

And one we saved Saturday 24th July 1971

It was a Saturday lunchtime when our alerter sounded. "Thatch Roof Fire Biddenham High Street." Britannia Road Fire Station and Barkers Lane were both mobilized; two pumps and a Water Carrier were on their way immediately. When we booked in attendance the situation was reported as "Thatch well alight, surrounding risk; make pumps four" The fire was in the right hand side of the roof and spreading left, it was a warm summer day with a slight breeze. This was a dangerous situation, at least three buildings and Public house were situated in very close proximity and they all had thatch roofs. Ladders and hoses were soon got to work, we on the roof stripping off the burning straw and to a point we seemed to be winning, help was on the way, we could hear radio messages as other stations were being mobilized, senior officers were also on their way. C.F.O. Richards arrived and directed operations. We now had a large crew working on the roof, but a problem arose, our water supply was running



low. The village mains had a very low pressure and the water carrier was all but empty.

Myself and another fireman were ordered down from the roof. We were instructed to look for supplies of water. Swimming pools sprang to mind, I shouted to the onlookers, "Has anybody a swimming pool in the area, or is there a village pond"? Yes, I will show you" was the prompt reply, we set off. The house with the swimming pool was just a

few hundred yards away. "Please we need the water from your swimming pool" "Yes by all means, follow me it's around the back," believe It was the local school pool We soon had a portable pump set in and a good supply to our pumps on the fire ground. Within the next hour we were winning and this fire was brought under control.

Our crew was ordered to take a rest and we were relieved for a break. To our joy the pub had remained open, and the grateful landlord showed his appreciation in the best way possible. Trays of beer and sandwiches were waiting. We were all well catered for, including the Police who had been helping with traffic and crowd control.

As the photograph shows we saved half of the roof. We also managed to save most the house contents.