



Museum of Fire
Articles on Historic Firefighting Equipment

Selfac Fire Extinguisher

The latest addition to the Museum collection is this extinguisher kindly donated by Mr and Mrs Keddie from Edinburgh. Although an interesting item it is regretted that it will never be exhibited.

These extinguishers were manufactured in 1941, consisting of a cardboard container containing bicarbonate of soda or another dry powder with a central explosives charge a Ranger and a set of sensors. They were designed for wartime use, for hanging in attics or roof spaces, the theory being when heat or flames set off the charge, the ensuing explosion would spread the powder, thus containing the fire or assisting in the extinguishment.

Over the years we have accepted many of these extinguishers, and when one was handed in to Lauriston Fire Station, the Officer in Charge decided to check its suitability. A fire was lit in a bin and the Selfac suspended on a ceiling hook and held over the flames. It certainly worked, however the powder had solidified over the years.

Fortunately the Station Welfare paid for the replacement pieces of glass in the Billiard Room and the Station Office. After consultation with the Army it was agreed that they would be destroyed in a controlled explosion by the Bomb Disposal Squad.

