



*Banbury Volunteer Fire Brigade outside the Fire Station in Horse Fair, 1890s.*

A large bell was fixed at the entrance by the gate which would be loudly rung and quickly the firemen would arrive buttoning coats and adjusting helmets as they ran, no cars or even bicycles in those days. Then out through the gate way came the fire engine drawn by two strong, excited horses, and off they went watched by an admiring crowd of people who had soon collected, all anxious to know where the fire was, the news of which was passed from one to another before dispersing.

I only remember seeing two spectacular fires in the town as a child. One was in some cottages near Edmunds and Kinch Mill, a good view of which was had from the Bridge over the Railways across the Park. That was in the daytime and the other, in the night, about 1900, some paint shops belonging to Mr Higgs in the corner of [f.3] North Bar where the Normer Tyre Co. now is. This caused a very fierce blaze and was watched anxiously from a bedroom window.

My grandmother and her companion were knocked up by the firemen in case the fire spread as sparks were flying over the roof of No. 43. My mother said they had great difficulty in getting my grandmother, who was nearly ninety, to understand the need to get up and she insisted on having her stays properly laced!