

AVON FIRE BRIGADE NEWS

AUTUMN/WINTER 1996



THE OFFICIAL
JOURNAL OF
THE AVON
FIRE BRIGADE





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EDITORIAL

Well I knew that when I went around the shops recently and saw the Christmas decorations for sale that it must be time for another Brigade magazine.

Thanks to all the budding journalists out there for sending in articles for publication. It is encouraging to see so many people taking an interest.

Many people across the Brigade may not be aware that here at Lansdown, far from being a far flung outpost at the end of a cul-de-sac, we are the forefront of journalistic enterprise. It has had its own newspaper for years - admittedly not a big circulation, generally depending on the number of ramblers or whether the cows are in the field.

Anyway as I've just been told, 'if you want to tell a man something... listen!!', I didn't understand it either.

Geoff Cater and John Dando
Editors

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COVER PHOTO: Merrywood Girls School, Thursday 29th August, 1996.

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

The Avon Fire Brigade would like to thank all who have advertised within this journal, as it is due to the purchasing of space herein that this journal can be produced and distributed. It must be clearly understood however, that advertising space is purchased from the publishers and not the Avon Fire Brigade.

FOREWORD



At the time of writing, the 'newly constituted' Brigade is almost six months into its new status. Whilst the changes have not materially affected the frontline Firefighters and Fire Safety Officers who directly deliver our services, those of us responsible for leadership and support have had many new challenges to face just to maintain the Brigade's normal daily momentum.

The Elected Members of our new Combined Fire Authority are keen to support the endeavours of the Brigade and are proud to be associated with the excellent service provided to the community. It is hoped that all Members will be able to take the opportunity to participate in the current round of Station visits in order to meet people at work, see the tools of our trade and view the facilities that we occupy. Financial pressures are of constant concern to the Fire Authority and they must be aware of our needs first hand in order that informed decisions may be taken in the future.

'In house' the Brigade is going from strength to strength due to the commitment shown by all concerned. This years new vehicles are now emerging on Stations and the availability of combi-tools is gradually increasing. Several Stations, the Fire Safety Community Unit and Headquarters staff, have put a lot of effort into open days and other events involving Members of the public which have proved very successful. Some long standing members of the Brigade have retired and a number of new faces are now settling down to new roles in the organisation. I wish the retirees good luck and welcome the new members to our team.

My thanks to everyone for the excellent support that I am receiving in my own new role - there is much to be achieved but it has to be a complete team effort.

J. D. Terry
Chief Fire Officer

Focus on 'F' Division



Fire Safety, when I joined the Brigade some 30 years ago, was in its infancy. Due to a great deal of imagination and forward thinking of Chief Fire Officers at around that time, they recognised the need to prevent or restrict the spread of fire thereby reducing the heavy cost both in financial terms and life.

As a result the Fire Precautions Act 1971 was born and now the Fire Safety Department has an input into virtually every building that is built or altered either through the Fire Precautions Act 1971 or through the masses of other legislation dealing with other subjects.

Unfortunately in the last 12 months or so the Division has lost some of its most experienced officers through ill health or age retirement, Dave Dun, Roland Hindmarsh, Edward Capp, John Medcalf, Rod Chidgey and lastly but by no means least Graham Burchell has retired after serving more than 16 years as a Fire Safety Officer at the Bristol Office. His expertise was invaluable and will be missed by the department for his professionalism, common sense and dry sense of humour.

Another major retirement in April this year that has affected the Division is that of Gordon Jennings who was the backbone of statistics in the M I S Department.

On behalf of my colleagues and myself may we wish them all well and a very happy retirement.

As a result of a lot of new faces have also been appearing in the department Stn O's Steve Brown, Ernie Wise, Tony Sim, Chris Bailes, Phil Case an import from Gloucestershire FB, Jackie Hallet M I S an import from Avon County Council.

This left the Division very depleted in expertise, however it is also very pleasing to see the remaining stalwarts developing and taking on the responsibilities of their predecessors.

As with all disciplines within the Brigade things change and evolve. The Division was formed 10 years ago and the recent reorganisation was a consolidation brought about by the requirements imposed by the development of the Unitary Authority in Brigade's area. It is hoped that the final part of the reorganisation will be completed in the very near future.

The development of the community team lead by ADO Sleight has hit the imagination of the media and other community action groups and it is also pleasing to note that the number of deaths in the Brigade's area from an accidental fire has reduced dramatically to 2 in the last 12 months as opposed to an average of around 10 over the last decade.

Fire Safety Training - As with any aspect of training within the Brigade is fundamental in providing expertise and skills within the organisation. With this in mind the Division has embarked on a policy of providing a

dedicated Fire Safety Training Officer. ADO Harper is to arrange training for fire safety across the Brigade. His influence is now being felt by not only providing in house fire safety training but also for the first time an effective operational package of training given by Fire Safety Supervisory Officers to every whole time watch station.

By the time that you read this article I will have tendered my resignation to take on a new challenge and I would like to thank my colleagues in the Division for their support and dedication to the philosophy of fire safety and hope that not before too long we will be able to say that not one person died from an accidental fire in the Brigade's area within a twelve month period. May I wish all of you well and every success with the new Brigade and I am sure that Avon will still rank high in the esteem of both the residents of the Brigade's area and other firefighting colleagues throughout Britain.

E. G. Watkin
Divisional Commander - Fire Safety

A1 Temple's New Rescue Tender



The Brigade has recently purchased a new rescue tender for Station A1 Temple. This appliance was handed over to the Brigade on the 30th August 1996 by Councillor Terry Walker. The appliance will replace the station's current rescue tender, which will now go into the Brigade's reserve fleet. The new rescue tender is based on the Renault Midliner chassis which has proved so successful over the past 6 years. Wheel base and vehicle width are identical with overall height and length having been reduced by a few inches.

The appliance also incorporates the now standard Telmar Brake Retarder along with an upgraded front axle for the fitment of a Hiab crane. The crane itself is hydraulically and electronically operated and includes several safety features. A remote control facility is also incorporated to aid operation. The crane's capability ranges from 3,870kg at 1.8 metres to 400kg at 10.8 metres by way of boom manual extensions. The crane also incorporates an integral winch which has a 1.2 tonne capability.

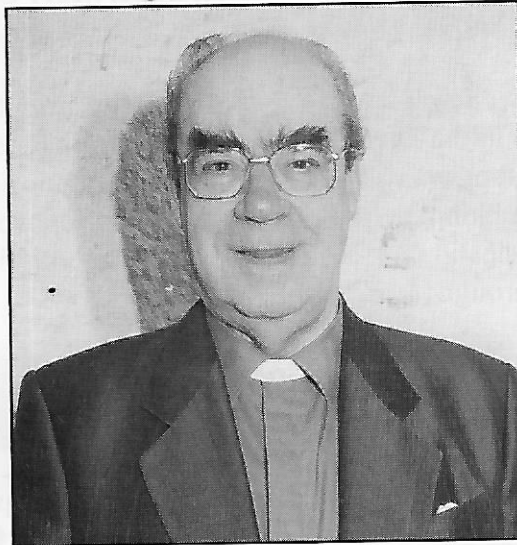
The rescue capability of this appliance is enhanced by the fitment of a rear mounted winch. The system includes a self-layering cable facility which will aid operation. The appliance is also equipped with two heavy duty generators which will run a variety of rescue equipment including four high powered floodlights. A sodium lighting mast is also a feature which will offer good scene lighting and have a maximum extension of 5.4 metres above ground level.

The appliance also incorporates the Brigade's now standard high conspicuity markings, with additional red rear repeaters. The specification also includes an evaluation set of locker shutter doors (Henderson Mobile) to enable the Brigade to evaluate this product fully.

A full set of a new style safety wheel nut (disk lock) is also a feature on the appliance. An operational training programme is now underway with an in-service date of 1st October being anticipated, so by the time this magazine hits the 'streets' it should be on the run.

Paul Beard
Fleet Engineer

From the CHAPLAIN



Did you know that firefighters have a Patron Saint? I didn't, until I attended this year's National Fire Brigade Chaplains' Conference at the Fire Brigade College in September. We had two German Chaplains present, one from Bavaria who had a supply of pictures which depicted Saint FLORIAN, "the Patron Saint of German firefighters" he told us. The picture shows a rather glamourised character, dressed in what could be the rather flamboyant uniform of a 4th or 5th Century firefighter. He is superintending the pouring of water from an earthenware container on to the roof of a burning house. Who St. Florian really was is enshrouded in mystery, but our German colleagues were quite sure that he is their Patron Saint. Anyone versed in the history of the Saints could perhaps let us know, courtesy of our Editor, who this St. Florian was, and if there is a British Patron Saint of firefighters in the U.K. One of the officers at the Fire Brigade College is in fact researching in his leisure time the mystery of the St. Florian myth. We wait with bated breath for his discoveries in his study!

Talking about Saints, in the writings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament there is some interesting references to Saints. He tells the Christians in Rome, at the beginning of the Christian era, that they are "called to be Saints". He refers to "the Saints in Caesar's household". To the Church in Asia he gives the title, "fellow citizens and Saints". So by the Apostle's reasoning anybody can be a Saint whose life-style reflects the love of God. Such a person has the marks of a Saint. Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, wrote, "God creates out of nothing, wonderful, you say: Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes Saints out of sinners." So you never know, you could meet a Saint in Blue Watch, or any watch, at any time!

Simone Weil, the French writer, says, "The world needs Saints just as a plague stricken city needs doctors." She is right!

Don't forget the Brigade Carol Service on Sunday, 15th December, at 3.30pm. The venue is the Broadmead Baptist Church in Lower Union Street, "the Church above the shops" (above Tesco's actually). We are looking forward to a happy time shared by all our Brigade family. Do come and bring your family with you. There are facilities for children and hopefully, coffee and mince pies will be enjoyed by all. Do please come!

Bill Cobby

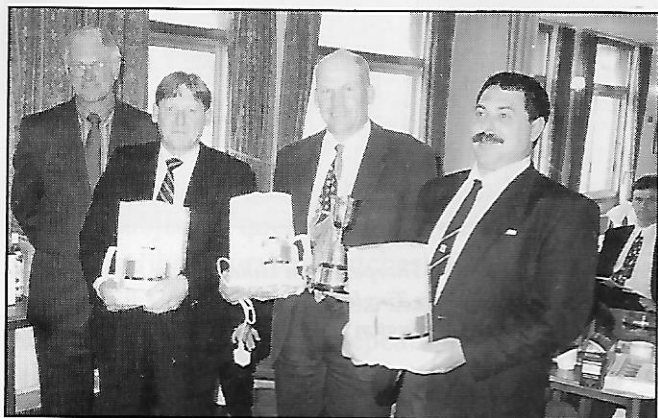


BRIGADE GOLF SOCIETY

Captain:- Bob Smith, 'S' Division, ext 615

Secretary:- Clive Leech, A2 G, ext 282

Brigade team wins South West Championship



From Right to Left: Richard Orton, John Cowley & Steve Mankowski

The Brigade entered 2 teams in the South West Championships, which were held at Came Down Golf Club, Dorset, on 22nd May. Strong winds and driving rain made playing extremely difficult, and caused the competition to be shortened to 18 holes.

Congratulations must go to our 'A' team, of Steve Mankowski, John Cowley and Richard Orton, who won the event, and bring the trophy back to Avon for the 5th time. Best was Steve Mankowski, who came 2nd in the individual Gross and Nett competitions, losing out in the gross only on countback. His score of 81 (nett 73) was superb in the conditions.

The 'B' team of Terry O'Sullivan, Dick Noke and Clive Leech could not cope as well with the conditions, coming 11th out of the 15 teams.

Brigade Championship

The Brigade Championships were held at Tracy Park Golf Club on Tuesday 24th September. A pleasant day saw 26 golfers pit their skills against this parkland course. Congratulations go to Steve Mankowski, who is the new Brigade Champion, and to Dave Samson, who won the Brigade Shield for best nett score.



Brigade Championships, 1st Tee

Results

Gross			Nett	
1st	Steve Mankowski (A5)	81	Dave Samson (B4)	94/20
2nd	Richard Orton (B7)	82	Bob Baird (B1)	96/72
3rd	Alan Alvis (C2)	87	Clive Leech (A2)	93/76

Nearest the Pin: Malcolm Dowling (C10)

Longest Drive: Dave Samson (B4)

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Details from an Incident Log print out:

Incident No. 12916 **Taken:** 27th August, 1996 01:59.05h
Address: A370 Cleeve
Type: Peed camera on fire

"C102, who were dispatched, must have wondered what they were going to find!!!"

3 Peaks Challenge Walk

by White Watch, C1 Weston-Super-Mare - 10th June 1996

Two teams of one driver and four walkers left Weston-Super-Mare in two PCV's at 05:00 hours on 10th June 1996 for Fort William, Scotland. PCV1 consisted on Chris Millard (driver), Bunny Warren, Graham Darlington, Brian Gillett and Ray Petty. PCV2 consisted of Stan Tingle, Dave Pang (driver), Mike Bennett, Oscar Rickard and Ben Thorpe.



From Left to Right: Ben Thorpe, Brian Gillett, Mark Rickard, Chris Millard, Ray Petty, Stan Tingle, Dave Pang, Dave Warren, Mike Bennett & Graham Darlington

The weather was horrendous and not expected to improve. However, upon entering Scotland the sun came out and the further north we travelled, the warmer it became. The mountains appeared and everyone's spirits dropped! They looked too high for us to tamper with!! We arrived in Fort William at 15:30 hours in quite bright sunshine and all felt pleased with the conditions and anxious to make a start. Had a nice surprise when we arrived at Achintee Farm to start the walk to see Don and Janet Wicks there to see us off, Don being ex-fireman of White Watch, C1.

At 17:24 hours the walk got underway and the monotonous climb up the tourist path to Ben Nevis was helped by the magnificent views over mountains and valleys which improved the higher we climbed, slowly! We all stayed together to get to the top which was achieved by all 8 of us at 20:30 hours. The descent was designed by Mike Bennett and we all safely found the tourist path again approximately half way down!! PCV2's team was down slightly ahead of PCV1's team at 22:30 hours having separated into 2x2 at the tourist path down when the two youngsters ran down to finish at approximately 22:00 hours! It was a race to get to the chippy then, and again PCV2 scored maximum points.

The journey to Wasdale Head was uneventful as far as the walkers were concerned as it was lights out for all except the two drivers, but herds of deer were negotiated across Rannoch Moor, brewers lorries doing a Schumacher along Loch Lomond and one of the drivers waking up at Carlisle. It nearly ended in tears!! Freshened up at Carlisle services then arrived in pouring rain and poor visibility at Wasdale Head, after missing the black sheep sleeping on the roads, at 04:10 hours. By now PCV1 were behind and arrived at Wasdale at 04:45 hours. The walk up Scafell Pike commenced at 04:25 for PCV2's team and 05:00 for PCV1's team. It has to be said that both teams were suffering with mutiny amongst the members, but they sorted out which way was up through thick mist and persistent heavy rain and one individual changed into dry clothes halfway up! The top was located by PCV2's team at 06:20 and PCV1's team at 07:00 hours. The descent was uneventful apart from the lack of visibility, pouring rain, ankle-breaking rocks, peat bogs, twisted knees etc. PCV2's team bottomed at 08:00 hours and PCV1's team at 08:20 hours. Both then travelled together over the rollercoasters of Hardknott and Wrynose Passes suffering worst of all from sickness!! "I wonder why" said some driver. It wasn't very pleasant later when offered a drink from a bottle containing pot noodles!!?! Where did they come from?!? We needed the drink too!

We reached Ambleside and another pitstop was urgently requested by PCV1's team at the public conveniences in the town's car park. PCV2 went for fuel and then PCV1 passed the garage and was gone. After we'd waited for them all those times! Anyway PCV2 arrived at Rhyd-Ddu Station car park at 13:00 hours and walk commenced at 13:10 hours. The Welsh weather was worse than we had experienced at Scafell Pike. The top of Snowdon was gained at 15:10 hours and we just managed to hold on to the trig point before succumbing to the wind, rain, hail etc., and descended very slowly. Passed PCV1 team on their way up near junction with Watkin Path, pleasantries exchanged, and down we went, more slowly! The descent took as long as the ascent for both teams due to the weather and ground conditions, paths became rivers. PCV2

bottomed at 17:14 hours and PCV1 bottomed at 18:00 hours with an extra member in their team, they'd found a lost soul on the top and we delivered him to the Youth Hostel on our way to recover at Caernarvon Fire Station. Everyone fast asleep by 23:00 hours having consumed a meal and a few pints!

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A6 Thornbury

Thornbury is a two pump station which is unique in several respects. Apart from being the most northerly station in the Brigade, it is the only one which has a nuclear power station in its area. Of A6's 20 personnel, eight work at Oldbury Power Station, ensuring a wealth of knowledge and experience when called to a shout there. We also have two prisons, Leyhill Open Prison, and the women's prison at Eastwood Park, Fairfield. The latter was formerly a boys' Detention Centre, and was the subject of questions in Parliament when its cells were described as rabbit hutches. Easter weekend this year saw us respond there on many occasions when an inmate set fire to her cell repeatedly.

Sub Officer Malcolm Young is the only crew member to have been employed by the old Gloucestershire Fire Brigade which handed over control of Thornbury (and Patchway and Kingswood) to the new County of Avon Fire Brigade in 1974. Malcolm is a Computer Analyst with Rolls Royce, and remembers when turnouts were by means of a siren in the day-time and house bells at nights. The Station was in the middle of Thornbury in those days, and one of the local youngsters who raced down the High Street to see the appliances turnout was John Riddiford, whose father and grandfather owned a grocer's higher up the street. He dreamed, like lots of boys, of being a Firefighter, and eight years ago his ambition was realised. Today he runs the shop with his father.



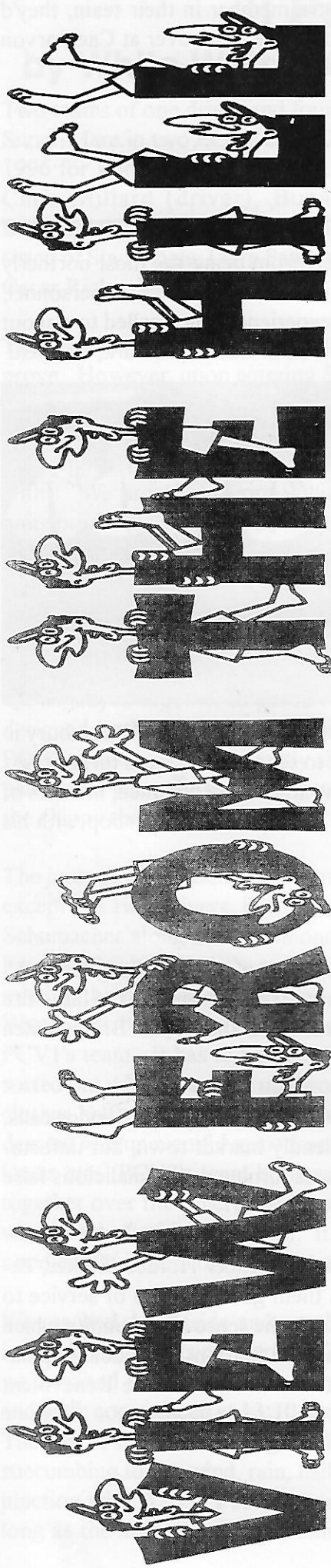
The old Fire Station was replaced in 1980 by a new one in Gloucester Road.

A6 is normally turned-out about 300 times a year and works occasionally with whole-time colleagues at A5 Patchway, and also with the retained crew at Wotton-under-Edge. Last year two crews went to the large fire at GATX Avonmouth, and earlier this year a crew was called to the coach crash near the Severn Bridge when many pensioners were sadly killed.

Recent years have seen a decrease in the number of chimney fires, and a large increase in Special Service calls, especially R.T.A.'s and car fires. Thornbury in the day-time is a typical friendly market town, but unfortunately late evening, especially at weekends, can sometimes see both appliances turning out to malicious false alarms and small-scale arson attacks on trees, vehicles and the like.

The last year has been a sad one for the Station with the deaths of ex-Station Officer Horace Walker, ex-Leading Fireman Nick Cornock and ex-Fireman Jack Bond, who between them gave decades of service to the local community. One of the great pleasures of being a retained firefighter is the sense of continuity which it gives, and this is reinforced by the social events which are organised within the Station. The local population are very supportive, witnessed by their very generous donations when we collect for the Benevolent Fund every year.

Nigel Warr
Station Officer
A6 Thornbury



New Cult Discovered

Draughtspersons Len and Tony have formed a new religious cult and have offered their services to any watch wishing to investigate the effect of meditation upon the brain's alpha waves. "Meditation is the only way we can cope with the pressures" said spokesdraughts person Len.

Their normal practice is to sit quietly during their short lunch periods with their feet up and their minds blank. Although they may appear to be listening to GWR local radio at the same time, this is in fact a test to confirm that their minds are totally clear of any and all thoughts.

"Listening to GWR radio drives any thinking person rapidly and irrevocably insane." said Chief Quantum Gravity Research Scientist Dave Hayward, "I should know, I've tried it."

New Chip Pan Unit Tactics Following Psychological Research

Following a three-month study of crowd psychology, which has concluded that nothing attracts crowds like crowds, Community Team Leader John Sleight today declared a change of tactics. That instead of having a fire engine nearby to act as a lure to attract children (hence their parents also) to the vicinity of the Chip Pan Unit, the fire engine will be out of sight. The crew, now dressed as elderly women complete with shopping baskets, will be deployed as decoys to lure a crowd.

Training has already begun in the technique of staring intently at the CPU while talking earnestly to the Community Gang officers present.

Christmas Greetings

For the duration of the twelve days of last Christmas all appliance two-tones were altered to play carols.

This was the first part of a routine experiment to assess the psychological effects of two-tones on drivers, using carols as a control sound to compare effects with.

"I was scathing about the very idea at first, but the carol-playing was more effective than two-tones." said one excited Officer-in-Charge.

"Everyone was so fed up with carols after the long long months leading up to Christmas that they did everything they could to get out of the way as quickly as possible.

"I'd love to see the experiment extended to the whole year"

Siamese Twins To Be Separated

Community Cohort Press Officers John Dando and Geoff Cater are to undergo an operation in an attempt to surgically separate them.

Said Community Crowd leader John Sleight, "I never initially realised they were Siamese twins; they look so unlike, and they use a car each when they travel; but they are always together, always coming and going together to and from the same places, never more than a car-length or two apart; it is as though there is invisible elastic between them."

John and Geoofs reply to this accusation was robust: "That's stretching it a bit far!", they snapped in unison, "Working in pairs in mutual support prevents us getting too strung out."

Firesetter Problems

The new innovative board game, "Firesetters", designed by advisors John and Geoff in order to teach fire safety to those children with an excessive interest in fire, was initially warmly received by educational experts, who raved that it set the childrens' imaginations alight.

But John and Geoff had to withdraw the game after they discovered the children were playing for matches.

General Relativity Theory And Its Application To Courses At Moreton

Physicists working at Avon Fire Brigades top secret gravity research laboratory at Lansdown have made a startling discovery of vital importance to everyone on long courses at the Fire Service College.

It is a well-known experimental fact that the further an observer is above a light source, the redder the light appears. As every probationary firefighter knows, Newton would have tried to explain this by claiming that gravity's pull slows the light photons during their climb and that the drop in speed causes an apparent frequency decrease due to the Doppler effect.

But as we all now know from our evening lectures on Einstein's General Relativity Theory, light

always travels at the same speed; it is never ever slowed by gravity; therefore because light cannot have been made redder by slowing down the light must have been redder at source.

Of course the light source below has not changed in any way and is still emitting the same frequency light it was when it and the observer were at the same level, so the obvious conclusion, well tested by experiments with clocks in high-flying aircraft, is that time itself passes slower the further down you are, and passes faster the further up you are.

This no doubt explains the instinctive desire of students at Moreton to sit in the high-up seats at the back, which enjoy a faster rate of time passing.

But this is actually a mistake, say the researchers at Lansdown: the lecturer times his lectures according to the lecture room wall clock; so officers wishing to see the clock hands turn at the quickest possible rate and experience the shortest possible lecture should position themselves as far as possible **below** the height of the wall clock, i.e. in the low seats at the front.

Admittedly the effect is small - a matter of at most a few milliseconds over the duration of the typical Moreton course. But everyone who has been even a week at Moreton and experienced that dreadful longing to be home again knows that every little helps.

Articles For Next Issue

"Arson About", by Community Group Officers John Dando and Geoff Cater. Their firesetter counselling memoirs.

"How to keep an idiot waiting", by CYuself.

"A History of the Glasgow Fire Service", by C. U. Jimmy.

Bunker Purpose Revealed

The enigma of why the Brigade should need the use of the Bunker can at long last be revealed.

Said Community Clan leader John Sleight, "The Chip Pan Demo Unit took too long to heat up, so we have had to develop nuclear fusion as a means of heating the fat; the bunker was needed in case anything went wrong with our underground testing; now we are in a position to have a really spectacular fireball - brighter than

a thousand suns - instead of the paltry one megaton effect we get using only fat.

"We tried fission chips at first, but experienced too much fall-out"

That the Chip Pan Demo Unit is to be used as a test vehicle for the development of fuel-air explosives was denied by John. "We already know how to do that," he claimed.

Savage Fish Discovered

Vicious South American piranha fishes have been discovered in the water tank in the bunker basement.

This may perhaps explain the horrific injuries recently inflicted on a visiting officer when using the office loo.

The Biological Warfare Research Laboratory has denied all knowledge, but as this is always standard procedure when secret experiments come accidentally to light, the denial should probably be discounted.

Lansdown Press Officers Appear In Film

Press Officers John Dando and Geoff Cater, long accustomed to TV appearances have recently extended their repertoire by appearing as cowboy and indian extras in the soon-to-be-released Western film, "Scalping at Cripple Creek."

Old Technology Proves Cost-Effective For Applying Fire Safety Car Logos

Brigade Transport today rubbished the idea that they got red logos onto white cars, and vice versa, by carefully cutting out the logo shape in the paint of a white car, lifting the paint off, then swapping it with the logo cut out from the paint of a red car.

"It's an idea we thought of, and it should have been very economical, but it was impractical because we don't have the same number of red cars as white.

"No, we had to resort to the old-fashioned method of using transfers. We sent the cars to the Brigade Seamstress, who did a very good job of ironing on the transfers."

How Lansdown's Scientific Community Evolved

The 'View from the Hill' can reveal that the reason why Lansdown

personnel developed their considerable scientific skills and knowledge is the slow speed at which the land rover hauled the Chip Pan Unit up the long hill between Wick and Lansdown.

Said spokesscientist Tom Edwards, "We used to get very bored chugging so painfully slowly up the hill. That is, we did until Dave had this great idea of using the time to study quantum mechanics and the like.

"It's dead easy to study, even for the driver, who only has to glance up every half-minute or so to check progress, adjust the steering and wave on any car drivers, cyclists or pedestrians who may be behind.

Dave is now studying for a PhD on his favourite subject, namely The Morphology Of The Feline Rectum. "When I was a probationer older firefighters kept saying I wouldn't be satisfied until I knew the ins and outs of a cat's *****. I didn't understand what they meant at first, but yes the subject is fascinating."

New Satellite Tracking System

The Brigade is now experimenting with a satellite tracking system which reports back to Brigade Control at Lansdown the present locations of those fire appliances which carry the tracking equipment.

This system replaces the existing optical tracking system pioneered on Fire Safety cars, which uses the special contrasting-colour logos on the car bonnets to identify which cars to track.

The optical system had generally worked well, except that there was a persistent problem with the Press Officer's car which always appeared as a double image.

Hot Water Problems

Following altitude-caused problems with the wall-mounted water heater in the Lansdown kitchen - as every probationary firefighter knows, water boils at a lower temperature 800 feet up, so the maladjusted system often over-boiled and tripped out - an 800 foot deep shaft has been dug so that the water heater can be at sea level, ensuring correct operation.

Office lynch-pin Jane has volunteered to be the first to go down the 960 rungs to make the tea.



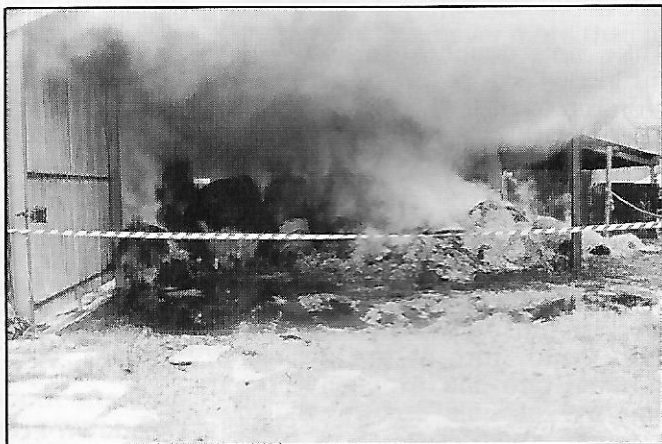
Date: Monday 29th July, 1996
Time: 18:23 hours
Address: B3130 Winford to Chew Magna
Appliances: C61, A11, A16

A serious RTA between a commercial light van and a Ford Mondeo. The driver of the van received serious spinal injuries and was transported to hospital by Police helicopter which had landed in an adjacent field. The Mondeo driver received only minor injuries as a result of the many safety features that appear in cars today. Crews were at the scene for nearly an hour and a quarter before the stop message could be sent.

Date: Friday 3rd May, 1996
Time: 19:07 hours
Address: Barn, R/O Barrow Hospital, Barrow Gurney
Appliances: C51, C52

This is one of three incidents this year where crews have responded to what was thought to be a straight forward job, only to find a body involved in the fire. In this particular incident the deceased was a patient at the hospital.

The other incidents were at Ruffet Road, Kendleshire on 16th June where the crews from A7 and A5 discovered a body lying on a pile of burning rubbish and B2 were called to a car fire in Millards Hill, Midsomer Norton on 28th July. Shortly after they arrived a body was discovered in the burnt out car.



Date: Saturday 11th May, 1996
Time: 02:04 hours
Address: Manor School, Coalpit Heath
Appliances: A72, A71, A52, B72, B62, A22, B77

When crews arrived at the school, little could be done to save the building. All of the seven classrooms were destroyed in the blaze. Crews were on the scene till midday.



Date: Saturday 14th September, 1996
Time: 14:27 hours
Address: Rodway Road, Patchway
Appliances: A52, A22

When the crews arrived to deal with a small fire in the kitchen I do not think they were expecting to find such horrendous living conditions. To get to the fire, firefighters had not only to fight their way through the rubbish and junk but also tread carefully to avoid the dog excreta. The 83 year old occupier was taken to hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation and the dog was given a lift to Southmead Police Station by the crew of A22.

Would you CREDIT this? (No - neither would I)

Memorandum to Officers in Charge - 'A' Division Stations

REIMBURSEMENT CHEQUES

I would ask you to bring to the attention of all personnel the item 1.5 on Addendum 1 to Brigade Routine Order No. 5/1996 which states:-

"existing arrangements with the County's bankers will cease as at 30th March, 1996... Consequently, any cheques presented for payment after that date will not be honoured... No cheques will be issued after Thursday 21st March..."

To this end, could I ask that all cheques being held by payees, and there are many of them, be banked immediately.

Mrs. R. Phillips
Senior Admin Officer
'A' Division

18th March, 1996

Reply received - Dated 25/3/96

Rita

I was on my way to the bank to deposit this cheque, when my car was suddenly immobilised and I was drawn up by a tractor beam into an alien spaceship.

I was transported light years away to their home planet, where I was incarcerated and most hideously tortured both physically and with mind* probes. (* took under 1 minute)

They were trying to extract the secret of Avon Fire Brigade's Mob 14 system, so that they could introduce it into the known galaxy, thus bringing everything to a grinding halt, which would enable them to take over during the ensuing confusion.

I could not be associated with the end of civilisation as we know it and managed to resist the torture, until I contrived to escape and steal a small space craft and headed for Earth.

I unfortunately made a forced landing somewhere in the amazon jungle, where I had to contend with the natives who thought I was connected with the Cargo Cult.

I managed to appease them by promising to send them a redundant fire appliance on my return home and thus only had to force my way through two thousand miles of rain forest, populated with various dangerous animals and cross rivers filled with piranha and alligator. (Not to mention the occasional 30 foot anaconda)

On reaching the coast I got passage on a tramp steamer in return for clearing the bilge's and taking a turn in the barrel.

When I reached England I immediately headed for the bank, only to find that the cheque was no longer valid, due to the accounts having been changed.

I would be grateful therefore if, taking into the balance my foregoing explanation, you find it in your heart to issue me with a replacement cheque on the new account.

Regards

Martyn Rundle

Response

With Regard to your communication and adhering to Divisional Policy re Customer Care, please accept the following in reply. "NO!"

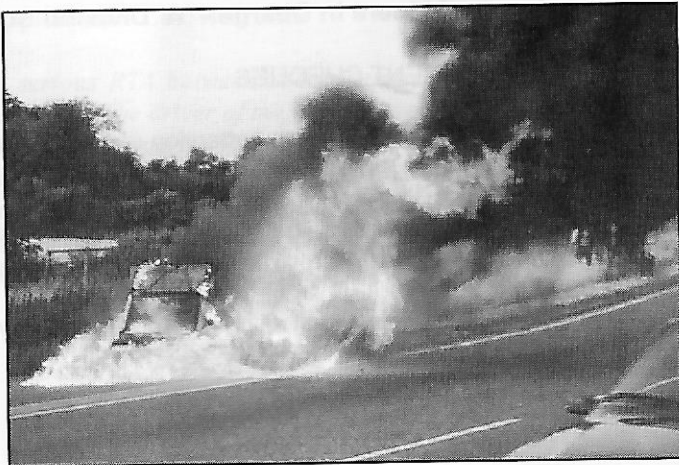
Customer Care Dept.
'A' Division HQ

A Bad Day Out at the Seaside

Brother Dave Creech had enjoyed a pleasant Saturday morning driving around Weston in his recently purchased 2CV, with a lady friend and his faithful dog Buster for company.

He had done some shopping and was on his way home to Bristol when disaster befell him.

The car started filling up with smoke and flames began leaping from the engine. With great alacrity for a man approaching the Big Five O, he stopped the car and jumped out, followed by his startled companions.



The car was turning into an inferno, but Dave bravely made two trips to rescue his groceries. By-standers watched in awe and admiration as he heroically went back for a third time to get his bags of rice.

Whilst he stood sadly watching his beloved 2CV expire in flames, the Water Tender from C1 turned up, and swiftly dealt with the incident. Afterwards the crew, most of whom knew Dave, offered their commiserations on his misfortune.

By an incredible coincidence a female journalist from the local paper happened to be passing, and she stopped and took photographs of the conflagration from start to finish. (She has since sent copies of these photos to Dave, so he has his memories.)

Footnote: This was Dave's latest 2CV, the floor pan collapsed in the previous one, but he is determined to get another; shades of the Phoenix rising from the ashes!

Alfie Hynds
Green Watch Historian
B6 Speedwell

Fire Service Career Advancement Courses

CRAFT COURSES

- C10 Bonsai Your Pet
- C11 Self-Actualization through Macrame
- C12 Needlecraft for Junkies
- C13 Drawing Genitalia in Soft Pastel Shades (Spring Term Only)
- C14 Artistic Chicken Trussing for Vegetarians
- C15 Orchestrated Flatulence Appreciation
- C16 Breaking and Entering Department Lockers

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

- HE10 Cultivating Viruses in the Home Refrigerator
- HE11 Sinus Drainage in the Modern Marriage
- HE12 Kitchen Taxidermy, eg. Stuffed Prawn Curry

Avon Fire Brigade Pensioners Association

Trip to Holland and the Bulbfields

Early morning (01:30 hours!!) on the 19th April last, saw 85 pensioners, their wives, families and friends assembled at Southmead in the rain to board 2 coaches first to go to Bath to pick-up another 13, and then to Dover for the ferry to Calais.

Once "over the water" the party went first to Bruges for a couple of hours walk around the city called 'The Venice of the North', although so short a time did not do the place justice. One or two in the party found a brewery that did guided tours, with a chance to taste the product afterwards, whilst some others bought Belgian chocolates. Afterwards the journey continued to the hotel we virtually took over for the weekend, at Hulshorst near Harderwijkweg.



A group of pensioners and friends enjoying pre-dinner drinks at the Hotel

The next morning the party were taken first into Amsterdam, where a few had an eyeful of the local attractions(!), a trip on a glass topped canal boat, and a look around a diamond cutting house, then the coaches picked us up to go to Volendam, a picturesque town on the side of the old Zuiderzee, lots of tourists, but well worth the visit. We called at a clog and cheese factory on the way back to the hotel in the area for dinner and an evening of traditional Dutch entertainment.

On Sunday we were transported first to the world famous Frans Roozens nurseries, where bulbs that had taken up to 16 years to prepare could be ordered for autumn delivery and planting, and then to the equally famous Keukenhof gardens, covering 70 acres, with 10 miles of footpaths winding under ancient trees, past ponds and fountains, planted with tulips of course, but crocuses, narcissus, hyacinths and many other flower varieties as well. Considering the size of the gardens, and the many restaurants, shops and other attractions that were there, it was surprising to learn that it is only open to the public from late March to late May. We called at a distillery on the way back to the hotel, as our couriers somehow got the impression that the party was interested in the intellectual side of drink. More entertainment was laid on after dinner, and the final night was enjoyed by all the party.

Our start back to the Hypermarket and ferry on Monday morning was delayed slightly by the very unfortunate heart attack suffered by Roy Spear during the last night, which meant leaving Roy and Tina behind, with Roy in intensive care, and Tina accomodated in a nearby hotel. Luckily the travel firm couriers, Marja and Anna kept close contact with both Roy and Tina, and after an enforced stay of a further 10 days they were both flown home via Lulsgate to continue recuperation.

The weekend, apart from the problem with Roy and Tina, went very well, with plenty of warm sunshine, good food and good value for money. The Pensioners Association would like to see more members on these trips - come along, you will enjoy them I am sure.

A. J. Townsend
Social Secretary

Beware all Watch Commanders!!

A firefighter in Mississippi, USA, shot his wife dead and killed four of his bosses. The 32 year old man was later seriously wounded after a shoot out with police. Colleagues said he had threatened for years to shoot his superiors and finally cracked when reprimanded over a typing error.

Station Officer 'Will Quote'

The watch were assembled for morning parade, awaiting the arrival of the Station Officer, Will Quote.

"Here he comes" said the Sub, *"Watch shun"*

At that moment the call out system went down and the teleprinter started chuntering.

"The Bells, the Bells" cried Will, dashing off to the watch room. He ripped off a copy of the message.

"All hands to the pumps" he commanded.

Both appliances went roaring off to the docks.

"This is my first ship fire?" squeaked Ff. O'Hara.

"Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn" answered Will, adding *"One leak will sink a ship, and one sin will destroy a sinner"*.

The crew looked at each other baffled.

"Do you think it'll be a goer sir?" quivered Ff. Flinch.

"People who jump to conclusions rarely alight on them" snapped Will, *"Where ignorance is bliss, tis folly to be wise"*.

No one asked any more questions.

On arrival at the stricken ship the Sub ran over to Will to get some orders.

"Why is this thus, and what is the reason of this thusness?" bellowed Will.

"Sorry Sir, I haven't got a clue what you are talking about" replied the Sub, *"I'll get the men in BA"*

"Look Sir" yelled Ff. Owl, *"there's a young lad on the foc'stle"*.

"The boy stood on the burning deck" observed Will.

"I'll get the HP set in Sir and we'll try and get him off" shouted the Sub.

"On the whole I'd rather be in Philadelphia" murmured Will.

"You're bloody mad" screamed the Sub.

"There is only one difference between a madman and I, I am not mad" said Will loftily.

"We had better make pumps 10 Quote" yelled the D.O. on jumping out of his car.

"Jesus wept" Will said sadly.

They got the HP set in and Will went up with O'Hara and Flinch.

"It is a far far better thing that I do, than I have ever done" cried Will.

"How close do you want us to go in Sir?" questioned Flinch.

"If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen" retorted Will.

They got the young boy into the cage and started to make their way down.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" ventured Will, when they reached the ground.

"You can send a Stop now Quote" ordered the D.O., Will picked up the handset and spoke.

"This is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning?"

Control did not respond...

Alfie Hynds
B6 Speedwell



The David Liddington Memorial Walk

John O'Groats to Lands End



Volunteers who have taken part in the 'marathon' events that Sub Officer Pete Liddington has arranged in the past to raise money for muscular dystrophy will not be surprised at this latest challenge.

Pete, Sub Officer Bill Pratt and Firefighter Chris Taylor are undertaking, in Fire Kit no less, the arduous John O'Groats to Lands End walk in memory of Pete's son David who sadly lost his fight against muscular dystrophy in June 1995 at the tender age of 22.

David was an inspiration to many people in the way that he battled against this tragic disease, and it is a fitting tribute to David and the many other young sufferers, who not only endured a life of suffering but also went out and raised money knowing they would not benefit from it.

Plans are well under way for the event which is to take place between 11th June and 11th July 1997. The planned schedule will mean that an average of 30 miles a day will need to be covered for 31 consecutive days.

The walkers are using 5 weeks annual leave to attempt this walk and are financing the walk themselves so that all money raised will go into Muscular Dystrophy Research.

Before the event Pete, Bill and Chris hope to visit each station to give a short presentation about the reasons for doing the walk and about muscular dystrophy, with a view to gaining sponsorship.

There is still a lot of organising and letter writing to be done before the walk but Pete is confident that come the 11th June 1997 they will be ready and raring to go, and with the support of members of Avon Fire Brigade he is sure that they will start the marathon walk with a substantial amount of sponsor money pledged.

A Guide to Safe Fax

Q. How well should I know the person to ensure having safe fax?

A. It generally helps to know the person you are faxing, especially if you want meaningful fax, but there are many people who safely fax complete strangers every day.

Q. If I fax something to myself, will I go blind?

A. Certainly not, but you should not allow faxing yourself to interfere with faxing others.

Q. I fax numerous times each day. Is this normal? (My friends say I fax too much).

A. Yes, it is normal, but be careful to allow enough time for other activities such as eating and sleeping. And about your friends, they're probably just jealous.

Q. There is a place down the street where you can go to pay to fax. Is this legal?

A. Yes. Many people have no other outlet for their fax drives and must pay a professional when their need to fax becomes too great.

Q. Should a cover always be used for faxing?

A. Unless you are really sure of the person you are faxing,

a cover should be used to ensure safe fax.

Q. I have a personal and business fax. Can transmissions become mixed up?

A. Being bi-faxual can be confusing, but as long as you use a cover with each one, you won't transmit anything you're not supposed to.

Q. Is it ethical to fax your co-workers?

A. Yes, faxing is ok between consenting adults, but be certain that you are not engaging in faxual harassment or else you may lose your job, or worse, end up in jail.

Q. How old do you think someone should be before they can fax?

A. Faxing can be performed at any age, as long as the person knows which switches to flip, which buttons to push and what is inserted where.

Q. What happens when I incorrectly do the procedure and I fax prematurely?

A. Don't panic. Many people prematurely fax when they haven't faxed in a long time. Just start again, most people won't mind.

The Fire Brigade Society

In inviting me to write this article for your house journal it was requested that I outline what the Society stands for, and what it was we achieved on the 27/28th April 1996 when some of the readers may well have got to know the Society a little better.

Thanks to successive CFO's, the Western Area of the Fire Brigade Society (FBS) has held its monthly meeting (on the third Tuesday of each month at 20:00 hours) at Brigade HQ. We continue to be grateful for this facility.

The FBS has over a thousand members in Great Britain, and a small overseas section. Founded in Manchester in 1963 it caters for individuals who have a serious, intelligent and responsible interest in the Fire Service. Not all of the membership will be interested in the same aspects of the Service but the FBS caters for members interests in still/video photography, fire station architecture, communications, mobilising, appliances and equipment, vehicle preservation etc.

As an example, the history of Bristol Fire Brigade can be traced back over many a year and the amount of information and knowledge members have of the County of Avon Fire Brigade, and now Avon Fire Brigade, may well be considered by some as staggering! Without doubt several books could be written on the subject, all vividly illustrated.

The FBS membership is drawn from all walks of life, many of who are neither 'mad' or 'anoraks', and whose love for the Service is very genuine! Whilst quite a few of the members are directly associated with the emergency services, many are not, but with such close interest it will not perhaps be surprising that the recent tragic loss suffered by your Brigade should impact upon us as a Society.

Our Area Chairman, Bob Smith, suggested that we visit every Fire Station in Avon, paying for the privilege of photographing all the appliances, and donating the proceeds to the Evening Post Fleur Lombard Memorial Appeal Fund. There was instantaneous support and the task of planning the event started in early March 1996.

Entirely of their own accord, for I contacted them to obtain a quote, Richard Reynolds, the Operations Manager of Badgerline, donated a bus, fuel and services of a driver (Paul Rice) for the two day event, totally free of charge - many thanks to Badgerline!

ADO Keith White acted as liaison officer. We appointed photographic and safety marshalls, the desired route and timings were planned by us to the last degree; our Treasurer quietly continued to control finances, and the inevitable trials and tribulations of undertaking such an event were hammered into place thus enabling Keith to 'make it happen' in a manner acceptable to the Brigade. He did and we are grateful to all concerned.

Our original plan was for 82 persons packing a double-decker bus at £10 per head. The Fire Brigade Society was not to benefit in any financial manner and local officers bore much of the associated costs in organising the weekend photographic marathon out of their own pockets. Members travelled from Scotland, East Anglia, the South Coast and Wales to join us.

The bus duly turned up at A1 on the 27th and 28th April 1996. Thanks to many of you at individual Stations within the Brigade - all went more or less to plan throughout the forty-eight hours! Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Avon Ambulance were 'commandeered' wherever possible and their vehicles duly photographed. By the end of the marathon we'd fulfilled our objective in raising as much money as possible for the Appeal Fund and we had visited every operational Station within the Brigade (sorry Control). We think every appliance - including the impressive Advanced Driver Training Unit/WrC - was seen except A1's RT (B441 vAE), A3's WrL (L548 SAE), C1's WrL (M207 AOU) and C9's WrL (J640 GHY), these being off the run and

not available for photography. With over one hundred vehicles photographed over the weekend I don't think anyone was complaining!

We were deeply touched by the reaction of the general public and it may be some small comfort to the Brigade to know what high esteem you are held in by the public you serve, and how much Fleur Lombard is in their memories. Ours was but an ad-hoc collection when we could get a moment or two spare from an exacting timetable but such was the public's goodwill to the Brigade that the bucket itself raised over £350.

Collectively we have definitely made over £900 for the Evening Post Appeal Fund, and the final total may edge towards £950. As a national committee member, and a member of the Western Area of the Fire Brigade Society, could I, on behalf of the Society, wish the Brigade every success and thank everyone who in any way assisted us on the 27/28th April 1996. We are grateful.

Should anyone be interested in joining the Society we do a quality newspacked and picture filled quarterly journal entitled 'FIRE COVER' (a copy of which is sent to all Brigades), annual membership is £19, and the Membership Secretary is a serving Gloucestershire Policeman, Mike Williams, of 115 Barnwood Avenue, Gloucester GL4 3AG. He will be pleased to answer any queries as will I, Dave Boulter, of 9 Cheshire Close, North Yate, South Gloucestershire BS17 5TQ, Telephone: (01454) 326469.

Dave Boulter

With Christmas on the horizon - This was a card that the Press Office received last year



"So let's get this straight - an Angel came to visit, you've had God's baby and you're still a virgin - The Editor will love this!"

"THATS EASY FOR YOU TO SAY"

To illustrate the sort of information supplied for deciphering at Brigade HQ, a copy of a recently received document is re-printed below...

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1996 No. 2096

FIRE SERVICES

The Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (Amendment) Regulations 1996

Made

8th August 1996

Laid before Parliament

9th August 1996

Coming into force

1st September 1996

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 18(1) of the Fire Services Act 1947(a), and after consultation with the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, hereby makes the following Regulations:

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (Amendment) Regulations 1996 and shall come into force on 1st September 1996.

2. Regulation 6 of the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) Regulations 1978(b) shall be amended as follows:-

(a) in paragraph (6):-

(i) the number "(i)" shall be omitted;

(ii) for the number "(ii)" there shall be substituted the letter "(b)", and

(iii) the words "or" to the end shall be omitted;

(b) in paragraph 6A for the letter "(a)" there shall be substituted the letter "(b)";

(c) paragraphs (6B) and (6C) shall be omitted;

(d) in paragraph (7) for the words "(in that or an earlier year)" in each place where they occur there shall be substituted ", on one of the three successive immediately preceeding occasions on which it was held." and

(e) after paragraph (7) there shall be inserted:-

"(7A) A member of a brigade who has, prior to September 1996, passed Part I of the examination referred to in sub-paragraph (a) or, as the case may be, in sub-paragraph (c) of paragraph (7) above, shall be treated for the purposes of those sub-paragraphs as if he had passed that part of the examination in September 1996."

Home Office

8th August 1996

David Maclean
Minister of State

(a) 1947 c.41; as amended by the Fire Services Act 1959 (c.44),

(b) S.I. 1978/436; the relevant amending instruments are S.I. 1985/1176, 1991/369, 1992/187, 1992/2365, 1993/2946 and 1995/2109.

PHEW!!