

1980

112 AGM.

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

Founded 1866

President:

J. LANDELLS, Esq.

Vice-President:

D. E. TINNING, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer:

J. P. STEPHENSON, Esq.

Hon. Captain:

H. M. CLAVERY, Esq.

Hon. Secretary:

T. P. FENNELLY, Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 112th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on THURSDAY, JULY 3rd, at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to the Members.

1980

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
 2. Business arising out of the minutes
 3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
 4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 6. Election of Officers
 7. Election of Committee Members
 8. Any Other Business
 9. Vote of Thanks
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ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending December 31st 1979

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 112th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The 12 months December 31st, 1979, were probably the most significant period in the Brigade's history for the past two decades. During the year considerable progress was made in terms of strengthening the Brigade's all-round efficiency and capabilities in the primary function as a breeches buoy rescue company and the parallel function of cliff rescue. The biggest single achievement in this respect was the winning of the Elizabethan Trophy for the first time. This success came as a fitting climax to months of training and dedication by the Members and in particular the enthusiastic example shown by the Brigade Captains. Having switched to the lighter Heath Jackstay breeches buoy rescue equipment the Brigade has maintained a high standard of efficiency and this has been reflected in the two competitions. Having won the Elizabethan Trophy, the Brigade came second in the Wearside Shipowners' Shield putting up another creditable performance.

Another major achievement during the year was the purchase of a replacement Land Rover, an objective agreed at the previous Annual General Meeting. The Hon. Secretary compiled a selected mailing list and over 400 local firms and businesses were circulated with an Appeal Letter. The response, including many individuals, was £1,500 which enabled the replacement vehicle to be bought later in the year. Brigade members played an active part in various fund-raising activities, including the Brigade's first-ever jumble sale which raised £130. Work on fitting out the new vehicle is still progressing and its arrival has stimulated a wider interest in the Brigade's Cliff Rescue training. To this end a successful training weekend was held in the Kielder area, to be repeated in 1980, and new equipment has been bought to supplement existing gear. The new vehicle and equipment has greatly enhanced the Brigade's Cliff Rescue capabilities. The need to maintain a constant state of readiness for Cliff Rescue along this dangerous stretch of coast has again been highlighted by the number of cliff incidents in and around the Marsden area. In conjunction with H.M. Coastguard, the Brigade maintains regular cliff patrols, especially during the summer months and peak holiday times. The Committee and Members are very much aware of the importance of the deterrent effect of these patrols and in view of the almost predictable number of tragedies and incidents, regular training is given a high priority. Again the enthusiasm of the Members is encouraging.

The Brigade participated in an increasing number of public demonstrations and displays and in particular won praise for an excellent if not explosive contribution to the South Tyneside Searchlight Tattoo. The Brigade also supported the South Tyneside Sports Week programme with an appearance in the opening parade and a demonstration drill. The Committee is constantly seeking new ways of promoting and publicising the work of the Brigade and the Auxiliary Coastguard Service.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

If dedication is the heart beat of the Brigade, then money is the life blood. The ongoing struggle to raise funds to maintain the Watch House and to buy equipment reached new heights during the year. The success of the Land Rover Appeal has already been outlined. The Committee wishes to pay tribute to the continuing financial support of our loyal supporters, in particular the Tyne Lifeboat Society and the Department of Environment. As the financial report shows, both organisations gave substantially increased donations during 1979. Without this kind of support, the Brigade, which relies wholly of voluntary donations and public subscriptions, could not carry on.

The repair and maintenance of the building is the Committee's biggest single concern and there is no doubt that a major roof renovation is desperately needed as a matter of urgency to stop further deterioration of the structure of the building and the interior. Steps are in hand to start raising the necessary finance for the roof repair. Much depends on the availability of grant aid to enable this essential work to be carried out. The Committee is extremely grateful to the South Tyneside Youth Opportunities Programme for the complete repainting of the exterior of the building and parts of the interior. This was made possible by the generous donation of materials by International Paints Ltd., of Felling. A major re-wire of the building is planned for completion in 1980.

The Committee is most appreciative of the financial support and encouragement given by South Tyneside Council. As the annual accounts reveal, South Tyneside Council has made substantial and significant contributions to the Brigade's finances. In particular, the Council's decision to take over responsibility for the payment of all the Brigade's insurances represents an annual saving of nearly £300. The Council also granted £250 towards the cost of replacing the stolen portable radio and the Committee was pleased to invite the Mayor of South Tyneside, Councillor Albert Elliott, to officially hand over the new radio. At the end of the year the Council was asked to give grant aid towards the purchase of additional cliff rescue equipment and a favourable reply was indicated. Thanks are also due to the many members of the public and local organisations who gave so generously during the year.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks to the Brigade President, Mr. John Landells, for his enthusiastic support during the year and also wishes to pay tribute to the sterling work of the Hon. Captain and Auxiliary Coastguard-in-Charge, Mr. Herbert Clavery. The Committee also acknowledges the considerable behind-the-scenes work of the two principal administrators, the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Tom Fennelly, and the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. John Stephenson, for

without their continuous work the Brigade could not function. The other Brigade officers, Senior Capt. Ian Robertson, Capt. Dennis Teale and Deputy Capt. Alan Ward have played key roles in maintaining the operational efficiency, training and moral of the Brigade.

Thanks are also due to the officers and members of South Tyneside Council, particularly the Cultural and Leisure Activities Committee, for their support and encouragement of the Brigade's work. Sincere thanks and appreciation are also due to our many friends and colleagues in H.M. Coastguard, especially Sector Officer, Mr. Tom Horsburgh, who after a prolonged absence from his post due to ill-health is now thankfully recovered. Finally, the Committee wishes to record its thanks for the loyalty and hard work of the Members during the year and is grateful for the understanding and support of their families. There is a busy calendar of social events and this adds fibre and substance to the work of the Brigade as well as increasing comradeship and fellowship.

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1979

ASSETS

LandRover NPT 946M		2760
Portable Radio Telephone		378
Winch		<u>155</u>
		3293
<u>Investments (Note 1)</u>		
Borough Council of Luton	2500	
Consolidated 4% Stock	3500	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ % War Stock	<u>105</u>	6105
Lloyds Bank Ltd Deposit Account		1253
do Deposit Account re Land Rover Appeal		28
do Current Account		<u>421</u>
Cash in Hand		15
		<u>£11115</u>

LIABILITIES

Sundry Creditors and Accrued Charges	97
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CAPITAL ACCOUNT

Opening balance at 1st January 1979	7993	
<u>Add</u> Surplus for year	<u>3025</u>	11018
		<u>£11115</u>

Note 1 These 3 investments are in trust only and the Brigade may only draw upon the interest. Should the Brigade disband these investments would be divided amongst other charities.

We have prepared the above Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1979 and attached Receipts and Expenditure Account for the year ended that date and certify that they are in accordance with the books and records produced to us, and information supplied by the Hon. Treasurer. As in previous years the Assets do not include the cost or market values of the leasehold property and furniture and furnishings as no evidence or information was available from the officials regarding these. We have again recommended that professional valuations be obtained for inclusion with future Accounts. No instructions were received or work undertaken in connection with the Social Club Accounts.

Earl Grey House
11 Beach Road
South Shields

16th June 1980

J. W. Dick R.
Chartered Accountants

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Receipts and Expenditure Account for
Year ended 31st December 1979

RECEIPTS

Interest received

Investments		
Deposit Account	580	
do	125	
re Landrover Appeal	<u>35</u>	740

Donations

Trinity House	36	
Tyne Lifeboat Society	275	
NALGO	10	
Collection Boxes	18	
B Burnett	2	
J H Johnson	5	
R Drew	5	
South Tyneside Corporation	226	
Mortimer Road Pensioners Association	2	
St Paul & St John Womens Home Church	10	
Captain Hunter	2	
Anonymous	<u>50</u>	641

Grant

Department of Trade		250
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Land Rover Fund

H M Coastguard for use of vehicle	30	
Donations - Land Rover Fund	<u>1534</u>	1564

Miscellaneous

Sale of Diaries	8	
Sun Alliance Glass Insurance claim	24	
Coastguard call out	40	
Telephone Box	5	
Restitution on broken windows	50	
Refund on ladders	6	
Jumble Sale Proceeds	130	
Proceeds from sale of old Land Rover	<u>1000</u>	1263

£4458

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J. P. STEPHENSON, Esq.

Hon. Captain:
H. M. CLAVERY, Esq.

Hon. Secretary:
T. P. FENNELLY, Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 113th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on TUESDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER, at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to the Members.

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
 2. Business arising out of the minutes
 3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
 4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 6. Election of Officers
 7. Election of Committee Members
 8. Any other Business
 9. Vote of Thanks
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ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending December 31st, 1980

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 113th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The past 12 months has seen another remarkable period of achievement in the Brigade's recent history. Following the Brigade's 1979 success in the Elizabethan Trophy Competition, the Brigade won the Wearside Shipowners' Shield for the first time for a number of years, after being runners-up on several occasions in recent competitions. These competitions, and the practice leading up to them, help to maintain the Brigade's efficiency in the use of the breeches buoy rescue equipment. The high standards set by the other competing Brigades made the winning of the Shield all the more pleasing. As standards of efficiency in the use of the breeches buoy equipment are maintained at a high level on this part of the coast, our friends in H.M. Coastguard have commented that it has become increasingly difficult to judge these competitions because there is very little to separate the teams. Despite a creditable performance the Brigade could not repeat their success in the Elizabethan Trophy.

Coupled with the success in the competition field, there has been a tremendous improvement in fund-raising activities on a scale never before attempted. The Brigade's first-ever Flag Day Appeal was an outstanding success and raised £1,027.38p an amount which far surpassed the most optimistic expectations. This excellent result was due in no small measure to the efforts of Brigadesmen, their relatives and friends. The amount collected also reflected the great generosity of the people of South Shields in supporting their Volunteer Life Brigade. This success has encouraged the Committee to go ahead with arrangements to make this an annual event. The money has gone towards the general running of the Brigade, the maintenance of the building and replacement of equipment.

While still retaining the primary function of a Coast Rescue Company with the breeches buoy equipment, the Brigade has become well and truly established as the principal emergency service, under the auspices of H.M. Coastguard, for cliff rescue. Thanks to the purchase and fitting out of the Land Rover and various items of new equipment, it has been possible to familiarise Brigade members with a wide range of rescue techniques. The Brigade's cliff rescue services have been called upon to deal with an increasing number of incidents in and around the Marsden area. There is a constant need to retain regular cliff rescue training and to carry out patrol work and practice in conjunction with H.M. Coastguard. The Committee and Brigade members are very much aware of the vital need to be vigilant in making this stretch of the coastline as safe as possible for local people and visitors alike. It is tragic to record year in and year out the grim statistics of death and injury resulting from a moment's thoughtlessness. The Brigade will continue to make its contribution to cliff safety and lends its full support to the local Council and others who strive to make people aware of the dangers of ignoring the warnings. To this end, organised training is carried out and another successful training week-end was held at an outdoor activities centre in Northumberland. Members also completed a renewal/refresher first aid course and all participating members obtained the necessary marks to qualify for the St. John's Ambulance Brigade First Aid Certificate.

Thanks to excellent co-operation from the local 105 Plant Squadron Royal Engineers (V), a number of Brigadesmen completed a familiarisation course in the operation of the Territorial Army's large searchlights, and the Brigade was commended for its skill

in the use and operation of these large lights during an exercise later in the year. The capability of using such equipment during prolonged rescues is an addition to the Brigade's capabilities and thanks are due to Major Norman Allison and his men for their assistance.

As usual the Brigade has taken part in the annual round of public demonstrations, drills and exhibitions. The successful Sports Week demonstration was highlighted by the first-class contribution by our friends at 202 Squadron RAF Boulmer with a superlative demonstration of flying skill and rescue techniques. Tynemouth RNLI and South Tyneside Sub-Aqua Club played a vital part in making this coast rescue demonstration a major feature of the South Tyneside Sports Week programme. The Brigade again supported the South Tyneside Searchlight Tattoo and after a highly-successful display in 1979, Brigade members handled the job of arena marshals.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

As already mentioned the success of the Brigade's first-ever Flag Day Appeal was a major boost to income. Another major and unexpected donation came from the Staff Association at the Marine & Technical College at South Shields who generously decided to donate half the proceeds of the college annual summer fete amounting to £386, the balance going to our friends the RNLI. The Committee is conscious of the need to have an enthusiastic spirit of self-help within the Brigade and is grateful to those members, wives and friends who play an active role in the various fund-raising activities. The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks for the ongoing support from the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Department of the Environment and the Port of Tyne Authority. All three bodies have given generous financial grants or donations over the years and without this level of support the work of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade, which is wholly financed by public subscriptions and voluntary donations, could not continue.

The biggest single source of financial concern to the Committee continues to be the repair and maintenance of the Watch House. It is recognised that in the very near future a major renovation, particularly to the roof, will need to be undertaken and the Committee is continuing to pursue the means of effecting this essential, but obviously very costly, repair work. The re-wiring of the building is virtually complete and the Committee wishes to thank Brigadesman C. W. Fennelly for his work in this respect.

Over the past few years the Brigade has been well supported and encouraged by South Tyneside Council which has made generous grants and allowances to the Brigade to help with the purchase of rescue equipment.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks to the Brigade President, Mr. John Landells for his active participation and help in the running of the Brigade affairs. Once again Hon. Captain and Auxiliary Coastguard-in-Charge, Mr. Herbert Clavery has rendered invaluable service, particularly in the maintenance of the rescue

equipment. Thanks are also due to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Tom Fennelly, and Hon. Treasurer, Mr. John Stephenson for their hard-working contributions to the running of the Brigade. The officers of the Brigade, Senior Capt. I. Robertson, Capt. D. Teale and Deputy Capt. Alan Ward have continued to make steady progress in operational efficiency and training during the year.

Sincere thanks and appreciation are also due to our many friends and colleagues in H.M. Coastguard, especially Sector Officer Mr. Tom Horsburgh who made a welcome return to duty after illness, and District Controller Mr. Ray Little and his staff at Tynemouth headquarters. Thanks are also due to the officers and members of South Tyneside Council, especially the Culture and Leisure Activities Department staff for all their help. Finally, the Committee wishes to record its thanks for the loyal service and hard work of all Members during the year, and for the support of families and friends. The Brigade has kept up a busy programme of social events which add to the enjoyment and fulfilment of the work of the Brigade. The Social Secretary/Treasurer Mr. David Robertson deserves special thanks for all his hard work in the running of the social club, which makes a valuable contribution to the comradeship and fellowship of the Brigade.

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

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President:

J. LANDELLS, Esq.

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Hon. Captain:

H. M. CLAVERY, Esq.

Hon. Secretary:

T. P. FENNELLY, Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 114th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on Wednesday, October 27th, 1982 at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to the Members.

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
 2. Business arising out of the minutes
 3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
 4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
 6. Election of Officers
 7. Election of Committee Members
 8. Any Other Business
 9. Vote of Thanks
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ANNUAL REPORT Year Ending December 31st, 1981

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 114th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The 12 months covered by the report have seen some changes in the officers of the Brigade and towards the end of the period came hints of future changes concerning the relationship between the Brigade and H.M. Coastguard and the maintenance of the coast rescue facilities. After a lifetime of service to the Brigade and Auxiliary Coastguard Service Hon. Captain H. M. Clavery was officially retired as Auxiliary Coastguard-in-Charge, although he has continued in that role pending the future changes. At the end of the first quarter Senior Captain I. Robertson announced his resignation and half way through the year Captain D. Teale also stood down. Both members have rendered good service over the years. Deputy Captain A. Ward assumed responsibility for all training, drills and competitions and managed creditable performances despite the circumstances. The Annual General Meeting subsequently agreed to revert to the two-tier captaincy and Captain A. Ward and Deputy Captain B. Finlay were elected. Following the successes of the previous two years, the Brigade put in good drills in the Elizabethan Trophy, finishing third, but failed to retain the Wearside Shields despite a good effort. Despite changes which may lie ahead, the Brigade continues to maintain a high standard of efficiency in the use of the breeches buoy rescue equipment.

Ever conscious of the need for self help the Brigade Committee has pressed ahead with various fund-raising efforts and spurred on by the success of the first-ever Flag Day Appeal in 1980, this year's appeal realised the magnificent total of £1,427. This excellent result was a tribute to the hard work of those members and friends who helped with the collecting and more particularly to the tremendous generosity of the people of South Shields. Without their financial help it would be difficult to maintain the tradition of 114 years continuous service by the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade and to continue to respond to the changing needs of the coast rescue service.

The maintenance of the primary function of a coast rescue company using the breeches buoy equipment has continued alongside the development of the Brigade's well-established cliff rescue role and general work in conjunction with H. M. Coastguard. The Brigade has placed great emphasis on the cliff rescue role in recent years and, thanks to generous support with finance, is now fully equipped and trained to carry out this

essential role. The number of incidents . . . some fatal and others serious injuries . . . in and around the Marsden area in particular does not record the near misses and potential casualties, and for this reason the Brigade is a strong advocate of the deterrent factor and maintains regular cliff patrols. In this work the Brigade receives excellent support from South Tyneside Council.

During the year the Brigade took part in the annual round of drills, competitions and demonstrations and general training sessions. This included participation in the South Tyneside Sports Week programme and a highly successful contribution to the South Tyneside Military Tattoo with a re-enactment of the famous "Saved" incident.

Whatever the future may hold in relation to the reorganisation of coast rescue facilities by H.M. Coastguard, the Brigade Committee is determined to maintain the long record of unbroken volunteer rescue service on this part of the North-East Coast. The Committee is confident that the spirit and dedication of Brigade members allied with strong support from benefactors and friends will ensure the continuation of this unique service to the local community.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Mention has already been made of the record-breaking Flag Day Appeal and House-to-House Collection and the £1,427 total represents a great boost to Brigade funds. The Committee is very aware of the loyal and continuing support of long-established benefactors and friends. The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks for the ongoing support of the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Department of the Environment, Port of Tyne Authority, South Tyneside Council and Trinity House, Newcastle. All these bodies have given substantial financial help over the years. Without this level of support and the many other smaller donations, just as important but too many to mention individually, the work of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade, which is wholly financed by public subscriptions and voluntary donations, could not continue.

A major step forward in the constant struggle to keep the Watch House and other buildings in good repair came towards the end of the year with the completion of the first proper structural survey by the Timber Research and Development Association. The T.R.A.D.A. report will be the basis of what the Committee hopes to be a major renovation programme. Meanwhile

the general upkeep of the buildings goes on in the knowledge that eventually major repairs will be needed to keep the structures sound, the biggest single source of concern is the condition of the roof.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks to all who have contributed in any way to the continuing prosperity and general well being of the Brigade. Special thanks are due to the Brigade President, Mr. John Landells, for his zealous interest in the running of the Brigade and his active participation in fund raising. Once again Hon. Captain Mr. Herbert Clavery, who although officially retired as Auxiliary Coastguard-in-Charge, has continued in that role pending future developments, has given invaluable service particularly with the maintenance of the rescue equipment. Thanks are also due to the two principal administrators, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Tom Fennelly, and Hon. Treasurer, Mr. John Stephenson, for their behind-the-scenes contributions to the efficient running of the Brigade's affairs. The officers of the Brigade, Captain A. Ward and Deputy Captain B. Finlay have maintained operational efficiency and training during the year.

Sincere thanks and appreciation are also due to our many friends and colleagues in H.M. Coastguard and the Auxiliary Coastguard Service for their help and support, especially District Controller Mr. Ray Little and all members of the Regular staff at Tynemouth headquarters. The Brigade Committee would also like to pay tribute to the work of Mr. Tom Horsburgh, who retired as Sector Officer during the year, and to thank him for his support over the years. Thanks are also due to the officers and members of South Tyneside Council, especially the staff of the Culture and Leisure Activities Department, for all their help. Thanks also to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff for their assistance.

Finally, the Committee wishes to record its thanks for the loyal service and hard work of all members of the Brigade during the year, and a special thanks are due to the support and understanding of families and friends of the Brigade. Social Secretary/Treasurer Mr. David Robertson continues to run the social club and associated events, and he deserves our thanks for all his hard work on behalf of members, families and friends. There is a good spirit of comradeship and fellowship within the Brigade and social events play an important role in helping to maintain the fibre of the Brigade.

1983

115 AGM.

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

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President:

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Hon. Captain:

H. M. CLAVERY, Esq.

Hon. Secretary:

T. P. FENNELLY, Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 115th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7th, 1983, at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to members.

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
 2. Business arising out of Minutes
 3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
 4. Hon. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
 5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
 6. Election of Officers
 7. Election of Committee Members
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ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending December 31st 1982

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 115th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The period of the Report covers a time which has seen the biggest change in the relationship between the Volunteer Life Brigade and the full-time Coastguard Service since the Brigade was founded in 1866. In the past few years there have been a series of radical reorganisations within H.M. Coastguard which, although having widespread implications for the full-time Service and paid members of the Auxiliary Coastguard Service, have largely unaffected the role of the Volunteer Life Brigade working within the Auxiliary Coastguard Service. However, as reductions, restructuring and centralisation have taken place in the name of progress, the extent of the changes was bound to have an effect sooner or later on the position of the country's three remaining Volunteer Life Brigades, which coincidentally are all in the North-East. 1982 will go down in history as the year in which the mandarins and bureaucrats of Whitehall tried, but failed, to sever the unique link between the Volunteer Life Brigades and H.M. Coastguard. It is to the credit of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade that it took a leading role in the eventual negotiations with H.M. Coastguard and co-ordinated opposition to the scrapping of the coast rescue equipment at South Shields, Sunderland and Tynemouth and the enforced withdrawal from the Auxiliary Coastguard Services of dozens of unpaid volunteers. It is to the discredit and detriment of those same faceless bureaucrats and nameless politicians who in the interests of so-called economies tried to devalue more than a century of continuous lifesaving service. To be fair to our friends in H.M. Coastguard, who were merely carrying out the orders from higher up the Government tree, they did recognise the special position of the three Volunteer Life Brigades and offered to allow the Brigades to retain the rescue equipment and provide a rescue service on the same basis as other "declared facilities" such as the RNLI lifeboats and SAR helicopters. It was also agreed to drop the proposal to end the Auxiliary Coastguard status of Brigade members, with a tight control of future numbers. The Committee accepted the final settlement of the proposals, but was highly critical of the manner in which the proposals were initially presented. Towards the end of 1982 the administrative procedures were in hand to establish the Brigade as a "declared facility" as from January 1st, 1983. In so doing the Committee recognised the long-term implications, particularly in so much as the Brigade will now be totally responsible for the maintenance and replacement of all the rescue equipment previously supplied by H.M. Coastguard. As the full implication of the changes were being absorbed there came another hint towards the end of the year that the whole question of the continuing maintenance of breeches buoy rescue equipment throughout the country may be under review, with a view to scrapping, in the next two or three years.

Despite all the upheaval, the Brigade continued to maintain efficiency in the use of the rescue equipment and gave creditable performances in the two major competitions, the Elizabethan Trophy and the Wearside Shipowners' Shields. Although competition success eluded the team led by Captain Alan Ward and Deputy Captain Bernard Finlay worked well. Training and practice in the developing role of cliff rescue and radio communications continued in conjunction with H.M. Coastguard. The emphasis on cliff rescue training and communications is made all the more important as the full-time Coastguard presence along the coastline is reducing. The number of incidents, particularly in and around Marsden Bay, never seems to go down and the need for the maintenance of a locally-based team trained in the use of cliff rescue equipment is greater than ever before.

During the year the Brigade took part in the annual round of drills, competitions and general training sessions. This again included supporting the South Tyneside Sports Week programme and a hard-working involvement as arena marshals at the South Tyneside Military Tattoo.

Over the years the Brigade has always shown a willingness to respond to challenge and change and has never stood in the way of progress. Indeed the Brigade has been proud to take a lead in many ways and has never been slow to show the way forward itself if necessary. Whatever further changes may lie in store the Brigade Committee is determined to maintain the long and unbroken record of volunteer lifesaving on this part of the North-East coast. The Brigade, through the spirit, determination and dedication of its members, and much support from its benefactors and friends, still has a vital contribution to make to the community in providing a local coast rescue service.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

The Annual Appeal has now become firmly established and now represents a significant proportion of the income raised by the efforts of Brigade members and friends. As well as making a sizeable contribution to funds the Annual Appeal is another source of team effort. The Committee is again grateful to our many benefactors and friends without whose continuing support the Brigade could not survive. In particular the Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, the Department of Trade, the Port of Tyne Authority, South Tyneside Council and the Master and Brethren of Trinity House, Newcastle. The work of the Brigade would be almost impossible without the major contributions made by these bodies. The Brigade is completely dependent upon public subscriptions and voluntary donations. The Committee is grateful for all contributions, large and small and wishes to record its grateful thanks to the generous people of South Shields.

The repair and maintenance of the Watch House continues to be uppermost in the minds of the Committee which has renewed efforts during the year to secure major financial aid towards a complete restoration project. Pending the outcome of requests for aid from the Tyne and Wear County Council and other sources the Brigade has been able to make a major improvement in the Committee Room with a complete replacement of the floor and plans are in hand for a complete refurbishment and refurnishing of this area. Most of the work has been carried out by a willing band of members and the Committee looks forward to its completion as representing another step forward in the Brigade's development.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to record its sincere thanks to all those who continue to make it possible to keep up the work of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. Brigade President John Landells continues to be a source of active encouragement and inspiration thanks to his keen interest in the Brigade's work and the orderly conduct of its affairs. Hon. Captain Herbert Clavery, the Brigade's longest serving active member, has again rendered valuable service with the maintenance and upkeep of the rescue equipment. The two principal administrators, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Tom Fennelly, and Hon. Treasurer, Mr. John Stephenson, provided sterling service as well as being keen and active members. The principal officers Captain Alan Ward and Deputy Captain Bernard Finlay have provided enthusiastic leadership and have done much to maintain operational efficiency and to promote training throughout the year as well as taking a close interest in all aspects of the welfare of the Brigade.

Despite all the changes and upheavals the Brigade Committee is happy to express sincere thanks and appreciation to our many friends and colleagues in H. M. Coastguard and the Auxiliary Coastguard Service for their continuing support. Special thanks are due to District Controller Mr. Ray Little and his staff at Tynemouth MRSC who have maintained close support and offered helpful advice during a very busy time. The Committee was pleased to welcome Sector Officer, Mr. Charles Eccleson, during the year and thanks him for his time and interest in training matters. The officers and members of South Tyneside Council have been most helpful and courteous in actively promoting and helping the work of the Brigade. Thanks are also due to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff, especially the South Tyne pier staff, for their help during the year.

The biggest round of thanks is due to all the members of the Brigade for their loyal service and hard work during a difficult year, with a special thank you for the support and understanding of families and friends associated with the Brigade. The smooth functioning of the Social Club and its associated work is again due to the quiet but efficient contribution from Social Secretary Mr. David Robertson who accomplishes so much unseen work on behalf of members and their families.

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Founded 1866

President:
J LANDELLS, Esq.

Vice-President:
D E TUNNING, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer
J P STEPHENSON Esq.

Hon. Captain:
H M CLAVERY, Esq.

Hon. Secretary:
T P FENNELLY, Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 16th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Flying Angel Club, Missions to Seamen, Mill Dam, South Shields on Monday December 17th 1984 at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to members.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
2. Business arising out of Minutes
3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
4. Hon. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of Committee Members
8. Any Other Business
9. Vote of Thanks

ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending December 31st 1983

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 116th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The Report covers a period of unprecedented change and development in the Brigade's history and marks the beginning of a whole new era of the life saving work of the Volunteer Life Brigade. This was marked by the implementation of the new relationship with HM Coastguard. With effect from January 1st 1983, the Brigade now operates as a "declared facility" offering its services on the same basis as the lifeboat, helicopter and other SAR units. Much of the build-up to this change took place during the previous year following the reorganisation of HM Coastguard and although it represents a major departure in some respects it does not fundamentally alter the Brigade's status and function within the Auxilliary Coastguard Service. It was achieved after the Government's cost-cutting exercise in the Coastguard Service and it is a matter of record that this Brigade co-ordinated the opposition to the original proposals to try to scrap the coast rescue role of the Volunteer Life Brigades. Thanks to support from local officers of the Coastguard the change has been relatively painless and the first year as a "declared facility" has not had a noticeable impact. However, the Brigade Committee is acutely aware that now more than ever before the Brigade is completely responsible for the supply and maintenance of every single piece of rescue equipment. This highlights the need for constant fund-raising efforts to enable the Brigade to play a full role as a local coast rescue unit. It is our policy to provide the best equipment and no effort is spared to meet the commitment of maintaining a high level of efficiency in our rescue work.

The year also marks another major landmark in Brigade history following the decision of Tyne and Wear County Council to make £31,000 available in 1984-85 to start the complete restoration of the Watch House. This is the culmination of five years patient persistence in trying to secure major funding to carry out long-overdue repairs and renovations. It has long been recognised that the scale of the project was beyond the resources of the Brigade and thanks to the massive support from the County Council the way is clear to achieving a complete restoration during 1984/85. Without this level of support and commitment the Brigade Committee and Members are deeply aware that the buildings would have rapidly deteriorated in coming years. Detailed work on the preparation of plans was continuing as the year closed and all the signs are that even further funding might have to be raised to enable the full programme of works to be carried out. Whatever the future might bring, the one certainty is that a major worry has now been lifted and we can only look forward to the day when the Volunteer Life Brigade has a headquarters building which will last another 100 years or more. The Brigade Committee believes that the restoration of the building will be a great credit to the area and will stand as testimony to the faith of the Brigade and its supporters and will ensure the continuance of the life saving work of the Volunteer Life Brigade for the foreseeable future.

Amidst all the changes and plans for the future the day-to-day work of the Brigade goes on to enable it to function as a viable Coast Rescue Unit. It is to the credit of Captain Alan Ward and Deputy Chairman Bernard Finlay that despite some upheaval training and enthusiasm for rescue work has continued unabated. Their efforts and dedication certainly paid dividends with the winning of the Elizabethan Trophy - only the second time since the Competition has inaugurated. Team work and practice has been the keynote of success and recognition as the most efficient company in the use of the breeches buoy equipment is a fitting reward.

Training and practice in other aspects of the Brigade's "declared" functions continues to maintain a high level of competence and efficiency in cliff rescue and general search and rescue techniques. Every year brings the inevitable toll of incidents along this stretch of coastline. The cliffs around Marsden continue to attract an unacceptable level of accidents - often fatal - most of which arise from sheer stupidity and lack of commonsense. The need to maintain an efficient cliff rescue capability is a high priority for the Brigade.

As well as being good public relations part of the Brigade's training programme involves taking part in various drills, competitions and demonstrations including the annual Sports Week programme. It is the policy of the Brigade Committee to keep the work of the Brigade in the public eye.

The past 12 months represents another successful period in the development and achievement of the Brigade. It reflects the ongoing determination and dedication of the Brigade to weather the storms of life and to preserve our proud record of 116 years unbroken service in lifesaving. The Brigade's contribution to the community could not happen without the commitment and interest of members and the support of benefactors, friends and the public of South Tyneside.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

More than ever the Brigade is trying to raise enough money to keep going. As a voluntary organisation totally dependent on donations and subscriptions it is a constant struggle to sustain fund-raising efforts. The Annual Appeal is a useful source of income and the regular list of loyal benefactors make a sizeable contribution to funds. The Brigade Committee wishes to express particular thanks to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Department of Trade, Port of Tyne Authority, South Tyneside Council, Master and Bretheren of Trinity House, Concordia Club and all who gave so generously throughout the year. Special thanks to the generous public of South Shields for their support with Flag Day. Faced with the colossal task of raising extra funds to help with the restoration of the Watch House the Brigade Committee is preparing long-term fund-raising plans for 1984/85.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to record sincere thanks to all who help South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade to continue functioning. The mainstay of the Brigade are the members. Brigade President John Landells takes an active interest in promoting the well-being and development of the Brigade and lends his considerable experience and stature for the good of the Brigade. The administration of the work of the Brigade is mostly unseen and because it is handled so capably by Hon Secretary Mr Tom Fennelly and Hon Treasurer Mr John Stephenson. These two combine the numerous duties of office with keen and active membership. The principle officers Captain Alan Ward and Deputy Chairman Bernard Finlay render sterling service in training and generally maintaining standards and morale.

Thanks are due to our many friends and colleagues in HM Coastguard and kindred services. Especially to District Controller Mr Ray Little and his staff at Tynemouth MRSC for their help and advice over the year, also Sector Officer Mr Charles Eccleson. The Committee wishes to thank the members and officers of South Tyneside Council for their consideration and courteous in helping the work of the Brigade. Special thanks also to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff, especially the South Pier staff for their continuing help and assistance.

The biggest thank you is due to all the members of the Brigade for their continuing loyalty and commitment. Thanks also for the patience and understanding of families and friends. Mr David Robertson continues his excellent work in running the social club.

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Founded 1866

President
J LANDELLS Esq

Vice-President
D E TINNING Esq

Hon Treasurer
J P STEPHENSON Esq

Hon Captain
H M CLAVERY Esq

Hon Secretary
T P FENNELLY Esq

NOTICE is hereby given that the 117th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields on **Monday 25 November 1985** at **20.00 hours** when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to Members.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
2. Business arising out of Minutes
3. Annual Report & Hon Secretary's Report
4. Hon Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of Committee Members
8. Any Other Business
9. Vote of Thanks

ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending 31 December 1984

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 117th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The most significant event of the year, indeed in the entire history of the Brigade, occurred in the last quarter when work finally started on the restoration of the Watch House. After years of hoping, negotiating and planning and a few frustrating delays, the contract got under way. It became clear from the very start that the worst expectations on the state of the building were realised and with major restoration the Watch House could not have lasted much longer. Its unique construction and a long history of repair attempts had variously made matters better or worse depending on which part of the rotting structure you looked at last. As the year closed the building looked as if it could never be the same again. However, the overall aim of the restoration is exactly the opposite, to restore the building to its original state while at the same time using modern construction techniques, to ensure that while maintaining historical accuracy, the structure and fabric of the building are sound. It cannot be stated too loudly or repeated too often that the entire restoration project would not have been possible without the 100 per cent commitment by Tyne and Wear County Council to fund the work. The measure of the support of the members and officers of the County Council can be gauged by their decision to increase the original grant of £31,000 to over £50,000. This massive increase in cost became inevitable as early site investigations revealed that the extent of the restoration far exceeded the original sum, which had only ever been very much of a guess. With the major part of the restoration due for completion in the first half of 1985, the Brigade Committee and Members can only look forward to its completion. The Watch House, which is a listed building, will be able to continue to serve as the working headquarters of a local rescue organisation and at the same time be preserved as an important part of local history and heritage.

The restoration has necessarily taken up a large part of this Report, but the Brigade Committee and members have always been aware that despite the colossal disruption and being made "homeless" for a few months, the main functions of the Volunteer Life Brigade as a coast rescue unit need to continue uninterrupted. To that end, all the usual training in breeches buoy, cliff rescue, communications and all the other aspects of the role as a "declared facility" providing a constant 24-hour rescue capability throughout the year has gone on unabated. Despite all the extra work and the privations of displacement from the main building, the Brigade Committee is pleased to report that all the training paid off by winning the Elizabethan Trophy for the second consecutive year. Training is the mainstay of the Brigade's work and demands a high degree of commitment from members to maintain acceptable levels of competence and efficiency in rescue techniques.

Notwithstanding the scale of the funding for the restoration work, the Brigade Committee has not lost sight of the need to sustain normal fund raising activities to maintain the rescue equipment, which needs constant replacing and updating as it becomes worked out or obsolete.

It is Brigade policy to maintain all equipment to the highest possible standards.

As part of the training programme the Brigade participates in various public drills and demonstrations, including the two major competitions in breeches buoy usage with neighbouring Brigades and companies.

Without a doubt the 12 months covered by this Report mark the most historic year since the Brigade was founded. It demonstrates the real volunteer spirit which led to the formation of the Brigade in 1866 and shows the determination of today's members to uphold the tradition of more than 117 years of unbroken service in lifesaving. The Brigade is proud to be of service to the community and recognises that this would not be possible without the continuing support of members and the generosity of benefactors and the people of South Tyneside.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

With a major commitment well in excess of £50,000 for the restoration work, which will generate additional extra expenditure, the Brigade Committee is acutely aware of the need to continue to raise funds to keep the organisation functioning. As ever, fund raising is hard work and the Brigade is keen to demonstrate that self-help is an essential part of winning support. The Annual Appeal continues to be a major source of income, but much is due to the support of regular benefactors and friends. The Brigade Committee wishes to pay particular thanks to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Port of Tyne Authority, Department of Trade, South Tyneside Council, Master and Bretheren of Trinity House and the management and staff of Marks and Spencer, and to all who gave so generously during the year.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to express sincere thanks to all who contribute to the success of the Brigade and its work. Brigade President Mr John Landells remains a pillar of support and takes an active interest in the development and well-being of the Brigade and its members. The considerable burden of administration carries on mostly unseen and unsung thanks to the sterling efforts of Hon Secretary Tom Fennelly and Hon Treasurer John Stephenson. This dedicated duo carry the bulk of the day-to-day workload as well as being enthusiastic and active members. Their efforts are supported by the two principal officers, Captain Alan Ward and Deputy Captain Bernard Finlay who continue to maintain high standards of training, efficiency and morale. Despite all the upheaval Mr David Robertson has continued his excellent work in running the social life of the Brigade.

Thanks are due to our friends and colleagues in HM Coastguard and kindred services, especially to District Controller Mr Ray Little and his staff at Tynemouth MRSC. The Committee would also like to thank the members and officers of Tyne and Wear County Council and South Tyneside Council for their support and interest. Special thanks also to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff, especially our good friends on the South Pier. Thanks also to the Rev Eric Newman and staff at the Flying Angel Club, Missions to Seamen, for helping their homeless bretheren. A very big and extra special thank you is due to Mr Mike Cookson, architect for the restoration work, who has worked so hard to make it all possible.

The biggest thank you is due to all the Members of the Brigade for their continuing loyalty. Thanks also for the patience and understanding of families and friends.

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

FOUNDED 1866

President:
J LANDELLS, Esq

Vice-President:
D E TUNNING, Esq

Hon. Treasurer
J P STEPHENSON, Esq

Hon. Captain:
H M CLAVERY, Esq

Hon. Secretary:
T P FENNELLY, Esq

NOTICE is hereby given that the 118th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at The Watch House, South Pier, South Shields on Monday December 15 1986 at 20.00 hours when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to members.

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of last Annual General Meeting.*
- 2 Business arising out of Minutes.*
- 3 Annual Report and Hon Secretary's Report.*
- 4 Hon Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts.*
- 5 Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts.*
- 6 Election of Officers.*
- 7 Election of Committee Members.*
- 8 Any Other Business.*
- 9 Vote of Thanks.*

ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending 31st December 1985

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 118th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The Report represents a major milestone in the history of the Brigade since its formation in 1866. The year saw the completion of the restoration of the Watch House, which was handed back in May after the main works costing £60,000 had been carried out. The restoration was only possible because of grant aid totalling £52,800 from Tyne & Wear County Council and the generous support and assistance from other bodies, local firms and individual donations to the Brigade special appeal for funds to complete the restoration works. The refurbishment of those parts of the building not covered by the main contract and the restoration of artefacts is an ongoing process and towards the end of 1985 the building was once again functioning as the day-to-day headquarters of this local volunteer rescue service and a working museum depicting the Brigade's history of 118 years of continuous lifesaving service. It must be recorded that without the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of everyone connected with the restoration project, that this unique and historic building would not have survived. It is to the credit of all those involved in any way that this building has been restored to a very high standard and South Shields can be proud that the Watch House can continue to play an important part in the continuing history of coast rescue service in this area.

Despite all the upheaval and considerable amount of extra work generated by the restoration, the Brigade has never lost sight of its main function to provide a 24-hour rescue facility in breeches buoy, cliff rescue and associated responsibilities as a "Declared Facility" in our role as Auxiliary Coastguards working with HM Coastguard.

Training has continued in all aspects of rescue work and the Committee is aware of the need to maintain high standards of competence and readiness. To this end the call-out system has been improved with the introduction of a Radio Paging unit linking the Hon Secretary directly to HM Coastguard at Tynemouth. Again, despite heavy demands on resources for the restoration of the Watch House, the Brigade Committee has continued to ensure that adequate funds have been provided for the maintenance of all rescue equipment to the highest standard.

As part of the training programme, the Brigade takes part in an annual round of public demonstrations and community events as well as remaining strong supporters of the two annual competitions in breeches buoy rescue with neighbouring Brigades and companies. Although competition success eluded the Brigade in 1985 there remains an encouraging commitment among members to play a full role in all aspects of the Brigade's work. The operation of the Brigade and the upkeep of the buildings and equipment is a major task. During the period of this Report the Brigade remains as proud as ever of its past and current achievements and now looks to the future with renewed vigour and dedication. The success of the restoration of the Watch House has literally laid the foundations for at least another century of service.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

As the restoration work continues it clearly represents the major source of expenditure. Quite apart from the grant aid, the Brigade resources have been severely stretched to cope with additional costs. Again, this has only been achieved by a combination of extra fund raising effort and generous support from our regular benefactors and friends. The Annual Appeal continues to be an important source of income and good public relations.

The Brigade Committee is particularly grateful to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Port of Tyne Authority, South Tyneside Council, Department of Trade and the Master and Brethren of Trinity House who give so generously each year. Special thanks to all who responded so kindly to the Restoration Appeal.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Committee wishes to express sincere thanks to all who help the Brigade to continue with its work. Brigade President John Landells is particularly supportive in his efforts to promote our work and takes an active interest in all our affairs. During the restoration period an even greater burden of work than normal has fallen on the two principal administrators, Hon Secretary Tom Fennelly, and Hon Treasurer John Stephenson. Apart from holding down these two onerous tasks these two officers also play a full part in the operational activities in the Brigade and the Committee appreciates all their hard work. Captain Bernard Finlay, ably supported by Deputy Captain John Stephenson and Deputy Captain Charlie Fennelly, has ensured that training standards, efficiency and morale have remained high despite all the upheaval of the restoration. David Robertson has had a quieter time on the social side, but has continued to render excellent service in co-ordinating the Brigade side of the restoration work.

Thanks are due to our friends and colleagues in HM Coastguard and kindred services, especially to Mr Ray Little, District Controller and his staff for their support. Members and officers of Tyne & Wear County Council and South Tyneside Council deserve extra special mention for their extraordinary support during this very special time. Thanks also to the Port of Tyne Authority and staff, our Architect Mr Mike Cookson and anyone else who has contributed to the success of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade.

As usual the biggest thanks must go to all members of the Brigade for their commitment, time and effort. Thanks also to supportive families and friends.

* * * * *

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119 AGM

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Founded 1866

President :

J LANDELLS Esq.

Vice-President :

D E TINNING Esq.

Hon. Treasurer :
A WARD Esq.

Hon. Captain :
H M CLAVERY Esq.

Hon. Secretary :
T P FENNELLY Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 119th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held in the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on MONDAY NOVEMBER 23 1987 at 20.00 hrs when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to members.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting
2. Business Arising from the Minutes
3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts
5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report & Accounts
6. Election of Officers (only if holders resign)
7. Election of Committee Members
8. Any Other Business

ANNUAL REPORT
Year Ending December 31 1986

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 119th Annual Report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. The year marked a major milestone in the history and development of the Brigade with the celebration of the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Brigade and the official re-opening of the Watch House after the completion of the restoration project. The official re-opening was carried out on the exact date of the anniversary by Coun. Mrs Jennie Shearan, Chairman of Tyne and Wear County Council, the body which funded the major part of the £70,000 restoration. Without the level of support which was so readily forthcoming from the County Council in the period 1983-86 the future of the Watch House and indeed the Brigade would have been very uncertain. The significance of the role of the now defunct County Council and South Tyneside Council in a supporting role is suitably recorded on a commemorative plaque on the exterior of the building and on an inscribed memorial plaque inside the main building. In addition to the excellent support from the two local authorities there was considerable financial support for the restoration work from local companies and businesses as well as many individuals. The restored Watch House now stands in testimony to all the hard work and enthusiasm by everyone associated with the project, especially our architect Mr Mike Cookson and the main contractors P.F. Burrridge & Sons. As well as serving as the operational headquarters of the Brigade the Watch House is a unique monument to the rich history and tradition of volunteer lifesaving work on this still treacherous stretch of the North East Coast.

During the past few years the scale of the restoration has inevitably dominated events, however it is to the credit of the officers and members, that amidst all the disruption and additional workload, the Brigade has continued to maintain its unbroken record of 120 years of lifesaving service with the provision of a 24-hour rescue facility in breeches buoy, cliff rescue and associated duties and responsibilities as a Declared Facility working in conjunction with HM Coastguard. The Brigade plays an active role within the Auxiliary Coastguard Service and in addition to maintaining an all-round coast rescue capability contributes to the vitality of the local community as a truly local and wholly volunteer service.

Training has continued in all aspects of coast rescue and the Brigade is constantly striving to maintain high standards of efficiency at all times. There is a commitment to strike the balance between the need to preserve the historic aspects of the Brigade's work and the need to support a specialist coast rescue unit keeping pace with modern developments. Despite all the changes, there remains a basic need to provide coast rescue facilities along this dangerous stretch of coastline and the Brigade is proud to be able to offer its services at the disposal of HM Coastguard. The Brigade remains an independent volunteer service committed to the preservation of life and is dedicated to upholding the proud tradition of 120 years of unbroken service.

The Brigade takes a lead in helping to organise and participate in community events. The Brigade was pleased to be able to play a major role in the local authority's celebrations leading up to the 1986 Tall Ships Race. The event was a most memorable occasion and the restored Watch House attracted a record number of visitors. Another major event during the year was the Brigade's success in bringing the Late Late Breakfast Show to South Shields and organising a spectacular live television breeches buoy rescue, using the Tyne ferry Shieldsman as a real 'casualty'. The event was an outstanding success and despite the scrapping of the show as a result of a tragic accident the following week the South Shields event was the result of months of careful planning and co-operation between many local agencies.

The Brigade continues to support the two annual competitions to test efficiency and competence in the use of the breeches buoy rescue equipment and although success has eluded us in recent years the value of these competitions with our brother Brigades and rescue companies produces excellent training.

During the period of this Report, there has been an encouraging upsurge of enthusiasm among members, especially the younger members, to play a full part in all aspects of the Brigade's work. It is sometimes difficult to convince people who are willing to dangle over cliffs at all hours of the day and night in all weathers, or search beaches in the depths of winter, that it is equally important to take part in fund-raising events. It says much for the calibre of Brigade members that they manage to score highly on both counts. New members are always welcome.

SUBSCRIPTIONS & DONATIONS

As the restoration work comes to an end the ongoing costs of maintaining the Watch House and buildings, plus all the rescue equipment, requires a constant inflow of funds. Without the sustained fund-raising effort and the generous support of our regular benefactors and friends the Brigade could not function. The Brigade Committee is very conscious of the need to be seen to be helping ourselves and organises a range of money-raising events, the biggest and most significant of which is the Annual Appeal. We are particularly grateful to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, the Port of Tyne Authority, the Department of Transport, the Master and Bretheren of Trinity House and South Tyneside Council. Thanks are also due in large measure to all the individuals and visitors to the Watch House who give so generously to our funds.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Brigade Committee takes this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all who give so generously in a variety of ways to enable the Brigade to continue with its lifesaving work while at the same time helping to preserve a unique piece of local maritime heritage. Once again the Committee is indebted to its two principal administrators, Tom Fennelly, the Hon. Secretary, and John Stephenson, Hon. Treasurer, both of whom also play leading roles in the operational work of the Brigade. Captain Bernard Finlay and Deputy Captain John Stephenson were instrumental in maintaining high standards of training and all-round effort in all aspects of our work. Their efforts were enhanced by the dedication of David Robertson, who as well as running the social club, played a leading role with Charlie Fennelly in co-ordinating the very considerable programme of works.

Thanks also to our friends and colleagues in HM Coastguard and kindred services, especially Mr Ray Little, District Controller HM Coastguard and Mr Ken Middlemiss, Secretary of Tynemouth Lifeboat. Thanks also to the members and officers of South Tyneside Council for their continuing support and encouragement and to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff.

Special thanks are due to the wives and friends of Brigade members who so generously support all the Brigade's activities.

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Founded 1866

President :
J LANDELLS Esq.

Vice-President :
D E TINNING Esq.

Hon. Treasurer :
A. WARD Esq.

Hon. Captain :
H M CLAVERY Esq.

Hon. Secretary :
T P FENNELLY Esq.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 120th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held in the Watch House, South Pier, South Shields, on MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28 1988 at 20.00 hrs when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be presented to members.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting
2. Business Arising from the Minutes
3. Annual Report & Hon. Secretary's Report
4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Statement of Account
5. Social Secretary/Treasurer's Report & Accounts
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of Committee Members (five)
8. Any Other Business

ANNUAL REPORT
Year Ending December 31 1987

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 120th. Annual report of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade. Although, by comparison to the previous 12 months this has been a somewhat quieter period, following the completion of the restoration of the Watch House and the 120th. anniversary in 1987, it has nonetheless been a year on continuing progress and steady achievement. The Watch House is now fully operational as the headquarters of the Brigade and there is an ongoing programme of restoration and display of the many artefacts relating to the Brigade's history. To this end the Brigade has been accepted as a member of the North of England Museums Service, and with their expertise and conservation advice, the presentation of the historical side of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade will be considerably enhanced. Work on this aspect of the Brigade's function has been reflected in the substantially increased number of visitors during opening times. This in turn has led to a welcome increase in donations and sales from souvenirs. The Brigade Committee and Members can feel rightly proud of the restoration of the Watch House, and hanks to the hard work and dedication of those who have added to the work since the main contract was completed. It is a never-ending task to keep on top of all that needs to be done and that runs parallel with the operational role of the Brigade as a local coast rescue facility along this stretch of the North East coast, which attracts more and more visitors and recreational water users each year. Given the responsibility for the maintaining the buildings and equipment as well as keeping up high standards of efficiency and training in all aspects of search and rescue, it is a great tribute to the officers and Members that they uphold the unbroken record of 21 years' continuous lifesaving service. To this end the Brigade has maintained the traditional breeches buoy facility and during the year was successful in co-ordinating a campaign of public protest and publicity together with our fellow Brigades at Tynemouth and Sunderland to make the Government change its mind about the withdrawal of rescue rockets. Regular training is carried out to fulfil all the requirements of the declared Facility Agreement with HM Coastguard and a high degree of efficiency and readiness has been maintained. The Brigade remains totally committed to providing a 24-hour, year round rescue service manned entirely by volunteers. The Brigade also strives to keep pace with the changing equipment and techniques

necessary in today's Auxiliary Coastguard Service. Support for HM Coastguard and the other emergency services in the preservation of life remains the Brigade's number one priority. The Brigade is pleased to be able to play a full part in the local community and remains a supporter of the South Tyneside Council programme of summer activities and other special events. There is a growing awareness of the importance of the Watch House as a local tourist attraction and, the Brigade Committee is anxious to co-operate with all the statutory bodies to develop this to its fullest potential. In this regard the Committee is particularly grateful to South Tyneside Council. This year, thanks to a grant from the Council, it was possible to fully restore the roof of the Coast Rescue Equipment building. Work still needs to be completed on a number of minor items around the external areas of the buildings and the Committee is hopeful of being able to arrange a floodlighting scheme in the near future.

The Brigade continues to liaise with the two Volunteer Life Brigades at Tynemouth and Sunderland and supports the two annual competitions to test efficiency in the use of the breeches buoy equipment, although it has long been the wish of the Committee to extend these competitions to encompass all areas of rescue work, in particular cliff rescue, radio communications and first aid. The Brigade continues to lay great store by training members in first aid and keeps its first aid equipment well up to date, as indeed is the policy with all rescue equipment. There is a heavy commitment to training and the Brigade continues to make regular coast patrols in conjunction with HM Coastguard as well as maintaining a 24-hour call-out procedure using the Radiopager and radial telephone system.

As the detailed report of the Hon. Treasurer will show there has been a healthy flow of funds to enable the operational work of the Brigade to continue. The Brigade Committee and successive Annual General Meetings have reaffirmed a determination to replace the Land Rover which despite its years continues to give good service. However, funds permitting, a replacement will be necessary during the next 12 months. The Brigade is particularly fortunate in having a nucleus of younger members who support the efforts of the older members and officers in an encouraging and willing spirit. So long as there is this kind of camaraderie and spirit, there is no need to worry about the continuance of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade.

SUBSCRIPTIONS & DONATIONS

Morale remains high in all areas of the Brigade's activities, and nowhere is this more amply reflected than in the efforts of members to help to raise funds. It costs many thousands of pounds to keep the Brigade running and members have continued to be keen to be seen playing a full part in the ongoing and onerous task of collecting funds. The Brigade could not survive without the concerted efforts of all its members. The same applies to the generous support of our benefactors. In particular, we are grateful to the Tyne Lifeboat Society, Port of Tyne Authority, Department of Transport, South Tyneside Council and the Master and Brethren of Trinity House for the continuing financial support. Thanks also to the many individuals and visitors to the Watch House for their donations and support for fund-raising events.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Brigade Committee takes this annual opportunity to formally record sincere thanks to all who give so generously in a variety of ways to enable our lifesaving work to continue uninterrupted, and at the same time enable our listed building to be preserved as a museum of great local and national importance. The Committee owes a great debt of gratitude to its principal administrators, Mr Tom Fennelly, Hon. Secretary, and Mr Alan Ward, Hon. Treasurer. Their behind the scenes work, day-in-and-day-out, is reflected in the Brigade's achievements and endeavours. The Hon. Secretary continues to demonstrate total commitment and enthusiasm and this no doubt rubs off on the younger members who are continuing to play an increasing responsible part in the operation of the Brigade. The Hon. Treasurer has turned in another good year after a distinguished spell as Captain. John Stephenson has completed a first year as Captain ably supported by Deputy Captains Charlie Fennelly and David Robertson, in maintaining a busy programme of training and works. David Robertson and the others who help to organise and provide for the various social activities are also deserving of a special mention.

Thanks are also due to our friends and colleagues in HM Coastguard and kindred services, especially Mr Bill Barnes, and Mr Ray Little, District Controller. Thanks also to the members and officers of South Tyneside Council for their continuing support and encouragement and to the Port of Tyne Authority and their staff. Finally, to the wives and friends of Brigade members.