

Fireman Ivor Douglas Brown - Awarded the Queens Medal for Brave Conduct

Rescue from the River Avon 11th March 1963

On Monday 11th March 1963 at 1017 hours a call was received in the Watch room at New Brislington Fire Station, which had only been opened on 10th December 1962, from Brigade Control “Special Service Call rear of the new Brislington Bridge, Whitby Road, there is a man on a boat which is sinking send WrE (Water Tender Escape)”



1018 WrE left the station with the following crew Sub Officer Parsons in Charge, Fm Silvester driving, Fm Hart & Lfm Spencer B.A. (Breathing Apparatus) and Fm Brown BM (Branch Man)

The Citation read at the Presentation of the Queens Medal for Brave Conduct reads as follows;

“On Monday 11th March 1963, a Call was received at Fire Control, indicating that a motor launch had been swept from its moorings near Brislington Bridge, St. Annes with a man onboard.

The Water Tender Escape 150 BHW was despatched from the new Brislington Fire Station, with Sub Officer E.W.Parsons in charge, and upon arrival, it was found that the launch had been carried by the extremely strong current on to the rocks adjacent to the weir.

When he reached the river bank, Fireman Ivor D. Brown discarded his fire tunic, tied a line around himself, entered the rapidly swirling waters, and swam towards the disabled craft.....

When within only a few feet of the craft, he was carried completely off course by the current and towards the weir. His companions on the bank however, quickly hauled him ashore.

“Topper” Brown, although almost exhausted, insisted on making a second attempt, and in doing so swam a further 200 feet upstream in an attempt to off-set the effect of the current. He did manage to reach the launch, but by this time he was too exhausted to climb aboard. The occupant of the launch lowered himself on to Brown’s shoulders, and the shore party commenced to haul both men towards the bank. During this time “Topper” was submerged on a number of occasions. Suddenly, the current swept Brown’s companion away towards the rocks..... Spectators on the bank threw him a line, and he was hauled to safety. Likewise, Fireman’s Brown’s companions on the shore again hauled him to safety.



Both Men were taken to Hospital, suffering from exhaustion and shock, but fortunately were later discharged.

Asked later by a reporter as to his thoughts at the time, “Topper” stated that he was “rather concerned about the 16 pieces of toast which were ready to be eaten back at the Station.....!!

(He did not mention that they were all ordered by himself..)”

1305 Fm Brown reported for duty

Top pictures ‘Queens Brave Conduct Medal. Bottom Fm Brown, with his family, being presented with his medal by the CFO K.Holland.

All the records pertaining to the above event are now stored in the Bristol Records Office (16.12.2014 ICS)