**Brighton Hotel Bomb**

**12th October 1984**

SEFF remembers the innocent victims of the Brighton Hotel Bomb who were murdered on 12th October 1984.

The Brighton hotel bombing was a Provisional IRA assassination attempt against the top tier of the British government in 1984. It missed its’ main targets but killed five others.

It occurred on 12th October 1984 at the Grand Hotel in Brighton, England. A long-delay time bomb was planted in the hotel by Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) member Patrick Magee, with the purpose of killing Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet, who were staying at the hotel for the Conservative Party conference.

Although the Prime Minister narrowly escaped injury, five people were murdered including a sitting Conservative MP, (Sir Anthony Berry) and 31 were injured (including Lord Tebbit and his wife Margaret)

As Norman Tebbit recalls: “We were woken by the sound of an explosion. Having grown up through the early 1940’s I had no doubt that is was a bomb, as first the ceiling, and then the floor collapsed and we were tumbled out of bed under a hail of debris.

“I had no idea how far we had fallen and still the bricks and lumps of concrete and wood rained down. Eventually there was nothing but pitch darkness and silence, broken only by the fading screams and groans of others buried somewhere in the ruins of the central block of the Grand Hotel.

“Margaret answered my call to her and I realised that we were not far apart. I was unable to move my head, lower body or right arm, but reaching out with my left arm towards the sound of my wife’s voice I was able to touch her hand as we lay, uncertain of how far we had fallen, or even which way up we were.

“I began to explore around me and found that we were both still entangled in the duvet and sheets from our bed, then that my left side had become an agonising sticky mess of torn flesh and what I realised must be blood.

“My mouth too seemed full of dust, blood and bits of teeth, my legs were trapped but I could at least feel they were still there, but I had no response from my right arm which I feared I might have lost.

“My wife seemed to be crumpled up into a ball but we could at least touch and speak to one another. There was little sound as the other trapped victims fell silent apart from that of water running from a severed pipe.

I realised that although rescuers would be on their way it might be a long wait, but my wife, unusually less patient than I, began to cry out for help. “Don’t waste your strength.” I advised her. “Wait until you hear the rescuers, it might be a long time.”

“We fell to talking, giving each other messages for our family lest only one of us survived. From time to time there were sounds as more of the wreckage collapsed, and I drifted in and out of consciousness wondering how many of our friends and colleagues had survived.

“Suddenly there were voices calling out for survivors. We struggled to reply and they asked us who we were. The rescuers were led by Fireman Fred Bishop and with him was reservist fireman Ash.

“Tony Trafford, a doctor who had been at the Conference, joined them to assess our injuries and found an arm so battered and cold they thought it had been severed, but turned out to be mine. Slowly, delicately, in order not to cause another shift of the wreckage, they began to dig us out. I had to be shifted first and will never forget being strapped to a stretcher and eased out from the debris into the glare of floodlights and the sweetest night air I have ever breathed.

“Then the cold sent me into great shivers as I was loaded into an ambulance and on my way to hospital and the sudden glare of the lights of an operating theatre and once again oblivion.

“My broken bones and other wounds were repaired although I have hardly known a day without pain for the last thirty-odd years, but my wife though scarcely scarred has been largely paralysed from her neck down.’

“We are but two of the casualties of the troubled years of the Sinn Fein/IRA insurrection. Nor was the ceiling of our room at The Grand Hotel the first I saw come down from the blast of a bomb, but the Luftwaffe I can forgive.

“Those who far from repenting still glorify in their crimes, I cannot”.

Victims of the Bomb:

Sir Anthony Berry (Conservative MP)

Mr Eric Taylor (North-West Area Chairman of the Conservative Party)

Lady Jeanne Shattock (wife of Sir Gordon Shattock, Western Area Chairman of the Conservative Party)

Lady Muriel Maclean (wife of Sir Donald Maclean, President of the Scottish Conservatives)

Mrs Roberta Wakeham (wife of Parliamentary Treasury Secretary John Wakeham)

The victims of the Brighton Bomb are remembered on SEFF’s Memorial Quilt; Terrorism knows NO Borders.

SEFF’s thoughts and prayers are with the families of those murdered via the bombing and all others physically and psychologically injured.