

Winter 1999/00

AVON



Fire Brigade *news*

Bristol's Biggest
Blaze

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As this copy of the magazine goes to print, both Christmas and the Millennium change are approaching us all rapidly.

During 1999 many challenges faced the Brigade, ranging from demanding operational incidents and technically complex fire safety solutions, to "Best Value" and the "Millennium Bug."

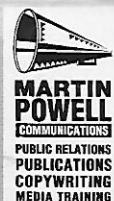
All sectors of the Brigade have worked hard to ensure that their particular role contributed positively to the on-going successful provision of an excellent response service to the public.

This is the objective that we must all never lose sight of, whilst pursuing the many new concepts that need to be addressed as the organisation develops its own aspirations, together with those of society in general.

May I thank everyone for their efforts and wish you and your families a very happy Festive Season and the best of luck for the Millennium and beyond.

J.D. Terry
Chief Fire Officer

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Martin Powell Communications
1 Lyons Court
Long Ashton Business Park
Yanley Lane, Long Ashton
Bristol BS41 9LB
Tel (01275) 394 400



Editor: Martin Powell

Journalistic team: David Baxter, Liz Lewis

Advertising sales: Anita Alexander
Bob Powell

Design and Production by: **semaphore**
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BRISTOL'S BIGGEST BLAZE



Fifty firefighters fought a massive fire which left a Bristol dockside warehouse a smoking ruin in the heart of the new city centre Harbourside development.



The inferno that demolished 'A Shed' in Anchor Road at Canons Marsh sent flames shooting 100ft into the air above the Bristol skyline as firefighters took two hours to bring the blaze under control.

The heat from the fire was so intense that fourteen cars parked nearby were severely damaged and trees were scorched more than 100 yards away. Firefighters had to hose down several boats moored in the dock until the craft were either moved to safety or the fire died down.

The fire was reported shortly after 9pm and five pumps initially tackled the flames which were spreading rapidly through the 100 yard long building. Another five pumps were called in and ultimately 19 appliances including a turntable ladder and the Chemical Incident Unit and Control Unit were at the scene.

The fire was tackled from outside because the structure was quickly becoming unstable and because of the danger of stored gas or chemical cylinders.

FACT FILE

Appliances attending:

A11, A12, A15, A13, B62, B77, C52, B61, B42, B49, A31, C51, A32, C92, C57, A52, A71, A16, B69

Fact File Fact File Fact File Fact File

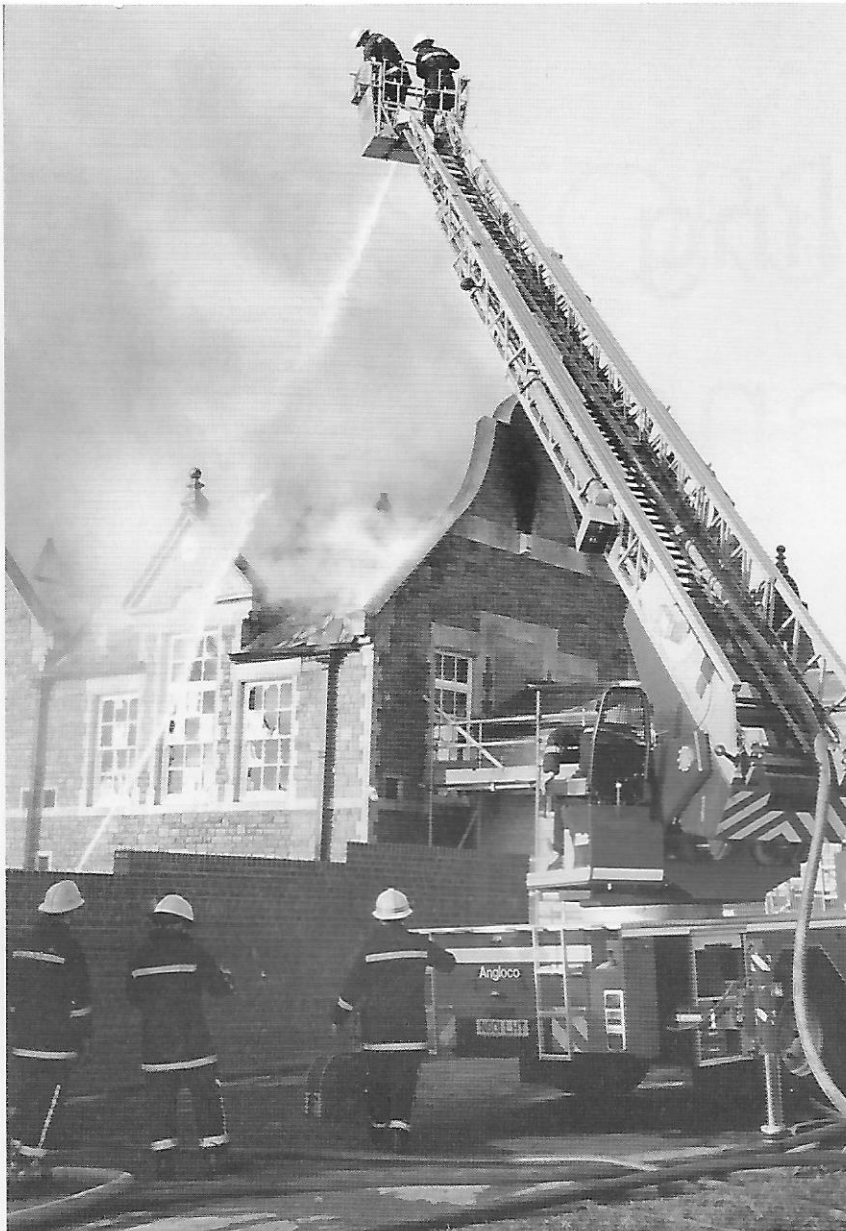
Jets were set to work and the two-storey building was rocked by several blasts as gas cylinders inside exploded, sending more columns of flames high into the night air. The fire was ultimately brought under control but firefighters stood by all night to ensure that it did not flare up again.

“This was one of the biggest and worst fires Bristol has seen for some time.”

The following morning staff arriving for work at the nearby Lloyds TSB Bank headquarters in Anchor Road stared curiously as fire investigators searched the wrecked remains to establish the cause.

Avon Fire Brigade spokesman Tim Wood said: "This was one of the biggest and worst fires Bristol has seen for some time. The fire quickly took hold and it soon became clear that the building was rapidly becoming unsafe because the structure was collapsing and conditions were perilous."

"Jets were set to work on it and with cylinders and chemicals thought to be involved, pumps were increased to ten together with the turntable ladder, the Chemical Incident Unit and the Control Unit were also brought into play."



Lucky Escape For Children

Beacon Rise Primary School in Kingswood, Bristol suffered a severe fire on October 14 while children were attending.

A completed roll call by the school staff ensured that when the first Officer in Charge arrived he knew everyone was out of the school.

He was confronted by a fire in a close boarded and tiled roof with limited internal access. Eight pumps and a turntable ladder and hydraulic platform were used to deal with a fire that involved the whole roof.

Five jets and water towers from the hydraulic platform and turntable ladder extinguished the fire. The fire meant that for the first time the Incident Command System was used.

The school will now have to be substantially rebuilt because of the severity of the damage.

FACT FILE

Appliances attending:

B62, B72, B61, B65, A11, A52, A12, C52, A13, A19, B77, B42, A72, A31, A29, A15

Fact File Fact File Fact File Fact File

Bloomin' Lovely!



Portishead's Station Officer Ken Windibank has a garden which was a blaze of colour in the summer with more than 4,500 blooms on display.

Ken, aged 56, won the town's best-kept garden competition this year after judges, who included television's gardening expert Nick Wray, found his spectacular display simply unbeatable.

The flowerbeds include some 1,000 busy lizzies in the central feature, surrounded by pots of fuschias and several brightly coloured hanging baskets.

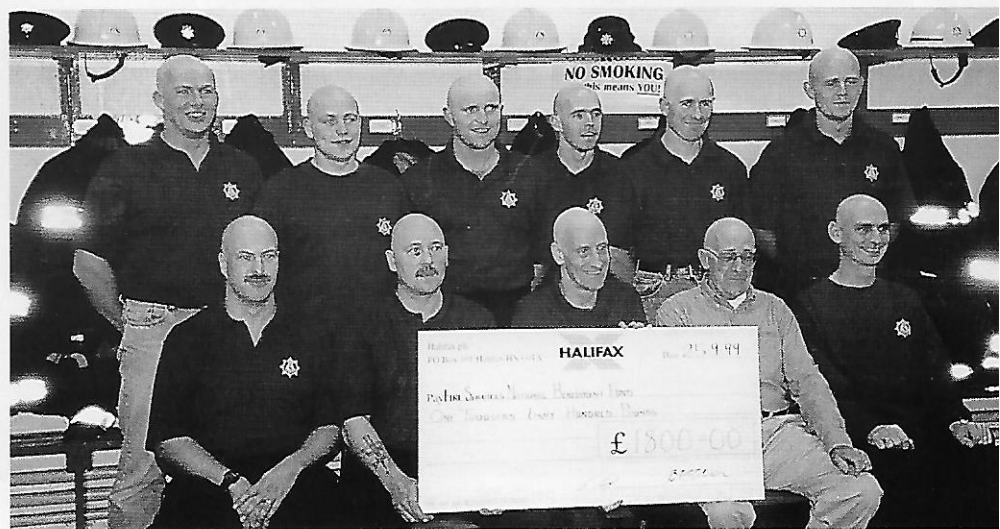
Ken, who is a lorry driver, said the majority of the plants had been grown from seeds that he planted in January.

"I try to spend some twenty or thirty hours a week keeping the flowerbeds and other features looking their best," he said.

A CLEAN SHAVE!

Helmets were a loose fit and all the locks were missing for a short while at B2 Radstock when the team took part in a sponsored head-shave for charity.

The stunt raised more than £1,800 for cancer patient Sub Officer Geoff Garrett, and the money was donated to the Fire Brigade Benevolent Fund.



A Gruelling Challenge



The Three Peaks Challenge is renowned as a gruelling ordeal but for the team from "B" Division Headquarters and "F" Division Bath, it was made even more dramatic by the Three Breakdowns.

They were not part of the grand plan which took the team hours to finalise, but they put a spanner in the works which challenged their ingenuity and patience in their bid to raise funds for the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

The team - John Rice, Nick Baker, Chris Bailes, Mark Burton, Steve Emery - with drivers Gordon Adams and Bob Kendall set off in the Brigade PCV at 6.30am on May 16 from Temple Back HQ with Ben Nevis their first target. Nick takes up the story.

"All went well until we reached the outskirts of Glasgow when the exhaust pipe broke in two," he said. "On a Sunday!"

"We managed to limp off the motorway and made it to a small industrial estate looking for a branch of Kwikfit. We made enquiries and were told that the nearest was Motherwell which was ten miles in the wrong direction but we had no other choice.

"We made it to Kwikfit, who had us back on the road in an hour and a half, £108.00 worse off. Morale was restored and we reached the foot of Ben Nevis at 1705 hours and immediately got organised and started our climb 25 minutes later.

"We reached the summit two hours 50 minutes later and it was a foot deep in snow but with clear sunny skies. Suddenly a group of five other people appeared, took a group photograph for us and just as suddenly disappeared down the mountain," he said.

"We started the descent and radioed our two sherpas - Gordon and Bob - to get the stove on as we were coming home for tea. We arrived at 2246 hours to be greeted with soup, pasta, rolls and tea which were all downed in record time so

that we could pack the PCV and head for Scafell Pike in the Lake District.

"Travelling through Loch Lomond Bob came face to face with a large stag wandering in the road. It's the size of a moose, he exclaimed and promptly acquired the nickname Klondike Kendall.

"At 0330 hours the following morning the PCV shed a bolt securing the alternator and the fanbelt went slack, the ignition light came on and we cruised off the motorway into the services.

"All went well until we reached the outskirts of Glasgow when the exhaust pipe broke in two," he said. "On a Sunday!"

"Bailes the Bolt" took a bolt from somewhere and fixed the alternator back on tight, adjusted the fanbelt and off we go again.

"Onward to Wasdale Head where we set off for Scafell Pike. We arrived at 0628 hours with the weather very cold and windy but dry. A quick breakfast, tea and cheese and ham rolls and away we go. At this point Gordon and Klondike are shattered and cannot wait for us to leave.

"We chose Longmell Gill and the Corridor route for the ascent. This was a very remote spot and we saw only one other person at the summit. Back down and once again dinner was waiting for us. Both Gordon and Bob were looking after us really well and they were much more polite and happy now that they had caught up on some sleep.

"Two peaks down and one to go - Snowdon. We left Wasdale Head at 1400 hours but we did not get far. Forty five minutes later in the middle of nowhere the PCV started belching smoke and made some funny noises. All stop.

"Bailes the Bolt reckoned that the water pump had jammed, and the bolt we replaced on the alternator is missing again. Morale dropped like a brick as hope faded of reaching Snowdon.

"Fortunately we had mobile phones, and ours were running red hot. Brigade Control contacted our workshops, Cumbria Fire Brigade Workshops, a local garage, the Samaritans and finally the AA who were our saviours.

"We decided to limp to the nearest village and call the AA from there. Our Workshops gave us tips on how to nurse the PCV along, mainly by driving up hills and coasting down. Easy really.

"The village was four miles away and as we approached luck ran out again. A level crossing was closing and we had to stop. The engine boiled over as we gloomily watched a nuclear waste train appear heading for Sellafield.

"But we managed to get to the village and the AA is mobilised. They arrived after about 50 minutes with a Relay flatbed recovery vehicle and a four-wheel drive. Within five minutes the PCV was loaded on the Relay vehicle.

"At this point I climbed in the recovery vehicle and asked Klondike where we were going.

"Dunno, ask him," he replied. I got out of the vehicle to find the driver and bumped into John, asking him the same question and getting the same reply. Just as I felt like strangling somebody it was explained that "Ask him" was actually "Askam," the name of the place we were being taken for the vehicle to be repaired.

"We arrived at the garage and a new water pump arrived from somewhere by courier. "We were told it would take two hours to fit so the garage arranged for us to eat at a pub five miles away and loaned us their own PCV to get there.

"Half an hour later our PCV turned up. Apparently there was nothing wrong with the water pump, the bolt we had shed had jammed the pulley. The garage renewed the fanbelt, refitted the radiator, filled it up, replaced several missing bolts and said there would be no charge. Brilliant!

"We thanked the garage and headed for Snowdon. We reached Llanberis at 2250 hours and dived into a bed and breakfast place for a well-earned orange squash and a good night's sleep.

"We started the climb at 0950 hours and reached the summit at 1345 hours after what to some of us was a scary experience. We started on the Pyg track on to Crib Gogh and then Crib y Ddysgl to reach the summit. When we reached the top it was a bit of an anti-climax after all the drama. Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike are both bleak, remote and lonely places, but at the top of Snowdon is a large cafe and a railway station.

"But we had made it, and we returned to Llanberis Pass by the Pyg Track and Miners Track, arriving at 1630 hours. We downed a cup of tea and a bun and headed for home.

"Thankfully there were no more problems and we arrived back at Headquarters at 2115 hours, very tired but very happy.

"Thanks to all the people who sponsored us and helped us raise £525.00 for the Fire Services Benevolent Fund."

VIP VISITORS

Liz Lewis reports

People from around the world have visited the station headquarters in the last few months. The most recent were delegations from Jamaica and the Gambia.

The High Commissioner of Jamaica Mr David Muirhead was invited to a reception at the station to mark his first visit to Bristol. The Chair of Avon Fire Authority, Councillor Terry Walker used this opportunity to launch a link between the Avon Fire Brigade and the Jamaican communities.

Also present were Bristol Lord Mayor Graham Robertson and his wife Joyce the Lady Mayoress, members of the CFA and members of the local community. They were given the opportunity to look at the Brigade fleet, met firefighters and saw a variety of demonstrations including road traffic accident procedures.

More long-established links were renewed when Gambia's Tourism and Culture Minister Susan Waffa Ogoo visited the station to receive the keys to two water tenders which are to be shipped out to West Africa shortly.

Links with The Gambia stretch back over more than ten years from the time when Deputy Chief Fire Officer Dave Hutchings was on holiday in the country and was unexpectedly called on to help with a road accident.



The Jamaican High Commissioner's party watches a road traffic accident demonstration.

Since then he has visited The Gambia nine times to train fire officers and deliver much needed equipment. To date Avon Fire Brigade have sent 17 pumps and a road accident rescue vehicle, plus 200 breathing apparatus sets to the country.

Fire Officers from The Gambia now come to Bristol to train for three months at a time. A total of nine people have now been trained. The latest fire officers, Sanyang and Ndow are due to return to The Gambia in February.

Another VIP visitor to the station's headquarters was the High Sheriff of Bristol, John Pool MBE who was invited by the Chief Fire Officer as part of his official visit programme.

Despite a busy morning when many appliances were called out Mr Pool was able to complete his tour, seeing a demonstration of appliances and equipment by members of Green Watch - and was treated to a lift 40ft in the air on a turntable ladder.



Gambia's Tourism and Culture Minister, Susan Waffa Ogoo, receives the keys to two water tenders



The High Sheriff watches a rescue exercise

Date/Time: 14/5/99 19.56

Address: Downend Road, Downend

Appliances: B72,B61,B62,B42,A13,A72,B77

First crews arrived within minutes of the first call but already the house was involved in a serious fire with confirmed persons trapped. Breathing apparatus teams entered to search and were faced with atrocious conditions. A mother and her young son were located in a second floor attic area and tragically died as a result of their injuries. Prior to our arrival three other children escaped with two rescued by a neighbour.



Date/Time: 26/7/99 06.03

Address: Lower Queens Road, Clevedon

Appliances: C22,C21,C92

On discovery of the fire five adults escaped from various windows but a man was known to be still inside. Six firefighters in breathing apparatus used three high pressure hose reels to fight a severe fire in a lounge. They had located the casualty but tragically had died in the inferno.



Date/Time: 29/8/99 20.09

Address: Albion Boatyard, Cumberland Basin

Appliances: A11,A12,A15,C51,C52,C57

The Brigade received over thirty calls to a fire and explosion involving an eleven metre catamaran with persons reported. The boat was destroyed by the blast but a search of the craft revealed no one aboard. Pieces of the boat were blown over one hundred metres away by the force of the explosion.



Date/Time: 13/9/99 09.24

Address: Severn Road, Weston super Mare

Appliances: C11,C12,C16

Crews arrived to find the driver trapped from his thighs down by approximately forty sheets of glass weighting a total of one tonne. Air bags were used to take the weight of the glass whilst it was carefully unloaded by hand.



Date/Time: 24/9/99 12.22

Address: Southfield Place, Bedminster.

Appliances: C51, C52, A13.

Firefighters were called to a fire in Southfield Place with persons reported to be trapped inside. Crews were faced with a severe fire in the ground floor kitchen which was spreading up the staircase and had trapped an elderly woman in her first floor bedroom. Six firefighters in breathing apparatus using hose reels fought their way to the first floor and rescued the lady by carrying her downstairs. The fire caused extensive damage to the kitchen, hallway, stairs and landing and heavy smoke damage elsewhere in the building.



Date/Time: 27/9/99 08.42

Address: Coleridge Road, Weston super Mare

Appliances: C11,C12, C15,C14

Crews were called to a fire and an explosion in Coleridge Road, Weston super Mare. On arrival crews were faced with a severe fire and some structural damage to the property. Six firefighters in breathing apparatus using two high pressure hose reels extinguished the blaze and isolated the gas supply. The explosion and subsequent fire severely damaged the kitchen, dining room and first floor rear bedroom. The cause of the incident was the ignition of gas by the occupier lighting a cigarette following a gas oven being left on unlit overnight.

Date/Time: 13/9/99 14.54

Address: Portway

Appliances: A11,A13,A16,A15,A17

Crews arrived to find that a young female climber had fallen twenty five feet and had come to rest on a ledge approximately eighty feet from the ground. A Vertical Line Rescue Team were brought into action and soon brought the casualty to safety.



Date/Time: 31/10/99 14.56

Address: Old Gaiety Cinema, Wells Road, Knowle

Appliances: B42,A12,A11,C51,A15,C92,B11,B77,A19,A13

Crews arrived to a serious fire affecting the first floor and roof of the old cinema and a search was quickly made for persons reported with children possibly inside. Two jets, a high pressure hose reel and turntable ladder monitor were used to extinguish the fire with up to six firefighters in breathing apparatus inside fighting the fire and searching - twice withdrawn due to signs of collapse of the roof.

Firefighters who keep their day jobs

They come from different backgrounds but share a common bond with their full-time colleagues who they regularly assist at major incidents - either helping to fight the flames or providing cover while the full-time crews are engaged.

In the heat of the moment it is hard to tell them apart. But when the incident is all over they go their separate ways - the full-timers return to their stations and the retained go home or back to their regular jobs.

The retained firefighters are a rare breed of people who have their regular day jobs but are also volunteers who are constantly on call to cover mostly rural areas for the benefit of the local community.

There are some, like seven full-time firefighters at Bristol International Airport, who are so committed to their job that they are also on standby at Nailsea in their free time.

It may be a house or factory blaze, a road accident or a horse stuck in a ditch, but they have to stop whatever they are doing and get to the fire station in five minutes, climb into their kit and prepare for the worst.

Avon Fire Brigade has 212 retained firefighters based at 14 stations throughout its area, and they are frequently called in to assist the 580-strong full time force.

It was drill night at Nailsea fire station and Firefighter Malcolm Hunt, who works as a carpenter-joiner at Southern Glass at Winscombe, had opened up the shop to reveal two gleaming fire tenders parked on a spotless brown tiled floor.

Nailsea fire station was opened in 1973 and covers an area from Flax Bourton to Brockley Combe, Tickenham and on towards Bedminster. Within the patch are larger towns like Nailsea, Portishead and Clevedon,

with the M5 and main roads, and tiny hamlets linked by single-track lanes.

Last year they turned out to 213 incidents including 55 house fires. Forty seven of the calls were incidents involving trapped or straying cattle and horses, and there were 33 false alarms with good intent, 14 calls caused by defective alarms and 17 malicious calls.

Station Officer Ian Rundle arrived looking amiable. "We have an inspection tonight," he said, glancing around to make sure that nothing was out of place.

Silver-haired and with 31 years' service behind him, Ian is one of the seven who work at Bristol International Airport where he is Station Officer in charge of Red Watch.

The rest of the 17-strong squad arrived in a rush and busied themselves with routine checks of machines and equipment.

They were called into the canteen and Ian went through his briefing - roadworks due to start on one of the main routes in the area, and a reminder of a general instruction from Temple Back HQ that all crews except the driver have to get into their kit before mounting the vehicle, and all must wear seat belts.



Nailsea fire station



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They checked the work rota and were going about their tasks to ensure that all the equipment was in good working order when ADO John Dando arrived for the twice-a-year inspection.

John has five retained stations under his command, Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Winscombe, Yatton and Nailsea, and he has a very high regard for all of the part-timers.

"They are the absolute backbone of the job, and we could not cope without them," he said firmly.

"The reality is that you cannot have whole-time firefighters at all of the stations throughout our geographical area, and the commitment shown by the retained people is astonishing.

"It is simply incredible that they are prepared to respond 24 hours a day seven days a week throughout the year.

"From the public's point of view it is cost-efficient and their presence in rural areas speeds response times to an incident.

"Being a retained firefighter is a source of pride for those involved, and for their local communities, and they all do a very good job as a close-knit team."



Gear is kept ready at Nailsea

It was drill time and the team assembled in the rear carpark. Floodlights switched on to penetrate the darkness as Ian and John quietly discussed the exercise they would go through.

Hoses were swiftly unreeled, breathing apparatus unpacked, ladders erected

against the tall tower and the team went to work fighting a simulated fire under watchful eyes.

Soon all the equipment was neatly stowed away and there was time for a quick cuppa in the canteen as ADO Dando and Ian Rundle went through admin matters.

continued...

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Station Officer Rundle

...continued from previous page

"It all seemed to go OK" said Mark Shaw, aged 31, who works at Nailsea post office and has been a retained firefighter for just over a year.

"I love it," he said enthusiastically. "You never know what the next shout will be, but I would not want to be a whole-time firefighter because I enjoy the job I do."

Some of the retained men at Nailsea such as Alan Miles have clocked up more than 28 years' service, or Paul Henley with 24 years, while Andre Harvey was preparing for a soaking from his colleagues as a friendly farewell before leaving to join the whole-time firefighters at Temple Back HQ.

There is only one woman in the team, Andrea Poole who works with TeleWest in Bristol, and Ian said they are keen to recruit more.

"Possibly the problem is that it is not the kind of work that appeals to many women, but I am sure that there are some who would make excellent firefighters."

So what does it take to be a retained firefighter, apart from a burning desire to ride on fire engines? It is certainly not the money. Pay for the first three years is set at £1,722 in fees - just over £33 per week - and after three years the reward increases to £1,881 or just over £3 per week more.

Even a Sub-Officer in charge collects only £2,085, just over £41 per week, rising to £2,268 after three years or £43.61. For that they will be expected to be on call day and night, turn out when required and fight fires which can range from the mundane to the highly dangerous.

They get extra for being called out - £12.76p for an ordinary firefighter and £16.92 for a Sub Officer. There is also a long service bounty scheme and a firefighter can expect an extra £867 per year after ten years, or just over £1,100 per year for a Sub Officer. There are also long service bonuses rises progressively at five-yearly intervals.

OK, so what is involved in becoming a retained firefighter? You have to be dedicated and need a sympathetic boss at your workplace who is prepared to release you at a moment's notice whenever required, because part of your commitment is to provide 24-hour cover.

Then you have to live and work in the area, within five minutes of the fire station. That is all the time you are allowed to arrive and kit up, otherwise the crew leave without you.

You fill in your application, attend an interview and undertake an assessment to prove your suitability. You have to prove that you are intelligent, alert, obedient, a good learner and a team player, that you have a head for heights and have strong self control

in stressful or dangerous situations. You undergo a memory test and a written examination, and a tough medical to ensure that you are fit and healthy. You also have to drag a 12 stone dummy 25 metres to prove your strength and stamina.

The assessment takes all day and if you are accepted you are signed up and undergo two weeks' basic training. Once over that you are taken on two years' probation, attending Temple Back HQ once a month and turning out for your weekly drill night.

"Most of the retained firefighters are driven by community spirit," said Ian. "They have the respect of the local residents and businesses who know that at one time they may have to call on the help of these people to save their homes and possibly their lives."

Ian said he had wanted to be a firefighter from when he was a child. "When I applied for a whole-time job at the old Bridewell HQ there was a three month waiting list, so they suggested that I try at the former Bristol Aircraft Corporation at Filton and I worked there for five years before transferring to Bristol Airport."

He glanced around to check that the team were working their way through their duties and said: "Fighting aircraft fires is very different because of the amount of fuel which is likely to be involved. You have to get in quickly and throw everything you have at it."

"You also come up against dangerous situations as a retained firefighter, particularly when you are called in to support the whole-time crews fighting fires at the docks or in factories."

"And afterwards you have the satisfaction of doing a good job and helping to protect the public and property."

"We could not do it without the help of the people we work for in our normal jobs and I would like to thank all those businesses involved for the assistance they give us."

Drill night was over and Nailsea's finest packed up their equipment, stacked the gear and gave Andre a good-natured soaking from a fire hydrant to celebrate his farewell.

"...afterwards you have the satisfaction of doing a good job and helping to protect the public and property."

That was the only action they saw that day, apart from answering two calls that turned out to be false alarms. But tomorrow could be very different.

A1 Green are just CHAMPION

The world of amateur football was set alight in Bristol on a damp evening in August when attention focussed on one of the sport's most prestigious trophy matches - the Emergency Services 5-a-Side Championship.

The atmosphere was electric as teams flocked in from as far afield as Staple Hill for the clash of the titans at the exclusive Pro 5 Brislington venue.

There was the inevitable pre-match staring showdown between the teams of finely-tuned athletes as the squads from the Staple Hill Cop Shop and Southmead Road studied the awesome firepower of the Brigade fives from B6 Red Watch, C5 Green Watch and A1 Green Watch.

Two leagues quickly got under way with some fierce competition between A1 and C5 and B6 v C5. There was some strong but fair tackling and only the brave survived.

Commentators noted that the police were sometimes late on the ball and were seen examining the advertising hoardings at point blank range at times.

The semi-finals were equally competitive with A1 Green against Staple Hill 1 and B6 Red v Staple Hill 2, and both fire brigade teams emerged victors.



The final was hotly contested with A1 Green keeping most of the possession to take the title prize with a clear 6-2 victory. Manager Dick Green said later that the tactics were to keep possession and shoot hard and low because Uncle Buck would never get down that fast.

The teams thanked Avon Fire Brigade FC for the use of the shirts, and manager Dick Green whose skills and wisdom guided them to victory.

Variety is the Spice....

Recently stations have taken delivery of Concept 11 rower machines. Here Leading Fire Fighter Matt Hunt of A3 Blue Watch gives a handy guide to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from their correct use.

Arguably a person who is in a better physical condition than their counterparts will participate more fully in life. Regular exercise can rehabilitate those with injuries and lessen the likelihood of more sinister conditions occurring.

Aerobic exercise is where the muscles that we use to perform movement do so in the presence of oxygen. It follows that a guide to your physical health is the ability for these to work (or exercise) for a given period or intensity whilst remaining aerobic.

A very simple check of this is when you will perspire but be able to hold a conversation.

The benefits of using the rower are many but listed below are a few under-stated ones:

- * User-friendly and not intimidating;
- * Complete aerobic exercise utilising all major muscles;
- * Not weight-bearing, non-percussive unlike jogging;
- * Time efficient, useful during lunch periods and stand-down time;
- * Used as part of a wider programme, excellent cross trainer.

Wherever a rower is an information training booklet will be found. The intention is not to tell you the facts on setting up and actually using the

machine. Moreover this is intended as an attention-getter, after all the benefits of any form of exercise have been well documented both at Brigade level and the real world, so ignorance is no excuse!

Several people have commented that they get bored rowing and need stimulus to maintain enthusiasm.

There is a definitive technique involved to achieve a fully fluent style. Your actual progression is then dependent on work-out duration and intensity, but most importantly variation. It is too simple to stick to a monotone programme because you will then only achieve the programme that has already been done. This is known in the trade as "plateau."

Equally it applies to any sport, discipline etc such as weight-lifting. That old analogy "variety is the spice" has credence and is very important if you wish to attain your true potential in any chosen sport.

Make use of the training device installed at the station. It is quite expensive to maintain and does not need oiling, only feeding and paying. The station PEI will be up to speed with the technicalities of the rower and can help you develop your physical fitness, in conjunction with a healthy diet and lifestyle. You will notice a difference - or your money back.

If you need advice on general training or specific matters, cross my palm with silver and give me a call.

GOLF CHAMPION

Mick Keepin of C5 is Avon Fire Brigade's first Matchplay champion after showing consistently brilliant form throughout the six-month competition.

Mick has enjoyed a magnificent season, winning 2nd best nett in the South West championship, and then qualifying for England for the annual England vs Scotland match.

He was joined by colleague Steve Mankowski from A5 who played shoulder to shoulder with him during the matchplay competition.

Both played well with Steve winning both his matches while Mick had a win and a halve while also winning the longest drive competition.

The brigade's first matchplay competition attracted 24 players for the first round in April, and Steve and Mick made it through to the final at Woodspring Golf Club.

Steve (handicap 7) was giving two shots to Mick (10) and both players started well. The highlight of the first nine holes was Steve's tee shot at the par 3 second ending within a foot of the pin.

At the turn Mick was one hole up and playing excellently, finishing 5 and 4 to take the title.

The Brigade championship was held at Thornbury Golf Club and saw a record entry of 42. Despite some seriously heavy rainfall in previous days the course played well and Mick Keepin was still showing fine form. Also playing well on the day was Keith Wharton of S Division who shot a fine nett 63.

RESULTS:

Brigade Champion	Mick Keepin (C5) 80
Winner Best Nett	Keith Wharton (S Div) 85/63
2nd Best Gross	Brian Lindsay (B6) 80
2nd Best Nett	Bill Watson (C1) 82/71
3rd Best Gross	Ashley Wright (C1) 82
3rd Best Nett	Steve Cornish (TRG) 96/72
Nearest the Pin	Mick Keepin (C5)
Longest Drive	Mike Sanders (ex A6)

ON CLOUD 9

Joyce celebrates 30 years!



Joyce Perry was walking on air when colleagues helped to celebrate her 30th anniversary working with Avon Fire Brigade.

Joyce was quietly working in the office on the third floor when there was a tap on the window!

"I looked around and saw that a turntable ladder had appeared outside with Firefighter Nick Stratton holding a big basket of flowers and an even bigger card," she said.

"I got in a bit of a panic when he asked me if I wanted a ride up in the cage - I thought at first this meant climbing out through the window!"

Joyce was ushered down to the yard where

somebody plonked a safety helmet on her head - and then she climbed aboard for a heart-stopping trip in the TL.

"I certainly won't forget my trip up in that cage, nor will I forget Firefighter Stratton's comment that he was born when I first started with the Brigade," she said.

Joyce thanked everybody who helped make it a memorable day including Tony Witcombe and Pete Hamblin for the arrangements he made and also Rachel, Sarah, Ruth, Rita and Lorraine for arranging a fantastic cake.

Jenni Eggo also presented her with a handsome engraved wall plaque which is now on display at Joyce's home.



Annual Remembrance Service - A first for the Drill Squad

The Avon Fire Brigade standard was paraded by the Drill Squad for the first time at the annual firefighters' Service of Remembrance at St Giles church in Cripplegate, City of London, in September.

It was a special day for the standard, which had previously been dedicated by the Reverend Peter Crick of St Stephens, City, and a proud day for members of the Auxiliary Fire Service, National Fire Service, Bristol Fire Brigade, Avon Fire Brigade and members of the brigade's pensioners association.

Betty Peet recalls: "It was a hot and sunny day when we assembled at the church where Oliver Cromwell was married and where William Shakespeare attended as godfather to his brother's children.

"The service opened with the entry of the massed standards from Fire Brigades, Old Comrades and pensioners' associations throughout Great Britain followed by the entry of the National Union and Fire Service College standards.

"After the service, conducted by the Rev David Hughes, we assembled in the forecourt and under the direction of the Parade Marshall the standard bearers, marching contingents and drill squads led by the massed band marched to the firefighters' National memorial adjacent to St Pauls Cathedral for the Laying of the Wreaths ceremony.

"Our own Ted Howard laid our wreath from the Avon Fire Brigade Pensioners' Association. He had driven from his home in Devon the day before through heavy holiday traffic to join us for the trip to London.

"The National Memorial made a great impression on me. I found it very moving to stand and remember and look around at the familiar faces of old colleagues that I have served with over the years. It meant a great deal to me and I felt very proud to have served with them."

Thanks are due to the Chief Officer for the use of the PCVs and for permission to park at A2 Southmead, the Watches at A2 for security and to Pete Marsh the driver and the Drill Squad who gave up their time to transport the party to London. Thanks also to Jim Pratt for producing the centre of the wreath, Avon Pensioners' Association for financial support, and to those members who attended.



Avon firefighter Alan Baxter's first big day was packed with surprises - including meeting actor Chris Chittell and having his photograph in the Bristol Evening Post.

Alan, aged 27, had completed his 15 weeks training and pictured 101 different incidents that could happen as he arrived at A1 Temple Back and joined Red Watch.

"At 1400 hours the first pump and TL attended Bristol Children's Hospital at St Michaels Hill - not for a shout but for a publicity stunt to promote Wrong Trousers Day on July 2," he said

"I glanced up to a first floor window and saw Eric Pollard from the TV series Emmerdale.

"He was quickly rescued with the help of the turntable ladder and was carried into the hospital where a number of photographs were taken of us all.

"Then we left all the cameras behind and returned to the Station. I could not have imagined a more surprising start to my career.

"It just goes to show that you never know what you will be called to next when you are a firefighter."

CELEBRITY INITIATION – In The Wrong Trousers?



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