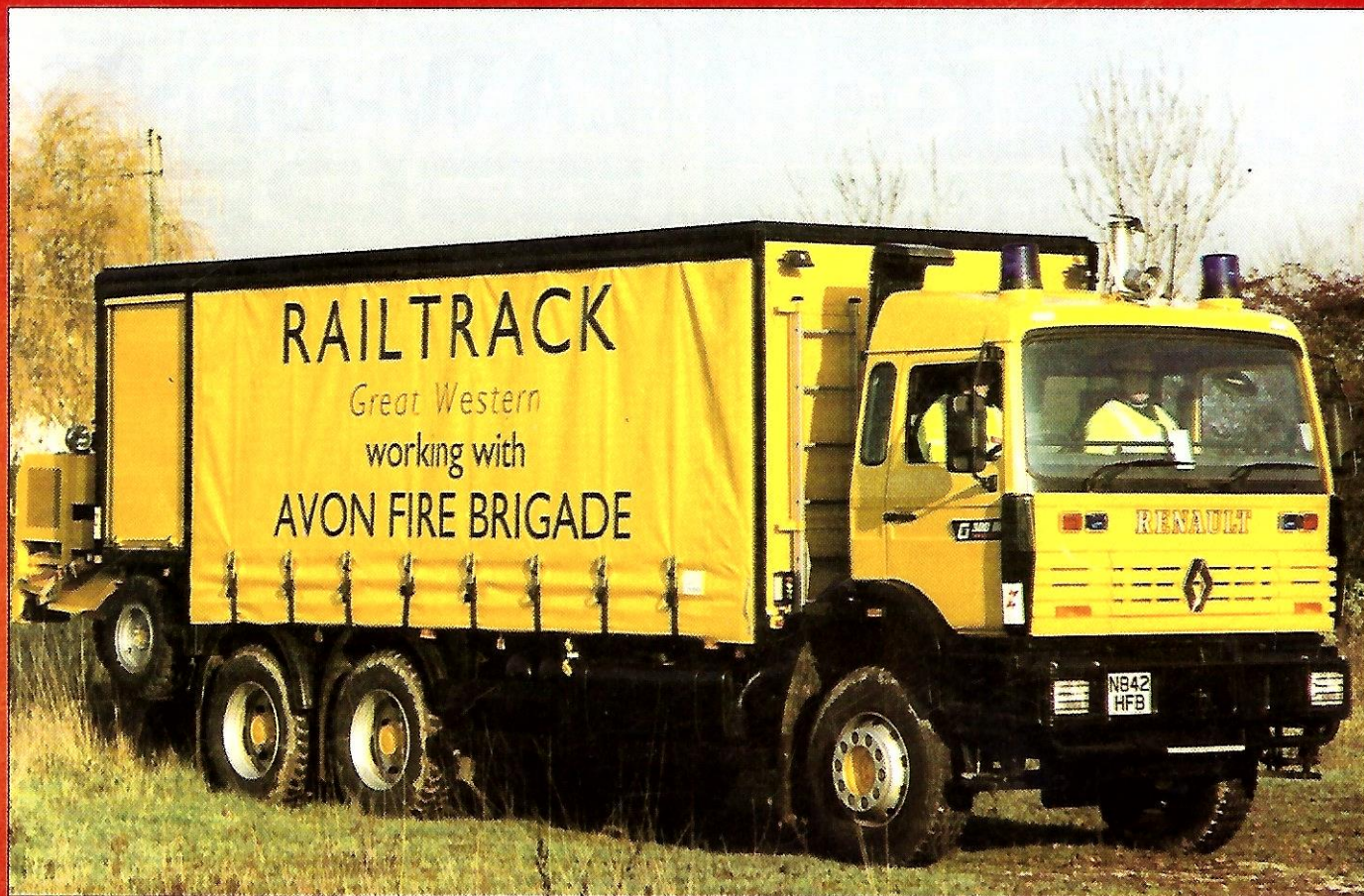


AVON FIRE BRIGADE NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER 1996

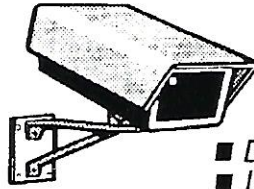


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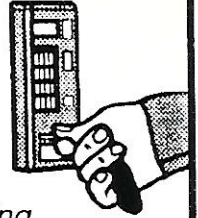
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AVON FIRE BRIGADE NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER 1996

EDITORIAL

Well here we are again. Our many thanks to the volunteers - well pressed ganged! - who have contributed articles for this magazine. Please keep sending items in. Of course, we are still awaiting the much sought after article from an anonymous Fire Safety Officer on *101 Things to do with the Fire Precautions Act*. I understand the paper plane flies well.

The latest news is just in from the Lansdown Birdwatching Society that a bird has finally been spotted through the fog. Said early bird Len Hill, "I couldn't avoid it. It just ran out in front of me, and I couldn't swerve to avoid it because I couldn't see the roadside fences. I think it was a pheasant, but there's not much of it left." The Society is now experimenting with bird feeding tables placed just outside the office windows.

Anyway, just remember, "a circle is the longest distance to the same point!"

Geoff Cater and John Dando
Editors

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COVER PHOTO: Railtrack Road/Rail Vehicle. (See article on Page 5)

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.

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FOREWORD



In putting pen to paper to write this, my last foreword to the Brigade magazine, I am conscious of very mixed emotions. By the time the magazine is published, the County of Avon Fire Brigade will be no more. All members, both past and present, can be proud of what has been achieved in the past 22 years. There is no doubt that this Brigade is second to none and is held in high esteem both nationally and locally. Indeed, it is my belief that it is that esteem which has resulted in the Brigade being the only department of the County remaining unchanged during the recent local government reorganisation.

I am sure that the new Avon Fire Brigade will go on to build upon the strengths which it has inherited. I am sad not to be part of this exciting new era but I am very confident that John Terry will, with the help of the excellent team around him, take the Brigade on to new levels of accomplishment and will continue to further enhance the services we offer to the community.

At this point, I would wish to register my thanks to the County Councillors on Public Protection Committee who have done so much to protect the Brigade in the past few difficult years and also the new Combined Fire Authority Members who have, from the very outset of their assumption of responsibility, taken a forward looking attitude to the needs of both the Brigade and the community. Their determination to provide a Brigade which properly mirrors the needs of the area is to be congratulated.

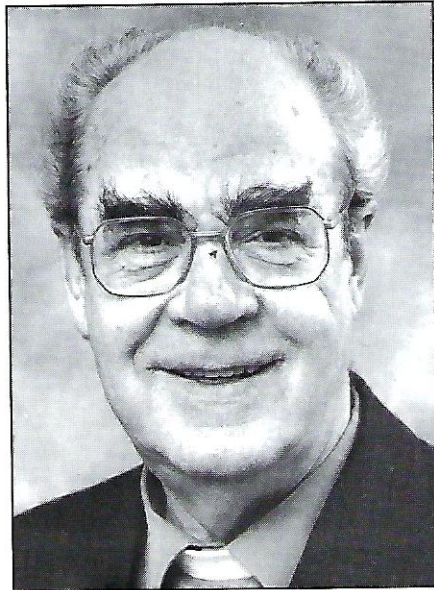
The tragic death of Fleur Lombard so near the end of the life of the County Brigade was indeed a blow to us all. It will be many years before all the pain which that event has brought about eases. However, we must all take a leaf out of her families book and look for positive ways of coming to terms with her death. Surely, one of the most obvious, positive memorials is the way in which our shared grief brought the whole Brigade together - as one - to mourn for her and to honour both her life and dedication and also to honour her family who have been so brave.

A happier event which has taken place since the publication of the last magazine is the award to ACO Dave Hutchings of the Queens Fire Service Medal for his efforts in fostering international links in the Fire Service - particularly with The Gambia where he has worked unstintingly to provide them with assistance. Mr. Hutchings is looking to build upon what is presently provided and is now working towards sending other members of the Brigade out to The Gambia to work. Who knows in years to come we may be posting Firefighters to Banjul rather than Avonmouth!

Finally, as I say goodbye, can I wish you all good luck, both in your careers and in your private life. If you get half as much pleasure as I have from being a Firefighter, you won't have done at all badly!

A. J. Walters
Chief Fire Officer

From the CHAPLAIN



A few days after that dreadful massacre of the Dunblane school children and their teacher, a service was held in Dunblane Cathedral, a place I know very well. At that service the minister said, "What we in Dunblane need is not explanations but faith." It could be asked, "If we cannot have 'explanations' as to why such tragedies happen, then what is faith in such situations?"

Faith is the framework for all human living, and not just the discription of religious belief. If we are going to exist at all we have to live by faith. The food we eat, the journeys we make, the promises we accept, all these and so much more, we take on trust. We believe the food is not poisoned, that the bus driver will take us to our destination, and that the vows we made were genuine. True, sometimes our faith is misplaced, or disrupted by doubt, but that does not destroy all faith, if it did, life itself would be impossible.

You may have heard of the man who fell over a cliff, and on his frightening decent managed to grasp the branches of a shrub to which he clung for dear life. He looked up in desperation and shouted, "Is there anyone there?" A voice answered, "This is God, just let go of the branches and I will take care of you." The man looked down, gulped, looked up again and shouted, "Is there anyone else there?!!"

Sure enough, there are times when whatever faith we have is tested, and maybe found wanting, but somehow we have to come back to some kind of faith. Before you attempt anything you have to believe that you will reach some kind of accomplishment. That is true for the scientist, the architect, the builder, indeed anyone who wants to do anything. The firefighter who responds to a call and rides on the fire vehicle to the scene of the incident must have faith that some sort of accomplishment or success will be achieved, else why respond to the call in the first place. "Have faith or you will fail to stand firm", is how the prophet Isaiah puts it.

Faith is no longer, in our day, an unscientific word, it is the beginning of reality. For the people of Dunblane who have known such tragedy, and for us in the Avon Fire Brigade who experienced the loss of Fleur Lombard, the future which lies ahead gathers up the past and leads us on to new challenges and fresh opportunities.

For Christian people the 'framework of faith', from which all living derives its inspiration, is not a statement of faith or in dogma, but a person, the experiences of Jesus Christ who turned death on a cross into a resurrection.

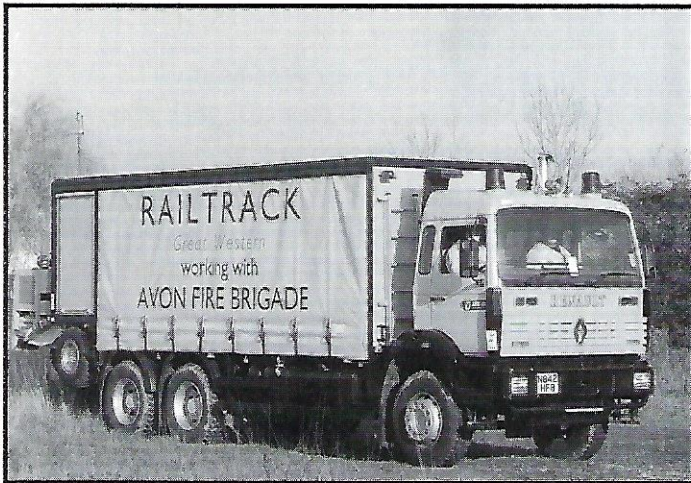
In his famous Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Martin Luther King declared, "I have the audacity to believe... that we shall overcome." It is faith like that we all need. C. S. Lewis, the well known writer described his own 'framework of faith' in these words: *"I believe here and now. I believe in Christianity as*

I believe that the sun has risen, not because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." We all need to fashion our own 'framework of faith' to help us find meaning and purpose in life.

To change the subject, please make a firm note of the date of our Avon Fire Brigade Family Carol Service. It will take place in my old church, Broadmead Baptist Church on Sunday, 15th December, 1996, at 3.00pm. Do plan to be present and bring the whole family with you.

Bill Cobley

Road/Rail Vehicle - Mechanical Chameleon



5th February this year saw the launch and official hand over of the Railtrack road/rail vehicle. It marks the end of five years of hard work between the Brigade and Railtrack as well as numerous companies in the United Kingdom and abroad. Renault supplied the truck, the German company Sweiweg provided the rail gear, working with Reekie Plant in Scotland to produce a special gearbox; A. G. Bracey of Bristol provided the bodywork and Moffat Engineering in Southern Ireland supplied the fork lift truck.

Within BR (and then Railtrack) and the Brigade, the key players were John Buxton and Ernie Coghlan,

who produced the concept and Fleet Engineer Paul Beard, and BR's Senior Project Engineer Paul Kerslake who developed it.

By June 1995, the vehicle had passed the emergency vehicle tests at the Army's test track in Surrey. Final tests were held at the Railway Technical Centre in Derby in July of last year.

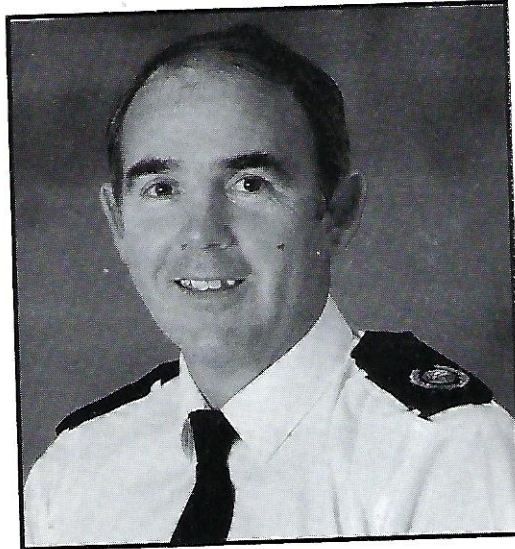
The road/rail vehicle is just part of a £6 million refurbishment project within the Severn Tunnel. Other initiatives include:-

- i) An improved communications system with the installation of telephones every 200 metres and a 'leaky feeder' system to provide radio contact throughout the length of the tunnel.
- ii) A large ventilation system. The existing fan is being replaced by four smaller, reversible fans, which will blow air into the tunnel or suck it out.
- iii) Modern pumping equipment to increase reliability and ensure that water is pumped away before it reaches the tunnel.
- iv) A larger lift which will improve access and provide a quick escape route for accident stretcher cases.

The vehicle, to date, has cost just over £200,000 to produce, this includes the fittings, rail gear and the fork lift truck. Another £80,000 will be spent on extra emergency equipment.

Although owned by Railtrack, the vehicle will be based at A3 Avonmouth. In addition to the Severn, it could also be used in the Box and Chipping Sodbury tunnels and other inaccessible rail sites.

Focus on 'B' Division



Readers of this magazine will be aware that the Editors, Messrs. Geoff Cater and John Dando, have for some time, encouraged all personnel to contribute items for inclusion, in an effort to increase interest and circulation. The last couple of issues have included "Focus on 'C' Division" and "Focus on 'S' Division".

It would appear that they are now playing their 'trump card' by approaching me to pen a few words about 'B' Division.

Since taking up my position in May 1995, the Division, and indeed Brigade personnel, have endured the very sad and tragic loss of our colleague, Fleur Lombard. I am unable to add anything better to the fine tributes paid to her by everyone who knew Fleur. I would however, through this magazine, like to express my personal thanks to everyone, both in the Brigade and outside for their tributes and practical assistance. It is perhaps suffice to say that I feel immense pride in being a member of this very fine organisation.

At the time of writing this article, the Brigade is only a few weeks away from Local Government Reorganisation and I am confident that we can continue to provide a second-to-none service to the community we serve. The service we provide is not achieved by accident, it is a combination of many things. Many initiatives are carried out by people behind the scenes and 'B' Division personnel have played their part in this area.

My appreciation for their sterling work goes to: Geoff Bennett, Dave Creech, Ron Marchant, Dave Holley, Dave Price, Pete Austins, Keith Harris, Phil Morse, Mike Dodd and Chris Palmer, who form the 'B' Division Benevolent Fund Council.

Other initiatives include the Brigade Skittles competition. A total of 25 teams are currently taking part in this event. It has been organised and run by Mike O'Leary and Geoff Strachan of B6, White Watch.

Congratulations also to Rob Seaman and Jon Brown of B6, who's achievements on climbing Ben Nevis and camping on the summit a total of 7 times is commendable. Their efforts raised in excess of £2,500 for the charity 'Dreams and Wishes'.

The 13th Ian Chalmers' Memorial Race organised this year by Rob Davis, Green Watch, B1 Bath took place in October. The event attracted a total of 38 runners, comprising of not only serving personnel but also families and friends.

It is these kinds of events that go some way in making our profession fairly unique and assists us in creating an efficient unit allowing us to deal with all operational challenges thrown our way.

No focus on the Division would be complete without mention of our Retained colleagues who perform an essential service to the community. My thanks go to them and their families for their excellent response to the unusual number of calls throughout the long hot Summer of 1995.

Keeping all uniformed personnel in order, is our 'B' Division non-uniformed staff who, under the guidance of Pat Lawton, provide us with excellent support. The remainder of the team comprises of Alison Dodd, Mary Reed, Shirley Bransgrove and Jane bale, who is temporarily covering Christine Read who is currently on maternity leave.



Left to right: Jane Bale, Pat Lawton, Alison Dodd, Shirley Bransgrove & Mary Reed.

The last 12 months have seen 10 personnel retire from the Brigade: Ernie Perrott, Royce Gibbs, Dave Maslen, John Needs, Reg Morgan, Pete Marsh, Dave Room, Terry Condon, Neil Kirkby & Paul Morgan. To you all, may you have a long and happy retirement.

At the other end of the scale, the Division warmly welcomes aboard Station Officer Steve Rodliff, Blue Watch, B6 Speedwell - transferred from Surrey Fire & Rescue Service; Firefighter Chris Fenton, Red Watch, B1 Bath - transferred from Hampshire Fire Brigade. Probationary Firefighters Stephen Imrie (White Watch, B4); Andrew Green (Blue Watch, B6). Probationary Retained Firefighters Kevin Bridges (B2), Paul Cook (B2), Kevin Smith (B2), James Collier (B3), Stuart Condon (B5), Helen Lerway (B5), Darren Hillman (B3), Ricky Patton, Phil Crump, Timothy Codd and Peter Ling (all B1).

Steve Bull
Divisional Commander

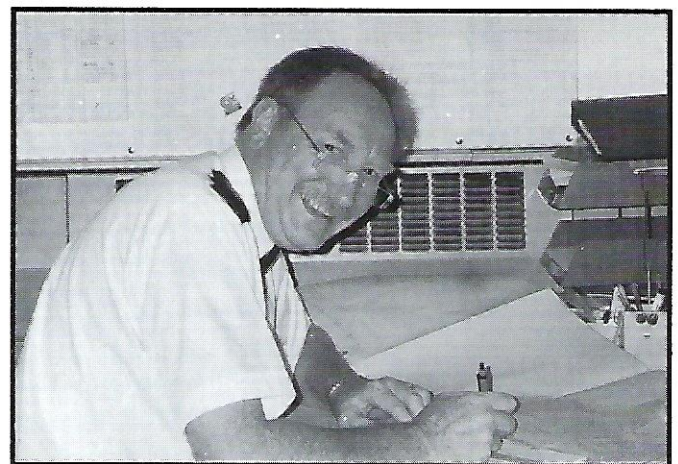
.....
 This was posted to Station A5 Patchway with no explanation.

TO ALL THE FIREFIGHTERS

*I write this poem, with thoughts of you,
 All fighting those fires, thinking it through,
 That we are the ones who save someone's life,
 Risking our own, with fate like a knife,
 You see people die, and others who sob,
 But all you men say is, "We're just doing our job",
 I'm sure we don't know just how lucky we are,
 To have men all a watch and who are never-a-far,
 This poem's a purpose to let you all know,
 That I'll be your fan wherever you go.*

Anonymous

Mr. Pastry spends a day with the Fire Brigade.



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B1 Bath Panto Fun



A deputation, resembling the Bath front row, approached the Station Officer. The spokesman said, with menace, "It's our turn to do the childrens party this year Guvvy - and the lads want to do a pantomime!"

"Oh, no they don't", pleaded the Station Officer.

"Oh, yes they do", came the reply.

The Grey Book was examined, Brigade Orders dissected, even his Moreton notes were consulted. Fi-

nally, using his best tried and tested man management techniques, the Station Officer caved in and, with a sinking heart, saw his peaceful run down to Christmas shattered by the small phrase, "Welcome to the Land of Rhyme."

With only a month to the party the 17 on-duty members of the Watch united as one and democratically nominated the one on leave (Alistair Dunlop) as the Director, Producer, Stage Manager and Villain.

Night shifts on the next four tours were punctuated by the sounds of banging and screwing coming from the dormitory and rec room. Much perturbed by this, the Station Officer again consulted Brigade Orders and decided that banging and screwing did not, in itself, contravene the Discipline Code. This did not reassure him - he had read the script!

Finally, with the scenery built (and suitably fire-proofed, but that's another LONG story), lines learned and costumes made, the great day arrived. The audience assembled. Ninety-six children, including some local disadvantaged kids, and about sixty adults squeezed into the mess room to endure the extravaganza.

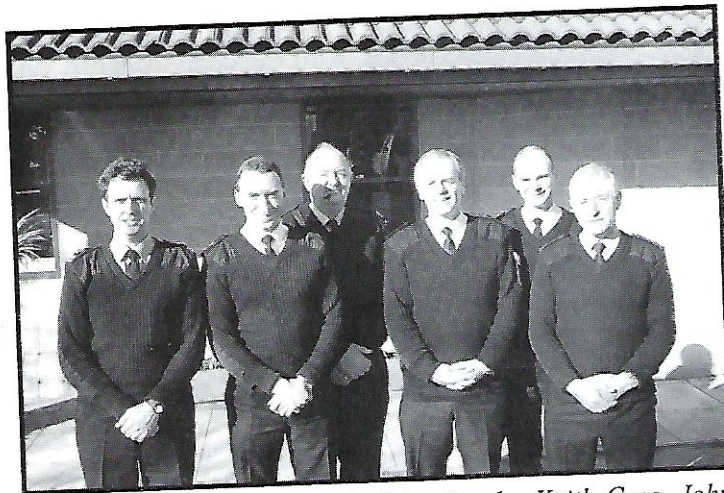
Lou Smith, Green Watch's own Mrs. Mills, gingerly stepped towards the piano, sat down and we were off! An entire 2 hour pantomime, spoken in rhyme, with villains, heroes and a fairy in stockings. Hardly any prompts, all the scenery stayed up and a good time was had by all, even the audience. Then, with the applause ringing in our ears and empty coke cans bouncing off our heads we served food to ninety-six ravenous gremlins.

We feel unable to convey the success of the pantomime to the readers without submitting the following quotes from reviews received by our adoring public. "Is the fairy really gay?", "How did Mike Dwyer squeeze those balloons into his Wonderbra and still see over the top of them?", "Is Jenky Knill suffering from BSE - or was he just acting?", "Why did they pick four guys with arthritis to dance to Whigfield?" But the most important quote of all, from a deputation from another Watch, "Could you do our turn next year please?"

Dozens of letters were sent out to local Bath businesses asking for raffle prizes, so that we could fund the party in the traditional manner of conducting a raffle which was drawn at lunchtime on Christmas Eve at B1. The response was magnificent, embarrassingly so. All told, over 100 prizes were donated, enabling us to pay for the pantomime, the party, and have £88 left over which we were able to donate to Dorothy House. The traders' generosity did save us from the dilemma of having to raid a Building Society in fire kit - that would have really given Sir something to worry about!!

Green Watch, B1

Profile of The Community Liaison Department



Left to right: Dave Hayward, John Dando, Keith Cuss, John Sleight, Geoff Cater & Tom Edwards.

Tucked away up at Fire Safety Headquarters, Lansdown is a small band of overworked and underpaid Fire Officers who are Jack's of all Trade, and master of....!

Perhaps now is the time to identify and outline some of the work/projects undertaken by the Community Team/Press Officers.

PRE-SCHOOL - 7 YEARS - A 'Puppet Show' is used to target this age group. This has been created and put together by Station Officer Steve Emery of Bath Fire Safety Office and tackles a wide variety of home and road safety messages. Steve has made all the puppets himself.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - A rolling programme of Fire Safety education in these schools is carried out by our Leading Firefighters Tom Edwards and Keith Cuss, supported by Sub Officer Dave Hayward. We target the 7-9 year age group with a one hour programme and aim to have visited every school within a three year period (350 schools in total).

JUNIOR LIFE SKILLS - Three schemes are currently operated within the County (Bath, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare), which are multi-agency disciplined and aims to encourage children (10-11 years) to take greater responsibility for their safety and that of others around.

CHILD SAFETY ACTION PACK - The aim of this pack which has been distributed to every primary school in the County, free of charge, and funded by the Health Education Authority is to raise the profile of safety education in those schools and is intended to be a teacher resource which assists their work in the area of home and road safety. It is targeted towards Key Stage 2 children and provides safety information on nine of the well known potential accident hazards in the home and on the road. Each programme provides activity work and the pack concludes with a useful contact addresses section.

SAFETY DETECTIVES CLUB - This is a project which aims to raise the awareness of accident prevention in the home by targeting children aged 7-11 years of age as the 'prime movers'. By using a checklist they take their parents/guardians around the home and identify certain potential accident hazards in their home. The scheme is operated through the schools and upon return of the checklists duly completed, they are awarded with a Safety Detectives Club Certificate. This project was submitted to the Health Authority for consideration in their 1996 Health Alliance Awards Scheme and we are proud to announce that it won first prize. A prize of £500 was awarded on 26th January 1996, together with a commemorative certificate. The Secretary

of State and Minister of Health, Mr. Stephen Dorrell, personally congratulated the Brigade on his recent visit to the County.

"MATCHGUARD" - This is a project which provided all Health Centres in the County with a supply of safety "Matchguard" matchboxes to enable Health Visitors whilst on their rounds to discuss their merits should they feel there could be a potential problem with children playing with matches.

SMOKE ALARM CAMPAIGN - With the support from a local sponsor, any resident in Bath could apply for a free smoke alarm. The project was advertised in the press which asked for a few details, and if the criteria was met, the alarms were fitted by Brigade personnel. A total quantity of 300 alarms were fitted and the scheme will be repeated again.

CHIP PAN DEMONSTRATION UNIT - The Brigade now proudly boasts a Chip Pan Demonstration Unit which travels around the County in an effort to reduce the high number of chip pan fire incidents. Our thanks go to Chubb Fire for their invaluable sponsorship.

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS - Station Officers Geoff Cater and John Dando are committed on a daily basis, developing and expanding the media coverage of the Brigade.

CAR CRIME INITIATIVE - The Brigade actively support a number of initiatives aimed at reducing vehicle related crime and re-habilitation of offenders. Our thanks go to all those operational personnel who have supported this initiative.

JUVENILE FIRESETTERS - In response to requests for help from members of the public, or any interested party, children will be visited and support and advice given by trained personnel from the Community Team. Again, our thanks to all those Brigade personnel who have passed on contact information to support this activity.

BRIGADE MAGAZINE - A bi-annual publication to inform, educate and hopefully entertain all members of the Brigade.

MULTI AGENCY CAMPAIGNS - The Brigade is committed to a number of accident prevention groups, in particular, "Avonsafe - Action for Safety", and works closely to support the Accident Prevention Co-ordinator for Avon.

FIRE LIAISON PANEL - The Brigade is an active member of the Panel, and with them, jointly support and promote Fire Safety initiatives.

CAREER FAIRS - The Team attend career fairs and offer job opportunity and advice/information to pupils and their families.

As you can see, a lot of community work is now being tackled and this could not be done effectively without the help and support of Brigade personnel, for which on behalf of the Team, I thank you all.

Should anyone like further information about any of the activities detailed above, please do not hesitate to contact our department. Telephone 0117 926 2061 and ask for the Community Liaison Department.

John Sleight
Assistant Divisional Officer
Senior Community Liaison Officer

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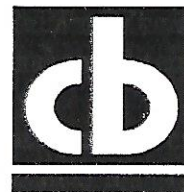
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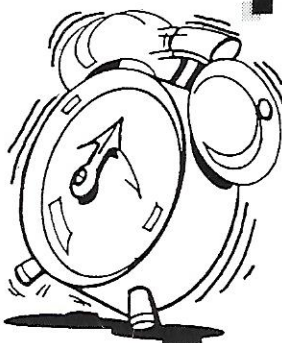
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Fire Victim Support Service



The Fire Victim Support Service was introduced into this Country four years ago having been developed in America some 25 years ago. Initially three Counties were included in the pilot scheme which proved to be extremely successful. There are now six schemes operational in the Country and the service currently being developed by the Avon Branch of the Red Cross will be the seventh nationally when it becomes operational on the 10th April 1996.

On November 28th the newly acquired vehicle was handed over to the Red Cross at a special reception at Fire Brigade HQ, Temple Back, attended by many dignitaries from throughout the County.

Since that date the Red Cross has recruited and trained 40 volunteers who will be delivering the service. They have all attended a comprehensive training programme, where they received instruction in Listening Skills, Managing Stress and Personal Crisis, First Aid, Roles of the Fire Brigade and many other skills have been developed to ensure delivery of an efficient and effective service.

The basic aim of the scheme is to offer practical and emotional support to victims of domestic fires in the first few hours, until relatives, friends and other existing support services are able to make longer term arrangements.

The support is offered to cover unsocial hours - evenings, weekends and bank holidays. The Service will respond within 60-90 minutes of an incident occurring, when two trained volunteers will attend at the request of the officer-in-charge at the incident, with a specially prepared motor caravan, which will provide cloak-room facilities (shower, washbasin, toilet), clothing, baby care equipment, a mobile phone, polaroid camera and refreshments.

Above all the Service will provide victims with a resting place to be together in a controlled environment, where they will receive support to deal with their distress.

Sue Bowen
Red Cross

A fond farewell to the County of Avon Fire Brigade from principal officers both past and present at a recent lunch.

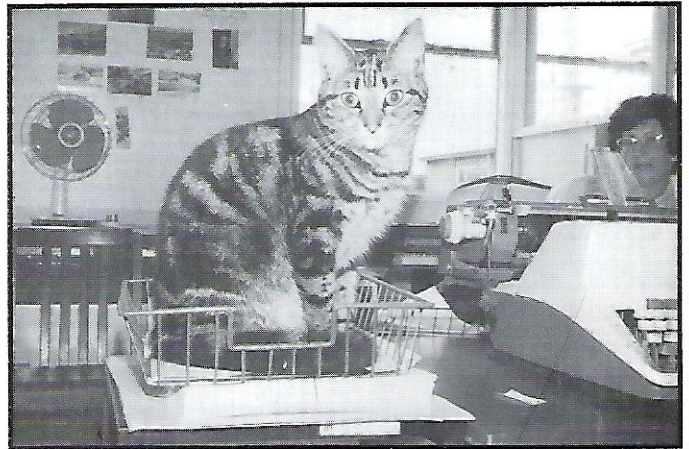
From left to right: Richard Brimmell, Terry McCarthy, Ray Southard, Fred Ponsford, Andy Walters, Barry Hook, Frank Wilton, John Terry, Norman Steeples, Dave Hutchings and David Boyne.



"PICKET" (Station Cat - Weston-Super-Mare) 1977 - 1996

There had never been a "Strike" in the history of the Fire Brigade and there has never been one since!

It was the evening of the 8th November 1977, at the rear picket line, the second night of the "Strike". Trying to warm ourselves, sitting by the lighted brazier, surrounded by frozen puddles, I recall how Graham Darlington and myself were joined by a little tabby kitten. I have to admit that the new arrival restored my faith in human nature amidst the miserable existence we were otherwise experiencing.



Around midnight, we retired to the galvanised shed, followed closely by the feline. Needless to say, this bundle of fluff spent the night cuddled up inside the top of my fire tunic! Firemen are renowned for TLC in such a situation!

Although enquiries were made and the rightful owners found, on several occasions this feline was returned 'home', BUT alas - each time she made her way back to the Station.

In mid December, it was no longer felt necessary to maintain the Picket duty at the rear of the Station and we moved around to the front and into the luxury of an old caravan, followed closely by you know who - yes, by now, realising that she would not go, we had christened her with the name "PICKET"!

9th January 1978, the "Strike" being over, we returned to the Station. "Picket" was not losing out and she followed... Soon "Picket" learned that life was somewhat more luxurious at 'C' Division HQ amongst the females; the girls would spoil her with tins of salmon and the like.

When Office hours were over, "Picket" would return to the Station and make her presence known to the night-shift.

This feline was intelligent. The weekends were no problem to her as she quickly realised that she would vacate HQ on a Friday afternoon and make home at the Station until Monday morning. However, in her 18 plus years she never quite got to grips with Bank Holidays!

Her intellect was such that whenever there was 'turnout' she would hide under a chair or table until such time as all appliances were gone and the Station doors were closed. Quite a priceless possession was "Picket" and she knew how to 'turn heads' in order to be noticed. During all social occasions (dances, retirements, open days), "Picket" could be seen strutting around as though she owned the place, giving her approval before retiring to bed.

Over the last couple of years "Picket" lost weight; she spent most of her time sleeping. Visits to the Vets would cause no alarm - she was eating, in no pain, but was getting old...

Sadly on 7th March 1996, through age and illness, "Picket" was put to rest.

Merv Sims, C1

Brigade Golf Society News

A Wintry scene greeted the golfers who came to Tracy Park to play in the Turkey Trot on 11th December. There were 25 players from the Brigade plus several guests, who braved the elements to try and win the bird and brandy for their Xmas table.

With temporary greens of various quality and the ground frozen solid, there was plenty of head scratching, as the ball seemed to bounce in all directions.

The winner, with an excellent score of 45 points, was John Hillier (C5). The next best from the Brigade was Pete Liddington (A5), who scored 38 points.

We have several society days arranged for this year at which we hope to meet all the Brigade's golfers.

These events are at:-

16th May	Thornbury Golf Course (Par 3 Course)
24th June	Thornbury Golf Course (Main Course)
8th August	Farrington Golf Club
24th September	Tracy Park (Brigade Championship)
TBA	Turkey Trot

Brigade matches confirmed so far are:-

30th May	Oxford	(Home)
1st July	Oxford	(Away)
16th July	Somerset	(Home)
13th August	Wiltshire	(Home)

For information on the above events, please contact: Clive Leech at A2 (Green Watch).

1996 3 PEAKS CHALLENGE

Does the first hint of Spring, influence the normally steady brain rhythm of the "average" firefighter? Is there such a thing as an "average" firefighter? Well, several groups this year I see are taking an "average" Sunday stroll that will stretch into Monday and attempt the 1996 3 Peaks Challenge. One such group is a rag-tag mixture of firefighters from C10, C9, C2 and Bristol Airport plus one or two supporters of the Marston's Fan Club from the "Little Harp", all money raised will go to three charities: The Benevolent Fund, Fleur Lombard Appeal and Amcare.

Anybody who has friends in high places and can influence the weather on the 23rd and 24th June please do so, we hope for a sunny weekend but you never know, at altitude even in Summer, when the clag comes down one or two of us may do somebody a favour and get lost. Anyway, we look forward to your support. Sponsorship forms and draw tickets will be available shortly and the best of luck to anyone else on fund raisers this Summer.

All the best

Pip Sawtell

ROWING (OR STIRRING)?

BRIGADE PROJECT TEAM DEFEATED

The Brigade project team and the Brigade handy men decided to have a competitive race on the River Wensum. Both teams practiced long and hard to reach their peak performance. On the big day, they were as ready as they could be.

The handymen won by a mile.

Afterwards, the project team become very discouraged by the loss and morale sagged. The Principal Officers Group (POG) decided that the reason for the crushing defeat had to be found and Quality Audit were sent to investigate the problem and recommend appropriate action.

Their conclusion was that the handymen had eight people rowing and one person steering. The project team had one person rowing and eight people steering.

POG immediately hired a consultancy company to do a study on the team's structure. Millions of pounds and several months later, they concluded that too many people were steering and not enough people were rowing.

To prevent losing to the handymen next year, the team structure was changed to four steering managers, three senior steering managers and one executive steering manager. A performance and appraisal system was set up to give the person rowing the boat more incentive to work harder and become a key performer. "We must give him empowerment and excitement, that ought to do it".

The next year the handymen won by two miles.

The project team made the rower redundant for poor performance, sold off the paddles, cancelled all capital investment for new equipment and halted development of a new canoe. They then presented high performance awards to the consultants and distributed the money saved to POG.

The Brigade Football Section



This year the Brigade's Football Section has been fortunate in securing sponsorship from a local business in Bristol. Besley Hill Estate Agents were approached by John Davies early this year to see if they were willing to back the Fire Brigade Football Team. John was successful in negotiating from Besley Hill a new football kit. The kit, sporting the logo of Besley Hill, was used for the first time in a match played by the Brigade's representative team against West Glamorgan Fire Brigade, in this year's Fire Service Knock Out Cup. The team, pictured right, won the game 4-0 with Andy Day

of C1 Weston-Super-Mare scoring a "hat-trick" in extra time.

The representative team progressed to the quarter finals of the competition, where we were drawn away to the favourites Hampshire. The game was played on a very ordinary pitch (to be kind). We took a first half lead through a penalty scored by Dave McManee (A3), this came after we had a goal disallowed scored by Steve Fisher (A1). Everybody could see what is good should have been allowed, but referee's have difficulty in communications as we all know, his linesman was trying to attract his attention to award the goal but as I said referees have difficulty with communicating.

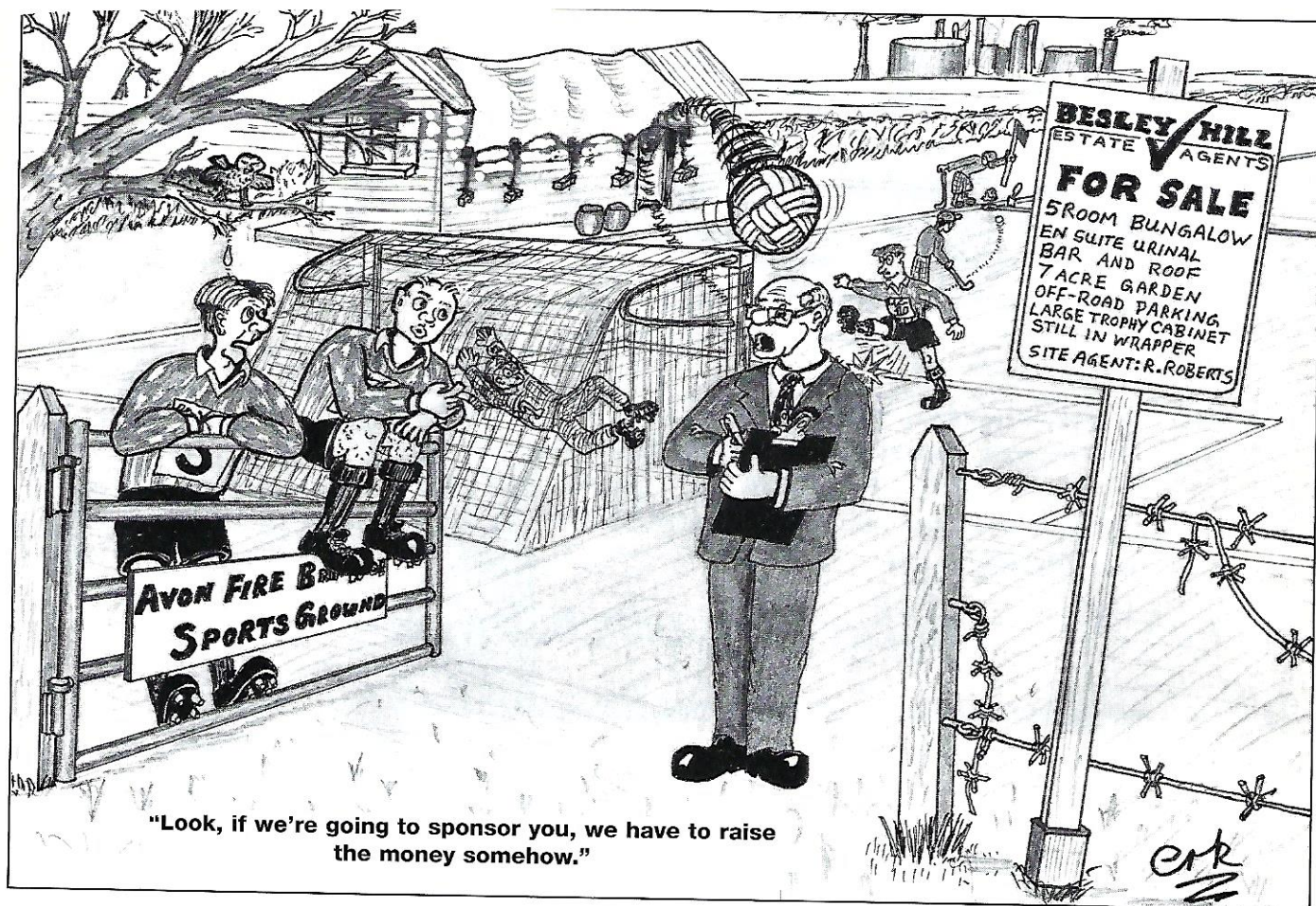
In the second half the Brigade suffered a cruel blow. Dave McManee was involved in a crunching tackle which left Dave writhing in agony clutching his ankle. Dave had to be taken to the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar, where it was confirmed he had broken both the tibia and fibia at the ankle joint. The game was eventually won by Hampshire, and it was plain to everybody we had lost our best player and lost our impetus following his accident.

Dave underwent an operation on his leg where two pins were inserted and was allowed home two days after the operation. Everybody associated with the Football Section wish Dave a speedy recovery, and look forward to seeing him at this year's Dinner Dance at Tracy Park.

Following the unusual steps of calling an Extraordinary Meeting due to the intentions of the committee members electing to stand down after this season, I am pleased to see people like Phil Parnham and Steve Fisher come forward to put themselves up for election as Treasurer (Phil) and First Team Manager (Steve). However, the club still requires a Secretary to take over from Gary Carr-Smith, because without a Secretary the club cannot continue Saturday Football according to Association rules.

So, if there is anybody willing to stand as Secretary at this year's Annual General Meeting please let the committee know now.

Robbie Roberts



The Story of Blagdon Fire Brigade



Present crew during the 25th Anniversary celebrations on the 30th March 1996.

We have come a long way since the Fire Brigade was first formed in Blagdon by Sir John Wills' father some years ago with a hand-drawn pump. Then replaced by a small trailer pump towed by Sir John's car, or someone local who had a tow hitch and was stored under the Arches at Coombe Lodge which was a type of cellar with an open front.

That pump was changed for a Godwin trailer pump towed by an ATC (Austin Tow Conversion) vehicle which was also stored under the Arches at Coombe Lodge until in 1957 Somerset Fire Brigade rented premises in the village from Sir John and the trailer pump and ATC were housed there.

It was a very dangerous access from this Station which was built right on the edge of the main Bath road, with a blind corner 50 yards along the road. We used to have to send a man along to the corner with a red flag to stop the traffic to give us room to swing out into the road and be able to hitch up the trailer pump. If we were going to the right, we had to pull out, go along the road for 50 yards, turn around on the bad corner, come back, hatch up the pump and away.

In 1960 we had a Land Rover delivered, we stored that about a quarter mile down the road in a small garage at a private house as the Station was not large enough to get it inside.

If we have a shout we would send one man down to collect the Land Rover and bring on the rest of the personnel, after the ATC had left with a minimum crew. Up until 1964 we were a volunteer station, but not once did we fail to turn out when called, in those days we only had a siren on the Station roof, and a bell in our homes.

In 1964 when we became a retained station, we were given a brand new Bedford TK Carmichael Water Tender, but it was a tight squeeze to get it into the Station.

In 1970, Somerset Fire Brigade purchased a plot of land from Sir John Wills and built a brand new fire station where it is today, we were the first station in Somerset to have personal alerters.

In 1971 we moved in and it was officially opened on 27th March 1971 by Brigadier Frith and we are now celebrating our 25th Anniversary.

THE CALL WE SHALL NEVER FORGET

One of the most upsetting incidents we had in the last 25 years was on the 23rd November 1987 at about 12.30. We had a call to Bourne Farm, Burrington. Message reads, "Persons reported trapped in mobile animal feed sylo".

On arrival we were told there was a young lad with his leg trapped in the auger in the bottom of the trailer. The trailer was a "V" shape with metal sides about 6ft. high and 6ft. wide at the top going to a "V" in the bottom. We climbed up onto the trailer and looked in, we could not only see his leg, but the lower half of his body was drawn under and around the auger screw shaft. We could not get to him, so we decided to cut the metal side out of the trailer to gain access.

We had just removed the side, when the Rescue Tender from A1 arrived, they took over and with a large angle grinder, cut off the shaft each end of the casualty. We lifted the casualty and shaft out and into the ambulance and he was conveyed to hospital by ambulance, with a police escort, but sadly passed away a few days later.

Station Officer Claude Skillman



Date: *Wednesday 25th January 1996*

Time: *07:21*

Address: *Tortworth House, Tortworth*

Appliances: *A62, A61, A52, A15, A72, B77, 109
(Gloucestershire)*

Residential building measuring 25m x 12m. On arrival the roof void was heavily smoke logged and there was a fire on the ground floor. The fire quickly spread and involved all floors and roof. The Brigade were in attendance for nearly 12 hours.

Date: *Sunday 28th January 1996*

Time: *09:28*

Address: *Cumberland Grove, Montpelier, Bristol*

Appliances: *A11, A12, A13*

Persons reported call. On arrival the ground floor was well alight. 6 BA committed and 2 high pressure hoses were used. Firefighting operations were severely hampered by the large amount of rubbish that had been stored in the rooms. The picture shows only a small amount of rubbish that had to be removed.



Date: *Tuesday 28th February 1996*

Time: *03:32*

Address: *Avon Fish Bar, Lambridge Buildings,
St. Saviours Road, Bath*

Appliances: *B11, B12*

A building of three floors with a severe fire on the first floor. One person was rescued by the Brigade from the first floor window, and another person was walked to safety from the second floor. A candle is thought to have been the cause of the fire.

Address: Tesco
Callington Road
Brislington

Type: Car fire

Stop: B42 Car high pressure hose reel. Police required due to driver leaving incident. A Voltswagon Golf Reg....

"Obviously a shocking experience for the driver!!"

.....

Details from a Special Service Report:

Address: B3130 Winford Road
Chew Magna

OIC Report: Following RTA between 7 ton lorry and car, one female released from car and conveyed to hospital.

**Equipment or
Materials used:** Hearse from A16

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