



# Fetch the Engine

## A history of **Southam Fire Brigades**

by Alan Griffin



**The Firehouse in 1910**  
The firehouse in 1910 was a large, two-story building with a prominent chimney. It was the central hub of the fire department, housing the engines, ladders, and other equipment. The firehouse was also a place where firefighters gathered for meals and social activities.

**Firefighting in 1920**  
By 1920, firefighting had become a more organized profession. Firefighters were trained and certified, and fire departments were established in many communities. The firehouse was still the central hub, but it was also a place where firefighters could find support and resources.

**Firefighting in 1930**  
The 1930s saw significant changes in firefighting. The introduction of the fire truck allowed firefighters to transport equipment and respond to fires more quickly. Firefighters also began to wear protective gear, such as helmets and jackets, to protect themselves from the heat and smoke of a fire.

**Firefighting in 1940**  
The 1940s were a time of great change for firefighting. The fire truck was now a common sight on city streets, and firefighters were trained to use the new equipment. The firehouse was still the central hub, but it was also a place where firefighters could find support and resources.

**Firefighting in 1950**  
The 1950s saw the fire truck become an even more important part of the fire department. Firefighters were trained to use the new equipment, and the firehouse was still the central hub. The firehouse was also a place where firefighters could find support and resources.

Fireman Dave







Fire Chief Helmet  
William Cardall

The Fire Brigade Bugle



**Fetch the Engine**  
 £5  
 Written by retired Southam fireman Alan Griffin following the history of the Southam Volunteer Fire Brigade from 1812 until the new fire station in 1951



Being from 1947 this is a National Fire Service helmet which would have been used by a fire fighter rather than an officer. The number on the helmet refers to the Fire Station number (24), which in this case is 24. There were 45 such helmets in the collection, which started by one in married occupation. This helmet was donated to the Heritage Collection by David Bell in memory of his father who wore the helmet.



Fire Hose Nozzle



As usually is very thin, Whitcomb's Patent, London, Paris, &c. Price 4/6 per dozen net.



Known as a grenade, this is a Victorian fire extinguisher one of many thousands produced. It is made of thin glass and would have been filled with water and sealed. Generally found in stately homes and large buildings, the Grenades were grouped together at strategic points. In the event



Three Grenades of the London Fire Brigade, London, 18

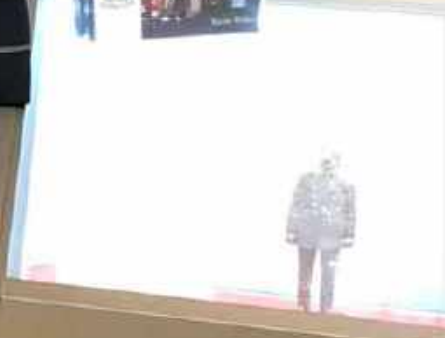


1906 Captain Jonathan Cardall and crew outside Stoneysurpe Hall with the Hatfield Merryweather Trailer Pump and the Hotchkiss vehicle

Captain Cardall and the firemen with "Perseverance" the horse. J. J. Beckwith, J. Parkinson, Jonathan Cardall (driver), F. Smith (bicycle), J. Bond (on foot), W. Cardall, H. Glass, & White (standing), Bacon (bicycle)



1912 Captain William Cardall (center front) with seven fire engines outside Ivy House, Fitchley, St. Paul's Church, Hatfield. (From left front row) Senior Fireman G. H. (2nd from left front row) Deputy Captain T. G.





1901 King's Own Light Infantry



1901 King's Own Light Infantry



1901 King's Own Light Infantry



1901 King's Own Light Infantry



1901 King's Own Light Infantry

1901 King's Own Light Infantry

1901 King's Own Light Infantry

INCE  
A. A. A.  
The following is a list of the names of the members of the club who have been elected to the office of President for the year 1901. The names are given in the order in which they were elected.

President

1901 King's Own Light Infantry



### **40 Ton Hay Rick Ablaze**

*Southam September 1936*

Fireman O Burnell, age 82, was the first to respond to the fire call at mid-day with the Chief Officer. However, Engineer George Hill beat them to the fire by a few seconds. He had just loaded his lorry with 3 ton of bricks when he heard the call and went immediately to the fire in his lorry without bothering to change into his uniform! The Firemen were there for several hours and managed to save a quantity of the hay.

### **Driver Died in Ladbroke Lorry Crash**

In 1965 two lorries collided head on in Ladbroke village on the main A423 Coventry - Oxford road on the sharp bend outside The High House. It took an hour to free both drivers and the road was closed for more than two hours. Police set up a diversion for heavy vehicles via Leamington Spa.



### **32 Ton Articulated Lorry Overturned**

on the sharp bend in Ladbroke. The village has one of the worst accident records in Warwickshire. The A423 was closed several hours with traffic diverted along the Southam-Deppers Bridge road where a second accident occurred and a lady died. (1983)



### **Fire in Historic Stable**

*Southam January 10th 1958*

A stable where King Charles I is reputed to have left his horse before the battle of Edgehill was burnt to the ground on Friday. The stable, built of stone, stood at the rear of Mr Saxton's *The Wood House* in Wood Street, which in the 17th C was the *Queen's Arms* and in the 19th C the *Castle Inn*. It started at lunch time when George Hill saw the smoke and the Fire Brigade was there until seven in the evening. Cause unknown.

### **At Marton, 100 Bikes Worth £2,000 Destroyed in a Shed Fire in 1964**

Firemen from Southam and Leamington fought a fire so fierce that the metal parts of the motorbikes and scooters melted, with many explosions as petrol tanks ignited.



They were owned by Aston's Garage, car and motor cycle dealers of Coventry.

### **Nearly gone for a Burt-on - trapped cat flushed out**

...the cat was trapped in a hole in the wall of the house...



...the cat was trapped in a hole in the wall of the house...

...the cat was trapped in a hole in the wall of the house...



William George Hill with his lorry outside the old WW2 Fire Station in Pendicke Street



THE Hill family, of Southam, has notched up three quarters of a century of service to Warwickshire Fire Service. Brothers sub-officer Michael Hill (left) and leading fireman Terence Hill (right), who have both served at Southam for 21 years, received long service medals at Leamington headquarters on Friday. Their father Mr George Hill (second left), talking with county fire chief Mr John Spence and public protection committee chairman Coun Lawrence Reynolds, served for 33 years at Southam before his retirement.

### William George Hill

## Southam fire chief retires

After 33 years with the Fire Service Mr. William Hill retired from his post as Sub-Officer at Southam.

Mr. Hill, who is 55, lives at "Arundel House," Coventry Street, Southam. He joined the Service in 1923, and in 1929 he joined the Auxiliary Fire Service, which later became the National Fire Brigade.

In 1948 he was promoted to Leading Fireman, and in 1952 he became the Sub-Officer in Charge at the Southam fire station.

Since then, Mr. Hill, who was born in Bedford, has been a part-time fireman with the Brigade.

Mr. Hill, who retired last Friday, was presented with a gold watch and his pensioned fireman by the Chief Fire Officer, Mr. F. J. Capron, at a celebration party at The Crown, Southam. The party was attended by many firemen from the Leamington area.

Mr. Hill's successor is Mr. John Grant, who was a leading fireman at the Southam Station. Mr. Grant started his new post on September 1 in order to "hoard the ropes" from Mr. Hill.

**Captain  
William  
Cardall**  
[1901-1927]  
c.1920

He helped raise  
the funds to buy  
the fire engine  
in 1893.  
Retired from  
Captain aged  
85 in 1927



**Deputy  
Captain  
Tom Grant**  
Butcher on  
Market Hill.  
c.1920

With the steam  
fire engine  
'Perseverance'  
in the Pendicke  
Street engine  
house.



Stories  
in this  
exhibition  
have been  
supplied by  
retired  
fireman  
Mike Hill MBE

## Southam's New Fire Station 1951

In April 1948, the County Council became the new fire authority and after more than 136 years, Southam's Volunteer Fire Brigade was no more!

By 1949, the old Fire Station in Pendicke Street, was in a bad state of repair, with no heating; damp and mould making it impossible to leave uniforms there; with a poor exit not suitable for a quick get-away.

Southam was to have the first new Fire Station in Warwickshire.



The new Station consisted of an appliance room and an office.

It was manned by part-time members of the County Fire Brigade, some of them retained from the old Southam Volunteer Fire Brigade.

In an emergency they were called together by means of a bell at home and a siren from work in town, remotely controlled from Leamington.



### St Florian

The patron saint of fire fighters, chimney sweeps and soap makers. He was an officer in the Roman army responsible for organizing and leading an elite group of soldier firefighting brigades whose sole duty was to fight fires. He was put to death for refusing to kill Christians as ordered by Emperor Diocletian.

Opening of Southam Fire Station 1951



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It is a part-time job and some of the men work away from the town during the day, which means a full crew can only be mustered overnight between 6 pm - 6 am.

Other response crews from the area back them up during the daytime. Fenny Compton being the nearest Fire Station.



## *Birdingbury Hall Fire 1859*

Birdingbury Hall was built in the 18th C by the Biddulph family and when the north wing burnt down in 1859, it was the seat of Sir T W Biddulph who on the night of the fire was away at Shenstone.

Nearby at Birdingbury Rectory lived his Uncle the Rev H Biddulph, who was at home and took charge.

In the north wing were the kitchen, offices and servant's quarters. The fire started in the kitchen and was discovered about 10 pm by a housemaid.

Rev Biddulph immediately sent 2 men on horseback to Rugby and Southam for fire engines.

Ashby (Footman) and Goatcher (Gamekeeper) fetched a long ladder from the stables and rescued Mrs West (Housekeeper) and her niece from the upstairs windows.

Constable Jacques raised the alarm in the village, who all turned out to help and everything movable was taken outside onto the lawns. By 11 o'clock all the bedrooms in the north wing were in flames.

### ***Robert Sweeting*** *the Artist*

Son of a Gentleman from Dorset.  
Robert married Mary Spraggett, a  
Gentleman's daughter from  
Southam, where they first lived.



It took Captain Jackson 25 minutes to bring the fire engine from Southam pulled by four horses .

Inspector Jenkins came with the engine, which was placed in position with two ranks of people supplying it with water from the river to spray on the fire.

Half an hour later the Rugby fire engine arrived with Captain Bromwich and accompanied by Superintendent Smallbone and several constables.

The Rugby engine was placed on the edge of the river and fed the Southam engine with water.

The north wing was not able to be saved, so they concentrated on the main house.

Munroe the carpenter assisted by others, climbed on the roof and succeeded in dividing it from the north wing. One man fell and would have died in the smoking debris if Inspector Gaskins had not managed to break his fall and catch him.

At 12.30 am the roof fell in. By 5 o'clock the flames were down and under control and by 6 o'clock the engines stopping applying water.



### ***Crash in Oxford Street 1959***

A lorry crashed into the front of an empty house in Oxford Street (where the Factory Shop is) after colliding with a stationary van delivering meat. The meat carcasses were damaged, but both drivers were only slightly injured.

### ***Long Itchington Bus Garage Blaze***

In February 1963, passengers and drivers at Smith's Coaches Grasmere Garage watched helplessly as a nearly new coach caught fire from an electrical fault. Southam Fire Brigade were on the scene in five minutes, but were unable to save the bus. Two other coaches and a car were badly scorched.



### ***Five Servicemen Die in a Coach Crash in 1956***

22 were also injured when a coach carrying 41 servicemen was returning back to Salisbury Camp and crashed near Stockton and was ripped in half by two elm trees.

Southam Firemen



helped remove the dead and injured from the wreckage.

It was caused by a suitcase falling from the rack above the driver and knocking him from his seat.

### ***Two Killed, Seven Injured in Coach Crash in 1956***

Two Coventry men died when a coach carrying 36 passengers returning from an International Rugby match at Twickenham crashed on the Banbury road near Ladbrooke. A burst tyre on a corner caused the coach to leave the road and become embedded in an oak tree.

Southam Fire



Brigade were first on the scene and firemen cut passengers free from the tangled wreckage.



### *'Perseverance'*

In the late 1880s the Southam Fire Brigade flourished under Captain William Sturley's guidance. There were new uniforms and equipment, and he started to fund raise for a new steam fire pump.

William Cardall took over the fund-raising and in 1893 they purchased a Merryweather steam fire pump.

The advantage was to be the steam pump replaced up to twenty press-ganged bystanders to pump the fire engine and it needed only two horses instead of four to pull it.

On its arrival it was demonstrated to several hundred spectators. They christened it 'Perseverance'. Then followed the annual Fire Brigade dinner when 100 people sat down to dine at the Court House off Market Hill

### *Attendance at the dinner included:*

*Captain H F L Locock, Captain W B Sturley, Lieutenants Phillips and Pains, Engineers Dengard and Cardall, Sub-engineers Grant and Burnell, Firemen Cox, Aliband, Bignell, White, E Duckett, W Duckett, Wood, Adams, Griffin, and Hitchcox (bugler)*

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single steam cylinder and a direct and double acting pump, and is capable of delivering 100 gallons of water per minute. The valves and hose connections are of gun metal, and large copper air vessels are fitted to the suction and delivery ways. It has Merryweather's patent quick steaming boiler, capable of raising steam to 100lbs. pressure from cold water in from six to eight minutes from time of lighting the fire, and the fire-door being placed behind together with footplate and coal bunkers, the furnace can be stoked while the engine is travelling, thus saving several minutes of valuable time in getting to work on arrival at a fire. The engine has a wrought iron frame mounted on horizontal steel springs and high wood spoke wheels. The boiler is handsomely lagged with brass, and the steam pipes are of copper. A large mahogany hose box is fitted, and a lever tank is provided. The whole engine is painted and varnished and the metal work polished in first class manner. The result of the trial was considered highly satisfactory. One three-quarter inch jet reached a height of about 150 feet, and two simultaneous jets one a five-eighth inch and the other half inch, reached almost the same height. A five-eighth inch jet was next tested to show the power of the engine in allowing itself to the use of a small quantity of water. Steam was got up in nine minutes, and maintained a pressure throughout of 100lbs. without fluctuating, the water pressure being 140lbs.



Jack Cardall and bugle used to alert the firemen

# MERRYWEATHER & SONS'

## FIRE RULES

### FOR PRIVATE RESIDENCES.

Care, order, and cleanliness are the best fire preventives, especially care with mineral and other inflammable oils and spirits, and with all movable lamps.

Protect all fire places with a guard.

Keep all chimneys properly swept and in good repair.

Keep all gasfittings and pipes in good order. All moving gasfittings depending upon water joints should always have the water in the tube covered with oil, to prevent the water evaporating. Fix all gas brackets that are likely to be placed too near inflammable pendant things, as they may be blown into exposed lights. Wire guards should be used where glass ones are impracticable.

Use only safety matches, and do not leave them lying about.

Do not read, smoke, or sew in bed with a movable light too near the bed clothing.

Oily or greasy rags should not be allowed to accumulate in cupboards or corners.

Cats and dogs should not be left in rooms where clothes are drying in front of fireplaces.

Do not leave children locked up in a room where there is a fire, light, or lucifers.

#### GAS.

Do not turn the gas off at the meter at night.

Do not seek for an escape of gas with a light.

When an escape of gas is discovered open all the doors and upper parts of the windows, extinguish all fires and lights, and turn off the gas at the meter and the stopcock outside. Examine all the taps and movable fittings, especially in pendant chandeliers, at the watercups.

Send for the nearest gasfitter, and watch him carefully, for he will sometimes seek for an escape with a light, and may find it at the risk of blowing up the building and all it contains.

#### MINERAL OR INFLAMMABLE OIL LAMPS.

The best lamp is the one with a heavy and broad base. The reservoir is safest when made of metal, with no other opening than that made to receive the wick case.

The light should be extinguished by a metal extinguisher. Do not blow down the glass chimney.

The wicks should be soft, dry and only long enough to reach the bottom of the reservoir, and should be soaked in oil before being placed in the wick case.

Keep all oil lamps and bottles thoroughly clean and dry.

Trim the lamps by daylight and away from any fire or light.

If the lamp is upset and the oil takes fire do not use water; sand or ashes are better, or dip some woollen fabric in water and smother the fire with it.

#### TO ESCAPE.

On discovering the house on fire, collect all the inmates in a front room as near the ground as possible.

Do not open any windows or doors more than are necessary, they should be kept closed.

Leave the house if you can by the front door, but if the lower part of the house is on fire make an exit by the trap door or by removing a few slates from the roof. If that cannot be done, then collect all the inmates in a front room, being careful to select one from which the wind will blow the smoke and flames, and wait as long as possible for outside assistance.

Should there be no rope in the house, sheets and blankets may be torn up and knotted together to form a substitute, make fast one end to the bedstead or some other piece of furniture, lower the most helpless inmates first, and lastly slide down the rope yourself.

If for some reason this cannot be done, throw bedding or any soft substance out of the window; a carpet or counterpane held by the onlookers over the bedding will break the fall, but do not jump from the window until there is no hope of being rescued by any other means.

In passing from one room to another in the midst of smoke and heat, crawl upon the hands and knees, keeping the head as near the floor as possible; a wet handkerchief or any fibrous material held between the teeth will assist free breathing.

#### ACCIDENTS TO PERSONS.

Upon discovering any portion of your clothing on fire, lie down and roll upon the carpet or floor and call for assistance to smother the flames.

In removing clothing from the injured part, be careful not to tear the skin or break a blister: apply flour, starch, or cotton wool, the object being to exclude the air until medical aid is obtained.

#### FIRE APPARATUS.

Keep always ready at least—

A few buckets filled with water.

A small force pump like those used in the London Fire Brigade.

A blanket.

A hatchet to break open doors and to cut up and expose fire burning under flooring, &c.

A long handled fire hook to pull down curtains and ceilings.

One or more length of rope, according to the height of the house and number of inmates.

A policeman's whistle or rattle.

A light ladder to lead to the roof, kept on the upper floor, and another to be kept in a convenient place on the ground floor.

It is the duty of the head of every family and his household to make themselves acquainted with the best means to be adopted in the event of a fire occurring, and those who have anticipated such a casualty will be best prepared for the evil when it comes; if living in a town all should know which is the nearest fire engine station, the nearest fire escape station, the nearest police station, the nearest plumber's shop, the nearest surgeon's residence, where the turncock resides, and the nearest plug or hydrant on the water supply to the house.

Examined by Mr. SUPERINTENDENT TOZER, of the Manchester Fire Brigade, and issued by

*Merryweather & Sons*

Every Household should have the Fire Prevention  
of the London Fire Brigade, and those who have anticipated such a casualty will be best prepared for the evil when it comes; if living in a town all should know which is the nearest fire engine station, the nearest fire escape station, the nearest police station, the nearest plumber's shop, the nearest surgeon's residence, where the turncock resides, and the nearest plug or hydrant on the water supply to the house.

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*Left to right 1980s:* G Hudson, A Mainsford-Payne,  
K Haynes, S Marsh, T Hill, D Prescott, M Hill,  
A Duckett, D White, S Fern, J King, L Emsley, R Cleal



*(back row)*

Roger Haymes, Lesley Emsley, Phillip Burnell,  
George Hudson, Clive Wood, Paul Hearnden, David  
Johnson, Geoffrey King

*(front row)*

Alan Mainsford Payne, Terence Hill, Michael Hill,  
David White, Andrew Duckett

Souham Fire Crew 1951



*(back row)*

R Hudson, D Duckett, P Hope, G Smith, J Grant

*(front row)*

A Burnell, A Bond, G Hill, H Hancocks, S French



*(back row) c. 1975/76*

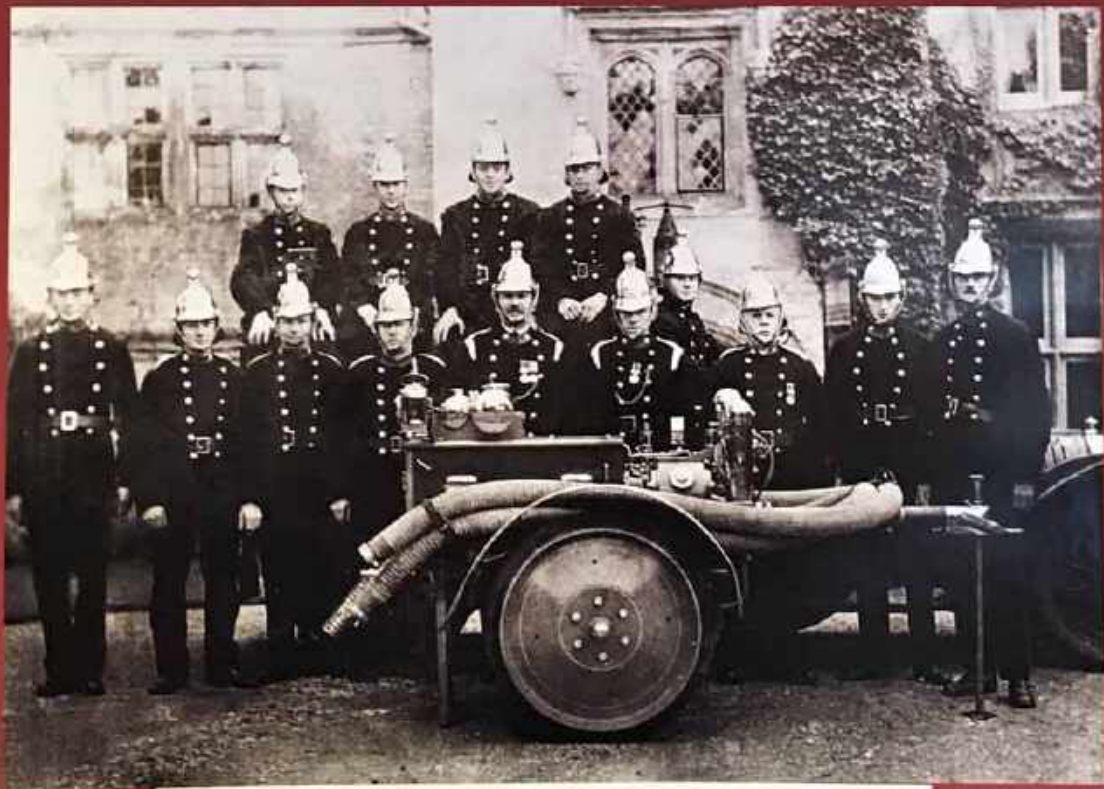
E McConnell, P Lidstone, D White, J Stevens,  
K Wyatt, A Duckett

*(front row)*

T Hill, L Bond, A Griffin, J Grant, M Hill,  
R Finch, R Cleal



*(back row) 1965*  
A Griffin, J Grant, W G Hill, D Duckett, R Finch  
*(front row)*  
S French, L Bond, A Haynes, M Hill



1930s Captain Jonathan Cardall and crew outside  
Stoneythorpe Hall with the Hatfield Merryweather  
Trailer Pump and the Hotchkiss vehicle



Captain Cardall and the firemen with 'Perseverance'  
*(at back) ? ? ? ? H Bicknell, J Parkington*  
*Jonathan Cardall (driver)*  
*F Smith (bicycle) J Bond (on footplate), ? W Cardall*  
*H Glenn, A White (standing), Bacon (bicycle)*



1923 Captain William Cardall (*centre front*) and the  
 steam fire engine outside Ivy House, Pendicke Street,  
 (*3rd from left front row*) Senior Fireman O Burnell  
 (*5th from left front row*) Deputy Captain T Grant



c.1890 Possibly Captain Sturley and his crew.  
The bearded man in the middle of the front row is  
Southam Police Inspector Welch





c.1880 Captain Edwin Squires outside the fire engine house in Pendicke Street.  
*(top row standing)* J Plummer, J Duguard, T Grant, W Bicknell, A White, J Evettes *(driver)*  
*(seated)* E Medcalf, M Sturley, W Timms, J Mole  
*(front standing)* J Fiddian, J Foster, C Aliband, E Squires, C Harold, J Phillips, J Cox



c.1885  
 Cpt Nelson and firemen outside Newstead Lodge where he lived.  
 With the four-in-hand large manual fire engine.

At the rear standing: D Burnell J Plummer W Bicknell  
 Seated driver: W Cardall  
 All Seated: C Harrold M Sturley J Hitchcox H White  
 Front standing: S Mole Fiddian J Phillips Captain Nelson  
 Dr Holmes Kirk Payne Inspector Welch



"FIRE!"

DESIGNED BY H. J. WOODVILLE.

*This exhibition has been put together  
with the assistance of retired firemen  
Alan Griffin, Andy Duckett, Mike Hill*

***Alan Griffin***

Alan was a re-  
tained fireman  
at Southam  
from 1962 and  
became a full-  
time Warwick-  
shire fireman  
in 1969.



Today he is a well known  
Southam historian.



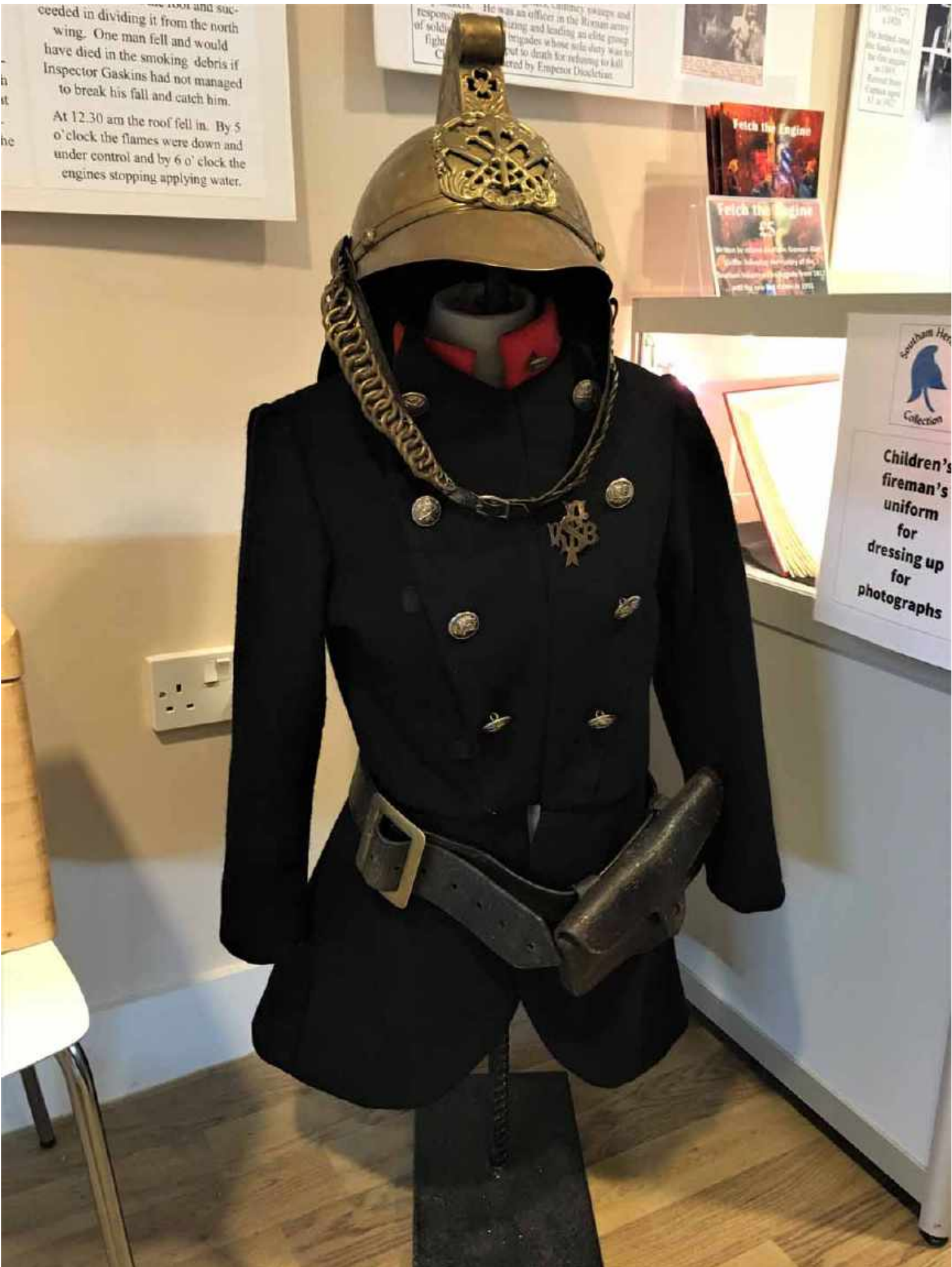
***Andy Duckett*** (bottom  
left) and ***Mike Hill***  
(kneeling) searching for  
Burt the cat in Harbury.





Three generations of Cardall Family serving in the Fire Service  
Jonathan, William and Jack Cardall





...the roof and succeeded in dividing it from the north wing. One man fell and would have died in the smoking debris if Inspector Gaskins had not managed to break his fall and catch him.

At 12.30 am the roof fell in. By 5 o'clock the flames were down and under control and by 6 o'clock the engines stopping applying water.

...responsibility of soldiers fighting. He was an officer in the Roman army and leading an elite group of brigades whose sole duty was to put to death for refusing to kill ordered by Emperor Diocletian.

Fetch the Engine

Fetch the Engine

1960-1970  
The British and the French in the fire engine  
1914  
Edward Dean  
1914-1917

Southam Heritage  
Collection

Children's  
fireman's  
uniform  
for  
dressing up  
for  
photographs

**Fetch the Engine**  
 £5  
 Written by retired Southam fireman Alan  
 Seddin, celebrating the history of the  
 Southam Volunteers Fire Brigade from 1817  
 until the new fire station in 1992

Southam Fire Brigade Records  
 1948 - 1992



**The Handled Trailer Pump**  
 According to the 'History of the Fire Station' book, the  
 first handled trailer pump was used at Southam in 1938.  
 The children of the town were keen to have a handle  
 and each year a new one was made. It was kept in the  
 hall and was used for the 'fire drill' in the school.  
 The children of the town were keen to have a handle  
 and each year a new one was made. It was kept in the  
 hall and was used for the 'fire drill' in the school.



NFS Austin towing vehicle similar to  
 the one used at Southam in the 1940s



Trailer Pump 1930s

ex  
 have  
 supplie  
 retired  
 fireman  
 Mike Hill MBE



Uniform, helmet and boots have been kindly loaned by retired

Fire  
1958  
18

