

FIREFIGHTERS WE CAN BE PROUD OF

By JEFF ALDEN



INSET: Fireman, Paul Knight with a new 'recruit'.

DURING the last war, there was of course a greatly increased need for fire services and Cowbridge Brigade found that the new fire engine was too big for the station under the Town Hall.

They, and a branch of the Auxiliary Fire Service, moved to Billy Jones's West End Garage at 56 High Street - where Chamberlains is today.

The two brigades had to deal with aircraft fires, as well as the devastating fire in the cinema in Eastgate in April 1942. Rumour has it that a cigarette end was dropped into a box of film - and also that Cardiff cinemas had unfortunately sent spools of film to Cowbridge to be stored, safe from enemy attack!

Another major fire was at the Bridge Garage in December 1946 when a tanker delivering petrol proved to be too close to a coal-burning stove. This was a spectacular fire which affected more than the owner of the garage, Mr Frank Sanders - as some of the new cars just returning to

the civilian market were engulfed in flames!

After the war, the AFS disbanded and the fire brigade returned to an enlarged fire station at the town hall. Unfortunately, I do not have any photos of the AFS (does any reader have one? I would love to see one!), but this photograph shows some of the members of Cowbridge Fire Brigade on the fire engine outside the old headquarters - clearly where the Lesser Hall kitchen is today.

Seated are Danny Powell senior, Tommy Carter and Herbert Tucker; standing are Iori Jones, Harold Bevan and Ernie Wheaton.

The brigade continued using the Lesser Hall until the new fire station in Druids Green, on the site of the old railway, was opened in May 1960. Cowbridge now has fully trained professional firefighters available 24 hours a day; in fact, in 1999 they turned out a total of 503 times - to fires and road accidents and other emergencies.

In addition, the men of the fire service are all involved in various aspects of community work - and frequently figure in the pages of The GEM as a result.

Among them are Paul Thomas with his charity work, such as Operation Christmas Child and missions to Uganda, Paul Sansom with various initiatives in youth work in Cowbridge, Neil Byrne with the Scouts and the Youth Centre, Andy Banks with town twinning.

Always willing to help, to give advice, to get involved, the men of the Cowbridge Fire Service are a credit to the town - and we are fortunate to have so many dedicated, cheerful and pleasant firefighters.

"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

PROVERBS 5 Vs 21-23. (Cowbridge Christian Fellowship)

chs04670-1 Fire crew ca 1940s names.docx

chs 04670 Fire Service crew ca 1940s – names given by Danny Powell

Left to right (top) : Dan Powell (senior), Tom Carter, Herbert Tucker (driver)

Iori Jones, Harold Bevan, Ernie Wheaton (standing)