

1 Thursday, 14 February 2013

2 (10.00 am)

3 Housekeeping

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

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

13 THE CORONER: Yes.

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

16 THE CORONER: All right.

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

21 THE CORONER: Yes.

22 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: As I understand it, there will be some  
23 additional documents but they're being gathered, and so  
24 the question will be how best to manage the questioning  
25 about this document today, given that the picture is

1           only partially complete. I'll leave Mr Walsh to address  
2           on you that.

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

6 THE CORONER: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

20 THE CORONER: Yes.

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

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

25 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Exactly. What I would like to do is to

1           ask someone -- and I think Station Manager McGurran's  
2           probably the best person -- to explain in generic terms  
3           the reason, to the extent that he can deduce it, why the  
4           premises that were included in the operational  
5           information folder were so included, and my recollection  
6           is that most of them were included because of the nature  
7           of materials held on site, be it chemical or other  
8           hazardous materials.

9   THE CORONER:   Yes.

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

13  THE CORONER:   Yes.

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

17  THE CORONER:   Yes.

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

22  THE CORONER:   Yes.

23  MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  But what I'm not sure is whether he would  
24           need to have the folder in front of him in order to  
25           enable him to answer that, and it seems to me that if he

1           would need to have it in front of him, then it would be  
2           fair and appropriate for him to have it in front of him  
3           but for others not to have it available to them. That  
4           would be my proposal.

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

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

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

1 determine whether some should be a two pump attendance  
2 and some a three, and there is a score.

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

17 The reason why we raise it now is that Mr Snazell,  
18 who is the borough commander who will give evidence  
19 later, will of course be in a position to answer  
20 questions within his knowledge, but it is far better, we  
21 feel, that such questions as there are about this, and  
22 the contextual information which will be served in due  
23 course, should be asked in one go, rather than asking  
24 Mr Snazell some of the issues today and then reserving  
25 issues until later. So we undertake to provide, as soon

1 as we can, a bundle of documents satisfying, insofar as  
2 we can, the requests, particularly of Mr Hendy's team,  
3 and we say that Mr Snazell, when he gives evidence --  
4 again, as he must do -- on other issues, will be in  
5 a position to answer questions about it. So I suppose  
6 the request really is that can we deal with those issues  
7 as and when we have the material together and served it.

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

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

20 MR WALSH: Madam, just very briefly, in relation to the  
21 other issue, which is the contents of the operational  
22 information file, again, the particular contents of the  
23 Camberwell Art College file have been disclosed and put  
24 up because we've obtained the relevant consents. There  
25 are indeed difficulties about obtaining consent from

1 other premises because some of the matters are  
2 relatively sensitive, for perhaps obvious reasons. So  
3 Mr McGurran will be able to answer the generic  
4 questions, but certainly we wouldn't be in a position to  
5 be able to go to any of the other files.

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

16 MR WALSH: I'm very grateful.

17 THE CORONER: All right. Does that sound workable?

18 Mr Maxwell-Scott, are you content with that? Does that  
19 sound like a sensible forward?

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

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

25 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I have it electronically and I could

1           print a copy for him if necessary.

2   THE CORONER:   Right.

3   MR WALSH:   I have to say it's not entirely clear.  If the

4           question to Mr McGurran is, in respect of that entry on

5           the schedule, that particular premises: "What is it

6           about those premises which requires an operational

7           information file entry?" then of course he may be able

8           to say, "Well, it's because it has X, Y and Z on the

9           premises."  That immediately steps over the mark which

10          we're concerned about, so I'm not quite sure what the

11          question might be.

12  MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  Well, to clarify -- if I put it back up

13          on the screen, 1668.

14  THE CORONER:   Yes.

15  MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:  Just taking the first one for an example,

16          I might say, "Why was it thought necessary for there to

17          be a file on the operational information folder for

18          Camberwell baths?  Was it to do with materials held on

19          site or complexity of layout or some other reason?"

20          Then I would expect him to answer by choosing from that

21          list, but if he needs the form to do so then we can

22          print it off for him and he can have it in the witness

23          box.

24  MR WALSH:   I think if that's the nature of the questions,

25          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

1 witness to have documents that all interested parties  
2 don't have. That goes without saying, I think, unless  
3 there are really exceptional circumstances. So yes,  
4 let's take it forward as has been proposed, and if  
5 problems arise then we'll deal with them as they crop  
6 up. All right?

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

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

12 Yes, Mr McGurran, would you like to come back?

13 Sorry, you're there. I do apologise. Help yourself to  
14 a glass of water and do switch the microphone on, thank  
15 you. Mr McGurran, you're giving your evidence on oath.

16 (In the presence of the Jury)

17 THE CORONER: Yes, good morning, members of the jury. We're  
18 going to continue with Mr McGurran's evidence initially,  
19 and then we're going to go onto Mr Snazell. If all goes  
20 well, what we're planning for tomorrow is a preparation  
21 day for all of the parties so that will mean that you  
22 will not need to be here tomorrow. So we hope that  
23 we'll be able to achieve that. Thank you. Yes.

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MICHAEL MCGURRAN (continued)

Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT (continued)

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

1 familiar with the following."

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

4 A. Yes.

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

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

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

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. If I could ask you to give us your understanding of what  
23 a small number of these bullet points mean. Firstly  
24 number one. What do you understand by "location and  
25 accuracy of information available on site"?

1 A. That might be that if -- if it was a certain block --  
2 some blocks -- certainly not on Peckham's ground, but  
3 some blocks have a premises information box on the front  
4 of them. This 72D relates to not only domestic high  
5 rise but it would also relate to commercial premises, so  
6 location and accuracy of information on site, that would  
7 be plans that might have been available. There might be  
8 a concierge there, there could be a desk. There's other  
9 things other than you would find on a residential high  
10 rise, say, on Peckham's ground.

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

14 A. Yes.

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

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

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

24 A. Single staircase.

25 Q. If you look about another five further down, there's

1 reference to "floor layouts and fire-resisting  
2 compartmentation". Can you explain what that means  
3 specifically in the context with a building like  
4 Lakanal House?

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

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

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

25 A. No.

1 Q. Then, four from the bottom, there's reference to  
2 "evacuation arrangements". Can you explain what that  
3 means and what, if anything, that adds to the bullet  
4 point "means of access and egress from the building"?

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

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

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

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

19 A. No.

20 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I asked you yesterday, at the beginning  
21 of your evidence, whether your personal practice when  
22 conducting a 72D visit in your time as station manager  
23 between 2003 and July 2009 had changed, and you said it  
24 had not. What I want to ask you about now is the  
25 practice in terms of recording information following

1 a 72D visit.

2 Firstly, let me ask you this: was there any change  
3 in your personal practice in how the results, if I can  
4 put it that way, of a 72D visit were written up or  
5 passed on between 2003 and July 2009?

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

14 Q. If I ask you to pause there and look at page 1098.

15 (Handed) This is a document relating to an inspection  
16 of Lakanal House in May 2004, and if we look over the  
17 page we see your name on it, so it is said to be sent  
18 from you. As far as I'm aware, this is the latest in  
19 time such document that we have in relation to  
20 Lakanal House and it relates to an inspection under  
21 section 1(1)(d) of the Fire Services Act 1947. Without  
22 going too much into the law, is it right that when we  
23 talk about 72D visits, we're referring to  
24 section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act  
25 2004? In other words, the 11D visit was the fore runner

1 of the 72D visit?

2 A. That's correct.

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

6 A. Yes, it would.

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

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

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

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

23 Q. After 2004, what happened to documents like this? I ask  
24 that because, of course, we don't have anything similar  
25 for Lakanal after May 2004.

1 A. There was an authority decision that we went away from  
2 carrying out a visit such as G9, which was a dry riser  
3 inspection, and the responsibility went over to private  
4 companies to test the dry riser and check its function.  
5 That didn't stop us, though, going back, as we did, and  
6 doing 72D visits to the same premises, looking at the  
7 same kind of things as we did on a G9 visit. But the  
8 only difference was the recording of them. There was no  
9 requirement to record them formally like this, instead  
10 of which, in our borough in Southwark, we started  
11 liaising directly with Southwark Council in term of  
12 getting defects corrected.

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

16 A. No.

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

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

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

25 A. Yeah.

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

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

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

14 A. No, that's not a defect.

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

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

19 Q. So that would be in their discretion?

20 A. That would be at their discretion.

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

25 A. On -- if they were substantial -- if there were

1 substantial defects, then maybe I would have expected  
2 the notes to end up in the station file on the premises.  
3 Otherwise I would have expected an email to myself  
4 telling me what the defects were, or to -- if it was of  
5 particular concern, to a fire safety officer.

6 Q. So summarising that, you would expect any difficulties  
7 to be brought to your attention in writing, whether in  
8 a written memo or an email; is that right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. The original handwritten notes made as the crews went  
11 round, would you expect ever to see those?

12 A. I wouldn't necessarily expect to see them again.

13 Q. Do you recall instances of being sent written  
14 information about matters that one wouldn't call  
15 defects, so matters like unusually complex layouts?

16 A. Not -- not in relating to layouts, no.

17 Q. After you received written notification of any defects,  
18 what would you do with that information?

19 A. I'd make sure that the information was passed on to the  
20 relevant person. So in terms of a building defect,  
21 tower high rise, it would have been passed on to  
22 Southwark Council by the -- by our fire liaison officer  
23 within Southwark.

24 Q. Would that be done on a standard form like the one we  
25 see on the screen or some other way?

1 A. It would be done just by an email listing the defects.

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

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

22 Q. Looking at some of the points you made there, firstly,  
23 does it follow that there might be situations in which  
24 a less serious defect was notified to, for example,  
25 a landlord, but wasn't noted internally at the fire

1 station?

2 A. I wouldn't say that. It's easy to make a note of a --  
3 in the station handing-over book or an email. It's  
4 quite simple for anybody who does an inspection to  
5 record that information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 A. The handing-over book and the email system.

1 Q. And any verbal handover would be informal and at the  
2 choice of those involved?

3 A. That would have been an informal discussion made, and  
4 that's -- that's it, really.

5 Q. Do the watches shift times overlap to allow for any  
6 handover period?

7 A. There's always -- there's always a handover between  
8 watches, certainly the officers on the watch, and that  
9 handover is -- is recorded in terms of it taking place  
10 in the station logbook.

11 Q. Are there periods of time when both watches are paid to  
12 be on duty so the handover can take place?

13 A. No, they're not -- they're either on duty or off duty,  
14 but they would be there, say, ten/15 minutes beforehand,  
15 and the information would be passed over then.

16 Q. At the choice of those involved?

17 A. At the choice of those involved.

18 Q. You explained to us the system in relation to the  
19 identification of defects on a 72D visit. What are the  
20 other purposes, if any, of a 72D visit, other than  
21 looking for defects?

22 A. Familiarisation. 72Ds might not necessarily even be  
23 a -- they can be an area, rather than an actual  
24 building. You could be looking at water supplies,  
25 even -- even, say, water supplies in a park, things like

1           that.  So they're not restricted to buildings.

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

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

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

14  A.  I can see that.

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

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

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

22           You go on to say:

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

25           Is it right that that makes the important point that

1 a 72D visit or a familiarisation visit is just that?  
2 It's not just about spotting defects; it's about  
3 familiarising crews with buildings where they may have  
4 to fight fires?  
5 A. That's correct.  
6 Q. Part of the point of that, I assume, is so that they  
7 build up some familiarity with the layout of the  
8 building?  
9 A. That's correct.  
10 Q. In terms of other possible purposes of a visit, is it  
11 right that one of them is to see whether a building  
12 should be on what's called the central risk register?  
13 A. Yes.  
14 Q. It was at the time?  
15 A. Around -- around that time, before the computers were  
16 put on the fire engines, we did have a central risk  
17 register, which was a -- a risk which was -- basically  
18 looked at streets in London and any unusual risks that  
19 you might find within that area. It was important  
20 information for crews around 2009 at that time.  
21 Q. To summarise, was that focussed very heavily on whether  
22 there were unusual materials, flammable materials,  
23 chemicals, on site?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. Would a familiarisation visit have as one of its

1 purposes checking the predetermined attendance for the  
2 building and whether it needed to be altered?

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 "Mobilise, mobilise, mobilise."

25 Then we see that the initial mobilisation was four

1 pumps and an aerial ladder platform. Do you see that?

2 A. I can see that.

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

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

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

15 A. That's correct.

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

20 A. That -- that's possible. I would say the more likely  
21 reason that would occur would be if you were carrying  
22 out, say, an exercise. If there was a -- like  
23 an event -- a training event arranged by Old Kent Road  
24 in a particular premises which might have been because  
25 it was a particular risk, that we would have taken part

1 in a exercise. But you wouldn't normally go and visit  
2 buildings on another station's ground.

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

8 A. That's correct.

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

12 A. That's correct.

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

16 A. That's correct.

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

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Can you just help us with how unusual that is, that the  
22 watch manager who becomes incident commander -- and of  
23 course, in this case, was incident commander for about  
24 25 minutes -- comes from a different fire station?

25 A. I would say probably a quarter of the time. That would

1 be due to the watch manager at Peckham not being --  
2 being on leave or training -- going on training events.  
3 So they would -- our control would send someone -- they  
4 wouldn't necessarily be from the next station anyway.  
5 They could be from two stations away.

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

11 A. No.

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

14 A. That's correct.

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

17 A. Yes.

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

22 A. Well, part of our training regime within the station  
23 would be to familiarise ourselves with different  
24 appliances from other stations. So we would routinely  
25 get the -- an aerial appliance, such as the one from Old

1 Kent Road, to visit Peckham for a training event. Other  
2 appliances -- say a fire rescue unit -- would also be  
3 required to attend Peckham, so even though they're not  
4 at our station, we would make sure that the firefighters  
5 were familiar with the appliances.

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

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

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

18 A. That's fine.

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

21 A. I don't think so.

22 Q. Now, in the course of these inquests, we've asked  
23 a number of witnesses whether, as a result of their  
24 presence at the fire ground on the day of the fire, they  
25 gained knowledge of certain features of Lakanal House.

1           There's a shortlist I asked you about.  What I want to  
2           ask you about is whether you would expect crews to have  
3           gained knowledge of these features in the course of  
4           a 72D visit, okay?

5   A.  Yes.

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

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

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

14   A.  Yes.

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

17   A.  Yes.

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

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

23   Q.  You would?

24   A.  Yes.

25   Q.  Thank you.  I think it follows from your evidence

1           yesterday you would have expected them to work out that  
2           the balconies are escape routes?

3    A.   Within -- yes, because like I said, we carried out home  
4           fire safety visits in four blocks in Peckham's ground  
5           that are all similar --

6    Q.   Just pause there.  I'm not asking about home fire safety  
7           visits at the moment.  Just recapping from yesterday,  
8           you made it clear that you would have expected those  
9           conducting a 72D visit to work out that the balconies  
10          are escape balconies?

11   A.   They -- yes, they have keys and the idea of the visit is  
12          to check the keys work, so they would have opened the --  
13          the doors to the lobby where the escape balconies are.

14   Q.   To what extent would you have expected crews to build  
15          up, at least at the time they were on site, some  
16          understanding of how the flat numbering system worked?

17   A.   I might not have expected them to retain that -- that  
18          knowledge on a 72D visit.

19   Q.   Well, I can certainly understand that wouldn't retain it  
20          in their long term memory, but would you expect them to  
21          note signs at the time, or develop some understanding so  
22          that if they went back to the building later they would  
23          have something to draw on to know how to find quickly  
24          where particular flats were?

25   A.   I -- I would have expected them to notice, for instance,

1 the -- an indication available in terms of where flat  
2 numbers are. Don't forget, we go -- we go to these  
3 blocks operationally on a fairly regular basis, and they  
4 will be looking for a specific flat possibly at that  
5 time, so they would need to have some sort of  
6 understanding of the flat numbers or where to find them.

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

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

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

21 A. That's correct.

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

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Briefly, what's the purpose of a home fire safety visit?

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

13 Q. Would one or two firefighters go to a block or would the  
14 whole crew go and go to different flats within it?

15 A. We've -- in our borough over the last few years, we've  
16 carried out --

17 THE CORONER: Mr McGurran, we need to know about before  
18 2009.

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

24 Q. Would any records be kept other than the fact that  
25 a visit was made to flat number 27, or whatever it may

1 be?

2 A. There is a -- a database which the crews have to  
3 complete on returning to the station, an electronic  
4 database, where they have to record the information that  
5 was given, whether smoke alarms were fitted and the  
6 person's personal details.

7 Q. Can I ask you to go to page 1102 in the advocates'  
8 bundles. This is a document provided by the  
9 London Fire Brigade to summarise home fire safety visits  
10 carried out at Lakanal House and Marie Curie. You can  
11 see that there were just over 25 in Lakanal House in  
12 2005.

13 A. I can see that.

14 Q. And one more in January 2008. There were, again, about  
15 25 in Marie Curie in 2005 and also about 25 in  
16 Marie Curie in 2008.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I think you can probably ignore July 2009 because  
19 I think they would have been done after the fire at  
20 Lakanal.

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Taking this fairly quickly, would it be fair to say that  
23 a firefighter who went into a flat in a block like  
24 Lakanal to carry out a home fire safety visit would  
25 notice, while doing it, that it was a maisonette?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. That on the upper floor it extended the full width of  
3 the building?

4 A. That's correct.

5 Q. And that it had balconies that were escape routes?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. If I take you then in your witness statement to  
8 page 679. Just for completeness, paragraph 17  
9 identifies another type of visit that might be conducted  
10 by a different part of the London Fire Brigade, where  
11 you say:

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

19 But you say:

20 "This did not happen very often."

21 A. That's right. That's -- for instance, if you -- fire  
22 safety had been asked to visit a premises where there  
23 was a specific problem in terms of compartmentation,  
24 fire separation, or the use of the premises, then they  
25 might have issued a notice on that building prohibiting

1 its use or part use, and then that information would be  
2 passed on to the local station and the local station  
3 would be requested to go and visit that premises from  
4 time to time to make sure that the measures put in place  
5 by the fire regulatory team were still current.

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

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

17 A. No.

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

20 A. Correct.

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

23 A. Yes.

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

25 A. Yes.

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

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

7 Then if I ask you to look at page 1127.

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

11 (Handed)

12 A. I've got that.

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

15 A. Yes.

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

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

25 It goes on to say, a few lines below:

1           "Building layout can be of particular importance.  
2           In some blocks of flats, the front door can lead into  
3           the flat, up to the flat or down to the flat, all from  
4           the same level. Where appropriate, pre-planning  
5           information should be recorded in the operational  
6           information folder and shared with adjoining stations."

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

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

13        Q. That wasn't what I asked you.

14        A. No.

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

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

1 stations have similar blocks of similar construction.

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

7 A. Yes.

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

11 A. I can see that.

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

15 "As part of the ongoing familiarisation training for  
16 station-based staff, station managers are to ensure that  
17 watch and crew managers diarise, book and visit the high  
18 rise premises on their station's ground during  
19 2009/2010. This process should begin with immediate  
20 effect and then be undertaken annually thereafter."

21 It also says, lower down:

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

24 And that exercise should be completed by 31 July.

25 A. That's correct.

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

6 A. Yes, I can see that.

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

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

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

25 A. It -- it did have an effect on the -- on the training.

1           Obviously, we carried out the training within a --  
2           a reasonable time of the email being circulated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1           yearly".

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

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

10   A.   That's correct.

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

13   A.   That's correct.

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

16   A.   Yes.

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

21   A.   That's correct.

22   Q.   Paragraph 14 says that:

23                 "Visits were set out at the beginning of the year  
24                 for the entire year and added to the electronic station  
25                 diary."

1           Does that mean, by "the beginning of the year",  
2           January of each year?

3    A.   Yes.

4    Q.   "If there was a direction from headquarters to visit  
5           a certain type of premises, then this would influence  
6           the premises to visit."

7           Then if we go over the page to paragraph 15, you  
8           refer to the email from Assistant Commissioner Brown  
9           that we looked at a few moments ago, and then we see  
10          what happened as a result of it. In the fourth line:

11          "Lakanal was visited by the white and blue watches  
12          in May 2009."

13          We've heard about that. That was 2 May and 30 May.  
14          Then you say this:

15          "The other two watches would have diarised to visit  
16          later on in the year."

17          Let me ask you this: as at 3 July 2009, was there  
18          a date for Green Watch and Red Watch to visit  
19          Lakanal House?

20    A.   I can't answer that now. I don't know now whether there  
21           was or not. The request to -- for them to diarise was  
22           handed down to watch managers to deal with actually when  
23           they were going to visit the high rise premises. It  
24           might have been that one of the other watches would have  
25           visited Lakanal as part of their schedule of visits

1 routinely so that it would have been only necessary for  
2 one other watch, say, to visit at some point. The other  
3 point with that email -- like I said a few times, we've  
4 got 125 high rise premises and in the course of our  
5 normal work, we carry out home fire safety visits, and  
6 when they carry out a home fire safety visit in a --  
7 a tower block, for instance, or a high rise premises,  
8 they are all -- they are, if you like, automatically  
9 carrying out a type of 72D visit where they're looking  
10 at the building. If they noticed any defects then they  
11 would be bringing them forward. So for us to visit --  
12 for instance, we've got 125 high rise, say. That would  
13 require about 1,000 visits to complete the task within  
14 that email, which would -- that's assuming that each  
15 watch would visit a premises twice. I say that because  
16 when a watch visits a premises, there wouldn't be, say,  
17 the whole watch on the appliances at that time. Some  
18 would be on leave, some could be sick, some could be on  
19 out duty, some could be training. So to effectively  
20 visit a premises it might require two visits, so you'll  
21 be looking at 1,000 visits for Peckham to visit all  
22 their high rise premises.

23 Q. All I was asking you was a question of pure fact.  
24 Looking at your sentence in paragraph 15, "The other two  
25 watches would have diarised to visit later on in the

1 year" -- all I was asking you was this: as of 3 July  
2 2009, had they diarised to do so? I think your answer  
3 was you don't know?

4 A. No, I don't know.

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

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

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

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

21 Q. By whom?

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

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

1 visits?

2 A. That's correct.

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

10 A. That's correct.

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

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

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

25 A. It would be the same crew who would go back.

1 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: You say at the end of that paragraph:

2 "I do not think Lakanal came up as having any  
3 specific issues around that time regarding these type of  
4 risks."

5 A. That's right.

6 Q. So we've looked at how the brigade policy in 2008 had  
7 an impact on the frequency of visits to high rise  
8 buildings like Lakanal House and how the visits  
9 in May 2009 were triggered by the email in April. What  
10 I want to ask you then is this: do you think that the  
11 brigade policy had any effect on the way in which visits  
12 were carried out as opposed to frequency of them?

13 I think your answer would be: probably not?

14 A. It would have had an effect, because the firefighters  
15 who undertook -- well, they all undertook the  
16 training -- the practical training in what equipment to  
17 do when they did their exercises, say, in a high rise,  
18 and also the lectures that they had -- there was a lot  
19 of information given to them and like you said, it was  
20 about an awareness of -- be aware of the layout of the  
21 floors, say. So they had had that training given to  
22 them, and it was assessed, if you like -- briefly,  
23 I think there were assessments within the training. So  
24 you kind of tried to make sure that they were paying  
25 attention during that time.

1 Q. So because they had training as well as there being  
2 an increase in the frequency of visits, the training may  
3 have caused them to approach the visits differently; is  
4 that what you're saying?

5 A. That's what I'm saying.

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

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

12 Q. Did you observe a change after the training?

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

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

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

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

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

25 Would you like a break now, members of the jury? If

1 we could be back in ten minutes. Do leave the papers on  
2 the desk if you like.

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

7 (11.28 am)

8 (A short break)

9 (11.40 am)

10 (In the presence of the Jury)

11 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you.

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

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

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

25 Just pausing there, is that a reference to A010, to

1 the standard form that's used when a form is put in the  
2 operational information folder?

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

5 Q. Thank you.

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

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

17 A. That's not an A010.

18 Q. It's not an A010?

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

23 Q. Did the A010 replace this form at 1672?

24 A. The A010 -- in terms of Peckham, what happened, this  
25 instruction came out for us to go and complete A010s on

1 premises. There was -- within the brigade, if you like,  
2 or certainly within our borough, there was discussion  
3 about how we were gonna train people to change how they  
4 were gonna record the information. The new form was  
5 an electronic form, and shortly after Lakanal, there was  
6 a decision made brigade-wide that a team would be sent  
7 out to each station and they would record the  
8 information onto -- they would capture the information  
9 electronically and prepare it for the new electronic  
10 database to go on fire engines.

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

13 A. Yes.

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

23 A. A010s had been completed and had been sent -- I think  
24 our PDA -- our predetermined attendance section -- there  
25 was a section collating information centrally and forms

1           were completed and sent off within that period. The  
2           information on the operational information folder,  
3           though, had remained the same and was still valid  
4           information for crews relating to those premises.

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

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

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

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

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

1 operational information folder held by the pumps.

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

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

10 A. I've got that.

11 Q. In the second line, you say:

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

24 Does that reflect the position in the first part of  
25 2009?

1 A. I would say so.

2 Q. Then, on the same point, in paragraph 9 of your  
3 statement at 677, you say in the second sentence:  
4 "However, I would not generally have thought of  
5 Lakanal, or any other residential high rise, as high  
6 risk operationally prior to the fire."  
7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. Then if we look at what was in the operational  
9 information folders for Peckham at the time of the fire.  
10 If we look firstly at the example at 1672. Is that  
11 an example of the standard form used on Peckham  
12 appliances at the time?  
13 A. That's right.

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

17 Q. And that's the standard way of completing these  
18 documents at the time?  
19 A. That would be, yes.

20 Q. Then if I take to you 1668. This is the beginning of  
21 a schedule that summarises what premises did have  
22 information forms like that on them on the Peckham pumps  
23 at the time in July 2009.  
24 A. It's not in the bundle, so I'll have to look at the  
25 screen.

1 THE CORONER: Can you see it sufficiently on the screen?

2 A. I can see it, yes.

3 THE CORONER: Thank you.

4 A. Yeah, I would say that was reflective.

5 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: One short point to start with, which is

6 that the pump ladder, E371, seems to have had more

7 information, several more premises on it, than E372. Is

8 there any particular reason why that might have been?

9 A. I think that's -- that's historic. I mean, this

10 document -- this document has been, if you like, from

11 2009 to now. One, we now use the operational risk

12 database, which is the most up-to-date information for

13 firefighters from any station attending a --

14 an incident. The operational information folder had

15 remained on the run until recently, but the most

16 up-to-date information from 2010 was the operational

17 risk database. So the forms within this folder, I would

18 say -- I couldn't say what was in there or what wasn't

19 in there now.

20 Q. So we're looking at historic information that has ceased

21 to be of practical use because of some changes made. So

22 it may be whilst we're getting a flavour here --

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. There may have been more pages and there may have been

25 a better fit between what was on each pump at the time?

1 A. I think that's -- that's fair to say.

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

7 A. That's correct.

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

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. If you could be as general as possible.

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

21 THE CORONER: Well, Mr McGurran, Mr Maxwell-Scott has asked  
22 you to keep it general. He's identified, for example,  
23 complexity of layout or the nature of materials on the  
24 site. So perhaps you could just focus on those two  
25 possibilities. There may be another possibility,

1 another broad category, but rather than looking at  
2 specific examples, unless we actually need to, I'd like  
3 to keep it general.

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

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

20 A. I would say that was correct.

21 Q. What I'd like to ask you now, just to finish off my  
22 questioning, is: thinking now about when a crew turns up  
23 to fight a fire at a premises like a tower block, to  
24 what extent is the system, if I can call it that, for  
25 effectively fighting the fire dependent on the fact that

1 the crew will have been there themselves not all that  
2 long ago and therefore have some recollection of the  
3 nature of the premises and its layout from their  
4 familiarisation?

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

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

15 A. Not necessarily.

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

20 A. That's correct.

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

23 A. Absolutely.

24 Q. If you don't think this is a fair question for you then  
25 just say so, but I'm interested in to what extent the

1 system of fighting the fire effectively is dependent on  
2 firefighters being able and expected to work out the  
3 layout when they arrive.

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

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

25 A. I would have expected, when they actually went to the

1 fire lift to activate it so it became a fire lift, that  
2 it would be apparent to them there was a -- a sign above  
3 the lift indicating what floors and where.

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

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

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

13 A. That they possibly were an access route.

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

22 A. I haven't seen it.

23 Q. There's a short point I want to ask you about on 1711,  
24 where on, the right-hand column, just above the  
25 section 6, it tells us something about maisonettes. It

1           says:

2           "A maisonette has two levels and its own staircase  
3           within the individual dwelling ..."

4           And then this:

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

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

17         A. I thought in blocks they had to.

18         Q. You thought they had to?

19         A. Had to; not "normally".

20         Q. Because we've heard a lot about firefighters having  
21          a built-in belief that compartmentation is part of the  
22          design of a high rise building. I understand that. Do  
23          I understand from your answer that there is also  
24          a belief that maisonettes will have an escape route on  
25          the level other than that on which the front door is?

1 A. Yes, I believe they're meant to have two means of  
2 escape.

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

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

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

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

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

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Finally, a point about aerial ladder platforms. You

1 told us that you did not think that high rise buildings  
2 would ever be high risk operationally before the fire.  
3 Obviously high rise buildings are of different heights.  
4 At what height does the information "high rise" first  
5 apply?

6 A. "High rise" comes in at 18 metres.

7 Q. How many floors would that be?

8 A. That would be say between five and six floors.

9 Q. Because what I'm interested in is --

10 A. Sorry, the "high rise" -- the other definition of "high  
11 rise" is a building which is outside the means of normal  
12 equipment.

13 Q. Do you mean outside the means of --

14 A. Fire brigade normal equipment.

15 Q. An aerial ladder platform?

16 A. And also an aerial ladder.

17 Q. That's what I wanted to ask you about. What I wanted to  
18 ask you about was whether the risk changes when you have  
19 a building that has upper floors outside the range of  
20 an aerial ladder platform.

21 A. The risk doesn't change, to my knowledge.

22 Q. You wouldn't regard such a building as being of higher  
23 risk than a residential tower block of, say, eight  
24 floors, all of which were within reach of the aerial  
25 ladder platform?

1 A. No, because even though you say an aerial ladder  
2 platform, because it's eight floors, might reach it,  
3 often with blocks you wouldn't be able to get an aerial  
4 ladder platform near to a block to effect a rescue or  
5 use it for firefighting purposes, so -- any building of  
6 18 metres and above has to have certain features built  
7 into them under the building regulations, ie --

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

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

12 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Edwards.

13 Questions by MR EDWARDS

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

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

21 A. We'd normally have two firefighters carrying out a home  
22 fire safety visit. Like I said, we try and use our time  
23 smartly, if you like, when we carry out visits now.  
24 Originally, we would have had the whole crew in the  
25 premises carrying out visit, but to try and effect more

1 visits across London and across the borough, we would  
2 generally break crews down into two or three people.

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

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

8 MR EDWARDS: The jury has also heard about 72D visits.

9 That's where a whole watch goes or most of a watch would  
10 go. Are the two combined ever, so you do a 72D visit  
11 and at the same time the watch will split up into  
12 twos -- or perhaps were they in 2009 combined -- so that  
13 they then do home fire safety visits?

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

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

25 A. That's correct. They're there -- like I said, we have

1 the outside duty schedule electronic diary which  
2 generates visits on a daily basis for crews to do, and  
3 the home fire safety visits are generated elsewhere.

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

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

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

22 A. Not to my knowledge.

23 MR EDWARDS: Forgive me, Mr McGurran, I'm probably not  
24 making my questions clear. Everything I'm asking you  
25 about, unless I say otherwise, I'm asking about before

1 the date of the Lakanal House fire.

2 You refer in your witness statement -- we don't need  
3 to call it up for the moment, but you talked about  
4 different frequencies of visits. So some buildings were  
5 visited every three months, some high rise buildings  
6 every three months, some every six months, some every  
7 year. Is that because they present different risks? To  
8 put it bluntly, were the three months riskier than the  
9 one0yearly visits?

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

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

20 A. It was on a yearly.

21 Q. Mr Maxwell-Scott also asked you briefly about ALPs, the  
22 aerial platforms. He suggested to you that if  
23 a building's taller than a certain height and the ALP  
24 can't reach a certain floor, it might be riskier. You  
25 said: well, you can't say that because you don't even

1 know about access, whether you can get the ALP up to the  
2 building. Are you able to say what, if anything, was  
3 done to work out in advance whether an ALP could reach  
4 a building?

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

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

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

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

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

24 THE CORONER: Using an ALP?

25 A. I don't believe they used an ALP there, no.

1 THE CORONER: Mr Edwards was asking you specifically about  
2 an ALP.

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

6 MR EDWARDS: But you don't know personally?

7 A. Personally, I don't know.

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

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

24 Q. What I'm getting at -- perhaps it would help you if  
25 I showed you a picture of the lift lobby sign. Can we

1 bring this up on screen, please?

2 THE CORONER: Photograph 7, isn't it?

3 MR EDWARDS: You can see there's a sign with different floor  
4 numbers and flat numbers at the top of that. If there's  
5 125 buildings on your patch and different watches are  
6 conducting almost daily, for each shift, familiarisation  
7 visits, are they expected just to remember that that  
8 sign is there, telling you where flats are?

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

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

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

19 Q. Can I ask you to open the jury bundle at tab 13, please.  
20 Photo number 36 I'm going to start you with. (Handed)  
21 What we can see here is a photograph of a balcony and  
22 the escape door. 37 is a bit closer. You can see the  
23 little window through the escape door. 38, what you can  
24 see is if your back's to the escape door looking down  
25 the balcony. Then 41 -- you were shown this photo

1           yesterday, but it's a bit tricky to work out. This is  
2           the other side of the escape door. Again, you can see  
3           that little window.

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

7   A. That's correct.

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

12 A. Not a complete visit, no.

13 Q. Not completely?

14 A. No.

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

19 A. No, you can't.

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

23          Just looking at the outside of that door, you can  
24          see there's some type of handle. This is a security  
25          door. If that handle didn't have a key -- so, for

1           example, there was no way of opening it from the side  
2           you're looking at --

3   THE CORONER:   Sorry, are you looking at photograph 41?

4   MR EDWARDS:    41 still, yes.

5   THE CORONER:   Yes.

6   MR EDWARDS:    Is that a defect you'd expect to be noted or is  
7           that a design feature of the building you wouldn't  
8           expect to be noted?

9   A.   If it didn't have a way of opening it, you're saying?

10   Q.   Yes.

11   A.   I would say possibly, ie like I said, crews -- because  
12           they were balconies to people's homes, I would have  
13           expected them to get as far as that door and then look  
14           through the vision panel down the balcony.   The only  
15           reason I would have expected them to maybe gain access  
16           is if there'd been a specific issue that had been  
17           highlighted to the Fire Brigade by a neighbour or there  
18           was a concern about rubbish or personal belongings left  
19           on the balcony itself.

20   Q.   It probably follows from what you've said that if you're  
21           looking at that door and it can be opened with a key but  
22           the crews don't have that particular key, would you  
23           expect them to note that as a defect?

24   A.   I'd have expected them to note, yes, that they didn't  
25           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,  
3 multi-lock key door anyway to get to that door.

4 Q. So if crews were attending Lakanal House to perform  
5 familiarisation visits and they were only looking on the  
6 even floors, they weren't getting to that door we've  
7 looked at at page 41 and they're not looking around the  
8 even-numbered floors at all, they're only looking at the  
9 odd floors with the central corridors, I think you'd  
10 agree they've not performed the familiarisation visit  
11 completely?

12 A. Not completely.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Dowden.

15 MR DOWDEN: No thank you.

16 THE CORONER: Ms Al Tai?

17 MS AL TAI: No thank you, madam.

18 THE CORONER: Mr Compton?

19 Questions by MR COMPTON

20 MR COMPTON: Mr McGurran, just one or two matters, please.  
21 Ben Compton. I represent Apollo Property Services.

22 THE CORONER: Sorry, could you just get your microphone  
23 a little bit closer, please. Thank you.

24 MR COMPTON: Can we start by just going back to basics and  
25 72D. The jury have heard quite a lot about 72D. 72D is

1 the requirement that a fire and rescue authority must  
2 make arrangements for obtaining information needed for  
3 the purposes of extinguishing fires and protecting life  
4 and property. Would you agree with that?

5 A. I'd agree with that.

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

7 A. It's mandatory that we --

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

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

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

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

25 Q. These are not criticisms aimed at you. This is really

1 just going back to basics of what the requirements are.

2 Do you accept that there are specific features about

3 high rise building fires that are very different to

4 general firefighting?

5 A. High rise buildings will obviously create a challenge to

6 any -- any -- if there's a fire in a high rise building,

7 it becomes a challenge in terms of resourcing,

8 equipment, making sure you've got enough people to deal

9 with the incident.

10 Q. Yes.

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

12 risk.

13 Q. Well, over the years, they've generated quite a lot of

14 documentation, haven't they?

15 A. They have.

16 Q. Yes, and if one thinks about it -- and the jury have

17 already heard about the construction, the height,

18 falling objects and the wind and so on. We don't need

19 to go back over that, but ever since the development of

20 high rise buildings, going back to the 60s, as a result

21 of the number of very serious incidents, there have been

22 a raft of documents produced to warn firefighters about

23 the risks of fighting such fires. Would you agree with

24 that?

25 A. I'd agree with that.

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

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

9 MR COMPTON: Yes, sorry.

10 A. Okay, I'm there.

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

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

19 A. Yes.

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

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

24 A. I would agree with that aspirational in that sense. It  
25 depends on how many high rise you have on your ground.

1 Q. Well, I wanted to ask you about that, because if you  
2 have a large number of high rise buildings on your  
3 watch, that shouldn't negate in any way your duties  
4 under section 72D, should it?

5 A. It -- it shouldn't negate your -- your duties, but it's  
6 achieving them.

7 Q. I mean, if one looks at your statement, did you actually  
8 know how many high rise buildings were on your watch,  
9 going back to the time of this tragedy?

10 A. Did I know how many?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. I couldn't tell you precisely now how many in terms of  
13 the total number of high rise. Peckham has 367 blocks  
14 over three floors and that's just local authority. So  
15 basically at a station ground we'll have a lot of  
16 blocks. Every few months, say, it may be a new building  
17 could appear, and we endeavour by -- currently by visual  
18 audits to go out and look at new buildings and see where  
19 they are and gather information on them. But it's a --  
20 like a live thing.

21 Q. If we could just look at your statement, page 677,  
22 paragraph 9. You were taken to this by  
23 Mr Maxwell-Scott, but I just want to read on a little  
24 bit further.

25 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

5 said:

6 "However, I would not generally have thought of

7 Lakanal or any other residential high rise as high risk

8 operationally prior to the fire. There are a large

9 number of high rise buildings over six floors within the

10 borough ..."

11 And you put in brackets "circa 300":

12 "... and crews at my station are used to dealing

13 with high rise incidents."

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. I think you mentioned 125 today in answer to

16 Mr Maxwell-Scott. Again, did you actually know how many

17 of these were over six floors at the time of the fire?

18 A. I knew -- I didn't know exactly how many at the time of

19 the fire. I knew we had around 50 over six floors.

20 Q. Again, would you accept that simply because you say that

21 your crews are used to dealing with high rise incidents,

22 that shouldn't in any way negate your duties to collect

23 information in accordance with section 72D, and of

24 course with the London Borough's own policy 633?

25 A. No, we -- every day we endeavour to improve the amount

1 of information we have on familiarisation visits.

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

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

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

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. I have no further questions.

18 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Walsh.

19 Questions by MR WALSH

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

1           This is the email --

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

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

4   A.   I've got it.

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

13            "As part of the ongoing familiarisation training for  
14      station-based staff, station managers are to ensure that  
15      watch and crew managers diarise, book and visit high  
16      rise premises on their station's ground during  
17      2009/2010."

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

22            But effectively the requirement was that you were to  
23      make sure that the watches concluded it by the end in  
24      2010, in essence.   You were also asked, in relation to  
25      that email, to ensure that high rise training is carried

1 out, and I'm not sure whether the -- I just want to be  
2 entirely clear about this as to what you did.

3 Would you mind now having a look at page 679 of your  
4 statement in the statement bundle, paragraph 15.

5 I think we've touched on this, but I'd like to make sure  
6 it's clear what you did. Paragraph 15. Halfway down  
7 that paragraph, in the middle, after you speak of the  
8 white and blue watches doing the 72Ds in May of 2009 and  
9 others being done around this time -- I'm going to ask  
10 you what was done after we see where it was done:

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

13 That was high rise training; is that right?

14 A. That relates to this email.

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

17 A. High rise training.

18 Q. Yes. Green Watch carried out a training exercise at  
19 Castlemead in Camberwell Road on 9 June, Blue Watch at  
20 the same premises on the 15th of that month, Red Watch  
21 organised a training drill with appliances from New  
22 Cross and a training exercise with Southwark fire  
23 station on 23 July, and White Watch organised a training  
24 exercise with appliances from Southwark on 5 July at  
25 Burwash House in Weston Street.

1           That was all in compliance with the request and  
2           requirement of Assistant Commission Brown. Did you  
3           personally, by the way, attend any of those high rise  
4           drills?

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

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

10   A. Correct.

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

18   A. That's correct.

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

22   A. That's right; Yvonne Drake.

23   Q. We needn't speak about the particular person but I'm  
24           just asking you about the system that would operate  
25           before the Lakanal fire in 2009. So let us say

1 2008/2009, if you or any of your crews identified  
2 an issue following a 72D visit in a council-occupied  
3 building, was there a system in place by which  
4 a communication could be made with Southwark's liaison  
5 officer?

6 A. Yes, the crew would have emailed the liaison officer  
7 from Southwark and then they would have actioned that  
8 request, and to our experience really promptly.

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. So we'd have had a good result in terms of getting  
11 the -- and we would get feedback that the request had  
12 been dealt with and there is some sort of audit trail  
13 for that.

14 Q. Yes. So you were impressed with how promptly  
15 Southwark's officer would deal with your requests if  
16 they were made, and there was an audit trail of those  
17 requests by way of email?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. All right. Apart from that, apart from that mechanism  
20 by which those communications were carried out by the  
21 Southwark liaison officer -- let's say there is an issue  
22 like a defective dry riser. You've told us about who  
23 gets emailed and what happens, but I just want to be  
24 clear about the contact which can then change the  
25 predetermined attendance in relation to an individual

1 building. So say the dry riser's not working. Please  
2 help us all with what might happen to the PDA which  
3 emanates from control when a fire takes place in the  
4 building?

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

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

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

24 Q. All right. Thank you very much.

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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

1           and there was a training exercise at New Cross and one  
2           at Southwark, and the reason --

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

5   A.   They were pre-planned.

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

14  A.   Yes.

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

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

25  THE CORONER:   So these nine items, are they included in

1 a list somewhere?

2 A. There is a list --

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

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

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

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

17 THE CORONER: I see.

18 A. And escape would have been one of them.

19 THE CORONER: Thank you.

20 Members of the jury, do you have any questions?

21 Questions by the Jury

22 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you, Madam Coroner, we do  
23 have a number. In regard to the keys taken or not taken  
24 to 72D visits, I realise that they've not always been  
25 taken on these appraisal visits but I'm just wondering

1 about the keys themselves. I believe there's  
2 a collection of keys kept on the fire engines when you  
3 head, for instance, to a high rise incident. Is this  
4 a collection of master keys that open all escape doors,  
5 that sort of thing? I'm just trying to work out how the  
6 keys work on a practical basis. Do you turn up with  
7 a dozen keys and try and find out the right one for the  
8 door, or is there one key that works on all types of  
9 doors?

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

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

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

1 local crews will have a key to that actual block.

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

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

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

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

12 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Sorry.

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

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

20 A. There's multiple ways that a home fire safety visit can  
21 be -- a person could ask for one personally, so turn up  
22 at a fire -- any fire station and ask for a home fire  
23 safety visit. We generate some visits by working with  
24 the council and liaising with them where  
25 they leaflet-drop or -- a block, say, and say, "The

1 Fire Brigade will come along and do some home fire  
2 safety visits next week. Do you want one?"

3 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, so it's a real mixture?

4 A. Yeah.

5 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: We've heard earlier about how some  
6 of the follow up, when there's faults and that sort of  
7 thing, takes place by email. It's also been covered  
8 slightly -- you've mentioned an audit trail. I was just  
9 hoping to clarify: we've seen the message from AC Brown  
10 and I notice that that's actually been sent from  
11 a communications team mailbox. As far as establishing  
12 a clear audit trail for the emails that a firefighter or  
13 watch manager might send to the council liaison officer,  
14 would he or she be sending that from their work email,  
15 or do things always come from that central  
16 communications team mailbox, or similar, something  
17 that's accessible to everybody?

18 A. I don't quite understand your question. Do you mean if  
19 you get a direction from above, if you like?

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

22 THE CORONER: Do you want to look at that? It's page 1172.

23 A. I've got that email.

24 THE CORONER: You have that open?

25 A. Yes.

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

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

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

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

22 A. It would be sent -- everybody in the -- every  
23 firefighter's got their own personal mailbox, so they  
24 would send that email from their account, and then it  
25 would -- they would cc in their line manager or station

1           manager.

2   THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY:   Right, so it wouldn't be

3           an automatic thing.  They'd think: "I'd better cc the

4           watch manager in"?

5   A.   Yeah.

6   THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY:   Again, in regards to identifying

7           the defaults and hazards, is there any distinction drawn

8           in reporting as far as issues that can be addressed,

9           such as rubbish, as opposed to those which can't be

10          addressed, such as poor access or that sort of thing

11          because the road is not planned properly, for instance?

12  A.   If there's a -- if there's a defect -- say, simple

13          defects, then you'd expect them to be addressed fairly

14          quickly.  If there was something more ongoing, then you

15          would just have to consider whether we need more

16          appliances to attend that incident while that defect or

17          access issue was dealt with.

18  THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY:   So that's quite clearly -- the

19          thing is that if it's a set-in-stone fault, then the

20          response is: "Well, we'll need more appliances then"?

21  A.   That's right.  There's nothing set in stone in that

22          sense.  You can --

23  THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY:   I just mean if there's something

24          that you can't actually address, you cope with that by

25          changing how many appliances need to go to the job?

1 A. (The witness nodded)

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

3 The central risk register that you've mentioned, is this

4 central to just the station that contributes to it or is

5 something on a wider basis, say, held by brigade

6 control?

7 A. It was a register held by brigade control and -- I don't

8 know if it's been explained to you how it worked. If

9 there was a -- when a fire engine would get a call, the

10 call slip might have a code down the bottom saying "CRR

11 code" --

12 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: And that's where the information

13 comes from. Okay.

14 I think it was yesterday's evidence when you

15 mentioned that the 72D visits that you were on often

16 were associated with a building being assessed for

17 coming off the central risk register. We were

18 wondering: what sort of circumstances would suggest to

19 you that the building no longer needs to be on that

20 register?

21 THE CORONER: I'm not sure whether it's really going to be

22 central to the issues that we need to be looking at in

23 these inquests, so I'm not sure that we really need to

24 follow that one up. Thank you.

25 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay, thank you. I don't know if

1           you'll feel this is the same question or something  
2           slightly different: what are the criteria which  
3           determine whether a certain building receives  
4           three-monthly, six-monthly, or annual visits from the  
5           different watches of the Fire Brigade?

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

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

16   A.   Yeah.

17   THE CORONER: Any other possibility?

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

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

23   THE CORONER: Thank you. Shall we break now for lunch and  
24          continue at 2 o'clock? I think the evidence we have now  
25          is Mr Snazell; is that right? Thank you very much.

1 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, that's right.

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

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

8 A. Thank you.

9 THE CORONER: Thank you.

10 (The witness withdrew)

11 (In the absence of the Jury)

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

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

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

22 (12.57 pm)

23 (The short adjournment)

24 (2.00 pm)

25 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you. Mr Snazell, are you in court?

1           Would you like to come forward.

2   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:   Just before he starts, the

3           London Fire Brigade have very helpfully obtained over

4           the adjournment the checklist for home fire safety

5           visits.

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

7           very much.

8   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:   Perhaps I could pass one.   I haven't

9           looked at it yet, but it's here and I can pass one up.

10   THE CORONER:   All right.   Mr Clark, could I just have a copy

11           of the document?   Thank you.

12   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT:   I'm also passing up a loose document that

13           I may refer to with the witness.   (Handed)

14   THE CORONER:   Thank you.

15                               (In the presence of the Jury)

16   THE CORONER:   Thank you.

17                               ANDREW SNAZELL (sworn)

18   THE CORONER:   Thank you very much.   Are we pronouncing your

19           name correctly, Mr Snazell?

20   A.   Mr Snazell.

21   THE CORONER:   I'm so sorry.   We'll try and get that right.

22           Please sit down.   Do help yourself to a glass of water.

23   A.   Thank you.

24   THE CORONER:   When you give your answers could you keep your

25           voice up and stay close to the microphone.   If you speak

1 across the room towards the jurors that will help them  
2 to hear and help you keep close to the microphone.

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

6 A. Thank you.

7 THE CORONER: Thank you.

8 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

9 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good afternoon, Mr Snazell.

10 A. Good afternoon, sir.

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

12 A. My full name is Francis Andrew Snazell.

13 Q. What is your current position?

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

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

19 A. Yes, sir, I was.

20 Q. When did you first take up that role?

21 A. Early 2006.

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

24 A. As a borough commander, I'm responsible for the  
25 operational response and training of all the personnel

1 within the London Borough of Southwark. The  
2 London Borough of Southwark contains four fire stations  
3 within its boundaries, although a Fire Brigade boundary  
4 and a local authority boundary may not line up exactly.  
5 So around the periphery, around the edges of the  
6 borough, we have stations such as Deptford, Forest Hill,  
7 Brixton, Lambeth, to the north Dowgate, that will all  
8 become involved in different areas of the borough. So  
9 for instance Forest Hill, although it's administered by  
10 the borough commander of Lewisham fire, does cover  
11 an area of Southwark. So it's just to illustrate that  
12 although I'm responsible for everything within the  
13 borough, I have other resources from other boroughs that  
14 I have to try and coordinate.

15 THE CORONER: Thank you.

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

18 A. Yes, sir, I have that.

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

21 A. That would be correct, sir.

22 Q. Was this written by you?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. If we look fairly quickly through it, we see the  
25 Fire Brigade's overall main aims, values, the five-year

1 London-wide headline targets, performance highlights,  
2 learning points and challenges, and resources available.  
3 That shows how you fit into the picture in the borough  
4 as a whole. There were four fire stations that fell  
5 within the borough; is that right?

6 A. That's correct, sir.

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

9 A. Yes, sir.

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

19 A. That's correct, sir.

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

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Just to set out, for your benefit and the members of the  
24 jury, what I am going to be asking you about, firstly  
25 I think it's right that on the day of the fire at

1           Lakanal House you attended at around 6.15 pm?

2    A.   Yes, sir.

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

5    A.   That's correct, sir.

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

18   A.   All understood.

19   Q.   So let's start firstly with the 1997 fire, and ask you  
20           to look at page 1080 in the advocates' bundles.  Turn  
21           over the page to 1081, please.  This is the report of  
22           the fire.  The date of the fire was 4 September 1997.  
23           I think I can introduce it by saying that our  
24           understanding is that over the years there had been  
25           quite a number of fires at Lakanal House, but before

1           3 July 2009 this one was the most serious?

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

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

5    A. I did, sir.

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

8    A. No, sir.

9    Q. Tell us then when you arrived --

10   A. Okay. Can I put it in context?

11   Q. -- and what your involvement was.

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

20           At the time, I was a station manager at the adjacent  
21           station, Old Kent Road, so a local station manager would  
22           have been in attendance for the operational aspect of  
23           the incident. I went on to do the -- the support and  
24           the accident investigation. So subsequently I wasn't  
25           there in the initial stages.

1 Q. In that case, I'm going to ask you to look at a document  
2 which I'll give you a hard copy of. It has page numbers  
3 19 to 24 in the bottom right-hand corner. I'll also put  
4 it up on the screen. (Handed) This is, as I understand  
5 it, some of the mobilisation records?

6 A. That's correct, sir.

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

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

9 Q. Okay, but you recognise the format?

10 A. Absolutely, sir.

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

16 A. 1817. It's Echo 371, Echo 372, Echo 353. So that's the  
17 pump ladder and the pump from Peckham Fire Station.  
18 Sorry, is the microphone --

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

21 A. Sorry. On that initial mobilising message at  
22 1817 hours, the first line says "mobilising message".  
23 The next line down, "53UB/105", that's a route card  
24 reference which gives us a grid map reference of the  
25 address locally, and the station's ground, E37, which is

1 Peckham.

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

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

11 A. My apologies.

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

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And you were not on those pumps?

17 A. No, sir.

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

22 A. That's correct, sir.

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

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Can you just tell us what is indicated there by the  
2 mobilising message?

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

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

12 A. That's a command unit, sir.

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

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Was that you or not?

17 A. No, no, sir.

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

20 A. No, sir. What that is is Hotel 241, that has sent  
21 a message saying "unable to proceed", and they've  
22 replaced it with Hotel 22 pump ladder, which is -- would  
23 have been Lambeth's pump ladder. So again, one  
24 replacement machine. So Brixton are unable to attend,  
25 Lambeth have been ordered as an alternative.

1 Q. Then over the page, there's reference at 18.31 to  
2 an ambulance being required because a member of the  
3 brigade -- I think that was Firefighter Sharpe --  
4 suffered cuts from falling glass?

5 A. That's correct, sir.

6 Q. Is that what then triggered your mobilisation?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Just for completeness, we can see towards the bottom of  
9 that page that there was a need for urgent police  
10 attendance for crowd control, and at the top of the next  
11 page, it was made pumps six?

12 A. Yes sir.

13 Q. Then on page 23, it seems that the incident was brought  
14 to a close. Towards the top of the page, it says:  
15 "Stop. Five-room maisonette on 11th and 12th  
16 floors. 100 per cent damage by fire. One jet via  
17 dry riser, one jet via TL."  
18 That's turntable ladder, yes?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. "BA", so crews wore breathing apparatus. "All persons  
21 accounted for"?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. What does that mean?

24 A. When a -- when a message is sent "persons reported", at  
25 the conclusion of an incident or at the relevant point

1 of an incident, a message saying that all the people  
2 that we've been searching for have been accounted for is  
3 sent. Now, that indicates to monitoring officers and to  
4 other people on the fire ground that we've -- we've  
5 either rescued or identified the location of all the  
6 people that we believe to be involved.

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

14 Q. Thank you.

15 Then finally page 24. Does this help us with when  
16 you arrived? Do you have a call sign on here or not?

17 A. Yes, sir, I'm at 18.37. My call sign at that time would  
18 have been Echo 35. I mobilised at 18.41, arrived at  
19 18.59, and left at 19.26.

20 Q. At the bottom, in the summary of numbers of appliances  
21 attending -- I found this slightly hard to follow  
22 because it seems to refer to seven pump ladders, three  
23 pumps and one turntable ladder?

24 A. I can explain that, sir.

25 Q. Please do.

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

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

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

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

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. How does that fit in with the fact that it's "make pumps  
2 six"?

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

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

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

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

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

1 case, is it?

2 A. Yes, sir. Can I explain?

3 Q. Please do.

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

5 THE CORONER: Sorry, can you get closer to the microphone,  
6 Mr Snazell, sorry.

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

10 A turntable ladder is, as it says on the description,  
11 a ladder affixed to a turntable that can rotate through  
12 360 degrees, but it purely elevates in a straight  
13 direction, it has no elbows or ability to drop.

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

20 We also have an aerial ladder platform. The aerial  
21 ladder platform was the biggest of the three machines.  
22 That is a combination of a turntable ladder and  
23 a hydraulic platform. So it has a ladder and it has the  
24 ability -- it's got two booms on it so it's got more of  
25 a range of movement. But it's a much bigger vehicle.

1           It's in the range of 28 tonnes and we -- at the time,  
2           I believe we had one at Forest Hill and one at  
3           Wimbledon, but Old Kent Road certainly had a turntable  
4           ladder. And they're differentiated by the call signs.  
5           3 is a turntable ladder, 4 is a hydraulic platform, 5 is  
6           an aerial ladder platform.

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

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

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

13  A. Yes, sir.

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

16  A. No, sir, I did not.

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

1 with?

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

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

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

6 Q. I am, yes.

7 A. Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 building has been damaged by fire.

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

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

8 Q. If one was going to be very precise about it, there are  
9 98 flats in the building, so 2 per cent, if one were  
10 being very precise, would suggest damage to more than  
11 simply one flat, but it may be that one shouldn't  
12 interpret the 2 per cent in that way. Can you assist at  
13 all?

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

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

19 A. On that occasion, from this information, it indicates to  
20 me that that complete maisonette -- and from the  
21 message -- the stop message that you showed me earlier  
22 indicates to me that the whole of that maisonette was --  
23 was damaged by that fire, but no further. If there was  
24 further damage to the remainder of the building, the  
25 stop message would have reflected that as well, sir.

1 Q. That's helpful. Thank you. Well, I won't ask you  
2 further questions about that fire.

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

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

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. By way of generalisation, at the relevant time -- by  
25 which I mean essentially before 6 pm in the evening on

1 the day of the fire -- no incident commander had had  
2 that sign drawn to their attention. The knowledge of  
3 the flat numbering system within the building was  
4 limited. Incident commanders were not aware of the  
5 balcony providing escape routes. They were not aware  
6 that on the upper floors of flats, the flats extended  
7 the full width of the building, and knowledge that the  
8 flats were maisonettes was patchy and came quite late in  
9 that timeframe. So that's the background to introduce  
10 the topic.

11 At the same time, as we've heard today from Station  
12 Manager McGurran, he would have expected a crew that did  
13 a familiarisation visit to have discovered many of those  
14 features in the course of such a visit. Were you here  
15 to hear his evidence?

16 A. I was, sir, yes.

17 Q. And so summarising, as I understood it, a crew that did  
18 a familiarisation visit would be expected, in the course  
19 of it, to notice that the flats were maisonettes, that  
20 they had balcony escape routes, and that there were  
21 indications within the building that would help you to  
22 work out the flat numbering system, and if one didn't  
23 notice or couldn't work out, in the course of a 72D  
24 visit, that the flats on the upper floors extended the  
25 full width of the building, that is something you would

1 work out on a home fire safety visit.

2 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

23 Another way of looking at this issue is to say that  
24 it's not necessary for all watches to visit, but  
25 a representative watch would visit and then the

1 information can be shared with other watches within the  
2 station. Okay?

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

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

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

21 Q. So let's look at that briefly. Firstly, the high rise  
22 firefighting policy in the jury bundle at tab 19.

23 (Handed) The first page is 1518. If I ask you to turn  
24 on to 1521. This is a section on pre-planning, which  
25 Mr Compton asked Mr McGurran about this morning. 3.1

1           says:

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

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

15        A. That's not correct, sir. 521 came out after the guide  
16          as to operational information folders, and again, direct  
17          me if I -- I go away from your line of questioning. An  
18          ops info folder -- they were introduced back in 1994.  
19          They were introduced as -- in reaction to a number of  
20          safety events. I believe notice was served on the fire  
21          authority as a result of incidents and they were  
22          specifically as an interim measure to provide  
23          firefighters with operationally important information  
24          that would assist them with dealing with a premises of  
25          unexpected or high risk.

1           At the time, there was guidance on what should be  
2           included in that operational folder, and it was around  
3           the storage of chemicals, the type of -- use of the  
4           premises, unexpected risks to be found within the  
5           premises, and that -- that's what the ops info folders  
6           were at the time. When they were introduced, they  
7           pointed the way forward to -- did the microphone go  
8           again there, madam? Sorry.

9   THE CORONER: Yes, just keep close to it.

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

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

21   A. That's correct, sir.

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

24   A. Again, sir, if I can explain, and stop me if I go away  
25       from your line of questioning. As I say, the

1 operational information folder introduced back in the  
2 early 1990s, when that was introduced, this proforma  
3 operational information form came out as well as the  
4 appendices to that as guidance, together with how to  
5 fill that form in, how to do the grid on page 1673, even  
6 with the guidance of what colours to use.

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

22 From around about 2000 and -- forgive me, sir, if  
23 I get the dates wrong, but we moved from that format  
24 into the A010 format, and the idea of that was because  
25 there were so many, across the fire -- whole

1 Fire Brigade, so many different formats of recording  
2 information that they wanted to standardise it, not only  
3 so that it became common so that everybody on every fire  
4 station could read it in a similar way, but also with  
5 a view to including it on the new data terminals that  
6 were being introduced on fire appliances.

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

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

24 A. No, sir. A residential high rise wouldn't have met the  
25 criteria for inclusion in an ops info folder. Sorry,

1 I will quantify that -- in an inner London station. If  
2 you move to an outer London station --

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

6 A. I understand.

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

9 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

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

22 Then separately:

23 "Each appliance also carried a folder ..."

24 That's the operational information folder,  
25 I believe:

1            "... with the records of around 20 premises on their  
2            station's ground."

3            A. That's correct, sir.

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

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

15          THE CORONER: Sorry, can you just focus on

16           Mr Maxwell-Scott's question, which was a fairly  
17           straightforward one about what was in the files.

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

24           As we introduced computer systems and different  
25           levels of computer skills became apparent at stations,

1 some stations would transfer a number of that off their  
2 own volition onto an electronic based system. Others  
3 would still use a simple system such as a T card system  
4 with each premises identified and you'd simply turn it  
5 round when a visit was done.

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

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

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

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

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

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Do you know what it had in it?

23 A. It had old records back to the 80s for dry riser tests  
24 and inspections. It had -- any other reference to  
25 Lakanal would have been included in that folder. But

1 I believe you have some of it in -- in these --

2 THE CORONER: Sorry, we're losing you. Can you face this

3 way when you're answering, because we're losing you.

4 A. Sorry.

5 THE CORONER: You said that it would have old dry riser

6 tests, and then I lost you. What else?

7 A. It would have any associated paperwork with that

8 particular premises or inspection. So if there was

9 a record of inspection, a premises inspection card, it

10 would have copy of that in that file.

11 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I think I've seen that file. I'm sure

12 Mr Walsh will correct me if I am wrong, but my

13 recollection is that the document I've just put on the

14 screen at 1098 was, in date order, the most recent

15 document in the file, dated 4 May 2004. My recollection

16 is that that file had a number of similar documents like

17 this every year or two years, but then that stream of

18 documents ended in May 2004. Does that sound right?

19 A. About right, sir, because we -- as I said, we then

20 started to move into emailing and electronic exchange of

21 information.

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

23 A. It wouldn't surprise me, no, sir. If there wasn't

24 actually a paper copy to put in there, I doubt they'd

25 have printed it and included it, sir.

1 Q. If I take to your statement on page 684. You make the  
2 same point in several places. Firstly, at the end of  
3 paragraph 14:

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

7 Then paragraph 15:

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

10 In paragraph 16:

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

14 Finally, paragraph 18, you say:

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

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

1 answer?

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 "Pre-planning for fighting fires in high rise  
24 buildings should include station personnel familiarising  
25 themselves with all high rise buildings on their

1 station's ground."

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

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

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

12 A. (The witness nodded)

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

21 A. Yes, sir. The -- the policy, the high rise policy, is  
22 a generic policy for all high rise, both residential,  
23 commercial, complex buildings such as Strata on the  
24 Elephant, or the Shard -- the policy covers all types of  
25 high rise building, not just residential, so many of

1 those aspects on that list -- fire control rooms,  
2 automatic fire detection, automatic events -- wouldn't  
3 be applicable to a high rise residential building. So  
4 it would be the parts that were applicable would be the  
5 ones that were relevant to a high rise residential  
6 inspection, sir.

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

17 A. Yes, I agree, sir, yes.

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

25 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

24 Q. I follow that. I mean, it might be thought -- and I ask  
25 you to comment on this -- that it would be more

1 resource-efficient to have some form of more extensive  
2 information sharing after one watch has visited  
3 a premises, thereby removing the urgency for all four  
4 watches to go, eight persons on each occasion, to visit  
5 a premises?

6 A. Absolutely, sir. We've moved towards that now.

7 Q. But that wasn't the system at the time?

8 A. No. At the time, the 72D system, which superseded  
9 11Ds -- the original guidance was that an 11D, which was  
10 under the old legislation, was completed, the records  
11 were available for all station personnel to either  
12 familiarise themselves with or, if time allowed, to  
13 complete lectures on them. But the practicalities of  
14 achieving that, again, are time-dependent and  
15 resource-dependent.

16 Q. Thank you, Mr Snazell. I think I'll end my questions  
17 there to leave time for others to have their share of  
18 the opportunity to ask you questions.

19 A. Thank you, sir.

20 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Edwards.

21 Questions by MR EDWARDS

22 MR EDWARDS: Thank you. Mr Snazell, you're now the borough  
23 commander; is that correct?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Who was the borough commander at the time of the

1           Lakanal House fire in 2009?

2    A.   Myself.

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

4    A.   The same, sir, group manager.

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

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

8    Q.   I'm going to start by asking you a couple of questions  
9       about the 1997 fire. Firstly, Mr Maxwell-Scott  
10       mentioned turntable ladders, and you gave a fairly long  
11       explanation as to what they were, how they relate to  
12       aerial ladder platforms. A simple question: did the  
13       1997 turntable ladders reach as high up as the 2009  
14       aerial ladder platforms, do you know?

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

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

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

25                "Other misuse of appliance: stew pot left on

1 cooker."

2 A. Yes, sir, I see that.

3 Q. We can see some photographs of the damage caused by the  
4 1997 fire. 1086. That's inside. There we have the  
5 upper level of the flat, and then we have the lower  
6 photo on 1068. I don't know if that can be made  
7 a little bit bigger, please. We've got what looks like  
8 the cooker. I don't know whether you know this or not,  
9 Mr Snazell, but the upper level of every flat in  
10 Lakanal House is the level that has the kitchen on, and  
11 the lower level is the level that has the bedrooms on.

12 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

24 A. Understood, sir.

25 Q. So within a compartment, at least, fires sometimes move

1 down, don't they?

2 A. Yes sir.

3 Q. The difference you can see in the photographs from the  
4 1997 fire, though -- if I can bring you back to  
5 page 1089, please. I wonder if Mr Maxwell-Scott could  
6 make the lower photograph slightly larger, please.

7 What you can see, looking out the window there, or  
8 the remains of the window, is -- do you see the bar just  
9 to the right-hand side of the photo in the middle of the  
10 window area?

11 A. Yes, sir, I can see that.

12 Q. You can see there's a gap there where the window would  
13 be to the left and underneath that there's a little wall  
14 area. Immediately under the gap of the window, there's  
15 a bit of wall standing. It's perhaps something so  
16 obvious that I'm pointing out that it might not need --  
17 the wall's there. Page 1090, the lower photo, please.  
18 It's probably a bit more visible there. You can just  
19 about see some breeze-blocks, and you can see the wall  
20 underneath the window area. You can see the wall's  
21 still standing?

22 A. Yeah, looks like a breeze-block wall, sir.

23 Q. Yes. We can compare that to the 2009 fire. Could I ask  
24 you to open the jury bundle, please, at tab 12. This is  
25 the sequence of events, page 30. If I can trouble

1 Mr Maxwell-Scott to put this on the screen as well.  
2 It's 20.10, photograph number 40. Can that be made  
3 a bit bigger?

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

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. I don't know whether you can make out, but there's  
11 certainly no standing, breeze-block-type wall left in  
12 2009, but that is left after the fire in 1997.

13 A. That's correct, sir.

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

19 A. Sorry, could you repeat the number?

20 Q. 240.

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

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

1 the fire. Do you remember completing this document?

2 A. Yes sir.

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

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

10 Et cetera. Presumably when you said "I know the  
11 blocks" not long after the 2009 fire, you didn't  
12 remember that -- were you aware that you didn't know the  
13 blocks were maisonettes inside when you attended the  
14 2009 fire, and that was something you only found out  
15 when you were on the scene?

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

1 recently completing targeted calling with the Green  
2 Watch and from previous knowledge of the station's  
3 ground.

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

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

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

17 A. That or the sister block, sir.

18 Q. Would you turn to the witness statement bundle,  
19 page 509, please. So the jury and you are familiar,  
20 this is a witness statement you gave to the police on  
21 27 May 2010, so it's some time after the fire.

22 A. Yes, sir.

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

25 "On arrival, at approximately 18.15 ..."

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

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

8           Sorry, that should say:

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

11          So it's before you get there.

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

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

22          I appreciate I'm asking you some three years later,  
23 but it's something I want to try and clarify. Do you  
24 remember how you drew a map? If you didn't know that  
25 the flats were maisonettes, I'm struggling to picture

1           what sort of map you might have drawn.

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

4   THE CORONER:  We've heard about that.

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

11  MR EDWARDS:  Then underneath that, the final paragraph of  
12          511, you say:

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

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

21  A.   No, not less important, sir.  At incident command --  
22          well, the incident command structure is very formal and  
23          very -- and established by the time that I arrived and  
24          was tasked with a particular role.  I was conscious that  
25          my role was to gather information, collate it, to make

1           it available for the incident commander so he could  
2           confirm what had actually been done and where it had  
3           been done. The actual direction of operational crews  
4           was being completed from the command unit and from the  
5           bridgehead, so the role that we were completing was to  
6           support those roles.

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

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

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

1           You can see on the first page:

2           "Issue date: 26 November 2008."

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

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

9   Q.   Mr Maxwell-Scott turned you to page 1521. Can I just  
10          turn you back to that page, please. The top entry,  
11          3.1 -- this is under "Pre-planning" -- it says:

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

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

21   A.   Where appropriate, yes, sir.

22   Q.   Where appropriate. We've got policy 521 at the  
23          advocates' bundle, page 1552. Can I ask firstly that  
24          that's brought up on screen. It's the fourth file. You  
25          can see that this was in force, or issued from

1 19 July 2007, so this is obviously being acted on at the  
2 time of the Lakanal House fire.

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

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

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

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

19 Q. I understand.

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

21 "Sites which have been designated by the borough  
22 commander as warranting inclusion in this series will be  
23 produced in the new format and as existing sites are  
24 revisited/reviewed they should be updated into the new  
25 format."

1           I think this probably follows on from some points  
2           you've already made. For information to be gathered  
3           about a site, that's down to the borough commander to  
4           decide whether it's the right kind of sight that  
5           information needs to be gathered and recorded; is that  
6           correct?

7   A. No, 4.2 refers up to 4.1, which is major sites: COMAH  
8           sites, major accident hazards and old operational note  
9           300 series, which is the most significant risks in any  
10          one area or borough. So for Southwark -- well, do you  
11          need details, madam?

12   THE CORONER: Please.

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

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

24   A. No, sir. At station level, a station commander would  
25          decide which sites may be included in the ops info file.

1 I would, in conjunction with my station managers,  
2 constantly review those lists.

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

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

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

10 A. Absolutely, madam.

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

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

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

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

25 Then under that we have "Information gathering",

1 6.1:

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

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

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

12 And it gives an example of LPG storage areas:

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

15 Then, under 6.2:

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

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

24 A. That's right, sir. High rise does not equate to high  
25 risk.

1 Q. You yourself had never been inside Lakanal House; is  
2 that right?

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

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

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

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

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

25 Q. You say it's more to do with the style of building?

1 A. Absolutely, sir.

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

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

6 There's obviously an element of judgment. But

7 7.6 -- do you have that? Still on 1554:

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

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

14 A. Absolutely, sir.

15 Q. What does that mean?

16 A. If you take, for instance, a large retail outlet that  
17 you'll find on any industrial estate, the method of  
18 construction, how it's built, the sandwich panels that  
19 are actually the cladding of the building -- it could be  
20 a metal sheet on one side, an in-fill, a metal sheet on  
21 the other side -- the fire, if it does break out, can  
22 actually get within the structure of the building. It  
23 can cause rapid fire spread, unexpected fire spread and  
24 rapid deterioration of the structure of the building,  
25 leading to collapse. So sandwich construction itself

1 can be a hazard.

2 Q. Over the page it talks about "the plan" on page 1555.

3 8.5 says:

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

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

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

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

22 A. Across the borough, we have a whole range of different  
23 methods of construction, different types of building.  
24 A flat or a maisonette, when you go through the front  
25 door, can go up, can go down, can remain on the same

1 level. So -- the operational crews within the borough  
2 are well-versed with experiencing a whole range of  
3 different ways of entering a flat and what to expect on  
4 the other side.

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

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

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

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

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

24 A. The note, again, is a generic one to cover all  
25 information gathering across all premises. "Any

1 particular difficulties", it could relate to particular  
2 communications difficulty with brigade radios.

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

7 A. Quite possibly. But again, if that's an underground or  
8 a predominantly metal building where it blocked out your  
9 radio signals, that could be more of a difficulty.

10 A block of flats wouldn't normally present unusual radio  
11 difficulties.

12 Q. How are you going to find out if a block of flats -- or  
13 any building -- presents radio difficulties? Before you  
14 answer, internally, presumably, buildings sometimes have  
15 metal, sometimes they have very thick concrete.

16 Sometimes a building that looks like there will be no  
17 difficulties might present a difficulty. Sometimes  
18 a building that looks like a massive concrete structure  
19 from the outside is actually very thin and radios work  
20 fine. Is testing the radio on a familiarisation visit  
21 really the only way that you could find that out?

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

25 Q. How would that testing work?

1 A. I'll send you upstairs and see if I can talk to you,  
2 sir.

3 Q. Can I ask you to turn now --

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 MR MATTHEWS: I have a few.

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

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

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

4                           (In the absence of the Jury)

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

14   (3.39 pm)

15                           (A short break)

16   (3.44 pm)

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

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

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

24                           (In the presence of the Jury)

25   THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Dowden.

1 Questions by MR DOWDEN

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

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

6 Q. 511. You get there at about 6.15, and you spend about  
7 15 or 20 minutes doing other duties. You'll see that in  
8 the top paragraph on the statement, and then, after  
9 being there -- so we're talking now about some time  
10 after 6.30 -- you're asked to collate information  
11 regarding the progress and results of the search and  
12 rescue operations. You have been asked about the next  
13 paragraph, about the map that you tried to draw in  
14 respect of the flat numbers. In the third paragraph of  
15 that statement, you say:

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

18 Do you see that?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. When you say "the numbers of flats located on each  
21 floor", are you talking about a range of perhaps half  
22 a dozen flats for the whole block which you then locate  
23 onto different floors, or are you talking about on each  
24 floor writing the range of the flat numbers for each  
25 floor?

1 A. With the information that I had -- it would be similar  
2 to that information that I'd been shown on the  
3 information board above the lift, the floor numbers --  
4 the odd floor numbers with the flats associated with  
5 each level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 Q. Thank you.

24 THE CORONER: Thank you. Ms Al Tai?

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

1 THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Matthews.

2 Questions by MR MATTHEWS

3 MR MATTHEWS: Mr Snazell, on behalf of the London Borough of  
4 Southwark, my name's Matthews. Just a few questions.

5 I understand that you're coming back later to help us  
6 with other matters.

7 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

15 A. That's correct, sir.

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

20 A. Information would be collated on the form. At the time  
21 when I was completing them, we would send them to  
22 Fire Brigade headquarters and the information from them  
23 would then be either used at headquarters for whatever  
24 data-collecting systems were in place and sent onto  
25 nationally.

1 Q. Right. And brigade -- that's London Fire Brigade's  
2 headquarters?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Was a copy of the form retained on the station?

5 A. Yes. This form had carbon paper.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So you had four copies -- three or four copies. Again,  
8 I can't recall, having not done one for many years, but  
9 it was handwritten from these copies.

10 Q. You mentioned the paper file for Lakanal that existed  
11 that had the 72D visits and the dry riser inspections.

12 A. It wouldn't have the fire reports in it, sir. They'd be  
13 in a separate fire reports file.

14 Q. All right. In that separate fire reports file, attached  
15 would be the photographs as well that we have in our  
16 1084?

17 A. No, sir. No, sir, those photographs, I believe, come  
18 off from a fire investigation branch which is separate  
19 from a fire station. There's no means of recording  
20 a photograph by operational fire crews.

21 Q. Lastly, then, on this, 1082. You've helped us with one  
22 of the boxes or a number of the boxes, 5.7 and 5.8.  
23 I don't know if Mr Maxwell-Scott can zoom in. It's 5.9  
24 that I think we ought to deal with as well. Help me to  
25 help everybody, please, because it's difficult to zoom

1 in. 5.9 is something headed "Estimate of horizontal  
2 area damaged". We have two rectangular boxes. The one  
3 on the left, A, is "Area damaged by direct burning", and  
4 the one on the right, B, is "Total area damaged by fire,  
5 heat, smoke et cetera".

6 A. Yes, sir.

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

10 A. Yes, sir.

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

13 A. Yes, sir.

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

17 A. Agreed, sir.

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

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

24 Q. Right. So the total of three could be water damage to  
25 the third floor. Could it also be smoke damage?

1 A. Yes, sir. I honestly don't know the details of this  
2 fire.

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

6 A. Understood, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 A. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

16 A. Sorry, sir, can you repeat that?

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

19 A. It's all high rise, sir.

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

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

24 It then says:

25 "Pre-planning is essential [and that's underlined]

1 when dealing with a fire in a high rise premises."

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

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. So what are they supposed to understand in relation to  
7 pre-planning? What bit of pre-planning is essential?

8 A. Understand the high rise policy on how to deal with any  
9 fire in a high rise building, commercial or residential.

10 Q. And the operational information gathering bit, what are  
11 they supposed to understand about that?

12 A. Write down the basics, sir, in terms of where the actual  
13 premises are, so topography, understanding your  
14 station's ground, understanding where your risks are,  
15 understanding how to get there, understanding where to  
16 park when you arrive, understanding where to secure your  
17 water supplies, how to secure the firefighter lift, how  
18 to establish a bridgehead.

19 Q. Does that extend to complex layout?

20 A. Absolutely, sir.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 Then the third topic -- and it's shorter and I'm  
23 less sure that I'm on safe territory, because I can't  
24 remember the page number, but it is the document -- can  
25 I ask Mr Maxwell-Scott to help me?

1           Mr Snazell, there's no mystery here. I may have  
2           caused confusion before and I want to make sure I end  
3           the confusion then. You're about to be shown this  
4           document, which you've described to us. It's the  
5           incident report back to that 1997 fire.

6    A. Yes, sir, I have it.

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

9    A. Yes, sir.

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

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

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

20   THE CORONER: Mr Compton?

21   MR COMPTON: No questions, thank you.

22   THE CORONER: Mr Walsh?

23   MR WALSH: No thank you, madam.

24   THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Members of the jury, do  
25           you have any questions?

1 Questions by the Jury

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

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

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

13 A. No.

14 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Thank you. Regarding the files  
15 that you were mentioning earlier -- we saw some examples  
16 of the papers that would have been kept in the files --  
17 we understand that you were in the middle of migrating  
18 information from paper to electronic, and that that, as  
19 you say, is not a quick process. We were just hoping if  
20 you could clarify: who would have access to each type of  
21 those files? So in the case of the paper files, would  
22 they only be accessible by the firefighters within that  
23 station? And with the electronic files, would they be  
24 password-protected, for instance, or could any  
25 firefighter go in and have a look?

1 A. The paper files would be available to the -- all  
2 personnel on the station. There's no -- no other copies  
3 given to -- unless it's specific risk, but normally the  
4 paper file available to ones in the station. We would  
5 keep an additional copy of the operational information  
6 folder in the station watchroom for use by standby  
7 crews, so there'd be an additional copy if a crew came  
8 in to standby for a time, and they could take that file  
9 with them.

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

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

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

18 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Okay. Thank you very much.  
19 That's all, thank you.

20 Questions by the Coroner

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

24 A. Yes, madam.

25 THE CORONER: And was that limited to investigating the

1           circumstances of the injuries suffered by the  
2           firefighter, or were you investigating the incident more  
3           comprehensively?

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

6   THE CORONER:   Right.  Thank you very much.

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

11  A.   Thank you, madam.

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

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

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

20  THE CORONER:   Thank you very much.

21           Members of the jury, you're free to go now.  Thank  
22        you very much.  Thank you for your patient attention  
23        this week.  Please don't forget the warnings I have  
24        given about not talking to anyone about the case and not  
25        doing any research on your own.  Thank you very much.

1           We'll see you back here for a 10 o'clock start on  
2           Monday. Thank you very much.

3                               (In the absence of the Jury)

4                               Housekeeping

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

8   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes.

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

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

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

12           Mr Clark, I have mine here.

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

14   THE CORONER: Ah, thank you.

15   MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: So then perhaps the main question that is  
16           undecided is the role, if any, that Dr Mansi will take  
17           after Mr Crowder. I've indicated by email that  
18           I personally didn't think it would be necessary for him  
19           to give evidence, because I thought the combination of  
20           Mr Crowder and senior members of the London Fire Brigade  
21           later on would be able to cover the necessary topics.  
22           I haven't particularly expected people to have reached  
23           a view on that by now, but I haven't particularly  
24           received views either. It may be that people can  
25           comment now or that we'll have to wait until the

1 conclusion of Mr Crowder's evidence.

2 THE CORONER: Okay.

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

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

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

24 THE CORONER: Yes, I do understand that. I'm sorry that it  
25 is taking time. I hope very much that it will be

1 available for the weekend. I hope that's the case.  
 2 MR COMPTON: Thank you very much.  
 3 THE CORONER: And apologies for the inconvenience caused to  
 4 everybody by the delay. Thank you. Any other points?  
 5 Good. All right, are there any issues anyone wants to  
 6 raise before we finish before next week? Good. Well,  
 7 thank you all very much, and we'll convene again on  
 8 Monday. Thank you very much.

9 (4.09 pm)

10 (The Court adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday, 18 February  
 11 2013)

12 Housekeeping .....1  
 13 MICHAEL MCGURRAN (continued) .....11  
 14 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT (continued) .....11  
 15 Questions by MR EDWARDS .....65  
 16 Questions by MR COMPTON .....74  
 17 Questions by MR WALSH .....80  
 18 Questions by the Coroner .....86  
 19 Questions by the Jury .....88  
 20 ANDREW SNAZELL (sworn) .....97  
 21 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT .....98  
 22 Questions by MR EDWARDS .....131  
 23 Questions by MR DOWDEN .....153  
 24 Questions by MR MATTHEWS .....155  
 25 Questions by the Jury .....162

1	
2	Questions by the Coroner .....163
3	Housekeeping .....165
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
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