know?

A. No, I wouldn't agree with that, sir.

Q. Isn't that a bit of a catch 22 situation, in that Lakanal House doesn't go on the high risk list because people think it's not a risk, and therefore it doesn't get inspected, but to get on that list, someone needs to have gone round and had a look to see whether it's high risk?

A. Again, in much broader terms, a high rise building -- a residential high rise building will be constructed to a building standard relevant at the time of its construction, and there will be an expectation that that construction would afford a level of fire protection in line with that standard of construction. So the risk associated with a high rise residential is more to do with the style of living rather than it's a high rise building.

Q. You say it's more to do with the style of building?
A. Absolutely, sir.

Q. If we look under "Hazards" at page 1554, the first point is very fair to make. 7.2, it says:

"These points are not exhaustive and the professional judgment of all personnel will add to it."

There's obviously an element of judgment. But 7.6 -- do you have that? Still on 1554:

"The building itself may be the hazard. The method of construction and materials used could pose a risk to firefighters once involved in a developing fire."

Then it gives some examples. Farm buildings obviously doesn't apply. Sandwich panel/CLASP construction. Does that mean anything to you?

A. Absolutely, sir.

Q. What does that mean?

A. If you take, for instance, a large retail outlet that you'll find on any industrial estate, the method of construction, how it's built, the sandwich panels that are actually the cladding of the building -- it could be a metal sheet on one side, an in-fill, a metal sheet on the other side -- the fire, if it does break out, can actually get within the structure of the building. It can cause rapid fire spread, unexpected fire spread and rapid deterioration of the structure of the building, leading to collapse. So sandwich construction itself
Q. Over the page it talks about "the plan" on page 1555.

8.5 says:

"Site profile: a brief description of the premises, its use, particular attention to any unusual building construction or unexpected use of premises."

In your mind, is unusual building construction something different from complex building construction or are they the same thing?

A. If it's the first time you've seen it, sir, then maybe it's unusual, but I wouldn't suggest that -- it depends on what context it's being used in, I think is the answer there, sir.

Q. The jury have visited Lakanal House. I'm not sure whether you yourself have been inside but we've seen the somewhat unusual -- and that is my word -- scissor-type arrangement of the flats, the fact that you enter on a bedroom, go up to a kitchen, the bedrooms are one side, kitchen and lounge area stretches across the whole width of the building. Would you not describe that as a little bit unusual?

A. Across the borough, we have a whole range of different methods of construction, different types of building. A flat or a maisonette, when you go through the front door, can go up, can go down, can remain on the same
level. So -- the operational crews within the borough are well-versed with experiencing a whole range of different ways of entering a flat and what to expect on the other side.

Q. I understand all of that. That wasn't my question. My question was: wouldn't you describe this scissor-shaped construction, entry on the bedroom level, bedrooms on one side of the building, then a lounge/kitchen on the upstairs, stretching across the whole building -- wouldn't you describe that as a little bit unusual?

A. Yes, sorry, sir, I misunderstood the question. But yes, I agree with you, sir.

Q. Just one more point on this document. Page 1556, just one page over. 8.13, communications. This is all still included under "The plan":

"Communications: include any particular difficulties or alternative arrangements that may apply and include details of control centres, PA systems, internal telephone location."

I think the only relevance there is "particular difficulties". Does that refer to particular difficulties firefighters are going to have using their personal radios when they're on the scene?

A. The note, again, is a generic one to cover all information gathering across all premises. "Any
particular difficulties", it could relate to particular communications difficulty with brigade radios.

Q. I appreciate it could relate to many things, but do you think part of what that's referring to is your radios don't work properly from certain floors or certain parts of building?

A. Quite possibly. But again, if that's an underground or a predominantly metal building where it blocked out your radio signals, that could be more of a difficulty. A block of flats wouldn't normally present unusual radio difficulties.

Q. How are you going to find out if a block of flats -- or any building -- presents radio difficulties? Before you answer, internally, presumably, buildings sometimes have metal, sometimes they have very thick concrete. Sometimes a building that looks like there will be no difficulties might present a difficulty. Sometimes a building that looks like a massive concrete structure from the outside is actually very thin and radios work fine. Is testing the radio on a familiarisation visit really the only way that you could find that out?

A. Practically, sir, yes. You could look at the design and get a technical specification for it, but my advice would be to actually test the radios in situ.

Q. How would that testing work?
A. I'll send you upstairs and see if I can talk to you, sir.

Q. Can I ask you to turn now --

THE CORONER: Mr Edwards, can I just ask, do you have a great deal more?

MR EDWARDS: I'm on my last topic. It may be one question, it may be several.

THE CORONER: Well, we need to have a break if we're going to be carrying on.

MR EDWARDS: Perhaps I can ask my one question and I can tell you if there's going to be any more. Can we turn to page 1493, please. Is this a document you've seen before?

A. Not until this morning's evidence, sir.

Q. In which case I won't ask you about it.

THE CORONER: Thank you. Are there going to be any more questions of Mr Snazell? In which case we'll take a short break. If there aren't going to be many then maybe we'll carry on and let him go and have a short break after, if we need.

MR MATTHEWS: I have a few.

THE CORONER: Mr Dowden has. Right, in that case, let's take a five minute break now.

Members of the jury, just five minutes. Thank very much.

151
Mr Snazell, we'll just have a five minute break. Please don't talk to anyone during the break about your evidence or this matter, thank you.

(In the absence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Perhaps we could just agree some numbering for the document which Mr Maxwell-Scott took Mr Snazell to during his evidence, the mobilisation record for the earlier fire. I don't know whether everyone's had a chance to look at the home fire safety visit proforma before we give it to the jury. Perhaps over the break you could just have a look and see whether there's any difficulty with handing it out to jurors, all right? Thank you.

(3.39 pm)

(A short break)

(3.44 pm)

THE CORONER: Yes, are there any objections to the proforma being handed to the jurors?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, we don't have enough copies to do it right now.

THE CORONER: Oh, right. In that case I'll leave it until next week, thank you. Sorry, I'd misunderstood; I thought that there were copies for everybody.

(In the presence of the Jury)

THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Dowden.
Questions by MR DOWDEN

MR DOWDEN: Yes, good afternoon, my name's Dowden. I ask
questions on behalf of one of the families. I'm going
to ask you to look again at page 511 of your statement.

A. Sorry, sir, could you repeat the page number?

Q. 511. You get there at about 6.15, and you spend about
15 or 20 minutes doing other duties. You'll see that in
the top paragraph on the statement, and then, after
being there -- so we're talking now about some time
after 6.30 -- you're asked to collate information
regarding the progress and results of the search and
rescue operations. You have been asked about the next
paragraph, about the map that you tried to draw in
respect of the flat numbers. In the third paragraph of
that statement, you say:

"I had a piece of paper with the numbers of flats
located on each floor."

Do you see that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When you say "the numbers of flats located on each
floor", are you talking about a range of perhaps half
a dozen flats for the whole block which you then locate
onto different floors, or are you talking about on each
floor writing the range of the flat numbers for each
floor?
A. With the information that I had -- it would be similar
to that information that I'd been shown on the
information board above the lift, the floor numbers --
the odd floor numbers with the flats associated with
each level.

Q. So effectively you're saying the range of flat numbers?
   For example, the first numbered floor would be 1 to 14,
   the second would be 15 to 28, et cetera?

A. Exactly that, sir. So I simply drew a very simple
drawing with that number of flats in each level.

Q. All right. Moving further down that particular
   paragraph, you say:

   "We had no specific information regarding individual
   premises where residents required rescue or residents
   were involved in fire survival calls."

   So even at that time, after 6.30, that information
   hadn't been passed to you?

A. No, sir. As I said earlier, the information that I was
   gaining was information that was already on the fire
   ground. So I was, again, taking information from the
   command unit and the bridgehead, information they
   already had.

Q. Thank you.

THE CORONER: Thank you. Ms Al Tai?

MS AL TAI: No, thank you, madam.
THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Matthews.

Questions by MR MATTHEWS

MR MATTHEWS: Mr Snazell, on behalf of the London Borough of Southwark, my name's Matthews. Just a few questions. I understand that you're coming back later to help us with other matters.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So these genuinely are just a bit of clarification on some of the evidence you've given. With a deep breath, can I ask you to have a look at that form at 1081, please.

Really, Mr Snazell, it's just because we've heard a bit about this form. This was a form that was in use nationally, is that right, across all Fire Brigades?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. And it ceased to be used, I think, some time after 2008? Don't worry. It was in use for a long time. What was the purpose of the form? Once it's filled out, who was it sent to?

A. Information would be collated on the form. At the time when I was completing them, we would send them to Fire Brigade headquarters and the information from them would then be either used at headquarters for whatever data-collecting systems were in place and sent onto nationally.
Q. Right. And brigade -- that's London Fire Brigade's headquarters?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Was a copy of the form retained on the station?
A. Yes. This form had carbon paper.
Q. Right.
A. So you had four copies -- three or four copies. Again, I can't recall, having not done one for many years, but it was handwritten from these copies.
Q. You mentioned the paper file for Lakanal that existed that had the 72D visits and the dry riser inspections.
A. It wouldn't have the fire reports in it, sir. They'd be in a separate fire reports file.
Q. All right. In that separate fire reports file, attached would be the photographs as well that we have in our 1084?
A. No, sir. No, sir, those photographs, I believe, come off from a fire investigation branch which is separate from a fire station. There's no means of recording a photograph by operational fire crews.
Q. Lastly, then, on this, 1082. You've helped us with one of the boxes or a number of the boxes, 5.7 and 5.8. I don't know if Mr Maxwell-Scott can zoom in. It's 5.9 that I think we ought to deal with as well. Help me to help everybody, please, because it's difficult to zoom
5.9 is something headed "Estimate of horizontal area damaged". We have two rectangular boxes. The one on the left, A, is "Area damaged by direct burning", and the one on the right, B, is "Total area damaged by fire, heat, smoke et cetera".

Q. On the left, we have a tick for "Area damaged by direct burning" in the box that has 20 to 49 square metres of area damaged by direct burning.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And on the right, we have 100 to 199 square metres of "Area damaged by fire, heat, smoke et cetera".

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So that box on the right's telling us that someone's estimated between 100 and 200 square metres have been affected by presumably smoke or heat in this fire?

A. Agreed, sir.

Q. Just above, in the box you were taken to, in fact it tells us that three floors were damaged; is that right?

Can you see?

A. Yes, I've found it, sir. If you go to the 5.8, where it says "Other", where you've got 10. It could well be water damage to the flats below.

Q. Right. So the total of three could be water damage to the third floor. Could it also be smoke damage?
A. Yes, sir. I honestly don't know the details of this fire.

Q. No, of course, and genuinely it's only because we have this form and you may be our best chance of working out what it shows.

A. Understood, sir.

Q. The significance is nothing more beyond that. I think that's all I need to ask about that form.

Can I ask you about something entirely different, and that is to get you to look in the jury bundle behind tab 15. Can I take this shortly. If you go to page 1137. This is --

THE CORONER: Sorry, just wait for Mr Snazell to get there.

MR MATTHEWS: Sorry. 1137. It's in our jury bundles, so we may not need it on the screen. As we understand it, these are the sort of materials that were given to crew managers or station managers and from which training to all London firefighters was given around this time on high rise buildings and dealing with high rise fires?

A. Yeah, around about 2008, I believe, sir.

Q. Yes. If you can go through to page 1158. Again, trying to take this shortly, it is this aspect of your evidence I think we need to understand. We understand you're saying there's a difference between high risk and high rise.
A. Yes, sir.

Q. This training is about high rise and we know your firefighters, if I can call them that, were given this training. Can you help us in this way: what were you expecting your firefighters to understand by "Station personnel should familiarise themselves with all high rise buildings on their station's ground"? As a bit of training, what are you expecting them to understand by that?

A. At an absolute bare minimum, an awareness; where resources permit them, to visit, but again, given the numbers involved, then that's not possible with resources available at any one time.

Q. You're not anticipating that they understand that this doesn't relate to residential blocks?

A. Sorry, sir, can you repeat that?

Q. In your mind, this isn't making a distinction between residential blocks and other blocks, is it?

A. It's all high rise, sir.

Q. When we look further up under "Pre-planning", the first paragraph, where it says:

"Under section 72D, regular familiarisation visits and pre-planning should be carried out."

It then says:

"Pre-planning is essential [and that's underlined]
when dealing with a fire in a high rise premises."

   Again, you're expecting them to understand that
relates to residential as well as high rise office
blocks?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So what are they supposed to understand in relation to
pre-planning? What bit of pre-planning is essential?
A. Understand the high rise policy on how to deal with any
fire in a high rise building, commercial or residential.

Q. And the operational information gathering bit, what are
they supposed to understand about that?
A. Write down the basics, sir, in terms of where the actual
premises are, so topography, understanding your
station's ground, understanding where your risks are,
understanding how to get there, understanding where to
park when you arrive, understanding where to secure your
water supplies, how to secure the firefighter lift, how
to establish a bridgehead.

Q. Does that extend to complex layout?
A. Absolutely, sir.

Q. Thank you.

Then the third topic -- and it's shorter and I'm
less sure that I'm on safe territory, because I can't
remember the page number, but it is the document -- can
I ask Mr Maxwell-Scott to help me?
Mr Snazell, there's no mystery here. I may have caused confusion before and I want to make sure I end the confusion then. You're about to be shown this document, which you've described to us. It's the incident report back to that 1997 fire.

A. Yes, sir, I have it.

Q. We've heard that at the control room, people manning the phones type at the same time as they're talking.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When they type, is this the product of what they're typing, what we see here from 1997?

A. I can't accurately answer that, sir. I'm not sure of the processes in control as to how the information is put. This is a MOBIS report, so it must link in somewhere, but I'm not sure if it's a direct link or a direct correlation or if it's them transposing somewhere. I can't answer that, sir.

Q. All right. Then I haven't succeeded in clearing up the confusion. I'll shut up and sit down.

THE CORONER: Mr Compton?

MR COMPTON: No questions, thank you.

THE CORONER: Mr Walsh?

MR WALSH: No thank you, madam.

THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Members of the jury, do you have any questions?
THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. Just a couple of brief questions. Going back again to the 1997 fire, do you recall any problem in finding -- I realise you didn't go inside the building, but perhaps you may have gleaned from your colleagues, was there any problem in finding the floors, or flat 81, anything of that nature?

A. I'm unaware of the details of the initial attendance.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Again, because you didn't go in the building -- I understand that, but there was nothing brought to your attention as far as the layout of the building at that point?

A. No.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. Regarding the files that you were mentioning earlier -- we saw some examples of the papers that would have been kept in the files -- we understand that you were in the middle of migrating information from paper to electronic, and that that, as you say, is not a quick process. We were just hoping if you could clarify: who would have access to each type of those files? So in the case of the paper files, would they only be accessible by the firefighters within that station? And with the electronic files, would they be password-protected, for instance, or could any firefighter go in and have a look?
A. The paper files would be available to the -- all personnel on the station. There's no -- no other copies given to -- unless it's specific risk, but normally the paper file available to ones in the station. We would keep an additional copy of the operational information folder in the station watchroom for use by standby crews, so there'd be an additional copy if a crew came in to standby for a time, and they could take that file with them.

The electronic, once it's into the MDT, the mobile data systems -- it's on the system within there called the operational risk database -- that's available to any front-line fire appliance with that equipment. There's no password protection.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: And that was in 2009 as well, or...?

A. The process had started and it's still continuing now.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay. Thank you very much.

That's all, thank you.

Questions by the Coroner

THE CORONER: Thank you. Just one thing, Mr Snazell. Your involvement in the 1997 fire I think was in a investigatory role?

A. Yes, madam.

THE CORONER: And was that limited to investigating the
circumstances of the injuries suffered by the firefighter, or were you investigating the incident more comprehensively?

A. It -- it was around the injuries to the firefighter, madam.

THE CORONER: Right. Thank you very much.

Mr Snazell, thank you very much for coming. I think that as has already been said earlier this afternoon, you're going to be coming back later to assist us with other matters.

A. Thank you, madam.

THE CORONER: Thank you very much for the help you've been able to give us today. Thank you very much.

Yes, Mr Maxwell-Scott, before I confirm to the jurors that they needn't come back until Monday, can we just be confident that that is indeed the case?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: This is absolutely correct. So we will next sit on Monday and we will hear expert evidence from David Crowder.

THE CORONER: Thank you very much.

Members of the jury, you're free to go now. Thank you very much. Thank you for your patient attention this week. Please don't forget the warnings I have given about not talking to anyone about the case and not doing any research on your own. Thank you very much.
We'll see you back here for a 10 o'clock start on Monday. Thank you very much.

(In the absence of the Jury)

Housekeeping

THE CORONER: Yes, thank you. Before we finish, just looking ahead at next week initially, Mr Crowder on Monday?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes.

THE CORONER: Good, and then for the rest of the week?

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I don't have my timetable with me.

THE CORONER: Ah, do you want to just borrow mine?

Mr Clark, I have mine here.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I've been lent one.

THE CORONER: Ah, thank you.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: So then perhaps the main question that is undecided is the role, if any, that Dr Mansi will take after Mr Crowder. I've indicated by email that I personally didn't think it would be necessary for him to give evidence, because I thought the combination of Mr Crowder and senior members of the London Fire Brigade later on would be able to cover the necessary topics.

I haven't particularly expected people to have reached a view on that by now, but I haven't particularly received views either. It may be that people can comment now or that we'll have to wait until the
conclusion of Mr Crowder's evidence.

THE CORONER: Okay.

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: After that, just to finish while I'm on my feet, we then have, on the 20th, Mr Aveling, who was the tenant of flat 79, which, as we know, underwent some refurbishment, and then we'll start hearing evidence from witnesses from the London Borough of Southwark on the 20th and also the 21st and 22nd.

THE CORONER: Thank you. All right. Does anyone perceive any problems or issues that need to be raised in relation to the witnesses during the course of next week? Yes, Mr Compton.

MR COMPTON: Madam, just one very short matter. I know that Mr Maxwell-Scott and Mr Atkins are doing all they can with the building regulations report, and I know that it's almost with us. It is vitally important we get it at least over the weekend, because of course it does impact on Mr Crowder. I know that he's going to give his evidence in the way set out, limiting the scope initially, but if there are any delays -- and I hope there won't be -- with this report, then I hope you'll forgive us if we do ask for a little bit of time if it doesn't arrive until Monday, or anything like that.

THE CORONER: Yes, I do understand that. I'm sorry that it is taking time. I hope very much that it will be
available for the weekend. I hope that's the case.

MR COMPTON: Thank you very much.

THE CORONER: And apologies for the inconvenience caused to everybody by the delay. Thank you. Any other points?

Good. All right, are there any issues anyone wants to raise before we finish before next week? Good. Well, thank you all very much, and we'll convene again on Monday. Thank you very much.

(4.09 pm)

(The Court adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday, 18 February 2013)
Questions by the Coroner .......................163

Housekeeping .................................165