

FIRE/31/4

GROUP FIRE

VOL: 7

SUB-GROUP

folios: 1 -

SUBJECT FIRES IN STANLEY AND CAMP

ARCHIVE

CONNECTED FILES

FILE OPENED 18 MAY 1973

(formerly INT/31/4)

FILE CLOSED *125-959*

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GS	50	12/1
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SAS	51	/
AS	<u>52</u>	-
Pa		

26th May, 1973.

Dear Mr Clapp,

Although I had the opportunity along the front this morning of thanking you and your team for the excellent work they did in containing the fire at Sullivan House, I would like to formally record my thanks to you and all your members: given the fact that there was a strong wind blowing at the time speedy action was necessary to stop the fire spreading to the main building and this you certainly achieved.

Yours sincerely,

R.G. LEWIS

E.C.J. Clapp, Esq.,
O.I.C. Fire Brigade,
Stanley.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A10/73

Police are investigating a fire which took place at Sullivan House in the early hours of Saturday morning and which destroyed the back premises.

2. Evidence in the hands of the police indicates that the fire was started deliberately and the matter is being treated as a case of Arson.

3. A reward of One hundred Pounds will be paid by the police for any information given which leads to the conviction of the offender.

Headquarters,
Stanley Police.


28th May 1973.

Ref: INT/31/4

29th May 1973.

Mr. Lewis has already written to thank you for your stalwart work at the Sullivan House fire on Saturday morning, and I would like to add my personal thanks to you and to all those who turned out to help. I was most impressed by the efficiency of your brigade, and by the large numbers of volunteers who put in an appearance.

2. We have all learned a lot from this fire, and I am anxious that we take steps to remedy any inadequacies which may have been brought to light. There are rumours that the water had been let out of the fire tender, and doubtless you will let me know if there is any truth in this.


(T. H. Layng)

E. C. J. Clapp, Esq.,
Stanley.

cc: T. W. Royans, Esq.

HRT.

Ref: INT/31/4

29th May 1973.

The fire at Sullivan House on Saturday morning has pin-pointed some inadequacies in our organisation. In particular, although the fire was spotted and reported by a kind and observant neighbour at 0615 hours, the occupant of the house was allowed to sleep on for a further 25 minutes, by which time flames were shooting six feet high over the kitchen, before being awakened.

2. I would be grateful if you would instruct the telephone operators that when a fire is reported, after alerting the fire brigade, they should inform the occupant of the premises (unless he or she reported the fire), the Police and the Duty Medical Officer. These instructions should be in writing and should be permanently pinned to the wall in the exchange.



(T. H. Layne)

V. H. Fuhlendorff, Esq.,
Stanley.

cc: L. J. Halliday, Esq.
M. Clapp, Esq.
T. J. Cook, Esq.
Dr. J. H. Ashmore, J.P.

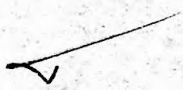
INT.

Ref: INT/31/4

29th May 1973.

The fire at Sullivan House on Saturday morning has pinpointed some inadequacies in our organisation. The most important of these was the failure of, I think, three out of the four fire alarms to go off.

2. You have, no doubt, already had the defective systems repaired, and we should now make arrangements for the alarms to be tested regularly. I suggest that they are all tested at 0900 hours each Monday morning and that you issue a public notice to this effect.


(T. H. Layng)

T. W. Royans, Esq.,
Supt. of Public Works,
Stanley.

cc: T. J. Carey, Esq.,
Power & Electrical Department.

E. C. J. Clapp, Esq.,
Superintendent, Fire Brigade.

T. J. Peck, Esq.,
Chief Police Officer.

(11)

FIRE BRIGADE NEWS

At approximately 6.20 in the morning of Saturday 26th, a fire was discovered in one of the buildings ^{which abut onto} ~~adjoining~~ the rear of Sullivan House.

The fire quickly took hold and by the time the first units of the Fire Brigade arrived, the building was well ablaze and as there was great danger of it spreading to the rear of Sullivan house proper, efforts were concentrated on quenching the flames in this immediate vicinity. This particular attack was successful and after 30 to 40 minutes the danger had been removed from Sullivan house proper, however the fire had taken such a strong hold on the remainder of the building that it was not until 45-odd minutes later the flames were fully quenched and even after this the charred timbers and embers had to be gouged clear of heat and smouldering by high pressure hoses.

Owing to a fault in the town siren system, only approximately half of the brigade turned out but all these worked very hard and efficiently despite the odd incidents of personal danger when the wind caused flames to belch out towards nozzle handlers. By 8.30 the incident was over and the Fire Brigade stood down.

And now to quell a few rumours which seem to have taken a strong hold in Stanley:

The No. 2 Firefly was, after exhausting its water supply, withdrawn from the scene because a ^{CASKET} ~~front plug~~ had defaulted and not because the radiator hoses were sawn through.

The sirens failed because weathering in a certain moving part caused jamming and fuses to be blown, not because the power lines had been deliberately cut.

The hydrant at the west end of Racecourse Road was not, as has been suggested - sabotaged.

BRIGADE MEMBERS WERE

Whilst cleaning equipment and laying out hoses for drying later on during the forenoon, His Excellency the Governor came up and spoke to members of the Fire Brigade present, congratulating them on their efforts. Later the same day, the Superintendent received the following letter from His Excellency the Governor:

"Although I had the opportunity along the front this morning of thanking you and your team for the excellent work they did in containing the fire at Sullivan house, I would like to formally record my thanks to you and all your members. Given the fact that there was a strong wind blowing at the time, speedy action was necessary to stop the fire spreading to the main building, and this you certainly achieved. Yours sincerely, E.G. Lewis."

A letter has also been received from the Acting Governor from which the following is quoted:

"I would like to add my personal thanks to you and to all who turned out to help. I was most impressed by the efficiency of your Brigade, and by the large number of volunteers who put in an appearance."=

To this report from Mr. Clapp, the Police have added the following details:-

The fire started in the old Laundry at Sullivan House which connects directly with the kitchen at the back of the house. The alarm was raised by Mr. John Halliday who was staying with his son at No. 11 Ross Road some 30 yards West of Sullivan House.

The night of 25th/26th May was an active one with many people attending the dance at the Town Hall and subsequent parties which continued until nearly dawn. Passers-by along Ross Road have given evidence that there was no sign of a fire at 5.45 a.m., but by 6.15 flames were shooting into the sky six feet above Sullivan House.

There are no electrical connections in the part of the building where the fire started and the building had not been entered by any of the staff of the house for 48 hours before the fire. The building is not conveniently situated as a shelter for courting couples - there are many better places nearby. A considerable amount of firewood, paper and kindling was stored in the laundry, and it was amongst this that the fire was started.

The Chief Secretary had received a number of abusive communications concerning the budget, and in the absence of any natural or accidental reasons for the fire on a wet and windy night, it is considered that it was started deliberately as an act of arson. Active investigations are proceeding.

HRT.

INQUIRY

The fire appeared to start in a room upstairs in the South ~~East~~ West corner occupied by Dennis Summers. On either side of this room there was an empty room.

Mr. Summers was questioned and he said that he had not slept in the bunkhouse that night and that he had only visited his room for a short time about 10.30 p.m. with 2 other men, these were questioned and verified this statement, and all was well at that stage.

Besides Mr. Summers, Mr. Trise, Mr. Gould and Mr. Miller who also reside at the bunkhouse, were also staying at other houses in the settlement, this is quite a common practice at North Arm.

When Mr. Summers was in his room the electric lights were on and these did not go out till about 12.00 midnight; there was no need to light a candle or tilley light. All the men that visited Mr. Summers room at 10-30 p.m. were smokers all had been drinking. Mr. R. Ford visited Mr. L. Bragger in his room at about 10.50 p.m. and asked Mr. Bragger if he could smell smoke, Mr. Bragger had a cold and said he could not he also pointed out that quite often smoke could be smelt after the central heating had been banked, this satisfied Mr. Ford.

The caretaker said that the central heating had been banked about this time.

No other person in the bunkhouse or in the settlement could throw any light on how the fire may have started.

At about 3.05 a.m. the settlement power was turned on and the main fuse at the power house blew, as the bunkhouse was triple fused this was confusing but Mr. J. Booth pointed out that as all houses would also be connected any extra load caused by a short in the bunk house during the fire would be too much for the main fuse and what happened was quite normal. Although there were 24 fire extinguishers in the bunkhouse and the fire engine was operating quite quickly, fire fighting was impossible due to the dense smoke that was present inside the building when the fire was discovered and it was only possible to get to the seat of the fire from inside the building.

As a result all fire fighting activities were directed to save buildings in close proximity to the bunkhouse, had we not done so there is no doubt that other buildings would have been destroyed.

At this stage it appears that only a small amount of farm and personal property was saved, no one residing in the bunkhouse carried any insurance. The residents of the bunkhouse that could not be housed by close relations have been housed in the Bungalow which was empty at the time of the fire and it is felt by the management that this is quite adequate for the operating of the farm without difficulty till a new bunkhouse is built.

A.T. Blake

SECTION MANAGER
NORTH ARM

REPORT ON NORTH ARM BUNKHOUSE FIRE 24TH AUGUST, 1974.

WEATHER slightly overcast with a North-West wind 5 - 10 knots.

The fire started in the South West corner of the bunkhouse 2.50 a.m. W. Morrison gave the alarm.

He woke men up in the bunkhouse and in the gally before returning home and calling, by phone, E. Goss, R. Morrison and myself.

I was woken by the phone ringing about 3 a.m. Mr. T. Phillips was the first to reach the room where the fire started and upon opening the door the room burst into flames, he reported that the corridors were full of smoke making it impossible to stay in the bunkhouse more than a few minutes.

Mr. C.D. Ford who arrived, outside, at about the same time as Mr. Phillips entered the room and he said a burning patch appeared on the outside just below the window of the room where the fire started about two feet in diameter.

Upon the alarm being sounded two men with a rover went for the fire pump this was in position and running by 3.10 a.m.

Upon arriving at the bunkhouse at about 3.05 a.m. I sighted all men known to occupy the bunkhouse and then proceeded into the building to find the extent of the fire.

The bunkhouse was full of smoke and it was impossible to remain down stairs more than two minutes, and any attempt to get up stairs was almost impossible.

I did however manage to get up stairs long enough to see that the fire had spread into the corridor.

I then left the bunkhouse for some fresh air, upon returning inside I found that the ceiling below the fire was ablaze as was the outside wall. A further attempt to return upstairs proved to be impossible due to the density of the smoke. At this stage I forbade anyone to go upstairs or downstairs below the fire.

Men were directed to enter downstairs rooms to save farm and personal property by way of the outside windows also some rooms upstairs at the North end of the building, the men were working in pairs one inside one out so that we knew where each man inside was positioned.

I consider that at this stage, about 3.10 a.m. the fire was out of control due mainly to the fact that we could not stay in the building long enough to attempt any fire fighting. I also considered that as the fire was moving into the building that water played from the outside would have done nothing. My main consideration was then to protect the surrounding buildings, those houses to the South East were hosed down. The protected walkway from the bunk house to the galley was removed.

As the fire increased the heat between the bunkhouse and the galley increased to an alarming degree and the fire party was directed to hose down the galley continuously, even with this the building was slightly charred and all paintwork badly damaged.

The peat stack and a garage to the south of the bunkhouse caught fire at about 3-30 a.m. as these were very close to the fire and down wind we could not attempt to save them.

The garden fences to the East of the bunkhouse also burst into flames these were put out with fire extinguishers.

By 3-40 a.m. the bunkhouse was on fire for its entire length.

It was only by taking turns on the fire hose for about 2-3 minutes that we managed to keep water playing on the galley thus saving this building.

At about 3.55 a.m. the building started to fall down and was completely down by 4.05 a.m. this reduced the heat in the area of the galley considerably and at about 4.10 the fire party was directed to try and save the peat stack at the south end of the bunkhouse. The garage had been completely destroyed.

The bunkhouse was completely burned down by 4.35 a.m. The fire party continued to fight the peat fire until around 12.30 p.m.

The bunkhouse chimneys, which were still standing were considered dangerous and were also pulled down about this time.

The manner in which the men worked during this period was most gratifying, there was no panic and all orders were carried out with crisp precision and it was only by such a level headed approach by the men that the galley was saved.

A.T. Blah

SECTION MANAGER
NORTH ARM

DPW

int/31/4

(29) (172)

Feb 658/1

Copy: CE
SS
21/2



M T Clarke
Supt of Fire Services
Stanley

17 February 1986

FIRE AT 62 DAVIS STREET

At 17.30 on the 13th February the Fire Service was called to the above address.

On arrival it was seen that the rear and east side of the peat shed were ablaze. High pressure hose reels were used to contain the blaze before fighting the fire inside the shed. Timber stacked around and in the shed was severely damaged as was the front of a Land Rover parked close by. The peat was removed from the shed by JCB to enable access to the deep seated fire on the east side.

At approximately 18.45 a call was received to say that there was a fire in the loft at 66 Davis Street which was two houses away. Six men and an appliance were sent to the scene. On investigation it was found that the weather boarding covered with hairy felt was alight.

As there was no access to the seat of the fire from inside the loft several sheets of iron had to be removed from the outside. After the iron was removed a hose reel was used to extinguish the flame.

The felt and boarding were removed and the loft thoroughly checked nothing else was found so the iron was replaced to keep the weather out.

On returning to 62 Davis Street the damping down had been completed.

After checking the area the Supt of Fire Services was satisfied that the fire was out and the equipment could be made up.

The fire incidents at 62 and 66 Davis Street were closed at 19.45.

At 22.00 the Fire Service was called back to 62 Davis Street as some peat was seen to be smouldering. The JCB was used to spread the peat around the yard whilst it was being damped down by hose reels.

The Supt of Fire Services was satisfied that the peat was safe and closed the incident at 00.05.

CONCLUSION

It is possible that the fire at 62 Davis Street was started by some debris from a drum fire on Callaghan Road, carried by the wind to the rear of the peat shed.

It is thought that a spark from 62 Davis Street ignited the felt and then the weather boarding at 66 Davis Street.

With the wind in South Westerly direction the drum fire, 62 Davis Street are directly in line.

The property at 62 Davis Street is owned by Mr Neil McKay.
The property at 66 Davis Street is owned by Mrs G D McPhee.

M.T. Clarke.
M T Clarke
SUPERINTENDENT OF FIRE SERVICES

Copy: Police
: 608-2

Affidavit 17 Feb

This fire skipped some 40' from the peat shed into the house roof. A sample of felt has been taken and has been found to ignite very easily.
tac

This is an example of the bad use of materials in building being the cause of fire. Many houses in Stanley have this felt. It is worse than that but less exposed fortunately.

WMM

**HEADQUARTERS, BRITISH FORCES
FALKLAND ISLANDS, BFPO 666**

MLI 2010

(30)

D Fernyhough Esq
Government Secretary
The Falkland Islands Government
The Secretariat
Stanley

Your reference

Our reference CS/6/5

Date 24 November 1986.

Dear Mr Fernyhough,

FIRE AT NORTHWEST ISLAND

1. I refer to our telephone conversation of Friday 21 November regarding a possible request to transport Mr Ian Strange by Service helicopter to Northwest Island to investigate a fire on the Falkland Islands Foundation's behalf. As I advised you, subject to operational requirements, it should be possible to drop Mr Strange off at Northwest Island by a Bristol helicopter and pick him up later the same day. Provided, of course, the Foundation, FIG or Mr Strange agree to pay the fare for the journey. I have already given you an indication of what the fare might be and I must re-emphasise that we cannot be responsible for transporting Mr Strange in Service helicopters on non Military business free of charge.

2. ^{1A} You have asked for some details regarding the fire at Northwest Island in October this year. As I explained, the Commander British Forces was earnestly requested to initiate an investigation into the alleged Military involvement. In view of the strong representation to the CBF, the Force Fire Officer was despatched to Northwest Island without any admission of liability to look into the matter. As you know we normally expect any request for fire assistance to come from FIG, unless of course we know that the Military are responsible, and then upon consultation with the landowner, we take immediate steps to deal with the matter.

3. The Fire Officer returned reporting that the fire was out and that the peat had not ignited. Unfortunately, he was not able to identify the cause of the fire, however, was of the opinion that the fire had started on the south side of Island and that the area would recover fairly quickly. ^B

4. All Military movements have since been checked and there being no Military personnel in the area, there is no indication of any Military involvement or responsibility. I attach a copy of a letter from Ian Strange which I have just seen which I hope explains the position.

Yours aye

Paul

P J FENDEGIN

Assistant Command Secretary (A).

Blind Copy
for info CBE
2 NOV 1986

CONFIDENTIAL
The Dolphins
Stanley
Falkland Islands MR 2/11

18 November 1986

Simon Lyster Esq
Secretary
Falkland Islands Foundation
c/o World Wildlife Fund
11-13 Ockford Road
Godalming
Surrey GU7 1QU

CH
CL
AC

North West Passage Island

Dear Simon.

Sorry I was not in when you phoned yesterday about the fire on the above island. As Maria explained we knew nothing about the fire at the time as we were on New Island. Actually the Military Liaison Officer was the first to mention the fire, but for some time I thought he was referring to the earlier fire on the sister island !

I am indeed sorry that nobody thought to get in touch but naturally thought the Trust had done this.

I dont know what information you may have received, but the little I have gathered is inconclusive. I have always been a little concerned about FIPV's (Falkland Island Patrol Vessels) for it is their job to patrol within the archipelago and they have the capacity to land, however, that type of vessel is no longer here. The more conventional warship would have much greater difficulty in landing personel and quite frankly I dont think they would be too interested. Ships do pass up the Falkland Sound but I dont know if one was in the area before the fire was reported.

A concern of mine this season has been the extremely dry weather, especially on the west, but it is amazing to see how farmers have been burning camp. I dont think we should rule out the possibility of airborne ash starting the fire. With such a dry season there is also the remote possibility of a piece of glass being responsible. I rule out lightning as I dont think we had the correct conditions.

I think the important thing to establish is just how much damage has been done. Apparently the inner section of grassland was not touched, but how far the fire went into the tussock bogs themselves is not known. I dont know what the possibilities are of making a visit but if the chance arises I will go in order to assess the damage.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to pass on a copy of this letter to Robert Gibbons as we dont appear to have his address.

Regards,

Cond Sec
File

R. Gibbons, Esq.,
VENTOULET,
La Rue des Fontaines,
Trinity,
Jersey,
Channel Islands.

27 November 1986

Fire at North West Island

As I mentioned to you on the telephone today the military have denied any involvement or responsibility in the recent fire at North West Island. Consequently they cannot accept any responsibility for transporting Mr. Strange to the island on "non military business" free of charge.

I asked the military if they would let me have their version of the story, and the following is an extract from the Assistant Command Secretary's letter to me dated 24 November 1986.

"You have asked for some details regarding the fire at North West Island in October this year. As I explained, the Commander British Forces was earnestly requested to initiate an investigation into the alleged Military involvement. In view of the strong representation to the CBF, the Forces Fire Officer was despatched to North West Island without any admission of liability to look into the matter. As you know we normally expect any request for fire assistance to come from FIG, unless of course we know that the Military are responsible, and then upon consultation with the landowner, we take immediate steps to deal with the matter.

The Fire Officer returned reporting that the fire was out and that the peat had not ignited. Unfortunately, he was not able to identify the cause of the fire, however, was of the opinion that the fire had started on the south side of the Island and that the area would recover fairly quickly."

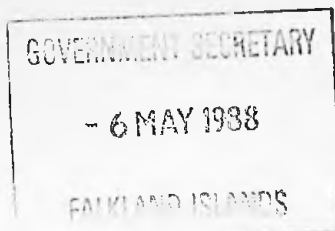
As I explained on the telephone whilst the military adopt this attitude, and unless we can provide any evidence to the contrary, we have to take their version of the events at its face value. I note however that you will be discussing this matter with Mr. Lyster of the Falkland Islands Foundation.

Derek Fernyhough
GOVERNMENT SECRETARY

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Your Ref.

Our Ref. FIF/2/30.....



Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

GOVERNMENT SECRETARY
SECRETARIAT
STANLEY

6 MAY 1988

RUGGED HILL CAMP FIRE

On the afternoon of the 17 February 1988 a call for assistance with a camp fire that was out of control was received from Mrs J. Smith of Johnsons Harbour.

After consultation with the Government Secretary the decision was taken to respond to the call for assistance and the fact that any charges raised would be the responsibility of the land owners was passed on.

The assistance of a helicopter for transportation to the scene was asked for and clearance was given by for this by the JOC.

The helicopter arrived at the football field at 17.28 where the equipment and firemen embarked and then moved to the scene of the fire arriving at 17.55. On assessing the situation 3 portable pumps were used to relay water from Berkely Sound to the scene of the fire. Pumping continued throughout the night until around 04.00 when due to exhaustion fire fighting operations were halted. At this point the spreading of the fire was stopped and the deep seated hot spots being concentrated on. After an hours rest pumping resumed until around 08.30 when due to a collapsed bearing on the impeller shaft of the base pump the relay of water to the scene of the fire was unable to continue. The distance to pump was to great for 2 pumps to achieve therefore the the order to make up was given. Mr O. Smith was advised of the situation and agreed that as much as possible had been done. While some members of the team made up the equipment the remainder continued to dig out some of the hot spots. On arrival of the Blakeney all works halted the firemen and equipment embarked and returned to Stanley.

On several occasions throughout the time in attendance the point that any charges raised especially in respect of the helicopter would be the responsibility of those calling for assistance.

The actual cause of the fire is unknown however footprints were found on the beach near to where the base pump was set in. The customs office advised that earlier in the day some fishermen had asked for permission to go ashore and were told that if they did they would be arrested. There was nothing found at the scene of the fire that could be determined as the actual cause of the fire.

M.T. Clarke
M.T. CLARKE
FIRE OFFICER

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Your Ref. FIRE/31/4.....

Our Ref. FIF/3/GEN.....

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

GOVERNMENT SECRETARY
SECRETARIAT
STANLEY

9 MAY 1988

CAMP FIRES

At a meeting of Executive Council held on the 3 September 1986 Honourable Members agreed that the Fire Service would not operate outside of the Stanley area. Memo FIRE/15 of 24 September 1986 refers.

However there have been occasions when calls for assistance outside of the Stanley area have been responded to. These incidents are only responded to after a specific request for assistance has been made and the circumstances warrant a response.

The following are guidelines with which requests for assistance are dealt with,

1. Is there danger to life (human)
2. Is there danger to animals (livestock or wildlife)
3. Is there danger to buildings

Depending on the information received a decision whether the request warrants a response or not will be taken. In the event that the decision is taken to respond the Government Secretary will be consulted for the final decision as to whether the Fire Service will respond or not.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

M.T. Clarke
M.T. CLARKE
FIRE OFFICER

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

(41)

Your Ref.

Our Ref. FIF/2/30.....

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

ADMIRALTY COTTAGE
RESERVOIR ROAD
STANLEY

29 DECEMBER 1988

FIRE REPORT 26/12/88

- 20.53 A call was received by F1 stating that there was a fire at Admiralty Cottage.
- 20.55 F1 requested control to call out the remainder of the firemen on the emergency tone, whilst proceeding to the scene.
- On arrival at the scene smoke was seen billowing from the south end of the building.
- 20.58 2 major appliances accompanied by a water bowser arrived at the scene. 2 hose reels were got to work on the building whilst BA sets were donned.
- 21.00 In the event that more water may be required the decision to establish a water relay was taken and the general alarm sounded.
- 21.05 6 firemen wearing BA had made an entry and were fighting the fire from inside the building. The water relay having been established was being used to cool the exterior of the building.
- 21.15 The fire was brought under control and the BA teams working towards the seat of the fire.
- 21.45 The main fire was extinguished and damping down operations commenced.
- 21.51 Fire extinguished.
- 22.15 Whilst the building was being checked for hot spots the water relay was made up.
- 23.06 The major appliances left the scene to be replenished.
- 23.06 The servicing of all vehicles and equipment had been completed.
- 01.10 F1 returned to the scene of the incident and carried out a thorough inspection of the building for any hot spots. Nothing was found and control were advised that the Fire Service was back on call.

APPLIANCES USED

2 X MAJOR APPLIANCES
1 X TRAILER PUMP
2 X WATER BOWSERS
6 X BA SETS
1 X LIGHTING PLANT
20 FIREMEN

INVESTIGATION

An investigation into a possible cause of the fire was started immediately. Evidence given by Miss Sue Howe indicated that the fire was first noticed in the kitchen of the flat being occupied by her. Further information revealed that a fridge situated in the kitchen had become hot on the side. The seat of the fire was established as being in the kitchen occupied by Miss Sue Howe and that the fridge had signs of being subjected to intense heat on its interior and the ice box had partially melted.

The fire spread from the kitchen into adjoining rooms and also into the common loft space.

The building consists of a ground floor construction containing 4 self contained flats with a common loft space. The 2 flats at the south end of the building suffered extensive fire damage whilst the remaining 2 were relatively undamaged.

CONCLUSION

The actual cause of the fire is still under investigation however it is considered that a breakdown of the thermostat control unit within the fridge is the most likely cause of the fire starting.

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

42

Your Ref.

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

Our Ref. FIF/2/30.....

**FALKLAND CLUB
17 DRURY STREET
STANLEY**

17 January 1989

1. At 02:15 hours on Wednesday 11th January 1989, the telephone operator reported a fire at the above address.
2. The building is a two storey structure which is used as a club and caretaker's residence. Refer to the attached plan for layout details.
3. The fire was reported to the telephone exchange by Mr Mike Summers. The telephone operator then rang the Fire Officer and reported that there was a fire at the Glue Pot (Falkland Club). Any additional information was asked for, however nothing further was known.
4. The telephone operator was instructed to connect the Fire Officer with the Police Station, where on answering, the desk officer was advised of the fire and instructed to page all retained firemen on the emergency tone. All retained firemen had been paged several times by 02:17 hours.
5. The Fire Officer proceeded to the scene of the incident where, on arrival, it could be seen that the south east corner of the building was engulfed in flames.
6. As the Fire Officer approached the building, some people were seen to be coming from the club entrance which is on the north side of the building. One of the persons being Miss S. Ross, the caretaker of the building. Miss S. Ross screamed, "He is still in there" but was unable to say where the person was, or was last seen.
7. At approximately 02:20 hours the first appliance proceeded to the scene via Drury Street, accompanied by a water bowser. The second appliance left shortly afterwards accompanied by a second water bowser.
8. At 02:23 the decision was taken to sound the general alarm.

/...9.

9. The decision was also taken to relay water from Stanley Harbour to the scene via a pump relay from the Government Jetty.
10. At this stage the fire had started to spread along and up the south wall which looked as if it may endanger the neighbouring property.
11. On arrival the first appliance was positioned in Brisbane Road and its crew commander, Fireman Luxton was instructed to attack the fire in the area.
12. Miss S. Ross accompanied the Fire Officer to the front of the building to assist with identifying the layout of the building. Some information was gained; however Miss S. Ross was quite obviously very shocked at this time.
13. At this stage the second appliance arrived and parked in Drury Street just east of the building. The crew commander Fireman Clarke instructed 2 Firemen to don breathing apparatus as they proceeded to the incident.
14. The breathing apparatus team was instructed to enter the building via the north entrance and proceed up the staircase which lead to the bar area. The objective being to try and gain access to the caretaker's quarter via an access door which was behind the bar. The breathing apparatus team was also advised of a missing person, whereabouts unknown, and the route throughout to be checked thoroughly. The main objective of the team was to try and locate the missing person.
15. At this stage the fire was being fought from the east end of the building and from the south. The breathing apparatus team also extinguished any fire they came across.
16. Fireman Luxton advised that breathing apparatus was being donned at the rear of the building to enable the fire internally to be fought as the exterior of the south wall had been extinguished. Fireman Finlayson remained to fight the fire while Firemen Luxton, Clarke and Biggs donned breathing apparatus. On the return of Firemen Luxton and Biggs, Fireman Finlayson withdrew to don breathing apparatus then returned to the rear of the building with Fireman Clarke.
17. At this stage there were three breathing apparatus teams each comprising of two men as detailed below:-

B.A. Team No1	B.A. Team No 2	B.A. Team No3
Fmn Keenleyside C	Fmn Biggs P	Fmn Clarke D
Fmn Johnson G	Fmn Finlayson R	Fmn Luxton M

Breathing apparatus team No 1 was unable to gain access through the access door between the bar area and the caretaker's quarter.

/...The decision...

The decision was taken not to force the door as it was obvious that the fire was raging behind the door. The forcing of the door at this point could have lead to the fire flashing over and endangering the safety of those involved in the area. It could also have lead to the rapid spread of fire throughout the remainder of the building. Breathing apparatus team No 1 withdrew from the building to advise of the situation and get further instructions from the Fire Officer.

18. Breathing apparatus teams Nos 2 and 3 had extinguished the fire at ground floor level having not entered the building at this stage. The structure at the rear of the building looked very unstable, so Fireman Biggs returned to the appliance to collect a searchlight which was then set up at the rear of the buidng. Visibility was limited due to the smoke and steam still in the area.
19. It was noticed that part of the south wall had burnt away. Breathing apparatus team No 2 started to enter through the hole in the wall, Fireman Biggs leading. On entering the building, Fireman Biggs felt something at his feet. On looking down, the outline of a body was observed. At the same time the body was also observed by Firemen Luxton, Clarke and Finlayson.
20. It was obvious to those present that life was extinct. Fireman Luxton withdrew from the area and advised Police Sgt Morris that a body had been found and that it was obvious that life was extinct. Fireman Luxton then returned to the rear of the building.
21. As it was obvious that life was extinct and all fire in the immediate area of the body had been extinguished, the decision was taken to leave the body where it was, to enable more detailed information to be gained for the enquiry.
22. Breathing apparatus team No 1, had re-entered via the north door to locate and gain access at ground floor level through a door between the billiard room and bedroom. The door was located and forced open. Entry into this room was hampered due to a wardrobe being placed against the door. After removing the wardrobe, an entry was made into the bedroom and the bedroom was searched. The breathing apparatus team found nothing in this room. Breathing apparatus team No 1 proceeded through the bedroom to the door which led to the staircase. It was at this door where breathing apparatus teams Nos 1 and 2 met, having established a link from the front of the building to the rear at ground floor level. Breathing apparatus team No 2 informed team No 1 that a body had been found in the living room at the rear of the building. Breathing apparatus team No 1 withdrew from the building via the same route as they had entered by, whilst breathing apparatus team No 2 continued to extinguish the fire in the staircase leading to first floor level at the rear of the building.

/...23.

23. Breathing apparatus team No 3 reported to the front of the building for further instructions. Breathing apparatus team No 1 also withdrew from the building. It was at this point, approximately 03:00 hours, that the Fire Officer was advised that a body had been found. The Fire Officer proceeded to the rear of the building to where the body was found. The Fire Officer observed the extensively charred body lying face down just inside the south wall of the living room. Part of the south wall had been totally destroyed by the fire, which exposed the top half of the body. All persons involved were instructed to create as little disruption as possible to the area of the body and the room in general. In conjunction with the Police it was agreed that leaving the body where it was until the building was declared safe to enter by the Fire Officer would assist in the investigation.
24. The jet of water being directed in through the landing window on the east end of the building was removed and tasked to cooling the exterior of the roof.
25. Breathing apparatus team No 2 proceeded to fight the fire up the stairs at the rear of the building, whilst breathing apparatus team No 3 re-entered via the north door and moved up the stairs to the bar area and through to the landing at first floor level where the door had been destroyed by fire. In conjunction with breathing apparatus team No 2, breathing apparatus team No 3 continued to extinguish the fire on the landing at the rear of the building.
26. Once establishing that any remaining fire on the landing could be dealt with by breathing apparatus team No 2, breathing apparatus team No 3 withdrew to the bar area where access to the loft space was gained via a trap door in the ceiling. A small area of smouldering was found and extinguished. The loft was then declared clear.
27. Breathing apparatus team No 2 had extinguished all fire on the landing and withdrew, down the stairs at the rear of the building, to ground floor level checking for and extinguishing hot spots.
28. Having completed the tasks, all 3 breathing apparatus teams withdrew from the building to Drury Street to report to the Fire Officer.
29. The fire was declared extinguished at 03:30 hours.
30. At 03:35 the Fire Officer accompanied the Police and Doctor to the area where the body was found. The Doctor declared that life was extinct.
31. Whilst the Police moved in to carry out their tasks, the order was given to make up the water relay and all hydrant connections.

/...32.

32. After the Police carried out their tasks a further check of the building and surrounding properties was carried out. No hot spots were found.
33. All personnel were withdrawn from the building and breathing apparatus returned to the appliances. The water bowzers were released for replenishing. The appliance in Brisbane Road remained at the scene whilst the appliance in Drury Street returned to the Fire Station.
34. A thorough check of the building was carried out and no hot spots were found. The Fire Officer, being satisfied that the fire was totally extinguished, gave the order to make up the remaining appliance
35. At 04:50 hours the remaining appliance plus all Fire Service personnel left the scene of the incident.
36. At 06:45 hours the Fire Officer returned to the scene of the incident to carry out a further check of the building. No hot spots were found. The Fire Officer left the scene of the incident at 07:15 hours.

INQUIRY

37. In conjunction with the Police and the Electrical Department, an immediate investigation into a probable cause of the fire began.
38. Some items of electrical equipment were removed from the living room to the Police Station for further examination.
39. Extensive examination of the electrical equipment together with expert advice from the Electrical Department identified a probable cause of the fire. Refer to the Electrical Department's report for further detail.
40. Evidence gained from Miss S. Ross established that the fire was first spotted in the living room starting to climb up the curtains which covered a window in the south wall.
41. After investigation of the area where the fire was first spotted, it was established that excess burning to some of the floor boards indicated that this area had been subject to intense heat. This area was established as the seat of the fire. Photographs of the area were taken by the Police.
42. Having consulted some very experienced Fire Officers and the Institute of Fire Engineers whose tests are carried out by two Home Office Forensic Scientists, the information gained is conclusive of that given by the Power and Electrical Department.
43. Temperatures in a traditionally furnished domestic house involved in a fire could reach between 600 and 700°C. Copper melts at 1083°C. Arcing of two wires will create bubbles on the ends. However, to create the bubble effect, the temperature in this area must reach at least 1083°C.

/...Conclusion...

CONCLUSION

44. The heat required to create the bubbled effect on the ends of the wire had to be at least 1083°C. The part of the wire where it is obvious that this temperature was present, was located in the area of the building where the floor boards have been subject to intense heat. This is also the area in which the fire was first spotted.
45. In my opinion the most probable cause of the fire was due to a breakdown within an electric lead belonging to a tape recorder, which was plugged into an extension reel. The tape recorder however was not attached to the lead at the time of the fire. The Electrical Department report refers. No other evidence was found to suggest that the fire could have been started by another means.

COMMENT

46. It would appear from information gained from Miss S. Ross and the extent to which the fire had developed on arrival of the Fire Officer, a considerable period of time had elapsed between the outbreak of the fire and the fire being reported. The clock recovered from the bedroom also indicates this.
47. Now knowing the location of the body when found and the extent to which the fire had developed on arrival of the Fire Officer it is considered that the fatality had occurred before the Fire Service was called.

APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL

48. 2 x Major Appliances
 2 x Water Bowsers
 2 x Trailer Pumps
 6 x Breathing Apparatus Sets
 1 x Lighting Plant
 25 x Fire Officers and Firemen
49. Some fire hydrants were used, however some failed to produce water. This was due to those parts of the new water system not being completed. Some problems were experienced at several of the hydrants, however in no way did the lack of water in these hydrants, or the fact that stand pipes were unable to be fitted to the hydrants, impede or delay the handling of the incident at any time.

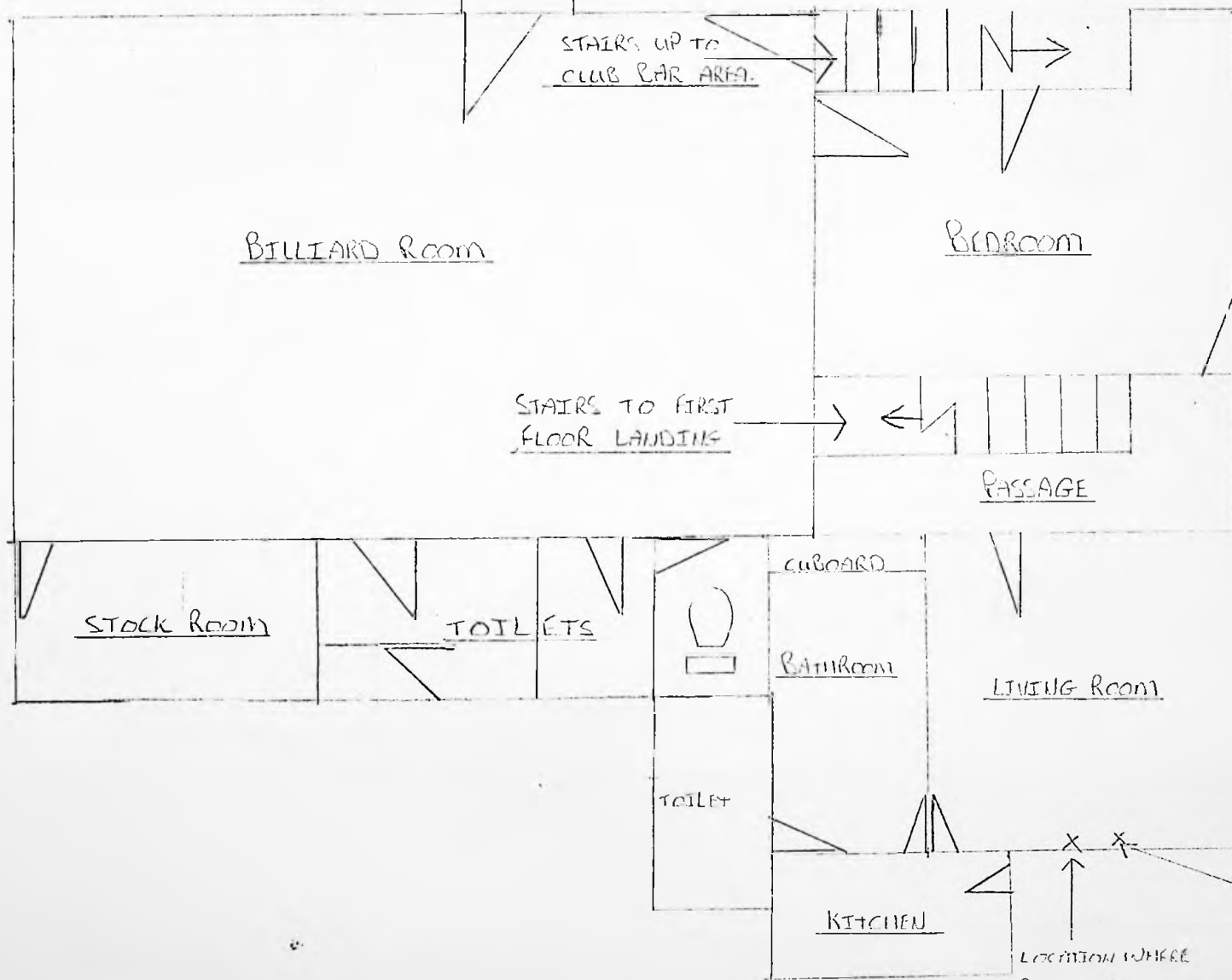
DAMAGE

50. The caretaker's quarter of the building was extensively damaged, especially the living room and kitchen area at the rear. The actual club side of the building mainly suffered from smoke and water damage. The club at first floor level did also suffer damage from radiated heat.



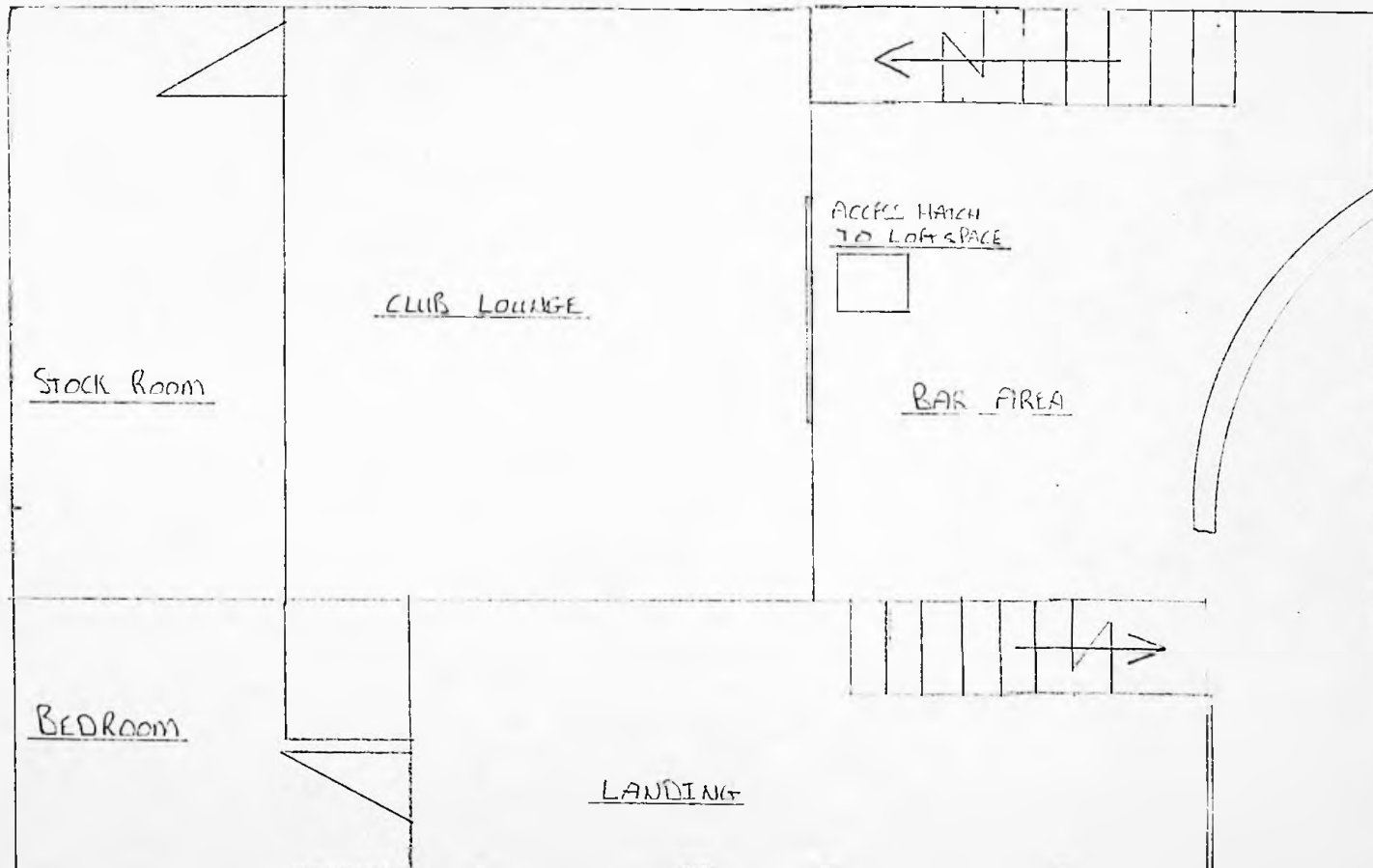
NORTH
ENTRANCE

GROUND FLOOR



NOT TO SCALE

FIRST FLOOR



NOT TO SCALE

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Your Ref.

Our Ref. FIF/2/30...

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

LABORATORY
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTRE
STANLEY

17 March 1989

INTRODUCTION

At approximately 11.15am on 17 March 1989 the Fire Officer was requested by Mr Ian Dickson, Director of Agricultural Research, to go to the above address and investigate into the possible cause of a fire which had occurred.

BUILDING

The building is single storey constructed of timber framing with the walls clad with lap boarding and the roof clad with corrugated iron.

OBSERVATION

On arrival at the laboratory, the Fire Officer was shown an area of floor approximately 3 feet by 2 feet that had been burnt away. This area of the floor was also determined as the seat of the fire.

It was established after conversation with the occupants of the building, that normally sat in this area of the floor, was a bucket which at the time of the fire contained discarded wool samples and filter paper. The bucket was made of plastic with a metal handle. During examination of the hole in the floor, a metal handle was recovered from beneath the floor. It is considered most likely that the handle did in fact belong to the plastic bucket which would have been sitting where the fire had taken place.

Examination of the floorboards revealed that the fire had burnt down through the floor.

The fire took place during the early hours of the 17 March 1989 but did not develop beyond the smouldering stage. It is considered most likely that the fire was extinguished by fluids which leaked from jars which had been on the floor adjacent to the seat of the fire and had cracked after having been subjected to heat.

No electrical equipment or wiring was found in the area.

It is thought, most unlikely that spontaneous combustion of any of the materials discarded in the bucket would have taken place.

From information received it is thought possible that a cigarette end or an ashtray discarded into the bucket could have started the fire, however there was no evidence found to support this.

CONCLUSION

At present, the definite cause of the start of the fire is not known. However, it is thought probable that a cigarette end carelessly discarded into the bucket ignited the materials already in it.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that

- a. All waste materials to be discarded only in a metal bin with a lid.
- b. If persons are to be allowed to smoke in the laboratory, suitable containers should be provided e.g. ashtrays. These containers should not be emptied into plastic bins etc.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Your Ref.

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.

Tel. 471

Our Ref. EIF/2/30.....

MANAGERS HOUSE
WEDDELL ISLAND

5th MAY 1989

FIRE AT WEDDELL ISLAND - 25 APRIL 1989

1. At 9.15 pm on 25 April 1989, the Fire Officer received information from the Joint Operations Centre at HQ BFFI to the effect that the manager's house at Weddell Island was on fire. Immediately afterwards, an RT call was received from the manager at Weddell Island, Mr John Ferguson. Because of poor reception, the Fire Officer had to go to the RT station in order to be able to communicate with Mr Ferguson. When communications were established it was learned that the major portion of the house was on fire and that the fire was out of control. Communications were then lost and at 9.55 pm, information was received from Shallow Harbour, who had 2 metre contact with Weddell Island, to the effect that the house had now burned to the ground and that there was a fear that it would spread through the trees which partially surround the house, and on to the gorse hedges and the other houses. The Fire Officer was also advised that the MV St Brandon, which was in the vicinity, had diverted to Weddell Island and was putting men ashore to assist in the fire fighting.

2. The Fire & Rescue Service was unable to assist further that night, but the following morning the Fire Officer flew to Weddell Island, arriving at 11.00 am. Enquiries were commenced immediately, and the facts of the case appear to be as follows.

3. The settlement at Weddell Island consists of 4 houses. They are supplied with electricity from 2 diesel generators which are housed in their own shed. The smaller of the 2 generators operates during daylight hours, and the larger one, a 7 kilowatt machine, is switched on to cope with the extra load during the hours of darkness. A plan of the settlement is at Annex A to this report. Living in the manager's house were Mr John Ferguson, his wife Stephanie, and their 2 young children. A plan of the house is at Annex B. The power distribution system, which had been installed approximately 30 years previously, and had not been subjected to routine inspection, was connected to the domestic circuit of the house at a junction point situated on the external wall of the ground floor office. At the same end

of the building, there was a peat fired boiler for the central heating system. This was located in a lean to boiler house which was connected to the main part of the building adjacent to the groundfloor bedroom at the northern end of the house.

4. On the evening of 25 April 1989, the generator had been switched on at about 5.00 pm. During the course of the evening, Mr Ferguson noticed that the power was fluctuating. He assumed that there was a fuel fault in the generator, particularly having experienced similar minor problems in recent days, all of which he had been able to solve with little difficulty. However, having been at work since very early that morning, he decided not to investigate that night, but to retire early to bed. Before he went to bed at 8.15 pm, he visited the bathroom, and noticed that the light in the bathroom was not working. He assumed that the bulb had blown, and carried on to his bedroom.

5. Shortly after Mr Ferguson had gone to bed, his wife also visited the bathroom. Not realising that her husband was already aware of the faulty light, she went up to the bedroom to tell him about it. While they were speaking, the bedroom lights were fluctuating markedly. Mrs Ferguson then went back downstairs, and on passing the glazed door to the office, saw that the office was full of smoke. She immediately raised the alarm. The house was evacuated, and Mr Bob Ferguson, whose house is some 500 metres away from the manager's house, was alerted by telephone. As Mrs Ferguson finished speaking to her father in law on the telephone she heard a loud bang coming from the office end of the house.

6. Mr John Ferguson tackled the fire with extinguishers, but without success, and the fire spread rapidly through the house, with smoke and heat making it impossible to approach the seat of the fire. Attempts were made to set up a hose line, and a small pump was brought into operation on the beach. There was insufficient hose for this to be effective, however, and the fire was never seriously checked. When it became clear that the house was a total loss, attention was switched from the house fire to the gorse bushes in order to prevent the spread of the fire to the other houses in the settlement. It was at this point that men from the St Brandon arrived and assisted in the efforts to prevent the fire spreading along the gorse hedges. The following morning they left and were replaced by a small detachment from HMS York which was flown in by helicopter along with a pump and a number of hoses. They were able to contain the fire, although it was several hours before it was totally extinguished.

7. On examining the scene on 26 April 1989, the Fire Officer found that, because of the total destruction of the house, it was impossible to locate the seat of the fire. Nevertheless, knowing that the fire had been discovered in the office, he examined that area of the house with particular attention. He found nothing of evidential value in the area of the boiler house. At the point where the power distribution system joined

the domestic system, however, he discovered that the connection had been a simple winding together of the main lines and the flat twin and earth domestic lines. This connection had been broken, and at the end of the domestic lines he found globules caused by the wires having melted. The amount of heat required to produce this effect is in the region of 1087 degrees centigrade, considerably greater than the temperatures normally generated in a domestic fire. From this, the Fire Officer concluded that arcing had taken place at this point in the circuit. It was also discovered that the all fuses in the generator shed had blown.

8. Following discussions with the Chief Electrician from HMS York, and the Superintendent of the Power & Electrical Department, and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is considered that the most likely cause of the fire was a short circuit of the electrical system at the point where the main line joined the domestic circuit. This was probably brought about by the chaffing effect of movement caused by the wind firstly breaking down the insulation material and subsequently bringing the live wires into contact. The momentary nature of such contact would have caused intermittent short circuits which in turn would have caused the fluctuations in power experienced earlier in the evening of the fire and may have resulted in some of the domestic fuses blowing. This would explain the failure of the bathroom light. The arcing effect produced by the intermittent short circuits would have further degraded the insulating material, leading progressively to a situation where a permanent short circuit developed. At the instant that this firm contact was made there would have been an explosive effect, and the load on the circuit would have caused the fuses at the power house to blow. This would probably have been the bang heard by Mrs Ferguson shortly after the discovery of the fire in the office. The heat generated by the arcing - in excess of 1087 degrees - would have been sufficient to cause the immediate ignition of the insulating material, and so have spread fire to the fabric of the building. No evidence was found to suggest that the fire had been maliciously started.

9. A number of recommendations can be made as a result of this investigation.

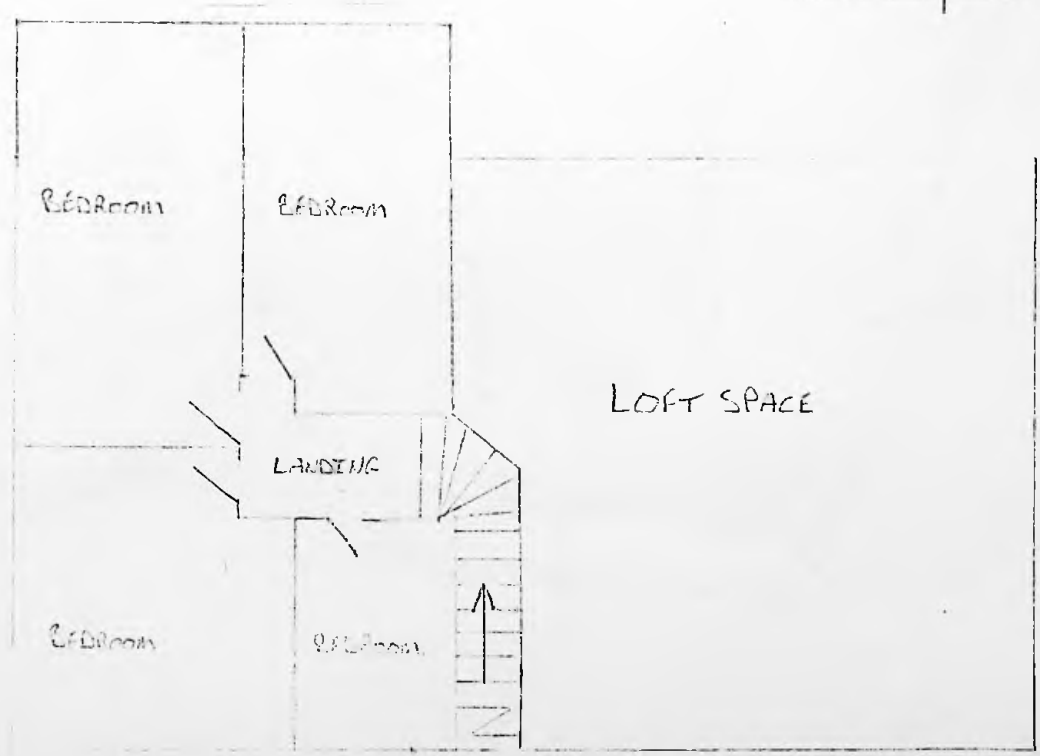
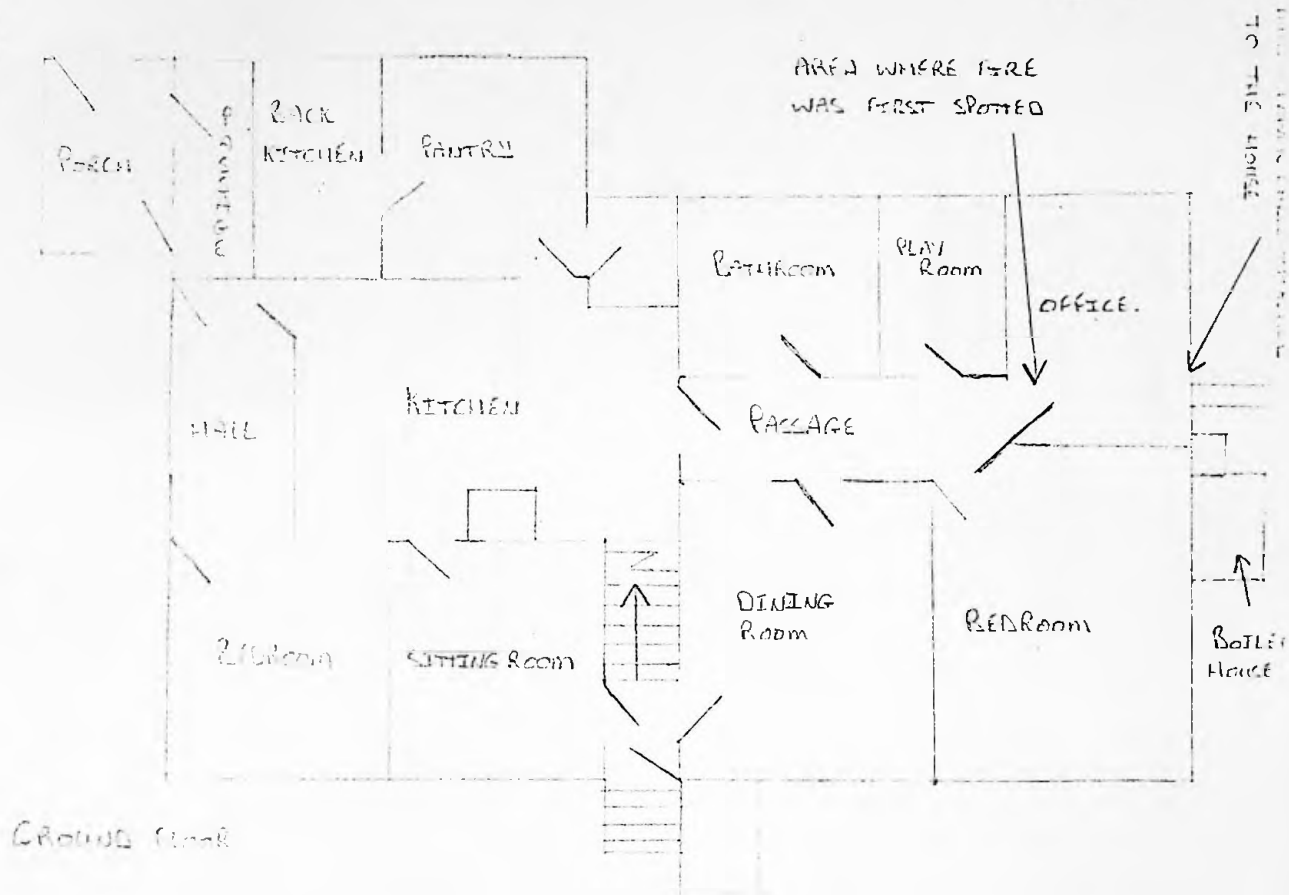
a. Power distribution systems and domestic wiring should be checked by qualified personnel at intervals not exceeding 5 years. As an immediate precaution, all farmers and householders with independent generators should conduct their own checks for chaffing and faulty connections.

b. Connections between mains and domestic circuits should conform with BS 1320 Fig type 1 or 2.

c. Every settlement or isolated house which maintains pumps and hoses for fire fighting purposes should ensure that the equipment is capable of delivering water from an open source to every building in the settlement.

d. Although the Fire & Rescue Service could not have deployed in sufficient time to be effective at Weddell Island, this will not always be the case. It is recommended that Executive Council reconsiders its decision of 3rd September 1986 forbidding the deployment of fire fighting assets beyond Stanley town boundaries.

M.T. Clarke
M.T. CLARKE
FIRE OFFICER



Not to scale.

Corse Hedges.

Power lines



WIRE FENCES



FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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Your Ref.

Our Ref. EIF/2/30.....

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.
Tel. 471

M.V. SOUTHERN STAR
FIPAS
STANLEY

1st MAY 1989

FIRE REPORT

At 19.32 on Sunday 30th April 1989 the Fire Officer received a call from the duty desk Officer at the Police Station stating that there had been a fire on board the "MV SOUTHERN STAR" docked at FIPASS. The Fire Service had been requested to assist with damping down operations.

The Fire Officer instructed the duty desk Officer to page Fires 2 and 3 and that he would liaise by radio on arrival at the scene.

On arrival at the scene the Fire Officer was met by the Master of the vessel who advised that the fire had been extinguished by the use of fire extinguishers however there was still some hot spots which required damping down but due to the area being smoke logged access to the area was impossible.

The Fire Officer ordered one major appliance to attend the scene.

The Fire Officer inspected the remainder of the vessel to check for the spread of fire however nothing was found.

On arrival of the major appliance a breathing apparatus team was sent into the smoke logged areas to check for the spread of fire and where possible open windows to allow the smoke to vent off.

On completion of the check in the smoke logged areas the Fire Officer instructed that the galley area be checked thoroughly hot spots to be extinguished and debris to be removed.

On completion of this task the Fire Officer inspected the area and declared the fire extinct.

The Fire Officer advised the Master of the vessel that checks should be carried out throughout the remainder of the night to ensure that the fire has not travelled through the ducting system and as yet has been detected.

The Fire Service made up and returned to Stanley at 20.23hrs.

It was established that the fire started as a result of a chip pan catching fire which had been left unattended in the galley.

The fire in the chip pan was extinguished by smothering with a fire blanket however the fire had also spread to the galley linings around the area of the stove.

DAMAGE

The galley area suffered from fire damage to the wall and ceiling linings and the electrical fittings had been damaged as a result of being subject to intense heat.

The pantry area and dinning room suffered mainly from smoke damage.

FALKLAND ISLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Your Ref.

Our Ref. FIF/2/30

3A DAIRY PADDOCK ROAD
STANLEY

Fire Officer,
Fire Headquarters,
Stanley,
Falkland Islands.

Tel. 27471

19 DECEMBER 1989

FIRE REPORT

At 23.39 on the 16 December 1989 a fire call was received stating that the top garage at No. 3A Dairy Paddock Road was on fire.

All groups were paged and the Fire Officer immediately reported to the scene accompanied by one major appliance and one support bowser.

On arrival at the scene the area was totally engulfed in smoke, however, it was established that the fire was at its severest in the centre of the three garages.

The team were put to work and were immediately supported by the arrival of the second major appliance and support bowser.

The fire was quickly brought under control and extinguished at 00.23 at which time damping down operations started and continued until 00.50.

An inspection of the premises and surrounding area was carried out after which the fire was declared extinct.

BUILDING

The building is rectangular in shape running in a north/south direction. The building is timber framed with a corrugated iron roof and flat iron on the sides. The top half of the west wall for the full extent of the building was windowed consisting of perspex sheeting. The east side of the building consisted of access doors which were also made of timber. The building was partitioned into three units by the construction of timber walls each with an access door cut into it.

INVESTIGATION

The owner of the building was advised that an investigation into the cause of the fire would be conducted, however, on returning to the scene later the same morning the Fire Officer observed that the area had been cleaned up and carted away.

As a result of this much of the material which may have assisted with the investigation was no longer available.

The only point that the Fire Officer was able to establish was that the seat of the fire was against the west wall in the centre garage.

The fire could have started from any of the following:

- a) Electrical
- b) Accident
- c) Spontaneous Combustion
- d) Arson

CONCLUSION

Due to much of the material that would have assisted in the investigation no longer being available none of the above probable causes can be eliminated, therefore, an exact cause as to how the fire started cannot be established.

M.T. *Clarke*
M.T. CLARKE
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Director of Public Works

Date: 27th June 1990

From: Building Adviser

Our Ref: PW/608/2

Subject: Coseley Building Fire - 26th June 1990

=====

1. The following facts obtained from a discussion with Chief Fire Officer Marvin Clarke at his office day after the event.

2. Call-out made at about 0425 hours. Fire damage limited to one room only, although rest of building extensively affected by smoke and smell of burnt plastics but not considered sufficiently so to make it uninhabitable after clean-up and probable repaint.

3. Door to room gave way easily for access by Fire Brigade. The non-combustible (Supalux or similar) wall and ceiling linings restricted the damage - this was further assisted since emulsion paint and not gloss had been used to decorate surfaces. Small area of ceiling had a gap through which the fire affected the wiring exposed at this point.

4. The bed and mattress were destroyed, and a music centre against an opposite wall had melted from the heat although an adjacent towel and wall behind it were untouched. Oil cloth floor covering also badly damaged. Double-glazed window has glass panes fixed closely together - inside pane was broken.

5. Unlike Admiralty Cottage, this building has good cavity barriers in the roof void and it is considered that if the fire had entered this space its spread would have anyway been effectively restricted.

6. C.F.O. Clarke discounts an electrical fault as the probable cause but was unable to say how the fire had started. He said it was an indication of the limited extent of the incident that Brigade members were back at the Station within one hour of the call-out.



C. B. France
BUILDING ADVISER