

# Newport fire station

JANUARY – JUNE 2012



**NEIL BYFORD  
OFFICER IN CHARGE  
W84 NEWPORT**

**A**t the risk of sounding like a stuck record, **YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!** Yes, we still urgently need a couple of new recruits who can give us cover during the working week, do you have time on your hands during the day, want to do

something worthwhile and often exciting, then go on, come down and see us and see what its all about. At present there are only four of us (which is the minimum crew) that can give cover during the working day. This puts a huge strain on us as we always strive to keep the appliance on the run, as soon as one of us has to leave the village the appliance has to come off the run, during the last couple of months we have sometimes been off the run for two or three days in a row. So go on, come down and see us, **YOU** could make all the difference.

**JANUARY**

January started in spectacular fashion when an arsonist struck at industrial premises in Gt Chesterford, 2 crews from Saffron Walden were initially sent but due to the number of calls received we were also dispatched.

As we approached we could see the orange glow in the sky and knew we had a working job to deal with. Saffron Walden's crews had already got a couple of jets on the go and we were tasked with securing a water supply and then taking over on the jets wearing breathing apparatus.

Three Lorries that had been parked up in the yard for the Christmas break were well alight and the outside of the building was now also starting to catch alight. Our priority was to prevent the fire spreading into the building and to bring the main fire under control; this was achieved successfully due to the hard work of all the crews involved.

Two people had to be extricated from a van that crashed on the M11 in the early hours at the Newport gates. The van had ended up on its side with the two people trapped inside; we managed to empty the contents of the van and then got to the casualties through the back.



Ourselves and Stansted were sent to a 'House Fire Persons Reported' in Elsenham on a Saturday evening, when we arrived smoke was billowing out of every window and a crowd had gathered outside, they were doing what they could with a garden hose. We were informed that everyone was out of the house but we still have to treat it as 'persons reported' until we are completely satisfied. Crews knocked the fire out on the ground floor enough for a team in breathing apparatus from Stansted to climb the stairs and search the first floor, they located an unconscious male in one of the bedrooms and passed him over to the officer in charge of stansteds appliance and our own Mark Murphy, they both performed CPR on him until the arrival of an ambulance but unfortunately he was pronounced dead at the scene.

ECFRS is continually trying to drive out fire deaths and to have a zero rate, unfortunately they are still occurring.

**FEBRUARY**

February saw the arrival of some snow and this caused chaos on the M11 one night when a number of vehicles collided. The snow had come down so fast that it had settled before any salt had time to work. There were a number of vehicles involved but thankfully no serious injuries.

A couple of days later we attended a more serious RTC, this time on Sparrows End Hill. A car had collided head on with a van and then gone into the flint wall, ourselves and an appliance from Saffron Walden were sent. A lady was trapped in the drivers seat and had suffered serious internal injuries and was very distressed, this is where the extra training some of the crew have had for the Co Responder work came into its own. They were able to calm and stabilize the lady and make an accurate diagnosis of her injuries, before passing this all onto the Paramedics and Doctor who arrived in the air ambulance.

The extrication was quite involved as she was well and truly trapped, the Doctor expressed to us that her injuries were time critical and both crews worked extremely well to perform the extrication as quick and safe as possible. Once she was out of the car our crews were asked by the ambulance service to assist them further as they attempted to stabilize her as it was too risky to move her until a further full assessment had been completed. Later on we found out that the lady was pregnant

at the time and both she and her baby are now well.

A couple of days later we were back working alongside Saffron Walden's crews at a house fire in town. Whilst thawing out some pipe work in his garage, the owner managed to ignite some materials in his garage, resulting in the fire destroying the garage and flames burning up through the roof and into the living area of the house, whoops, and just as we were leaving some three hours later, guess what, the water started to run.

Just after midnight we were called to a car on fire in Chalk Farm Lane, this was where the cars park for the Rail Station, one car was well alight and the car next to it had just started to become involved, we called for the Police to attend as there were signs of a break in on the vehicles.

Due to the cold snap we also attended a number of chimney fires this month, but the biggest fire was yet to come.

It was being reported on the national news that there was a serious fire developing on the 8th floor of Tilbury Power Station, 20 appliances had been at the scene since 10am and the fire was still not under control, when our alerters went off at 1pm the tip sheet stated we were to attend as part of a 20 pump relief. With an hours drive time in front of us we called in at Dorringtons and stocked up with some food as we knew it would be some time before we got back. We eventually found our way down to the docks and parked up at the appliance holding area, I went and reported to the Incident Command Unit 'ICU' and then went back to the appliance to wait for instructions. The priority at these relief change overs is to make it as smooth as possible and to keep the continuity of fire fighting going, rather than all appliances changing over at the same time it is staged so that firefighting can continue effectively. We were eventually tasked to go to the front of the building and the crew helped move large numbers of foam barrels up to the scene of the fire where it was being fought from, we managed to get back to the station about 9pm.

**MARCH**

A Postman knocking on his door alerted a Clavering resident to the fact that his car was merrily burning away on his

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driveway early one morning, luckily the postman had spotted it when he did and had it been much later then it would of involved the house also due to the close proximity that it was parked.

A joy rider decided it would be good fun to steal a car and race it around the grounds of Quendon Hall Estate before crashing it and setting it on fire, I'm sure the owner didn't find it quite so funny.

We attended a serious RTC on the motorway early in the morning when a lorry had collided with the back of another and then traveled down the embankment into some trees just past

the recreation ground. When we arrived we found the two occupants of the lorry trapped in the cab. The problem facing us was the fact it was on unsteady ground at an angle, and also the height of the cab and working with our cutting equipment at head height is extremely strenuous due to its weight, as many of you may have experienced if you have held the cutting equipment when attending our annual open day or when we have attended local fetes.

Once we had made preliminary cuts to the cab and released some pressure off the casualties the paramedics requested

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some specialist equipment to protect the driver's spine which was causing some concern. As the situation was not now time critical it was decided to wait for the equipment to arrive before continuing the extrication. Once everything was in place we managed to push the cab away enough to extricate them.

It isn't unusual to attend chimney fires in late March, but we were a bit surprised to receive a call due to the fact that the

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temperature on the day was in the high 70's and the occupants were also having a barbeque in the garden, our interaction with the occupants in Clavering was quite amusing.

**APRIL**

Now that our region had been declared a drought area we were attending quite a large number of grass and hedge fires, nothing very big but just quite a few of them, little did we know that in a few weeks time it was going to rain and never stop.

We got called to a house fire in a remote area of Berden, Little London about 10.30 in the evening, control passed us on information that they were an elderly couple and the fact that the husband wasn't very mobile and the wife said she can't get him out of the house. This is the time when seconds do really count and the sooner we can be on the scene the better, when we arrived at the top of their drive we could see the flames coming out of the kitchen area like a blow torch, then to the side, just emerging from the smoke were the elderly couple, he clinging to his Zimmer frame and she to his arm, a true partnership.

When I asked the gentleman if he was ok he told me in no uncertain terms that 'of course he was, he managed to get through the war ok and a bit of bloody smoke wasn't going to stop him', we did get an ambulance to check him over just in case.

When the temperature dropped on a Saturday afternoon a farmer in Clavering thought he would do a good thing by putting the heaters on for his young lambs in their barn, unfortunately one of the ewes decided to jump into her neighbours pen, and in doing so knocked over the heater that then ignited the straw. Within seconds the whole barn was alight and the screams from the ewes and lambs is not something you want to hear. It was quickly established that the barn wasn't savable so our attention was diverted to protecting the surrounding barns and properties. We returned later that evening just to check over any hotspots.

An alarm sounding at the wedding venue at Parklands saw us racing there at 3 in the morning, only to find that the now torrential rain that we were experiencing was leaking through the roof and into one of the detectors.

**MAY**

Road rage was thought to be the cause of an RTC that we attended on the M11 near the Newport Gates late one afternoon. When we arrived we found a van overturned on the embankment with two people suffering quite severe cuts and abrasions, they had managed to climb out through the top of the van before we arrived. From speaking to them and others at the scene it transpired that a pick up truck and the van had been swapping lanes and goading each other for a few miles before the collision, the pick up truck didn't stop, once we had treated the casualties and handed them over to the paramedics we left the police to find out the rest.

The next afternoon we got called to a car transporter on fire, fortunately the driver had time to unload the cars he was carrying, thus preventing a much more serious incident, the only problem now was that he had six cars on the hard shoulder to move, and only one of him.

Ourselves and crews from Saffron Walden were called to assist Cambridgeshire at a house fire persons reported at

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Ickleton around lunchtime. When the first appliances arrived from Cambridgeshire they were faced with a severe developing fire in a large bungalow. Their quick intervention managed to save the life of an elderly lady who was located by a crew searching in the kitchen area, she was brought outside and treated by Paramedics, thankfully in time she made a full recovery.

A large fire at a local recycling yard tied up four fire engines and a water bowser following numerous calls from drivers on the M11 who were concerned about what was on fire. After attending it once at 9pm and informing control it was a bonfire we were called back again at 11pm as motorists were reporting a large fire in the distance with description from a 'barn fire, building fire to house fire'. Control can not assume that it is the same bonfire so we turned out again and this time we had to extinguish it to stop all the calls continually coming in.

When we attended a call to the smell of burning at a house in a nearby village

we raised some concerns about their fire safety precautions. We entered the property and could smell a trace of an electrical type fire, we used our thermal image camera to try and locate the source after looking in all the usual places we drew a blank, then I pointed it towards a pile of items at the top of the landing and hey presto it showed a hot spot in the middle of it. After pulling the pile apart we found a small oil filled electrical radiator was switched on and in a pile of clothes on top of a toy pram, the plastic on the pram had begun to melt and that is what we could smell. Small children were also living in the house so we explained about fire safety and offered some advice on help to prevent these types of situations occurring.

**JUNE**

Tragedy came to a local road this month when two vehicles collided head on resulting in the death of one of the drivers, both of the drivers were known by some members of the crews that attended from ourselves and Saffron

Walden. This is always a fear that is with us when we attend local RTC's .

We also attended a number of minor RTC's on the motorway this month, but thankfully they resulted in nothing more than cuts and bruises.

Travelling up my drive at 4 in the morning following my alerter screeching into life, I could see a large column of black smoke rising in the direction of Saffron Walden. I assumed it was possibly a fire in Shire Hill industrial estate. When I arrived at the station it turned out we were being sent to standby at Saffron Walden, this is a procedure that comes into place if both of Saffron Walden's appliances are going to be out for a considerable time or they are going over the border, and in this instance it was both of these. They had been called to a large fire at Chilford Hall, Linton, the fire featured on all the local news programs and destroyed the wedding venue that was a popular choice for many couples getting married.

That covers most of the more interesting calls that we attended during the past six months, apart from one last point of interest, remember we welcomed Paul Waters and his family back from Cornwall ... guess what, they have gone back to Cornwall.

Good luck Paul, we all wish you well.

I would like to finish by urging anyone who thinks they can give some cover during the working day or if you know of anyone, come down the Fire Station on a Thursday evening and have an informal chat. **NN**

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