

# NOVA



*Avon Fire Brigade Journal*



**WINTER 1990**

# NOVA

## *Avon Fire Brigade*

### Editorial

It is hard for me to believe a whole year has passed since the last edition of 'NOVA'. This is not something I am proud of as I would like to produce three editions a year. Unfortunately, without material coming to me then the task is impossible. There are a handful of people who do send pieces to me and I would like to thank John Patrick, Tony Witcomb, Ian Satherley and Jim Churchill. Bob Shapcott is now giving me a hand sub editing raw material so start sending reports of all those activities I know go on, so that we can all enjoy a full and interesting journal.

With Christmas upon us I would like to wish everyone seasonal greetings, and look forward to the New Year which, I am sure, will be full of new challenges for us to overcome.

Ian Jefferies, EDITOR

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and publishers and may not represent the official opinion of the Fire Brigade.

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# FOREWORD

By PAT ARIS, Chief Fire Officer

As we approach the end of another year we can look back on a period where the Brigade has seen a further increase in calls on its services. These have been met with the effectiveness of which we are justly proud.

We are all aware of the very difficult times which are facing the County Council, but whatever problems confront us we must clearly recognise that the people of the County must receive the highest level of service that we can provide.

I have had the opportunity during the past year of meeting and talking to many of you. I have enjoyed that very much and have been strengthened by the constructive and creative suggestions which you have made to advance your brigade.

I wish all of you and your families a happy and peaceful festive season.

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# Mastermind is "Band On The Run"

WHILST in training for the London Marathon, two major events overtook my life.

Firstly, on the third time of asking, my application to the B.B.C at Elstree Studios for a chance to sit in the chair on their 'Mastermind' programme was accepted. As with my two previous attempts, I was asked to attend the Hawthorns Hotel in May for an interview with the programme producer.

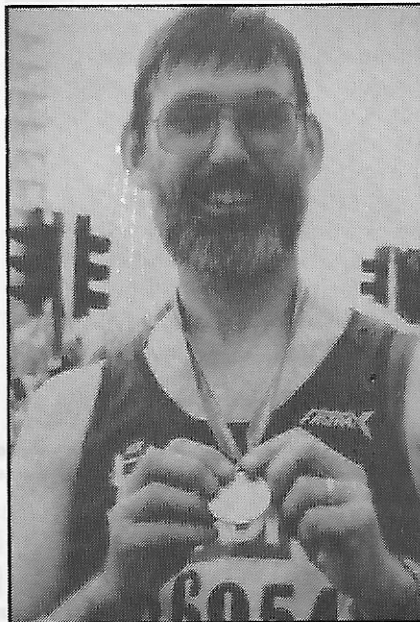
Even though I approached the day feeling confident, after the meeting and seeing a large number of hopeful competitors, I did feel this would be the end of the matter. Imagine my surprise when I received a 'phone call at work a few weeks later offering me a place on the programme - an offer I could not resist - even though there were two conditions. First, the good one; I had five months to prepare my "Act" and worry about being in the spotlight. Second, the bad one; I would need the five months to prepare because I could only appear on the show if I changed both of my chosen subjects (obviously sex and drugs aren't acceptable to the B.B.C)! Anyway, I agreed and the paperwork was sent and returned duly signed, stating that I would answer questions on the history of brass bands. So now the panic set in. Would I be able to do sufficient research in time for a recording date in November.

In the event I managed to do a considerable amount and I found 'Mastermind' took over my life. All of my reading was directed at the subject and all of my thoughts to general knowledge questions.

My swotting went relatively smoothly until the second major episode in my life dropped like a bombshell. At the end of October my father died of cancer. This inevitably threw out of joint the remainder

of the research schedule, so when it came to the recording session only three weeks later I was, understandably, a trifle more nervous than I would otherwise have been.

The recording session itself was the worst part, with a production team that seemed a combination of the helpful psychiatrist's couch and the Spanish Inquisition rolled into one. The afternoon



was spent getting the script right and having a dummy run with a set of general knowledge questions - the dummy won and the general came a close second - this made us competitors feel a bit better (with Magnus Magnusson cracking a few jokes!!)

This was followed by B.B.C. refreshments but unfortunately a crew of firemen filming an episode of 'Casualty' got there first and scoffed the lot.

Then came the grilling in the evening.

By this time we all could feel nerves getting the upper hand, which required help from the production staff and helpful hints from the previous year's winner. Even Magnus turned the screw and pressure built up with the climax for all competitors being the introduction into the theatre, seeing the competitors' chairs surrounded by an audience of something like 200 people.

I had to go on last and I am sure that long wait is the worst, my nerves being shot when the time came to sit in that black chair. I shook like a leaf all the way through.

Having somehow survived the trauma of the two interrogation sessions and trying desperately to remember not to stand up before my passes were given by Magnus, the reading of the results was something of an anti-climax, but I can remember shaking all the way to the bar and downing a pint in about three seconds flat!

The rest of the evening I could relax and watch a second batch of contenders going through the same process. People don't realise the B.B.C. record up to three shows in one evening, so we could see other recordings from a "behind the scenes" angle which was very instructive.

A buffet followed by liquid refreshments ensured that everyone had an enjoyable time, making it a memorable event in my life and I have an autographed souvenir as proof of my participation for the other band members.

Going back to the title of this piece, I along with Chris Harris, another band member, took part in the London Marathon and the 4 hours 27 minutes it took was a good time to get all thoughts of brass bands out of my mind.

**Peter McGowan** - Brigade Military Band

# Owen Harris, Bristol Oil Storage Ltd

THE very nature of a firefighter is a Jack of all trades but there are many jobs carried out by our specialist personnel which, after a period of learning, makes them experts. Usually that period of learning and subsequent work bring us in close contact with many people outside of the Service and one such person has been Owen Harris.

Owen has now retired and therefore it is time to record the tremendous contribution he has made to the oil industry at Avonmouth.

Owen leaves his post as Operations Consultant for Bristol Oil Storage Ltd after thirty years. A former aviator, he joined Petrofina in 1960 as a sales representative in Essex but moved rapidly into operations. After a year of secondment to the National Oil Company of Ireland at their terminal in Cork, he transferred to Avonmouth in 1962 as Assistant to the Installation Supervisor. Over the years he first

took charge of the terminal and then became Group Terminal Manager. When the consortium, Bristol Oil Storage Ltd, was formed, Owen



became its Operations Consultant. His wealth of experience and depth of knowledge have been of great value not only to the petroleum industry itself but to the Port of Bristol Authority and our Brigade. Owen's help and practical assistance over the years have always been gratefully received. The explosion and fire in 1988 at Shell, Avonmouth, was just one occasion when he and his colleagues rushed to the scene to give advice and assistance to site personnel and the Brigade. This action was recognised in the form of a commendation from his Company.

As Owen now moves into retirement, I am sure his energies will make it long and active and it looks as if his family may have to endure many hours of sailing as he pilots his 29 foot cruiser out of Plymouth.

John Sleight

Bristol Water Company, PO Box 218, Bridgwater Road, Bristol BS99 7AU.

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**WATER**

*always on top*

# Successful Christmas Flash Photos

THE Brigade Photographic Department is often asked why certain photographs were not successful.

Many people think that if they spend a small fortune on a camera then it will solve all their photographic problems, but this is not so. What is required is a very basic understanding of how photographs are produced.

Modern compact cameras produce excellent results but no matter how expensive it was, they all suffer from the same problem of a low power flash system close to the lens.

If you remember that photographs are records of light reflected from a subject then the further away the camera is from the subject, the less light from the flash is going to fall on that subject. Read the camera's manual to find out the maximum distance for flash work but as a general rule of thumb anything greater than ten feet is likely to be under exposed. Also remember that light reflects off walls and ceilings, so a picture taken with flash indoors is more

likely to be successful than one taken outdoors.

The speed of film, that is the A.S.A. number, also has a bearing on the success of a picture. The higher the A.S.A. number, the faster the film reacts to light, which means that less light is required to form an image, therefore if you intend to take pictures in low light or using flash, use a 400 A.S.A. film after first making sure from the camera manual any adjustment to settings on the camera or changes in maximum distance from the subject. One point I should make here is that most free films given on offer are 100 A.S.A. which are fine outdoors in summer but not so good for flash work because of the slower nature of the film.

The next problem from the flash being close to the lens is red eyes. This cannot be avoided if the subject is looking at the camera, so compose the picture so that the subject is looking away. Examples of this could be

children opening presents or playing with their new toys or a family gathering in a group looking at each other or at one person in the group. If you have a flash gun that can be removed or has a tilt head, then bounce the light from the ceiling or, using an extension lead, hold the flash to one side pointing at the subject but at a distance from the lens.

To sum up, give the camera a chance by using a fast film and fill the viewfinder with the subject by getting in close. Read the manual to obtain the working distances for flash operation. Don't compose the picture so that the subjects are looking straight at the camera, and expect a lot of comment over the time it is taking to set the picture up, make a joke of it because with that careful preparation, success is more likely.

Jeff Lovell



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# *The Meaning of Life,* *The World and Everything*

OVER recent years many new technical terms and 'jargon' have come into usage in the Brigade. To aid new firefighters and non-uniformed staff as to their meaning, a short glossary of the more common terms has been compiled.

My Union Rep/Health & Safety Rep/Doctor/Wife		
Girl Friend/ Boy Friend says "I must not do that".	=	I don't want to do it. (I'm afraid of heights)
'I've just come back from Annual'		
'The night watch didn't hand it over'		
'It wasn't in the handing over book'		
'I thought the Div Sub did that'		
'It's not my job'		
'It's against Union Policy'		
'I thought that Brigade Order was out of date'	=	I didn't want to do it
Part-time Firefighter	=	Full-time firefighter
Full-time Firefighter	=	Part-time firefighter
Divisional Commanders' meeting	=	Irish Parliament
Live carry down	=	Forbidden - health hazard
Live line rescue	=	Forbidden - health hazard
BA drill in smoke	=	Health hazard
Cigarette smoking	=	Every smoker's God given right to pollute the work place with carcinogens
'F' Division	=	The land that time forgot
That was an enthusiastic, smart and snappy drill - let's do it again just once more and see if we can get it even slicker	=	That was a b----y shambles, now do it again and try not to fall over or drop anything this time.
'I'll stay on the radio while you do the 11D visit, sir'	=	I'm too idle to put one foot in front of the other
Self certificated sick leave	=	Extra annual
'Sir, I've just had a 'phone call, I have urgent domestic distress'.	=	Sir, the skittles team are one short
Divisional Officers'/Watch Officers' meeting	=	Spanish Inquisition
Lease Car	=	Hot rod
Golf Section	=	Extra annual leave
'C' Division	=	Where?
Assessment Counselling	=	Character assassination
Angling Section	=	More extra annual leave
'26 1/2'	=	Painful retirement

# C6 Chew Magna Open Day



USING Fire Fiesta '90 has a kind of rehearsal of organisation, the ever resourceful crew at C6, led by Sub Officer Mike Parsons, held a Station Open Day the following weekend. As the fire-fighters are held in such high esteem in the village, it is not surprise that it was very successful, attracting a large crowd from the local district.

As well as their own appliances, several other machines were on display including the new Major Rescue Tender. The firefighters also showed off their new drill tower, one of the latest type and recently erected.

With only a total of eight in his crew, Mike, his men, and their families worked marvels ensuring the event will be remembered in the village. A special thank you goes to the crews of visiting appliances who joined in with such enthusiasm. A total of £140 was raised for the Benevolent Fund. Well done, C6.

**TONY WITCOMBE**

# *Book Review*

IN the summer 1989 edition of 'Nova' I had my first experience of reviewing a book. It was 'The Blitz - Then and Now' Volume Two and now I have just completed reading Volume Three, all 592 pages covering the period from May 1941 to May 1945. It is interesting to note that the last person to die in Britain, due to enemy action, was 34 year old Mrs Ivy Millichamp of Arpington who fell, victim of a V2 rocket at 1700 hrs on 27th March 1945.

The book, edited by Winston Ramsey, is an authorised record of the daily events of the Blitz and this volume follows the hallmark of "After the Battle" publications in its comparison photographs of then and now. The German aircraft which took part in the raids are listed with details of crew and their fate if brought down. To balance the publication there are many features and special articles.

As with volume two there are many pages of local interest covering raids on Bristol, Bath, Weston-Super-Mare and Avonmouth, with many pictures of bomb damage at Bath.

Interesting features for firefighters are sections on the formation of the National Fire Service, and the appliances used for fire-fighting.

The later section was of special interest to me as I have a kind of perverse affection for the Auxilliary Towing Vehicle as I, along with many others, learned to drive in one back in the early 60's. About 4,000 of these Austin K2 vehicles were produced, based on a 2 ton light truck chassis with unassisted brakes and steering and of course a crash gearbox. They gave faithful service throughout the country over many years.

The book is the same excellent quality as volume two and priced the same at £37.50 and offers the same reference or entertainment value, giving many hours of fascinating reading to those interested in local or military history.

ED.

# Travellers Tales

**In a Bucharest hotel lobby...**

*"The lift is being fixed for the next day, During that time we regret that you will be unbearable."*

**In a hotel in Athens...** *"Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 & 11 a.m daily."*

**In a Yugoslavian hotel...** *"The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid."*

**In a Japanese hotel...** *"You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid."*

**In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery...**

*"You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian & Soviet composers, artists & writers are buried daily except Thursday."*

**On the menu of a Swiss restaurant...** *"Our wines leave you nothing to hope for."*

**In a Bangkok dry cleaners...** *"Drop your trousers here for best results."*

**Outside a Paris dress shop...** *"Dresses for streetwalking."*

**In a Rhodes tailors shop...**

*"Order your summer suit, because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation."*

**In an East African newspaper...**

*"A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers."*

**In a Vienna hotel...** *"In case of fire, do your utmost to alarm the hotel porter."*

**A sign posted in Germany's Black Forrest...**

*"It is strictly forbidden on our Black Forrest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men & women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose."*

**In a Zurich hotel...** *"Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose."*

**In a Rome laundry...** *"Ladies! Leave your clothes here & spend the afternoon having a good time."*

**On the faucet in a Finnish washroom...** *"To stop the drip, turn cock to rights."*

**In a Bangkok temple...** *"It is forbidden to enter a woman even a foreigner if dressed as a man."*

**In a Tokyo bar...** *"Special cocktails for the ladies with nuts."*

**In a Copenhagen airline ticket office...** *"We take your bags & send them in all directions."*

**On the door of a Moscow hotel room...** *"If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it."*

**In the office of a Roman Doctor...** *"Specialist in women & other diseases."*

# Quotation from a letter received at "F" Division Bath Office

"I own the flats above... (fast food takeaway). Recently the takeaway has been infested with cockroaches.

To my surprise they found their way up into my flats...

The only way I can assume the cockroaches managed to obtain entry is through the ceiling of the shop.

**I would have thought that if the ceiling complied with fire regulations it should be cockroach proof...**

Would it be possible for one of your officers to call at the premises... I would like a professional opinion."

Yours faithfully,



**Fireman's Wellie (pest control) plc.**

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## Skittles Knockout 1990

THE skittles section are as busy as ever with the knockout competition final held way back in April.

Again, the "Beehive" Public House hosted the event which this year saw A2 Red come to grips with the finalists from the last three years, A3 Green. Going into last year's final A3 Green had been winners for the previous two years but this winning streak was brought to an end when B6 White took first place. Knocker White was said to have supplied a certain cough mixture to the team and a dope test was requested. This was refused as it would make a mockery of the qualified fireman's exam.

### **Back to the final.**

Roy Spear, the captain and mentor of A3, took them into an early lead. Halfway through the game near the pain barrier where fitness and stamina count, A2 solved the problem with lots of fortifying liquid (Guinness) and Dave Coles abandoned his patent "Douglas Bader skittle slippers" for a lighter pair of shoes.

Southmead then tried a different method of breaking Avonmouth's concentration, this was a Kissogram. It was to celebrate the award 'Brylcreem's most valued customer' to Dick Noke for the fifth year in succession. The distraction worked for a while with Mike Hares' pacemaker

working overtime and four of Avonmouth's players were blinded by the glow from Dick Noke's head.

A2 took the advantage and started to make a comeback, could this be another upset for A3?

Alas no, Dave Coles was in such a nervous state after the Kissogram his skittling suffered, resulting in a score of 11 pins, 3 light bulbs and 1 sticker up. A3 now had the match in the bag and after team captain Roy Spear had



collected the coveted award from the Chief Officer, he led his team in a lap of honour around Knocker's wallet.

SKITTLES CORRESPONDENT

## Ian Chalmers Memorial Race

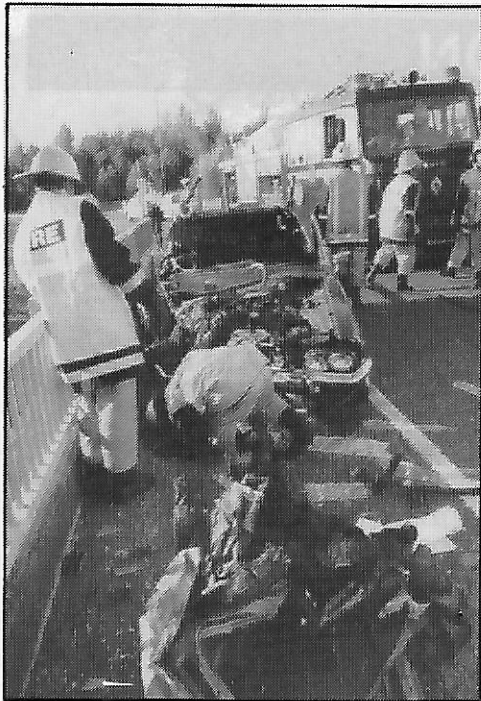
THE 7th Ian Chalmers Memorial Race took place at the end of 1989. It was again a great success due to the commitment and enthusiasm of all concerned.

For the newer members of the Brigade some background information will enlighten you as to the purpose of the race.

Ian Chalmers joined the Brigade in 1980 and following training school joined Green Watch at B1 Bath. On the 18th October 1982, after attending a fire call at the Royal United Hospital, Bath, he was involved in an accident, which sadly resulted in his death. Ian was a keen sportsman and the race is a tribute to him.

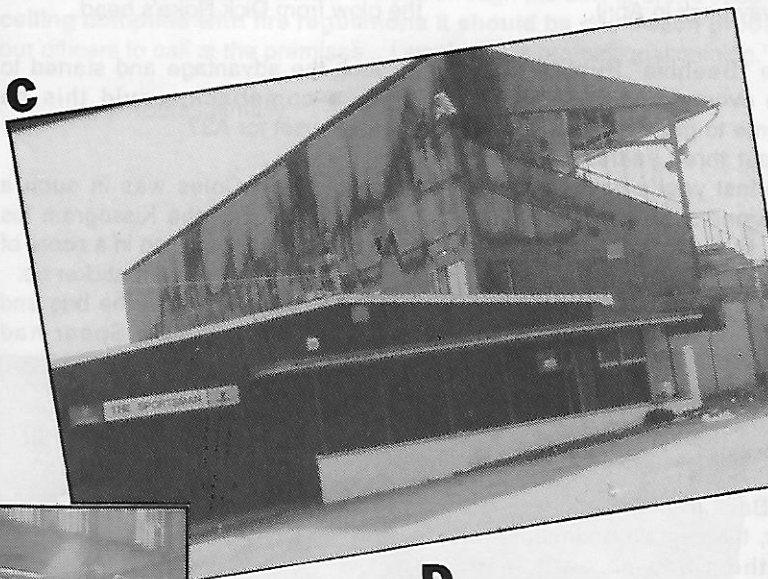
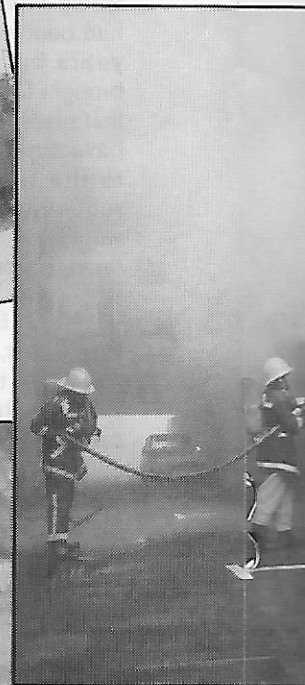
The weather has always been kind to us on race day and this year was no exception. Mrs Jill Chalmers, Ian's mother, started the race with a blast on an "Acme Thunderer" and 36 runners "evacuated" the station.

A brisk start was made over the first 5 yards, then they settled down to "drill yard" pace. The guinea Lane incline was approached and runners must

**A**

# SPOT THE LOCATION

*The first person to pin-point the locations of a  
Answers to Ian Jefferies, B*

**C****E****B****D**

# ATION COMPETITION

ons of all these incidents wins a bottle of scotch.  
eries, Brigade Headquarters.



H



I



have reflected as to whether last night's extra pint followed by a vindaloo was such a good idea after all. As the race progressed the field began to string out. Mike Collin from B6 began to pull away from the following group headed by Rod King. The runners made their way to the Royal United Hospital along Julian

Road and commenced the return journey, along the Upper Bristol Road. By this time the leader had established an unassailable position. The runners passed through the city and Mike Collin reached the finishing tape in a record time of 24 minutes 53 seconds.

Others followed in various states of

exhaustion!

Some concern was expressed as to the whereabouts of Paul (Flash) Ruddick and Tim (Mega) Robinson. However, they eventually appeared and crossed the line in 43 minutes. The trophies were presented by Mrs Chalmers in conjunction with Chief Officer Aris.

### ***Results are shown below:-***

<b><i>Position</i></b>	<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>
<b>1st Individual</b>	Mike Collin	24 minutes 53 seconds
<b>2nd Individual</b>	Rod King	27 minutes 6 seconds
<b>3rd Individual</b>	Martin Glanvill	27 minutes 22 seconds
<b>1st Over 40</b>	Neil Kirkby	29 minutes 49 seconds
<b>Most Improved Runner</b>	John Brown	27 minutes 42 seconds
<b>1st Team</b>	Rod King Martin Glanvill Kevin Escott	
<b>2nd Team</b>	John Brown Andy Coe Mike Collin	
<b>3rd Team</b>	Ron Stinchcombe Rick Hanratty Geoff Cater	

I would like to reiterate my thanks to Alan Lawson and wife (time-keeping, registrations), Sandy Gammie (food), the marshalls, all their helpers and, of course, the runners.

Many thanks.

**Mark Bryan**

# A1 White Watch Walking Club

FOR the last three years several members of White Watch, A1 Temple, have been visiting the beautiful county of Cornwall, walking the coastal path.

The first walk started from Padstow and following the north coast down to Newquay. It was used as a trial which turned out to be a disaster as the moment they left the car the rain started and continued for the next three days, which is okay for ducks but not too good if you are sleeping under canvas!!

Back at the station the decision was made to move up-market and frequent local bed and breakfasts, this way we'd ensure a dry bed to sleep in and a full stomach to start the day. Partly as a result of this the second walk was rather more successful, with three of the watch starting off where the last walk had finished and managing to get as far as Hayle.

My introduction to this form, of what can loosely be called, "Leisure Activity", came on the third walk which began at St Ives. Five of us (the biggest attendance yet) walked a very hard twelve miles to St Just. The path was very rugged and quite treacherous in places and my feet were glad when we eventually came to a halt for the night. After hot food and a good night's sleep we awoke to see a bright and sunny day, at last! A great day's walking ahead, we left St Just, went around Land's End, stopping at St Leven for lunch and of course a pint or two, more walking in the afternoon to get to the finishing point, the quaint harbour town of Mousehole.

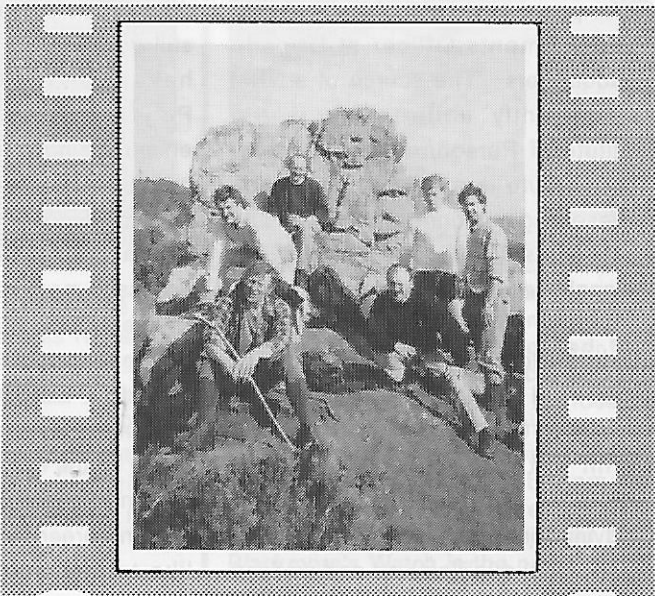
The weather improved dramatically from there on and our fourth walk was spent in hot sunshine. We left Penzance past St Michael's Mount and on through Perranuthroe and Para Sands. We found it very refreshing to take a quick dip in the sea when the going got tough. We spent the night in Porthleven and the following day walked on to the Lizard passing the beautiful Mullion Cove.

Ranks swelled again to seven for the most recent walk in March. For someone who until recently tended to visit only

the more popular tourist beaches in Cornwall, I have been very pleasantly surprised to find some breathtaking views and wonderful coves that can only be reached by foot or by boat. A slight hiccup occurred in our plans on this trip when we found that the ferry we'd hoped would take us across the estuary from Helfords hadn't swung into action yet for the 1990 tourist season. At this stage a few struggled on the extra seven miles to Falmouth while others (myself included) chose the easy option in the form of a taxi. Those who had stuck it out were extremely grateful to find all the accommodation arranged and a pint waiting for them on the bar when they eventually arrived in darkness that night.

We are planning to finish this part of the Cornish coast in the next two walks and so will be looking for a new location. If anyone has any suggestions they will be welcome.

**Dean Iles**



## *You're Never Too Old To Learn*

DUE to unforeseen circumstances in my life at age 26 I realised it was time to pick up the threads of my education and get some qualifications to enable me to get a reasonable job with a bit of security. Having left school at 15 with one O Level I realised I would have to do some studying and started with a 9 month full time college course in shorthand/typing accounts after which I got a job as a shorthand/typist at C Division Headquarters at Weston-s-Mare. I continued studying on a part time evening and day release basis, and my career progressed eventually to the post I now hold which is that of Establishments Officer at Brigade Headquarters. The course of study I am currently undertaking is the Institute of Personnel Management. The Institute is a professional body representing personnel generalists and specialists in Great Britain, is nationally recognised and membership is widely regarded as the main qualification for practitioners of personnel management in a wide variety of organisational contexts within both 'public' and 'private' sectors.

Studying for educational, vocational or professional qualifications and working

full time whilst running a home and coping with a family has made me something of an 'ambidextrous juggler'. Trying to cope with studying, homework and completing assignments on schedule while being asked questions like:

"Where's my clean shirt/football kit/ Iron Maiden record/lunch/tea?"

has at times taken me to lows I did not know existed.

Lecturers, in the past, all seemed to assume that you have no other commitments than those of college and that when the college is on holiday then so are you although in reality, life still goes on the same. One thing I have found with studying at the Polytechnic is that the lecturers I encounter now are fully aware of the problems of part time study whilst in full time employment and often make special arrangements to facilitate easy access to many resources.

I have derived much pleasure as well as knowledge from studying and wouldn't want to put anyone off embarking on a course of study in the future as the rewards are manyfold not only in terms of personal fulfilment but also in career terms, however I would like to say that a large degree of

commitment is necessary and the help, understanding and support of your partner, family, friends and work colleagues can make a big difference to the effort put into the course and the end result. It is not always easy to maintain motivation to study up to midnight on a regular basis and still be bright and cheerful at work the next day.

I have been very lucky during my years with the Brigade in as much as I have received much encouragement and support from officers and colleagues as well as sponsorship from Avon for my last two courses. I no longer have my son living at home so the time I spend on 'chores' has been reduced but I

can't end this article without a big thankyou to my husband for the support, encouragement and patience he has provided over the last few years. "Thanks Mike".

**Carol Parker**

# RETIREMENTS

## *Mike Black*

IN March Station Officer Mike Black cleared his desk for the last time after thirty years service.



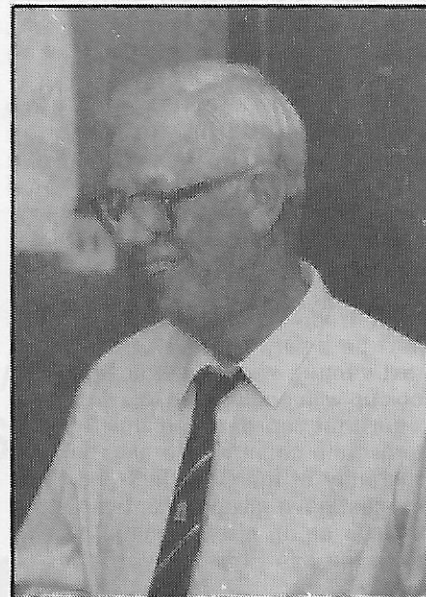
He joined Bath Fire and Ambulance Service in 1960 after serving in the Fleet Air Arm for nine years after entering as a junior seaman. Mike worked as an armourer which also involved duties in aircraft crash rescue. He was a member of the Royal Navy Field Gun crew and represented the Fleet Air Arm on several occasions at the Royal Tournament and in America.

After many years of operational duties at Bath, in 1974 Mike joined the Fire Prevention Department as a Station Officer and the many years of experience and knowledge will be sadly lost.

Nearly forty of Mike's colleagues past and present celebrated his retirement at the Castle Hotel where he received retirement gifts from Senior Divisional Officer Southard and Divisional Officer Clark. Alvin Craig also presented a token from the non Fire Service friends with whom he had worked for so many years.

## *Frank's Farewell*

THEY say Firemen are "Jacks of all Trades", but the various tasks they have to perform give them a wide range of expertise, so when in 1974 Frank Hollister applied for and obtained a job as a Fire Control Operator he brought with him a wealth of experience, which started in 1942 when, serving in the Navy, he was sent on a Ships Firefighting and Rescue Course in Plymouth.



Those wartime days were far removed from 1968 when Frank ventured into firefighting again and joined the Gloucestershire Fire Service, serving at Kingswood Fire Station. He rose to the rank of Sub Officer, only leaving when the Retained Pump was made redundant. In 1970 he became a member of the B.A.C. Fire Brigade, where he worked until he joined Phil Blackmore's Watch in the new County

of Avon Fire Control.

He quickly became our expert on that strange (to us) system of retained firefighters (we'd never heard of them!!)

During Frank's long and varied career, he had been a "Knight of the Road", (Long Distance Lorry Driver) and to us Bristolians in the new Brigade Control was a godsend, knowing the topography of the new Avon County. Here was a man who KNEW where Nempnett Thrubwell WAS; we couldn't even spell it.

Frank had an accumulation of stories about his war years and lorry driving that kept us entertained across many a night shift. On a good day he was better than any stand up comedian on the stage.

His biggest headaches must have been caused during the years he served us as F.B.U. Rep, not only at a Branch but Regional and National levels at a time when new technology and horrendous building works were going on around us; he did a marvellous job for his members.

From Trade Unions to Golf Societies can't be a very big step! and Frank's next venture was into Golf, which he took up with enthusiasm, playing in the team that represented the Brigade across the country. He also became Secretary of the Golf Club and I feel he must have given of his best in this position as on his retirement he was given the Life Presidency of the Golf club.

A farewell party for Frank was held on Friday, 5th October and it is a tribute to him that members from all stations and ranks attended.

I'm sure it is not the last we see of Frank. I believe he will still be found on match days running up and down the touchline with a wet sponge and smelling salts and cheering on the football team.

**Eileen Sluter**

## Roger Strickland Flies Away

AFTER losing Mike Black from Bath, Fire Prevention Office, Weston-Super-Mare, lost one of their long experienced Fire Protection Officers when Station Officer Roger Strickland retired after nearly 28 years service.

He joined Somerset Fire Brigade as a retained firefighter at Blagdon in 1962 while carrying out a full-time pursuit of Gentleman Farmer. The early mornings suffered by farmers eventually took their toll so he joined full-time in 1966 and was posted to Weston-Super-Mare.

At the recruit training course in Reigate, Surrey, he met our current Assistant Chief Officer and together they learned their basic skills.

After five years as a fireman at Weston-Super-Mare, Roger had a period of rapid promotion as his potential was realised, serving in Taunton, Bridgwater and finally in 1972 as residential Station Officer F.P. in Weston-Super-Mare, a post in which he remained until his retirement.

After a number of years dealing with

licensing, Roger concentrated his efforts on general fire prevention in the Bedminster, South Bristol, area.

As his main interests are football and aircraft spotting, much time, it was alleged, was spent inspecting Bristol City Football ground and Bristol (Lulsgate) Airport. It is reported he knows every blade of grass at Ashton Gate and the complete flight schedule at Lulsgate.

To mark his retirement, a collection was made which funded a flight from Lulsgate over South Avon to Weston-Super-Mare. The light aircraft which took 'Biggles' Strickland on this memorable flight was piloted by the Brigade's newest flying ace, Deputy divisional Commander, 'C' Division, Roy Kennedy. After Roy found the starter and got aloft, the flight took in some circuits over C1 at 800 feet.

A video of the day was made a presented to Roger along with a framed photograph of him in his 'Biggles' flying gear.



# Harcombe Hospitality

As I had never been to Harcombe House before, my thoughts were a little mixed as I was taken there for a fortnight's convalescence. My driver, provided by the Benevolent Fund, did his best to assure me that I would enjoy my stay deep in the heart of Devonshire.

He was not wrong as my first sight of this large, stately-like house was one of delight. This first impression was heightened as I entered the bright reception area and was greeted by Philip and Rosemary. The large and wonderfully spacious lounge looked out from the many windowed front, over the peaceful but windswept fields and hills. It was over these that I saw the first snowflakes of winter fall. I was shown up a lovely wooden staircase, covered in red carpet, so reminiscent of richly lived days, to my bedroom. On entering the warmth from its radiator welcomed me and with an adjoining bath and

toilet I knew with certainty I would enjoy my stay.

Going down to my first meal any doubts were immediately dashed for it was of the highest quality. Three courses set in a lovely room by staff offering such pleasant service made each meal throughout the fortnight a delight. The friendship offered at the table by other Fire Service 'guests' made me look forward to each meal.

This friendship continued later in the bar which was decorated with many Fire Brigade mementoes and acknowledgments. It was here that I met and had a drink with Chris Deverill and his family, and pleasant that was.

During my first Sunday breakfast, I was asked if I would like to attend a church service at Chudleigh. This I wished for an transport to and from arranged for me. Not having a car and only able to walk with a stick, I was somewhat

confined to my room but anyway the rough winds outside kept me to the pleasures of this great house. I was fully compensated by the companionship of the other residents and concern by the staff for my welfare.

I did manage some walks in the grounds and visited the lovely bungalows built nearby for those catering for themselves. Returning to the main house I found it to be the place for relaxation and pleasant conversation, and from this I benefited, for I was feeling much better in myself and gaining strength towards good health.

When David Creech, my driver, drove me home, and my thanks to him, I returned feeling so much better and stronger from having visited Harcombe House.

**Gilbert Croker**  
**AFS NFS BFB 1940 - 1963**

NOVA Magazine is Published and Produced by

*Gateacre Press*

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# *Fire Services National Benevolent Fund*

HAVING just completed my first year as Brigade Treasurer, I am now beginning to settle down to a regular routine. I now realise just how much work is involved in keeping the County of Avon Fire Brigade Benevolent Fund ticking over, but without the knowledge and assistance of Chris Deverill, the Brigade Secretary, my job would have been considerably harder.

The Brigade again had a steady income during 1989 which is very encouraging, although that income was slightly down on the previous year. Our expenditure is up by around 33% overall when the expenditure is subtracted from the income. The donation to the National Fund from Avon was £7,196.67. As a matter of interest, the Avon Brigade has raised a total of £202,526.36 in the past ten years for the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund which over the period has been a considerable feat.

Our main source in previous years has been the various Carol Floats that have been in use in the Brigade, but over the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to persuade personnel to assist in collecting. Maybe the time has come to direct our fundraising efforts in a different direction. One particular idea in mind at present is 'Give As You Earn' whereby a donation from salaries can be made on a monthly basis. This idea is being investigated by The Brigade Council.

As you may or may not be aware, at the last A.G.M of the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund a new National Treasurer was elected, Mr Dennis Turner, who has been given the task of looking into how money in the Fund's name is raised, collected and paid out. Some changes will take place in the coming months to the methods that we use at present and Divisional Treasurers will be kept informed as the changes take place. It has been stressed by the National Treasurer that any money that has been donated or raised for the fund must only be paid into a Benevolent Fund account; it must never under any circumstances be paid into a personal bank account. If any occasion arises where money has been raised or donated and a Divisional Treasurer is not available please contact the Brigade Treasurer or Secretary for advice. If spontaneous donations are made following an incident and a Station Representative is not available, please give the donation to the Chief Fire

Officer's Secretary.

On behalf of the Brigade Council and myself, I would like to thank everyone for their efforts this year in connection with all fund-raising for the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

Ian Satherley - Brigade Treasurer

## **Station Donations For 1989**

	£	p
C3 Portishead	4,294.92	
A7 Yate	2,966.69	
C2 Clevedon	2,551.60	
B3 Paulton	1,738.95	
B1 Bath	1,723.81	
C4 Pill	1,355.46	
B2 Radstock	1,334.76	
C7 Blagdon	1,285.88	
C8 Winscombe	1,132.72	
C1 W.S.M.	1,118.36	
B5 Keynsham	1,046.72	
C10 Yatton	856.94	
HQ Reception	750.00	
B7 Kingswood	700.98	
'B' Division HQ	700.77	
Banwell	684.60	
B6 Speedwell	462.60	
A1 Temple	325.72	
C5 Bedminster	308.73	
'C' Division HQ	292.40	
'A' Division HQ	223.46	
C6 Chew Magna	222.24	
B4 Brislington	218.93	
A5 Patchway	188.46	
A2 Southmead	182.76	
C9 Nailsea	132.80	
A6 Thornbury	43.25	
Wrighton	24.80	
A3 Avonmouth	8.20	

# Princess Alexander opens Marine Court

"THE Chairman of The Fire Services National Benevolent Fund has great pleasure in inviting Mr & Mrs C.A.Deverill to the opening of the New Convalescent Rest Building at Marine Court, Littlehampton, by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra on Thursday 19th April 1990 at 4.pm" said the gilt edged card.

Once accepted, instructions on what to wear & how to address H.R.H soon followed. On first meeting H.R.H., a slight nod of the head from the men and a small curtsy from the ladies was sufficient, she was to be initially addressed as "Your Royal Highness, after which she was to be addressed as Mam (as rhymes with Jam the letter said!).

After a 3 hour journey through a thunderstorm, hailstones and a torrential downpour we reached Littlehampton in brilliant sunshine. Arriving at Marine Court we were met with a scene from "The Bill", with uniformed policemen everywhere, checking everything and everyone who entered Marine Court. There



were even a team from the bomb disposal unit searching the drains, half an hour earlier and we would have seen a team of sniffer dogs going through their paces!

Although we couldn't look inside the new building until H.R.H had left, 3 flats in the old complex were made available for anyone to change or freshen up and even with 2 hours to go before "lift off", a small crowd of local people had begun to gather outside the new building.

When Chris and I first saw

Marine Court, some 14 years ago, there was only the one block of 24 self catering flats and a small portacabin in the car park at the rear, which soon revealed itself as the "Nerve Centre" of the Benevolent Fund. The passing years, with the increasing workload, have meant a vast improvement to the equipment and the number of staff needed to administer the aims of our Fund to its present high standard... It's not for nothing that the now extended office is sometime referred to as

G.C.H.Q.

In those 14 years the accommodation at Marine Court has gone through a transformation to emerge a beautiful swan. With the purchase and conversion of nearby Munson House into accommodation for those who want convalescence with meals provided (at a small charge), followed by the acquisition of the house next door, known as 4, Maltravers Drive, offering self catering accommodation for larger families, the metamorphosis has now been completed

with the purchase of the large corner plot between Marine Court and 4, Maltravers Drive onto which has been built the Ronnie Greene Wing and the reason for the Royal visit.

The gathering of the various Benevolent Fund Representatives from all over the Country 20 minutes before H.R.H was due to arrive, gave Chris and myself the opportunity to renew some very old acquaintances from many years and I finally met the people belonging to the names on the Xmas cards we receive every year. Four o'clock on the dot there was a buzz in the crowd outside, indicating "she" had arrived. The Princess, accompanied by her lady in waiting, Lady Mary Mumford (the Duke of Norfolk's daughter) was greeted by a guard of honour from Littlehampton Fire Station and 2 pipers from the Tyne & Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Before entering the building she insisted on speaking, at some length and in pouring rain, to every member of the Honour Guard & several people in the waiting crowd. Major General Sir Philip

Ward, Vice Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, then introduced the Funds Chairman and the staff at Marine Court, who accompanied her on a tour of the building.

Whilst this was going on a team of smartly dressed caterers began force feeding us with gallons and gallons of tea, followed by an assortment of delicate sandwiches and scones with cream and jam.

We were just finishing our 3rd, or was it 6th, cup of tea when someone whispered "she's on her way in".. too late for a toilet run now! My first close encounter with Royalty was one of serene elegance in a deep violet suit, matching hat and grey accessories. Her opening remark, in a very 'deep cultured voice, was to hope she hadn't kept us waiting (she was running behind schedule as she had insisted on trying out one of the exercise bikes in the fitness room!) and had we all had a cup of tea.. you must be joking Mam (as rhymes with jam)!

She then asked to be introduced to everyone in the room, which totalled about

50, she spoke to all of us and had obviously been well briefed on the Fire Brigade before hand, judging from the questions and comments she made as she went around. At one stage it appeared she had managed to give her detective the slip (albiet only temporary) when she disappeared into the depths of a crowd, heading for the members of Sussex Fire Brigade Control, who were acting as guides and ushers for the afternoon and the 2 Pipers who had been playing on her arrival.

One very moving moment came when she was introduced to a former fireman who has been confined to a wheelchair following an accident when his appliance overturned on black ice. The sad part is it was a malicious call. The Fund has assisted the family in many ways since then, especially by purchasing a dormobile van adapted with hand controls, enabling them to all travel together once more. In return they have proved great ambassadors for our Fund over the years.

We couldn't help but notice how his youngest daughter didn't appear all that

impressed at having just met a Royal Princess, in fact she was quite miserable about the whole thing. This was soon explained by mum who said she didn't believe H.R.H was a real Princess because she wasn't wearing a crown. I suppose in the eyes of a 7 year old a real princess would never been seen without her ballgown, crown and gold coach.

Only when H.R.H was completely satisfied that she had spoken to everyone in the room did she make her way over the unveil a plaque, covered by a deep blue velvet curtain and officially declare the new block open. Victoria O'Connel, whose dad is a Littlehampton fireman, then presented her with a small bouquet of flowers and was rewarded by H.R.H asking to meet her mother.

After a few more words with different people she said her goodbyes and prepared to take her leave, not, however, before she had one last attempt at giving her detective the slip. Two of the ladies who clean the flats on change over days had offered to "man" the cloakrooms, on her way out

the Princess noticed them, asked if she had met them (which she hadn't) and made a dash towards two very surprised ladies to rectify the matter. We then had the situation where her detective, convinced she was heading for the royal Daimler, was outside by the car, whilst she was inside heading down a corridor in the opposite direction.

About 20 of us stayed overnight and were the first to officially use the new flats. In the morning we became "Marine Court Guinea Pigs" when we were met by the manager, Mrs Green, complete with notebook, asking us for any suggestions or improvements we could think of, or any faults we had noticed that the builders should be made aware of when they came back to rectify a few problems that had arisen.

It would take another article to describe the facilities and decor of the new complex, suffice to say that whilst no expense has been spared, some very good deals have been "agreed" with top

designers like Laura Ashley for furniture and Coloroll for carpets. The cost of the building and its furnishings was £1,140,000.00 and has been met entirely by the fund raising efforts of Fire Service personnel and retired members, without any grants from outside trusts or authorities. For those who question the cost to the Benevolent Fund of the Official Opening, the answer is that ALL expenses were financed by sponsorship from friends and businesses, sympathetic to the aims of our Fund, from in and around Littlehampton.

The Benevolent Fund now own and manage two short term convalescent centres, one at Marine Court, the other at Harcombe House, near Chudleigh, Exeter and both have facilities for those with a physical handicap. Both centres are open to bookings from serving and retired members of the United Kingdom Fire Services. Bookings may be made for 1 or 2 weeks stays and can only be made through their brigade

benevolent fund secretary, via their Station Representative and providing their Dr. recommends convalescence rest after illness or injury, for themselves or their spouse. In addition, some members who are supported with grants by the Fund may also apply. These include disabled or permanently sick ex Fire Service personnel, widows with orphans and serving firemen with disabled children. Widows and Pensioners may also book when space is available in quiet periods.

None of these facilities or the payment of these Grants would be possible without the efforts of all the Firefighters, former members and their friends who raise money for the fund. We rely heavily on these dedicated band of voluntary workers to meet the costs of grants and convalescent rest facilities, which in 1989 totalled approximately £1,240,000. The dangers faced by Fire Brigade Personnel were cruelly illustrated when, in 1987, seven firemen were

killed in action in six different incidents ranging from an explosion in a quarry to the Kings Cross tragedy. Its a comfort to all those serving in the Fire Service that, should a disaster happen, there is a caring Charity ready to assist them, their widows and their dependants, run by fellow members of their profession. For those of us who may need the care of the Benevolent Fund in the future, there's the knowledge that it stands ready to help in times of need. On the other hand can those of us who may never need the care of the Benevolent Fund remain content in the knowledge that some one else will always be prepared to raise the funds necessary to offer them that care in times of need.

Thank you for all your wonderful support

**Penny Deverill, Secretary,  
"A" Division Council,  
Fire Services National  
Benevolent**

# Temple's Past

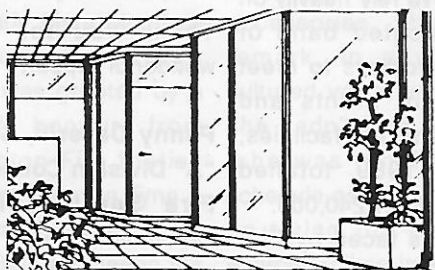
FOR those of us who work at Headquarters and look out of our windows trying to decide whether to jump or not, I wonder if any thoughts have passed through our minds of the history in the plot of land that is covered by the Headquarters building. Today the district is known as Temple Parish or just Temple. Earlier references to it as Temple Fee derive from "Fief" meaning a feudal benefice. The Temple district, originally a separate community outside the main town of Bristol, was named after the Knights Templar. Founded in 1118 AD during the Crusades as an Order of Soldier Monks to guard pilgrims en route to Jerusalem, the Order had their own fleet of ships, treasuries, castles and fortified estates. It is believed that

they established their community on the bank of the Avon in 1145 when land was granted to them by the Earl of Gloucester. The land extended from a track that became Temple Street to the bank of the Avon adjacent to Temple Back and upon it they built a characteristic circular church and possibly a hospice and living quarters. A dock existed until the seventeenth century at the end of Water Lane and was most likely used to export wool. The Templars were in continual conflict with the Burgesses of Bristol because of their right and ability to exercise jurisdiction over the inhabitants of Temple Fee and also their privileged position of being allowed to export wool. The Burgesses of Bristol repeatedly petitioned the King to force

the tenants of the Master and Brethren to contribute to the King's tolls in common with other townspeople. This situation continued until the suppression of the Order by Pope Clement V and in this country by Edward II in 1312. The confiscated land was then granted to the Order of the Knights of St John, the Knights Hospitallers who, to a lesser extent, behaved in much the same way as their predecessors. The Burgesses did not gain control of Temple until after the dissolution of the monasteries.

The struggle for local government finance seems to be never ending.

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