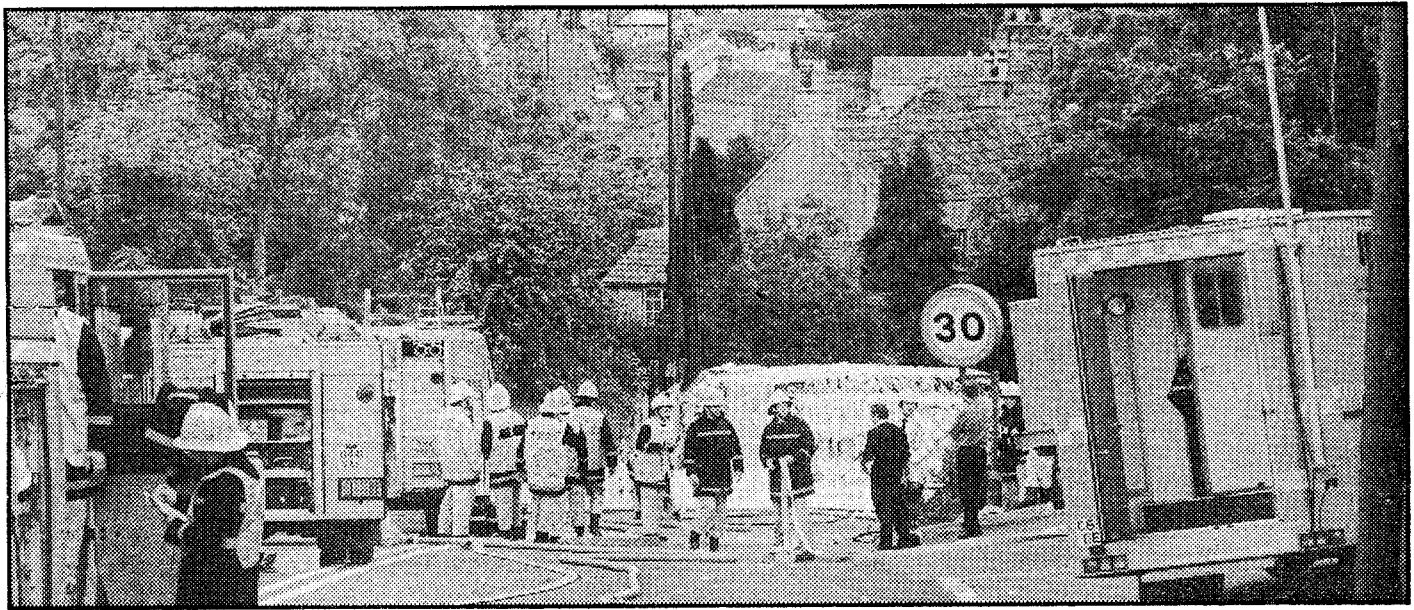


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# Crash hero saves village

LORRY  
BRAKES  
DRAMA



Seconds from disaster: Firemen cover the stricken tanker with foam because of the risk of an explosion

By Caroline Thomas

**BRAVE** petrol tanker driver Peter Brown risked his own life yesterday to save dozens of pedestrians and school-children when the brakes of his lorry failed.

In a split-second decision 48-year-old Mr Brown overturned his tanker carrying 13,000 litres of fuel to stop it careering down a steep hill lined with houses.

Last night, fire chiefs praised the driver for averting tragedy by taking the last chance he had to stop the tanker before it crashed into homes and a school.

The UK Petroleum tanker ran out of control on Pensford Hill, near Bristol, and Mr Brown swerved into a grass verge before overturning.

More than 200 people and a

## Petrol tanker driver risks his own life

school were evacuated for six hours because of the risk of fire as leaking petrol immediately began pouring down the hill.

Avon Fire Brigade spokesman Ian Jefferies said: "Had he missed that ground there were stone walls and houses all the way down and there would have been nowhere else to stop until the bottom.

"It would have been of great danger to pedestrians and other road users."

Pensford's parish council chairman and district councillor Mr Albert Webb said: "The driver is to be commended. It was his only chance and he took it."

Police spokesman Chief Inspector John Bragg said the

tanker's brakes may have failed and the driver could have turned into the wall to avoid danger.

Mr Brown, of Lindsay Road, Horfield, Bristol, escaped with minor chest bruising and shock and was treated at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Last night, his wife said he did not wish to speak about the incident. "He is still in shock," she said.

The accident happened at about 1.30pm and four fuel compartments of the tanker ruptured immediately leaking petrol at about five gallons a second.

Firemen covered the overturned tanker with foam to limit the risk of explosion.



Diana Jones

Residents of 19 houses on either side of Pensford Hill and 91 children from the village primary school were evacuated.

The children, aged four to 11, and visiting classes from Chew Magna and Stanton Drew schools all had to go to the Memorial Hall in the village.

Chew Magna school teacher Mrs Kate Daintith said: "We could smell the fumes as we walked, but the children were brilliant and you would never have known anything was wrong."

The National Rivers Authority placed booms across the River Chew to contain the fuel leaking into it.

Last night furious residents said they had been campaigning for traffic to be slowed down on the road and had warned someone would be killed.

Mother-of-four Mrs Diana Jones of The Hollies, Pensford Hill, who was evacuated, said: "About a year ago we got 200 signatures calling for something to be done about the speed of the traffic."