

NOVA

Avon Fire Brigade Journal



Summer 1992

NOVA

Avon Fire Brigade

Editorial

IN my present role as the Brigade's Press, Public Relations and Welfare Officer I come into contact with a great variety of people within our own organisation and those outside. The reasons for this contact are equally as varied, but will in the main be well understood by members of the Brigade, for instance the close working relationship I have with the media and why.

The Welfare side of my job, however, is not so well understood or recognised and I suppose that this is an inevitable fact of life because you cannot really appreciate what a job involves until you actually do it yourself.

I now realise that until I undertook the Welfare Officer role I had only a basic understanding of the tremendous workload undertaken, and the dedication and commitment of all our Benevolent Fund Representatives at Divisional and Brigade Council level and also the ground work carried out by Station and Department Representatives.

This benevolence does not come only from serving Wholtime and Retained Members of the Brigade, there are a number of retired members who contribute tremendously to the fund in their own inimitable way whose experience and encouragement is invaluable.

What makes the results of the fund even more rewarding, I feel, is the fact that apart from a handful of dedicated full time officials at head office everyone else working on the fund's behalf and contributing to its success, does so on an entirely voluntary basis. This, I am sure you will agree, is what makes the Benevolent Fund so special and we are all very lucky to have such a caring group of people working tirelessly to help and assist past and present members of the Brigade and their families through difficult times. Please give them your continued support.

FUTURE OF NOVA

I have recently been in contact with the publishers of 'Nova' regarding the frequency of issue of the magazine and have secured a four monthly issue for 1993. There will be one more publication this year, probably in November/December. — CHRIS PALMER, Editor.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Busy scenes of fire crews loading equipment on board the train at Pilning Railway Station before entering the Severn Tunnel to deal with the rail crash on Saturday, 7th December, 1992.

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.

Foreword

OCTOBER 1st, 1985 will stand out in my memory as a watershed in the working environment of the Firefighting personnel at Bristol Airport at Lulsgate. Ever since the fifties, when the decision to move from Whitchurch was implemented, the Fire Station had several homes within the Airport's boundaries. These working locations were adequate for their purpose at the time but they became outdated and therefore the decision was made to give us a brand new home. Imagine our thoughts at being installed at last in a purpose-built Fire Station. The immediate effect was to instil in us an immense feeling of pride, not always hitherto felt.

The Station's completion was, in fact, the culmination of a period of important changes which saw us begin to acquire the modern type of airport fire tenders necessary if we were to continue to function as an effective firefighting unit. Allied to this a new C.F.O., Rodger Thomas was appointed and a subtle yet determined effort to improve our professionalism began.

The C.F.O. and myself sought closer links with the County of Avon Fire Brigade. This closer liaison was achieved and steadily enhanced over the ensuing years. We were invited to visit the Brigade Training School at Temple Back to give lectures to successive recruits courses on general aircraft firefighting tactics and techniques. These same recruits then came up to the Airport's 'fireground', to engage in some practical firefighting under the watchful eye of their instructors to see if they had been listening to the lectures!

For those of you not conversant with our 'fireground', its facilities include an old Varsity aircraft which is used as a 'crashed aircraft'. There are several firefighting 'rigs' including a fire screen, fuel bowser, undercarriage assembly and aircraft engine. In addition to the foregoing, we have another Varsity aircraft which has been converted into a realistic facility for breathing apparatus training. Brigade personnel have already used this 'BA' Varsity and found it to be a good training aid, something out of the ordinary.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the production of 'Nova' for the extremely professional, informative and entertaining way it is presented. Well done!

Finally, to all Brigade members, you know where we are, drop in and see us some time.

DIVISIONAL OFFICER BARRY RIDGE, BRISTOL AIRPORT.

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From the Chief Officer

TO say that we live in the midst of change has never been truer than at present. We have never been over-endowed with resources, but their current scarcity is tending to make the past seem like the years of plenty. Things are not likely to improve in the foreseeable future, indeed the financial outlook for 1993/4 is likely to be much bleaker than anything we have known so far.

The exercise to re-structure the Brigade is moving ahead. Its objective are to provide and maintain the most efficient and effective levels of service delivery to the public. We can best do this by maintaining and improving the level of our most valuable resource — people.

We will find that many changes need to take place over the next year, many of the systems and methods which we presently use will disappear or be drastically altered. Our own perceptions of our individual responsibilities may need to change radically. Each one of us must recognise the overwhelming importance of our Brigade continuing to provide the highest possible level of service to the people of our community.

I am especially conscious, even in these times of severe constraint, that we are still managing to edge forward. These improvements stem from every level in the Brigade, both uniformed and non-uniformed, and they are a constant reminder of the enthusiasm, expertise and thoughtfulness of a host of people within the organisation.

The path of Local Government Reorganisation still remains unclear. There is however a strong signal coming through to suggest that, whilst we might in the future operate under a different name and with a different cap badge, it is unlikely that there will be any significant change in the overall shape of this Brigade.

We have a great deal to be proud of, not only in what the Brigade achieves, but in the high level of support which we receive from so many other sources.

I am confident that whatever the future holds for us, your continuing efforts will carry us through.— **PAT ARIS.**

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SPORTS SECTION

Volleyball

A VOLLEYBALL Match was arranged between B6 Green and the T.A. Gunners of 266 Battery based at Whiteladies Road T.A. Centre, Bristol. This was held on the evening of 10th March 1992, in the Drill Hall at Whiteladies Road.

The B6 team found it strange playing on an indoor court, resulting in the Gunners taking an early lead. However, not to be outdone, the lads from B6 Green rolled up their sleeves and fought back, to win the first game. The next two games went our way as well but only because of a battling performance by us against the gritty Bristol Gunners. Gary Reilly was in superb form on the net, with some unstoppable 'spikes', following good sets by his team mates. Even Gary Spindler (all 4ft. 2ins. of him!) was flying high on the net and scoring some vital points. Trevor Tate's devastating serving and Ian Cook's overall fine display, kept our noses in front.

After the serious stuff, we mixed the teams and had a knock-out, which produced a few good laughs. This over, we retired to the Gunners' Arms for a well earned pint.

We would like to thank Sergeant Mike Dring for organising the event and for the hospitality of 266 Battery in providing the buffet and for being perfect hosts. A return match is on the cards for the not too distant future.



From left to right: Back row: Dave Harris, Gary Reilly, John Hurford, Andy Hall, Steve Cook. Front row: Gary Spindler, 'Alfie' Hynds, Ian Cook, Trevor Tate.

COUNTY OF AVON FIRE BRIGADE SKITTLES TEAM SEASON 1990/91 PRESENTATION

ON Friday, 6th March, 1992 the team members made their way separately to Bournemouth for the weekend team presentation at The Chequers Hotel, Durley Chine — a very nice spot! The evening meal on Friday was exceptional, although Josey and I were late because of work, we arrived in the car park of the Hotel to be ushered in by Paul Drake (who had left the dining room doors open). The Saturday was very eventful, given the fact that England were playing France at Rugby and Lyn Lloyd (C5) still hadn't won a game of pool.

The presentation that evening saw George Jenkins (ex-A1) receive the Club Person of the Year Award and Perpetual Trophy — well deserved too, together with the trophy for the highest average score. The highest individual score trophy was presented to Bill Lewis (ex-A2) who was almost caught by Mac Aston (ex-Training Department) and Pete Dobson (A7).

Dave Coles didn't receive a trophy this year, which is just as well after swimming, ten pin bowling and eating everyone's Sweet that evening.

Denise Aston (Mac's daughter) was awarded the trophy for the Most Ducks with Pete Dobson narrowly escaping this privilege. Our newest recruit, Don Darling, witnessed the events with relish, his scores should put him in the frame next year and, as an Avon Councillor, may even be Chairman!

John Marshall (A7) is the newly appointed Team Secretary and is helping me to run events, which is greatly appreciated since moving out of town to Temple Cloud.

We played 26 matches last year and scored only 26 points, achieving 7th place in the League. As for this year we have finished up League Champions for the second time in our history. — **KNOCKER WHITE**

1991 Annual Brigade Skittles Knockout



The victorious A3 (Green) team.

THE competition finally commenced at The Beehive in early November with 16 teams to play off the first round, thus playing eight other teams drawn with a bye to the second round.

Surprisingly, first round casualties included C1 Red, A3 Blue, B6 Green, A3 White Watch Ladies and Brigade Control.

The second round saw the defeat of the Training Department, the Staff Office 'S' Division, A3 White (Men), C3 Red, B7 Kingswood, B1 Red, A5 Blue and B6 White (home of the organisers of the competition).

The quarter final consisted of B6

Blue v. A1 Green, 'F' Div Bristol v. A5 Green and A3 Green v. The Pensioners. A2 Red unfortunately could not play and A1 White claimed a walk over.

Finally, the final was a noisy affair between A1 White and A3 Green, but Adrian Lemm was proud of A3's Captain — Steve Harding — for winning the shield again.

The presentation took place at B6 Speedwell, a cheque for £300 was presented to the Frenchay Burns Unit, a very worthy cause. Station Officer Mike Gribble was presented with the 'Ann and Doug Church Trophy' for the highest individual score of 53 for the competition.

My thanks to Geoff Strachan and Mike O'Leary, the dynamic duo from White Watch, B6 who steered the competition to its conclusion.

Also thank you to Franco, the Landlord of The Beehive for sponsoring the second prize and for the use of his alley, together with Mr. Wills of Courages for the donation of the barrel of beer to the winners at A3.

Last but not least — thanks to all teams who competed.

KNOCKER WHITE.

Land's End — John O'Groats

IN May 1986 along with my brother, I undertook a charity cycle ride in aid of the Birmingham Burns and Scalds Unit. We completed the ride in ten days, enjoying good weather and raising £1,300,000.

On reaching John O'Groats we signed the visitors' book, both quoting that it was a great challenge but we would not attempt it ever again! We were both reasonably fit, myself being employed at a Sports Development Officer for Solihull Education Department.

In August 1990 my wife and I moved to Winscombe, Avon, and I became self employed opening an Arts and Crafts shop in the village.

In March 1992 I joined the Avon Fire Brigade as a Retained Firefighter, having undergone and successfully completed two weeks of intensive training.

In January 1992, during a night out with pals from the Midlands, after a few beers and a good laugh I was dared to do the cycle ride again. In a moment of madness I accepted, so preparations commenced for my second charity cycle ride.

I chose the Weston Hospiccare who care for the terminally ill with cancer as the charity to donate all sponsorship monies collected and who I believe to be a most worthy organisation.

My best mate who is a Firefighter in Birmingham and my brother-in-law said they would attempt the journey with me, but both had to back down due to unforeseen circumstances, so, on the 15th April this year, sponsored by Abbey National Homes and having a 21 gear mountain bike kindly supplied by Halfords of Weston and with the full backing and support of Avon Fire Brigade and the lads at C8 Winscombe, I began my journey.



The photograph shows Mark on his mountain bike just prior to setting off on his venture. Well done, Mark!

Weather conditions were grim throughout, to the extent of snow and sleet from Land's End to Okehampton, a Force 8 gale, and undergoing such a journey alone with no one to take the lead at times, led to such boredom I often counted the times the pedals went round to keep the mind occupied.

I pulled a tendon en route to Worcester and had to take a day out, but sheer determination more than anything else forced me to persevere.

I arrived at John O'Groats on the 24th April, the journey having taken nine days, again to sign the visitors' book but this time, vowing dare or no dare, I will not undertake the journey again!

I have raised £816.00 for the charity and thank all who sponsored me for their support.

**FIREFIGHTER MARK TROMANS,
STATION C8, WINSCOMBE.**

Fitness 'Control'

ONE evening, whilst relaxing in Al's Bar, the conversation came around to the question of fitness or rather the lack of it! This left me pondering over what could be done to improve my own fitness and perhaps other members of the Brigade would like to join me.

At last I came up with the idea of starting an aerobic class and set about gauging the level of response to such a venture around the Brigade.

I then asked DCO Walters if this idea would receive the necessary approval and he said **YES!**

The next task was to find a qualified areobics teacher and this is where Gordon Jennings came to the rescue, as a friend of his was an aerobics teacher. So, with a teacher, a venue and people interested, we started our work-outs on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 8 p.m. in Al's gym. Not many people joined in during the first few weeks but the ones who did kept coming back for more.

After Christmas more posters were circulated which seemed to do the trick as the support increased. I don't really know if it was the posters or the fact that everyone had far too much to eat over the festive period!



The happy crowd having a well-earned rest for the photo call.

Not many people are fully fit when they join us but after a few weeks they notice their fitness improve. Dick Green, for instance, couldn't lift his arm over his head when he first came, but you should see him now! Getting fitter every week!

Lots of people seem to lack co-ordination so you sometimes get the odd collision or two. Mumbling is also often heard as everyone tries to

remember the step routine.

We have a wide age range from 14 to 55 so age is no excuse or a barrier.

All new members are very welcome, just come along equipped with a mat or towel (please wear trainers) and a £1.50 subscription. Every Wednesday 7.00 to 8.00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there.

LOUISE BLACKWELL,
Brigade Control, Green Watch.

TV or Not TV — That is the Question

HOW many times have you mislaid the TV or Video remote control unit? Many times I suspect, and where do you usually find it? — in the waste basket, under a chair or coffee table or behind the settee? **NO!** these units inevitably find their way between the cushions of your three-piece suite. Any problems? — read on.

Nottinghamshire Fire Brigade have attributed at least two recent fires within their Brigade to TV or video remote control units overheating when accidentally jammed down the sides of upholstered furniture.

The problem occurs when several buttons are held in simultaneously and a crude experiment carried out by their Fire Prevention Department has shown that the temperature of these units can rise rapidly under these circumstances.

All that was left of the units discovered in each of the two recent fires were two rectangular metal plates.

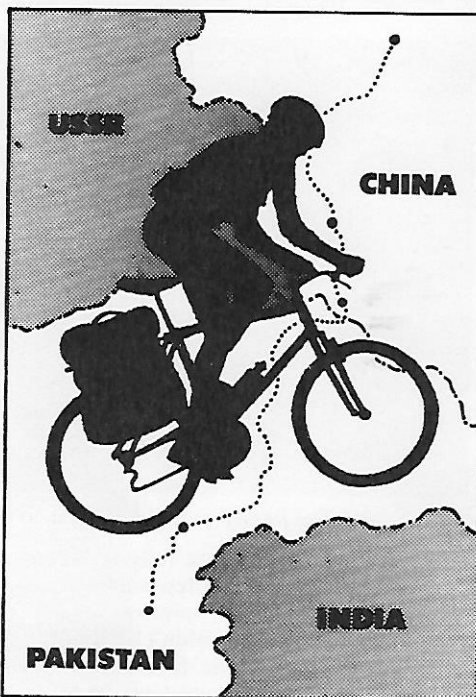
Electronics engineers have said that they feel insufficient temperatures are reached to cause any problems, however further tests are being carried out. Certainly food for thought! — ANON.

Pakistan to China by Mountain Bike

ON June 1st two Firefighters from White Watch, B1, Pete Marsh and Nick Baldwin, along with Graham Chattoe, a Glastonbury Policeman and Jonathan Mearns, an art dealer, from the Cotswolds, embarked on a mammoth mountain bike trek along the Kakakoram Highway.

This expedition was the idea of Jonathan Mearns, who in 1990 cycled with a team from Warsaw via Paris to London on behalf of Marie Curie Cancer Care.

This time Jonathan, Peter, Nick and Graham, hope to cover approximately 800 miles, reaching a height of 15,500 feet. They will be leaving from Islamabad in East Pakistan over the Karakoram Highway to the Khunjerab Pass, where they will enter China. At this point they will be escorted to



Kashgar by a member of the People's Republic of China.

Through this trip the team wish to raise funds for Marie Curie by sponsorship and also by helping to raise the profile. They intend to bring back a video of the expedition which, it is hoped, will be made into a professional video in conjunction with the work of the charity.

The Patron of the expedition is Mr. Sandy Gall, the well-known News Presenter, who is also an honorary member of Pakistan.

All equipment for this expedition has been sponsored by the 'Cycling +' magazine.

It will be interesting to hear of their experiences when they return and there is no truth in the rumour that Pete Marsh was invited purely to frighten the bandits away!.

Visit of Mayor and Mayoress of Kingswood

KINGSWOOD Firefighters were pleased to welcome the Mayor of Kingswood, Councillor Mr. L. W. Bishop and the Mayoress, Councillor Mrs. Brenda Bishop to the Fire Station on the morning of Wednesday, 22nd April.

They were met by Divisional Commander Ernie Perrott and the Officer-in-Charge of the Station, Assistant Divisional Officer Colin Morris.

Once introductions had been made an informal discussion took place around the mess table and then the visitors were shown around the station, the Fire appliances and the equipment carried. Firefighters from Brislington then arrived with the Chemical Incident Unit and the decontamination equipment was set up and demonstrated.

The Mayor and Mayoress stayed for approximately two hours and thoroughly enjoyed their visit which they found of great interest.



The Mayor and Mayoress with member of Blue Watch, B7.

Royal Humane Society Awards

ON Wednesday, 13th November, 1991 Sub. Officer Dave Miller of Station C1 Weston-Super-Mare, Green Watch, and Sergeant Nigel Maddocks of the Avon & Somerset Police were awarded Royal Humane Society Awards for their part in the rooftop rescue of a man intent on taking his own life.

The incident happened on Wednesday, 10th April 1991 and Sub Officer Miller and Sergeant Maddocks sprang into action after being called to a house in Severn Road, Weston-Super-Mare, where a 50-year-old man had shinned up a drainpipe onto the roof and was threatening to leap off.

Sergeant Maddocks was the first on the scene and tried to calm him down

and when Sub Officer Miller and his crew arrived, the two men used an extension ladder to get to the edge of the three storey house.

For the next two hours they patiently tried to persuade the man, who was becoming increasingly distressed and irate, to come down. At one stage the man ripped a roof tile off and threatened the two men with it.

Sub Officer Miller then requested the attendance of a turntable ladder and both officers climbed into the cage and were raised to the roof. They then left the cage, getting onto the roof and crawled towards the man. He suddenly turned to run towards the edge of the roof, threatening to jump. Sub Officer

Miller threw himself forward and up the roof incline to grab the man by the ankles and pin him to the roof. The two officers then hauled the man back to the ladder and safely to the ground.

The man underwent psychiatric treatment after the drama and later wrote to thank both men for saving his life. In his letter praising the pair for their actions, he said:— "I express sincere apologies and greatest respect for their patience, tact and understanding, which averted me committing suicide".

The High Sheriff of Avon, Mr. Andrew Reid, presented the awards at the new Police Headquarters at Portishead.



The photograph shows Sub Officer Miller along with the High Sheriff and Assistant Chief Officer Southard.

Green Watch, Bath, had a very busy time over the Christmas period last year and displayed their talents on two occasions. The first was at the Cannon Cinema in Westgate Street, Bath, and the second at the Children's Christmas Party and Pantomime held on the Station.

They raised many a smile and brought happiness to a great many people, young and old. Well done lads, (I always knew you liked dressing up).

Wakey Wakey, Father Christmas!

A SENTIMENTAL, festive, tale of Shakespearean proportions performed by members of Green Watch, B1.

After three years in the theatrical wilderness, the Green Watch Players resurrected their thespian reputations in taking to the stage to perform the above named panto. Led as always by their figurehead, Ed Capp, who played a masterful Genie, everyone threw themselves into their roles.

Some said that the casting director had got it wrong in giving the lead part, that of an incompetent, overweight and very ugly Fairy, to Lou Smith, but remarkably he took to it like a duck to water. Not to be outdone, Jenkyn Knill summoned up all his skills of stage and screen to portray the clumsy, ugly bumbling Pantomime Dame, a role with which he is entirely unfamiliar. The chemistry within their interplay was there for all to see and held the audience spellbound.

Meanwhile, throughout, the other panto characters made regular appearances. 'Simple Simon' — 'ADO' Samson. The demure and beautiful 'Cinderella' Creton, in lemon ballgown. The fetching Terry 'Snow White' Love and finally, Jim 'Aladdin' Knight, whose Mum made his costume!

Among the 'baddies' helping the dastardly Demon King were the excellently played Wood Guardian — 'Jack' Russell; Ali Sneezalot — Andy Henderson and Clockmaker — Tim Robinson.



Lewis 'Fairy' Smith and Jenkyn 'Dame Trot' Knill.

Lou Smith to the Rescue

LEADING Firefighter Lou Smith answered an S.O.S. call from the Beau Nash cinema in agreeing to 'perform' in front of 300 pensioners as a prelude to the showing of *'Helly Dolly'*.

Having sung one or two solos, he then summoned the assistance of fellow Green Watch members who provided a backing group to his and Firefighter Dave Samson's 'Old Time' sing-a-long.

This half-hour 'warm-up' was very well received by the audience and the management of the Beau Nash were very grateful. Lou had to fight off the hordes of admirers as he left by the stage door. Further engagements beckon.

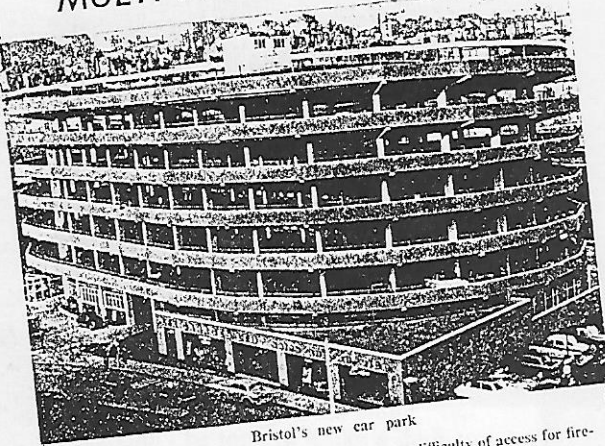
The two photographs show the Green Watch Sing-a-long team during the performance and outside the cinema after the event.



DOWN MEM

Free the fireman from prevention duty—call

NINE PEOPLE RESCUED FROM MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK



Bristol's new car park

A MULTI-STOREY car park was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Bristol, and, in accordance with normal procedure, an inspection under Section 1(1) (d) of the Fire Services Act, 1947, was carried out, three days afterwards.

"The value of these inspections was amply demonstrated when a call was received the same afternoon to release nine persons trapped in one of the lifts," says CTO K. L. Holland, AMIFireE, in a report to Fire.

Six storeys

The building, rising to about 70 feet and with an overall dimension of about 200ft x 129ft and with a total parking capacity of 540 cars, is in the form of a continuous ramp six storeys in height on an oval shape plan.

The structure, which is of open design, is of reinforced concrete and the ramp, 56ft in width, is supported on columns, beams and pre-cast piles. At the centre there are two lifts with two enclosed staircases, by means of which members of the public parking their cars travel to and from the ground floor.

Adequate means of escape are provided by the two staircases and, being of open-sided construction,

there is no difficulty of access for fire-fighting purposes.

Being exposed to weather conditions and bearing in mind the form of construction, it was not considered necessary to recommend either a rising main or hose reels. A liberal number of foam extinguishers has, however, been installed.

The plan was designed on the assumption that a roadway with parking at right angles provides the most efficient economical layout. As mentioned, the overall width between balustrades is 56ft, and this permits a central roadway of 24ft with a parking space of 16ft on each side.

Lift well

The whole ramp has been tilted towards an inner well so that drainage can be provided with downpipes fitted to the walls of the lift well; and this arrangement has resulted in a camber at the circular ends in the correct direction.

Motorists can drive to the top-deck, park their cars and return by lift to street level in under five minutes. The ground floor provides accommodation for a petrol filling station, workshops and a car showroom, under-floor heating being installed.



At the Clevedon Fire Service Dinner held at the Fire Station on Saturday, Mr. George Bees (Chairman of Clevedon U.D.C.), Station Officer F. B. Nash and Divisional Officer D. A. Harris inspect the menu.

Picture by John Harvey, Clevedon and Donhead.

Bristol Fire Brigade Committee are to be asked to employ clerks on fire stations and to train firemen for fire prevention duties.

The Fire Brigades are alerting local authorities throughout the country to the fact that firemen are more usefully employed helping to prevent, as well as extinguish, fires.

Bristol's Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Kenneth Holland, says that firemen do not visit fire stations in the city.

On fire prevention it was proposed to house - to - house firemen throughout the city.

Firemen with their families would visit households agreed purposes to place prevention.

Fire losses in 1950 were the highest ever. They amounted to £65 million, or £125 million - almost treble the figure of 1949. Annual fire losses were now regular at 600.

DOWN MEMORY LANE CAPTIONS

1. Nine people rescued — 'FIRE' Magazine — March 1961.
2. Clanging firebell to go — 'Clevedon Mercury' — November 1964.
3. Clevedon Fire Service Dinner — 'Clevedon Mercury' — January 1965.
4. Barn fire — 'Bristol Evening Post' — August 1965.
5. Free the Fireman — 'Bristol Evening Post' — February 1964.
6. Spectator saw smoke — 'Bristol Evening Post' — February 1966.

MEMORY LANE

n for
-call

Bristol Fire Brigade Committee are to be asked to employ cleaners on fire stations and free trained firemen for more fire prevention duties.

The Fire Brigades' Union is alerting local authorities throughout the country to the fact that firemen could be more usefully employed in helping to prevent, as well as extinguish, fires.

Bristol's Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Kenneth Holland, said today that firemen do clean fire stations in the city.

On fire prevention, he said it was proposed to arrange a house-to-house campaign throughout the city.

Firemen with their appliances could visit householders at agreed times to discuss fire prevention.

Fire losses in 1963 were the highest ever. They exceeded £5 million—or £125 a minute—almost treble the figure of 10 years ago. Annual deaths in fires were now regularly about 100.

er 1964.

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y 1966.

SPECTATOR PREVENTS BLAZE

Saw smoke in garage

Someone working in an office saw smoke coming from beneath a garage door across the road.

They called the fire brigade, and saved a car from being badly damaged.

It happened at Midsomer Norton on Saturday afternoon.

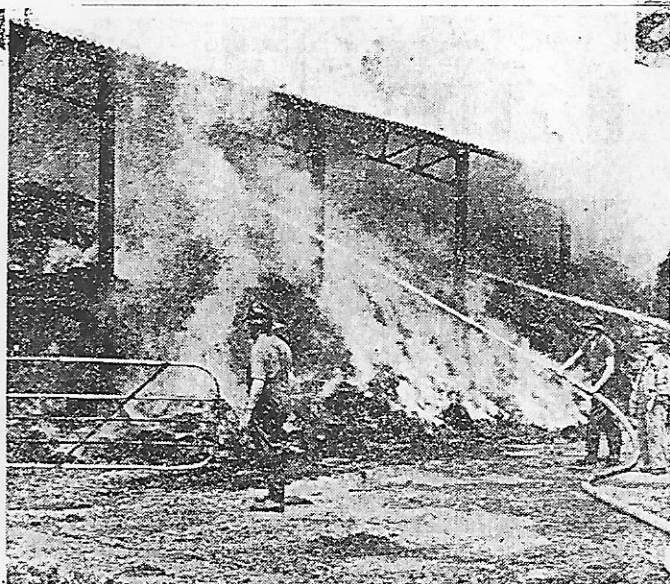
Electrical fault

When firemen from Radstock arrived at the garage, one of a number in Station Road, they found an electrical fault had set fire to the car.

But they extinguished the outbreak before much damage was done.

Firemen from Paulton also attended.

The car belonged to Mr. H. R. Jones, of 27, Rock Road, Midsomer Norton.



Firemen fighting the blaze at Camerton Farm, Radstock, where tons of hay and straw were destroyed.

BARN FIRE DOES £5,000 DAMAGE

Farmer Bill Wells yesterday led his men into a blazing barn to rescue valuable machinery.

Mr. Wells, aged 39, tried to douse the burning hay with a foam extinguisher as asbestos roofing exploded in the heat and sprayed around him like shrapnel.

A tractor, grain and a forage harvester were rescued from the flames but

the fire at Camerton Farm, Camerton, Somerset, caused over £5,000 worth of damage.

The 360-acre farm is owned by Mr. Bill Wells and his father Frank.

They have lost over 200 tons of hay and their six-bay dutch barn is badly damaged.

Firemen watched the charred pile of hay all night to see that the blaze did not break out again.

The fire was spotted by

Bill's seven-year-old son Graham.

Appliances from Radstock, Paulton and Frome were called.

Neighbouring farmers brought their tractors to help move the smouldering hay.

Last night Mr. Bill Wells said: "It's terrible to see so much work go up in smoke. All our hay has gone."

The cause of the fire is not known.

Clanging firebell to go

THE clang of the fire bell, which youngsters—and many adults—find so stirring, may soon be a thing of the past.

Somerset's Chief Fire Officer, Mr. A. L. Bullion, says the bell has become out-dated by modern transport conditions, insofar as it cannot be heard by drivers in closed cabs of diesel lorries, by car drivers with closed windows and with radios playing, or against the general noise level of modern traffic.

Two-tone horns will replace the bell as soon as possible, Mr. Bullion states.

These new two-tone horns have already been fitted to one fire appliance at Weston and to another at the Blagdon station.

"I am hopeful that this type of device will give ample warning of the approach of fire appliances, and thus give road users more opportunity of assisting the free passage of fire appliances to fires," the Chief Officer adds.

WAKEY WAKEY, FATHER CHRISTMAS — Continued.

As usual, Good eventually triumphed over Evil, and Santa — Phil Turner — was left to bring the curtain down with a musical finale.

All in all well over 100 people watched the show and approximately 70 children were treated to a Christmas tea which followed shortly after and was superbly organised by Mike Dwyer. Father Christmas finally arrived by means of the TL at around 1630 and everyone then went home happy.

Green Watch would like to thank the on duty Red Watch for all their assistance in making the afternoon so successful and also to thank again all the local businesses who sponsored the raffle. Biggest thanks however go to Jane Bengy who gave up a great deal of her own time to rehearse and perform the music.

GREEN WATCH.



Left to right: Cinderella Creton, Snow White Love, Aladdin Knight and Simple Simon.

RETIREMENTS, ILL-HEALTH AND INJURY DISCHARGES

SINCE our last issue of 'Nova' eight of our colleagues have left the Brigade through retirement, ill health or service related injury discharge as follows:

L/Ff. M. Rogers, ADO P. Causon, Ff. J. Highams, Ff. C. Brooks, Ff. D. Lewis, L/Ff. P. Spindler, Ff. D. Wicks and Ff. D. Summers.

The following Workshop personnel have also left the Brigade through early retirement/voluntary redundancy:

Mr. P. Perryman, Mr. J. Commons ('B' Division) and Mr. C. Elson ('C' Division).

I am sure you would like to join me in wishing all our former colleagues all the very best for the future.

CHRIS PALMER.

'Play it Safe'

JANUARY '92 saw the launch of a Major National Campaign to promote the Safety of Children at home, on the roads and at play. It is running over the next two years and was fronted on television by Anneka Rice.

The 'Play it Safe' campaign has so far been very well received which has been reflected in the television programmes screened from January to March on Sunday evenings where viewing figures have exceeded nine million. These were the best statistics recorded by the Department of Education at the BBC for seven years. These high figures were achieved because of the hard work and commitment at local level.

The aims and objectives of the Campaign were drawn up by the Child Accident Prevention Trust in collaboration with the BBC Education Department and other major safety organisations in which Officers from Avon Fire Brigade took



part. The intention is to reduce the incidence and severity of accidents and injuries to **Children** (0-16 years) through the education of parents and other carers. One of the main aims is to encourage and support local safety initiatives.

A County wide action group has been set up in Avon to promote and co-ordinate local activities with representatives from all the Local Authorities and Health Authorities within the area. Avon Fire Brigade has pledged its commitment to support the campaign and is very pleased with the positive response shown so far.

There have been various forms of media coverage to date and the Brigade's Fire Safety Exhibition Unit and Welephant have been travelling around the County spreading the 'Fire Safety' message to children's groups at such venues as Yate Fire Station, the Broad Walk Shopping Centre, Asda Superstores at Cribbs Causeway and Bedminster and the Hartcliffe Health Centre. On Saturday 21st March the Avon Fire Brigade team comprising of John Sleight, Dave Hayward and Keith Cuss, were invited to man the 'Play it Safe' stand at the Ideal Homes Exhibition in London and on this occasion Welephant was joined by 'Fireman Sam'. The team were kept busy all day and the level of interest shown by members of the public was very encouraging.

The activities held so far have all been very well attended and successful largely due to the enthusiastic co-operation of Station personnel who have supported each of the activities in their area. Fire Station personnel will be utilised to the full in varying supporting active roles throughout the remainder of the campaign.

John Sleight



The pictures show the youngsters getting the message 'Play it Safe' from Welephant at the Broad Walk Shopping Centre on Monday, 17th February, 1992.

Fire Services National Benevolent Fund

From the Brigade Treasurer

1991 saw an increase in our overall expenditure of some £11,384.48 which reflects the greater amount of assistance given not only to those members in need in the County but also those in need visiting the County.

An example of the kind of assistance given to someone outside the County is as follows:—

During the early part of last year a firefighter from Cheshire was staying near Bath visiting his brother. Unfortunately the firefighter was taken ill and had to be admitted to the Royal United Hospital in Bath. His wife was

informed and she travelled down from Liverpool to see him. Sadly, he passed away in hospital and I received a call from the Secretary of the Cheshire Fire Brigade who asked if we could assist with a hardship grant, which of course we did.

The income remained the same with a very slight increase of 16p. which does not keep us in line with inflation.

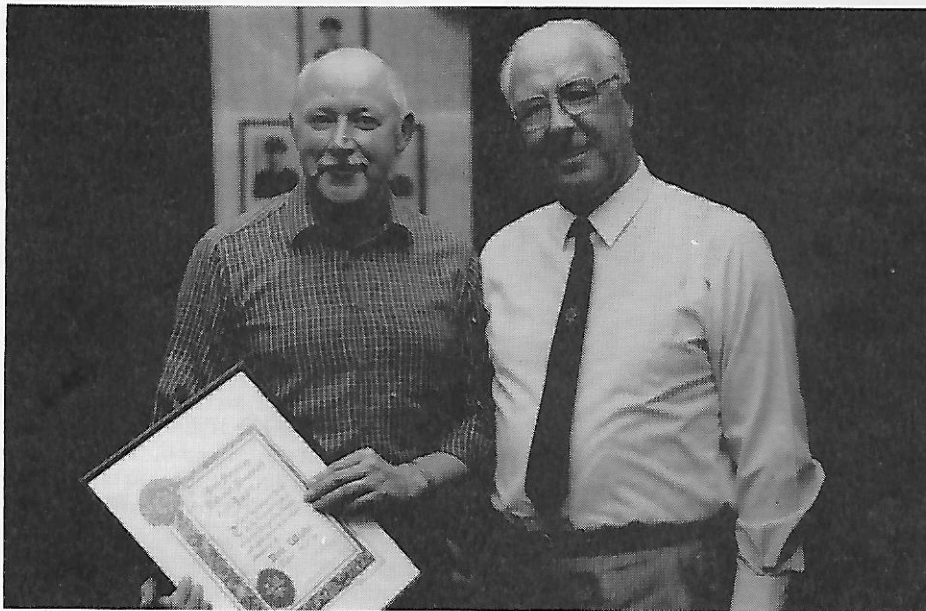
I have this year, with the aid of the new banking system, been able to break down the income into the various headings set out in the system and you will see (from the Breakdown of Income Page) that half of our income is generated by the Christmas Carol Floats, the majority of which is collected by our retained colleagues.

Approximately 25% (£11,370) of the total income was raised by wholtime stations.

The new banking system has been in operation now for over a year and is now running quite well, although there is still a small problem with the paying in of money as the codes are designed to ensure that all monies paid in are credited firstly to their correct Brigade and Division and secondly to their correct category, i.e. donation, collecting boxes, fund raising etc. This will be addressed with the Divisional Treasurer shortly.

Thank you for your support.

**IAN SATHERLY,
BRIGADE TREASURER.**



It was with great pleasure recently that Monty Britton presented Don Wicks with a National Certificate for all the time, effort and support he has given to the Benevolent Fund over many years. The photograph shows Don with Monty having just received his award.

Well done Don!

COUNTY OF AVON EXPENDITURE 1991

	A.	B.	C.	Total
*Widows Allowances	2870.00	870.00	1705.00	5445.00
*Orphans & Education Grants	1200.00	335.00	1905.00	344.00
*Further Education Grants	370.00	Nil	1110.00	1480.00
Hardship Grants	2524.00	900.00	Nil	3424.00
*Prolonged Sickness	260.00	Nil	Nil	260.00
*Handicapped Children	380.00	380.00	380.00	1140.00
Death Grants	Nil	600.00	Nil	600.00
Hospital Parcels	265.22	56.00	148.00	470.18
Wreaths	Nil	12.00	25.00	37.00
*Christmas Hampers	99.51	1374.33	1833.94	4201.20
(Goods upto £20 per case)	(45 Cases)	(71 Cases)	(94 Cases)	
*Convalescence	6930.00	2520.00	5670.00	15,120.00
£315 per week	(22 Cases)	(8 Cases)	(18 Cases)	
Petty Cash	20.90		17.61	38.51
Petty Cash (Other)				978.66
Travel Expenses				Nil
Articles Resale			59.00	59.00
Fund Raising			1340.78	1340.78
Loans		360.00	200.00	560.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				38,194.34
TOTAL INCOME				39,775.51
BALANCE TO THE FUND				1581.17

BRIGADE INCOME 1991

DATE	A DIV	B DIV	C DIV	C.F.O.	M/TOTAL	G/TOTAL
JAN	79.36	816.00	119.99	160.00	475.35	475.35
FEB	Nil	514.50	76.39	74.00	664.89	1140.24
MAR	15.00	143.52	199.46	15.00	372.98	1513.22
APR	256.16	36.00	304.50	411.25	1007.91	2521.13
MAY	6.00	137.59	157.50	Nil	301.09	2822.22
JUNE	46.44	91.10	36.90	65.00	239.53	3061.75
JULY	796.82	149.79	1104.72	166.40	2217.73	5279.48
AUG	Nil	17.44	20.44	1532.25	1570.13	6849.61
SEP	Nil	27.81	420.50	590.73	1039.04	7888.65
OCT	136.00	Nil	3203.00	385.00	3724.00	11,612.65
NOV	60.90	108.14	441.55	258.60	869.19	12,481.84
DEC	5057.04	6202.58	11,053.48	4680.57	26,993.67	39,475.51
Legacies received from Littlehampton						300.00
Totals	6453.72	7544.47	17,138.52	8338.80		39,775.51

*B Divison includes £360.00 loan.

*C Division includes £59.00 overpayment.

*Divisional totals do not include donations via C.F.O.

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME

	A	B	C	Total
Donations	431.77	1516.50	5574.00	7522.27
Flag Days	525.73	117.84	1569.25	2212.82
Coll-Boxes	26.44	17.44	381.74	425.62
Sale of Stock	180.60		303.30	483.90
Carol Floats	6226.91	5537.09	9889.61	21,653.61
Open Days	756.00		576.56	1333.38
General Events	351.00			351.00
Sponsored-Events		1176.06	1176.06	
Dons via CFO				3897.85
Legacies				300.00
Totals	8499.27	7188.87	19,470.52	39,356.51

The final totals include any donation made to the C.F.O. and credited to Divisions.

COMPARISONS

	1990	1991
A. DIVISION	8497.18	8499.27
B. DIVISION	11,830.68	7188.87
C. DIVISION	16,491.88	19,470.52
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER	2955.61	4179.85
	39,775.35	39,356.51
EXPENSES	26,809.86	37,775.34

Frontera as Paramedic Unit

LAST March Avon Ambulance Service took delivery of a new Vauxhall Frontera for use as a Paramedic Rapid Response Unit which will no doubt become a familiar sight to Brigade personnel at incidents in the future.

The decision to buy Vauxhall was made by the Ambulance Service on a value-for-money basis after negotiations with all the major British manufacturers, looking at purchase and maintenance costs, vehicle reliability and operating economy.

The vehicle was supplied by Uphill Motor Company, of Weston-Super-Mare, whose staff got involved in the development of the vehicle which is the first in the country.

The Frontera is a good all-rounder, built for hard work, with its off road capabilities and load carrying capacity well able to meet the needs of the Service.

It is intended to use the Frontera in a supporting role at all major and serious incidents throughout the County and it can also be used as an on-site communications base.



Ambulance Officers leaving Uphill Motors, Weston-Super-Mare

Below the Belt

*Through the cunning manipulation of their partner's nether garments,
women have finally achieved mastery over their males.*

'UNDERWEAR', said the magazine 'Men's Wear' back in 1935, "should have the grace of Apollo, the romance of Byron, the distinction of Lord Chesterfield and the ease, coolness and comfort of Mahatma Ghandi". Magnificent sentiments, admirably pursued — until women got their hands, as it were, on men's underwear.

In 1946, Jockey patented its famous Y-fronts. Technically, as far as I can see, it's more of an upside-down Y, but I suppose they decided that there wasn't the same commercial ring about lambda-fronts. Anyway, Y-fronts were advertised as 'scientifically perfected for correct masculine support', and for around 40 years, we were happily, snugly ensconced in our scientifically perfected briefs.

But then, a fashion was mooted. Boxer shorts — baggy, flimsy, loose and breezy boxer shorts — were declared to be the thing to wear and suddenly, briefs were banished, Y-fronts were dropped and every underwear counter was

dominated by ranges of boxer shorts printed with absurd patterns.

Now, it's clearly ridiculous to extend the idea of fashion to something as personal as underwear. Few men wear their underpants in public, except perhaps Superman (and he doesn't wear boxer shorts, does he?). The only people who get to see your underpants are women, and, when you think about it, the only reason men swapped their snug, practical Y-fronts for fashionable boxer shorts was — women.

The rise of boxer shorts had nothing to do with men's fashion consciousness — it was a trend amongst women. It was women who saw your underpants, and it was probably women who bought them and women decided that men looked much sexier in boxer shorts. But, like so many fashion trends, this one flies in the face of practicality. Firstly, boxer shorts are too thin. Briefs and Y-fronts are made from good, snug cotton interlock — but sit on a coin in a pair of boxers, and you can tell if it's heads or tails.

Secondly, boxer shorts give you no support whatsoever. Underneath their shorts, real boxers wear jock straps. Even if you buy a pair of swimming shorts, as opposed to trunks, they have a little support bag inside, in which your wherewithals can be carried like so many supermarket tangerines.

There is but one question to ask a proponent of 'fashionable' underwear, a question which women have to answer in the negative: Have you ever tried to run for a bus in a pair of boxer shorts?

Man may be born free, as the wind blows, but that's not the best way to gallop in pursuit of a No. 22. Y-fronts are the most practical form of male underwear — and to hell with fashion. If women want men to wear boxer shorts, then they must first do something to improve the frequency of public transport. Otherwise, the population explosion is going to be ended by a generation of stylishly clad men — not with a bang but with a whimper!

ANON

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The Firemen's Pension Scheme

WITH one exception currently, all serving firefighters are subject to the Firemen's Pension Scheme, although they can elect to 'opt-out' following appointment to the Brigade, and indeed at a later stage in their career if they wish. They can then determine to apply for reinstatement and afterwards, opt out again. In this case there is no provision for reinstatement.

During the last 15 years I have been personally involved in counselling firefighters with regard to their entitlements and in the case of the exception referred to above, my view is that, when faced with the argument that the firefighter would be faced with financial difficulties in maintaining a private pension plan (to which he was already committed before joining) plus contributions to the Firemen's Pension Scheme, the decision is simple.

With the present range of benefits, extending to dependants and further enhanced by the recent introduction of a death grant based on two years pay, a firefighter would be ill advised **not** to afford the contributions he makes to the Fireman's Pension Scheme, a view supported by both the craft Unions.

Whilst I accept that the applications of the Firemen's Pension Scheme can be somewhat complex, the precise details are set out admirably in the two booklets currently held on Stations/Divisional Headquarters and entitled 'A GUIDE TO PERSONAL BENEFITS' and 'A GUIDE TO DEATH BENEFITS'. With the exception of the recent increase in contributions to 11% for the lump sum 'death in service' grant, these are still accurate.

During the last six years we anticipated losing 41 firefighters arising from retirement on grounds of age, (the only known figure we can work on). In fact we lost 161, (120 of whom were related to ill health/injury compulsory retirements and not predictable for budget purposes). It is hardly surprising that pension pay-outs grossly exceed

*With the present range of benefits, extending to dependants and further enhanced by the recent introduction of a death grant based on two years pay, a firefighter would be ill advised **not** to afford the contributions he makes to the Firemen's Pension Scheme, a view supported by both the craft Unions.*

income from contributions, but this situation has been the case since the early '60's and arises in part because the Scheme was never 'funded'.

The other important statistic is that the average length of service of all (firefighter) leavers is 22.9 years. How would you stand under private pension arrangements if this turned out to be the maximum span of contributions? I only

wish I could have had the option of joining the Firemen's Pension Scheme 31 years ago, because I still believe it to be an excellent arrangement, administered locally by people who know the contributors and can bring a touch of humanity to its application. With the benefits outlined above, and your likely period of contribution (based on recent performance), it still represents very good value for money.

Whereas 'frozen' pensions operate only from age 60 (currently), if you voluntarily resign your appointment you can ask for a transfer value to be paid to either your new employer's pension scheme (where available) or otherwise to a private pension plan, thereby ensuring that your past contributions are maximised to your benefit.

The Brigade is very conscious of its responsibilities to its uniformed personnel, which is why I try to ensure that all retiring employees receive appropriate counselling prior to their discharge/retirement, irrespective of the circumstances which may have prompted this. Please remember, however, that although it is the County Treasurer who is the paying agent, should any problems arise with regard to payment of pension or lump sum following retirement, it is preferable for such problems to be referred in the first instance to Brigade Headquarters and we will deal with such approaches on your behalf.

**B. G. HOOK,
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER.**

Radstock Centenary

THE Radstock Fire Brigade was formed in 1891 by Mr. George Coombs of Radstock House, Chairman of the local Brewery 'Coombs & Co'.

Subscriptions of £10.0s.0d. per year were raised by Captain Coombs and Superintendent Hugh McMurtrie with the local board to operate the Brigade team from small rooms behind the Old Radstock Police Station and horses were hired from Matticks Stables in the Waldegrove Yard.

In 1894 a Shand Mason arrived to find that it would not fit in the Station — alterations were made to the doors and roof.

1895 saw the new water scheme of piped water from Downhead Reservoir arrive at Radstock. Hydrants were fitted to this main for Fire Brigade use. The pressure was in excess of 150 psi and burst the hose. For those who have had the experience of shipping a plug hydrant, this must have been quite horrendous!

In 1896 a new Station in the Waldegrove Yard, issue of uniforms and equipment costing £195.00p.

1897 saw the saleint feature of the rule book being issued. Rule 10 stated that a reward of five shillings would be paid to any person notifying the Superintendent, Foreman or Engineer of a fire.

The Firemen roused one another, it was some time before the Fire Engine left the Station. Not until 1901, after much agitation, a steam siren was fitted to the Ludlow Colliery.

The horse remained the motive power for the Brigade until 1915 when Mr. B. C. Malony of Radstock Mill arranged the hire of his lorry to tow the steam engine. In 1919 the Co-Operative Society offered the Brigade the use of theirs.



Sub Officer Cedric Brown with his grandson Luke holding Cedric's Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

A new Fire Station was built in 1923 on the site of the Old Pound Ground at Riverside. Nine years later the Brigade purchased from Bristol Fire Brigade, a Dennis Water Tender to replace the manual steam pump. The new tender had a built-in pump and carried 40 gallons of water. The appliance originally had solid tyres but these were later updated.

1941 saw the Fire Brigades in the Country brought under National Control and the first Station Officer, Mr. Frederick Meadows was appointed in 1942 and was Officer in Charge until 1951 when control of the Brigades was handed back to County and County Boroughs so Radstock lost the control of its Fire Service.

Somerset built the present Station at Wells Road, Radstock in 1960. The Station, together with Paulton, provided sterling service with Station

Officers Conrad Malony and Bertram Mitchard in charge.

The 1974 re-organisation and the County of Avon was seen in by Station Officer George Rossiter, at which time many of the Firefighters there today had already joined the Brigade.

Station Officer Terry Coles became Officer in Charge in 1976 and served until 1988, weaning into shape the Fire Officers and experienced hands at the Station today, before his sad loss.

The Station today, in the experienced hands of a Sub Officer Cedric Brown and his two right hand men, Geoff Garrett and Steven Powell, is a key Station serving a rural community with high risks presented by the printing industry, together with many road traffic accidents, for which the Station carries the Hurst Rescue Equipment.

RADSTOCK CENTENARY — Continued.

***So on Saturday,
December 7th 1991***

the Station was prepared for its

OPEN DAY

to mark **100 years.**

Drills and demonstrations, static displays including the Hydraulic Platform B6, Rescue Tender B1 and Control Unit B7, together with Banwell Vintage Appliances, the Fire Safety Caravan, a Benevolent Fund Stand and Paulton Ambulance were ready to for the off!

The Chief Fire Officer and the Divisional Commander and his staff were on hand with the Firefighters of

Radstock to welcome District and Town Councillors, together with Councillor Don Pearce (Chair) Avon County Council and Councillor Mr. Betty Perry to represent the Public Protection Committee (who as local Councillor for Midsomer Norton has always taken a keen interest in the welfare of Radstock Station).

Local employers of the Retained Firefighters were also invited to see, first hand, the purpose for which they readily agreed to release their employees in the event of a call out. This was suitably enhanced by commentary from Station Officer Don Bevan from Paulton.

Unfortunately that very morning occurred the passenger train crash in the Severn Tunnel which immediately revised plans for the day.

Reg Morgan from B2 went with the Control Unit to the tunnel entrance, Martin Long was waiting for the Make Up!

However, Cedric Brown was presented with his Long Service Medal, a proud moment for his wife Rita, and their Grandson.

The ladies of the Station complimented the day with excellent fare! and the serving members of Radstock were a credit to the large numbers of public who attended the somewhat depleted display.

Well done Radstock, a history to be proud of and events in the future may well enhance the Station's long and worthy contribution by its greatest asset — the Firefighters and their families.

**ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL OFFICER,
K. B. WHITE.**

Station A7 Yate — Nebuliser Presentation

IN April Firefighters from Yate Fire Station presented Kennedy Way Health Centre, Yate, with two Nebulisers, purchased from money raised by the Station Social Club (£286.00).

Station personnel became aware of asthma sufferers, due to a Firefighter at Yate having family experience of the problems encountered, not only by the individual sufferers, but the support required of family and friends.

Dr. Graham Ward of the Health Centre, sincerely thanked the Station for their contribution towards combating an illness affecting one in ten of the population (five million sufferers), where 20,000 extreme cases tragically die each year.

The nebuliser is the most effective form of emergency treatment, whereby the machine is used and then lent to the sufferer, which in most cases prevents the condition from worsening and subsequent hospital treatment.



*Dr. Graham Ward receiving one of the Nebulisers
from Mike Lewis, Chairman of the Social Club, and
Tim Bolland.*

Model Maker's Delight

LAST autumn I had a visit from a Mr. Jim Lucas, a retired engineer living in Filton, who wanted some help in supplying detail to add the finishing touches to a scale 1/6 model Shand Mason fire engine (circa 1894) he was making. I searched through piles of old photographs and struck lucky with one which showed the real thing and the detail Jim sought regarding the footplate bell and the lettering on the side of the engine.

As he left I asked him if he would bring the model into HQ when it was completed so that I could see the result of his labours.

Some two months later Jim brought the model in and I must say that it is nothing less than superb, standing 15ins. high on a polished mahogany base, with an overall length of 23ins. and weighing approximately 28lbs.

The coal fired vertical boiler operates two pistons of $\frac{7}{16}$ ins. diameter x $\frac{7}{16}$ ins stroke at a safe working pressure of 50lbs. per square inch, which in turn operates the twin cylinder water pump.

I asked Jim the inevitable "How long did it take to make" and he said he started the project at the beginning of 1984 and completed the model at the end of 1991.

Jim also stated that it is very difficult to put a time-scale or value to a project such as this; however, he remembers well the many moments of despair and frustration when something didn't fit or the drawing was wrong and the part or parts had to be scrapped and remade. Above all Jim said it was the great pride and joy felt when it all came together and worked, that made it all worthwhile.

The Bristol Society of Model & Experimental Engineers thought the model so good they awarded Jim the 'Ted Knight' Trophy and I am sure you will see from the photographs that the award was thoroughly deserved.

