



AVON FIRE & RESCUE

Magazine

Issue 4 | January 2005

For Employees of Avon Fire & Rescue Service



Focus on Arson Task Force



One watch: thirty years



The next generation...

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From the Chief

The last few months have been very busy as we carry on modernising our service. Once again I would like to say thank you to everyone in our organisation for their hard work and patience. We have a massive task ahead of us, with new legislation and codes coming from the centre frequently but I'm confident that our organisation will rise to the challenges.



I hope that 2005 is a more settled year for all of you and that it will provide us with the necessary breathing space to implement some of the changes our service needs.

Please enjoy your magazine. It focuses on our many talented staff and fills me with confidence that together we can make Avon Fire and Rescue a service to be proud of.

W. Bain

Editor's note

People from round the organisation have been fantastic in sending in their articles and contributions. We've had items from firefighters, pensioners, officers and support staff and ideas from lots of people – keep them coming as this magazine is for you to read and enjoy.

This issue there is quite a focus on the past with articles looking at old kit and uniform as well as finding out what it's like to have been in here on one watch for thirty years. But we must look to the future too and the double page spread on the new Equipment in the service shows that we are always improving and moving on.

If you have ideas, comments or contributions for the April 2005 edition then please get in touch with me as soon as possible on ext 338. We need all copy and photos by Feb 28 2005.

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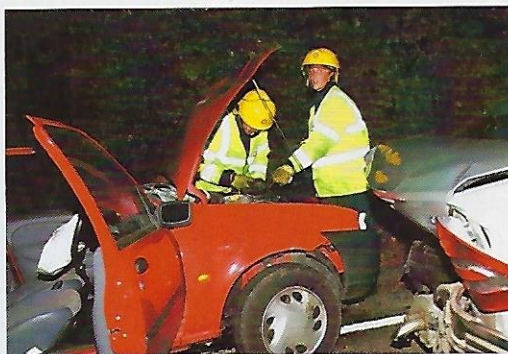
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"I can see another white elephant!"



Flaming Train A Tricky Job For Firefighters
18 October (20.26) - Backwell Green,
Backwell Common - Blue Watch



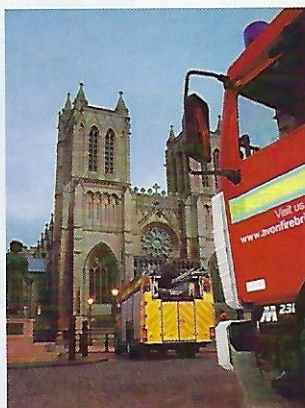
Driver Trapped In Vehicle Wreckage
11 October (19.23) - Clevedon Road, Failand -
White Watch



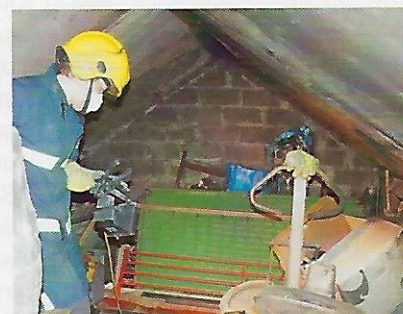
**Fire Investigation
Launched After Serious
Fire At Prefab House**
12 November (02.56) -
Inkerman Close, Horfield
- Blue Watch



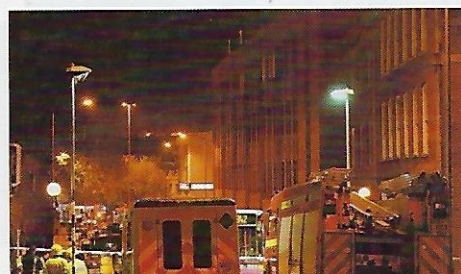
Ten Rescued By Safety Boat
14 October (16.25) - Pulteney Weir, Bath - Red
Watch



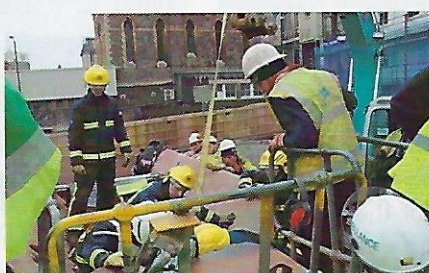
**10 November (16.08) - Bristol
Cathedral, College Green,
Bristol - White Watch**



**Family Need Re-housing After Serious
Fire**
19 November (08.52) - Pendock Road,
Oldbury Court - White Watch



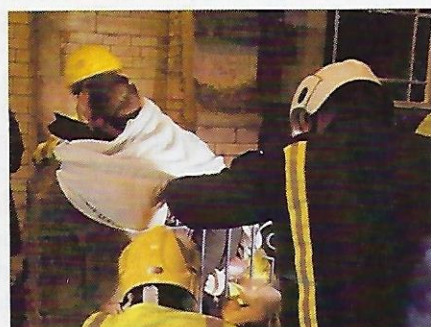
Man Killed In Bus Accident
23 November (19.29) - Lower Maudlin Street,
Bristol - Green Watch



Man Rescued From Stone Crusher
30 November (12.13) - Whitson Street,
Bristol - Red Watch



Deer Rescued By Bath Safety Boat
22 October (07.52) - Pulteney Weir
and Gardens, Bath - Red Watch



Rescue Of Man Impaled On Railings
18 November (21.53) - Elm Tree Avenue,
Radstock - Blue Watch



Fire Rages At Disused Shopping Centre
12 October (20.47) - Inshops, East Street,
Bedminster - White Watch



**Southmead Red Watch attended a fire
in a birds nest in summer and found a
silver backed gorilla!**

Bon Voyage to Fire Engine on Gambian Rally

On Friday 17 December it was farewell to the team from London hoping to cover 3,600 miles of treacherous terrain in a 50 year old Land Rover Fire Engine. The Plymouth to Dakar / Banjul Rally is an annual event that sees hundreds of vehicles, all costing under £100, attempting to reach The Gambia in aid of the country's various charities. The team hope to reach The Gambia by mid-January and will donate their vehicle to the Gambian Fire Service.

Uniform of the past...



In November over fifty pensioners came in to help us open a new display in HQ reception on old fire brigade uniform. Fire Safety provided live models, who wandered round in old uniform and Bedminster popped in to show off our current kit. Many thanks to everyone who donated kit for

the event and to Sandra Connolly for organising it all. We have some photos from the display on the back page of this magazine.

Christmas dance at Weston

Weston danced the night away on 18 Dec at a party organised by the Weston Fire Station Social club. Over 450 people attended raising about £2000 for the Benevolent fund and the Life Nursery School, in The Gambia. A local band, Evan Flies, provided excellent tunes until the small hours. Another success for Weston!

Our Clever People

Universal achievers...

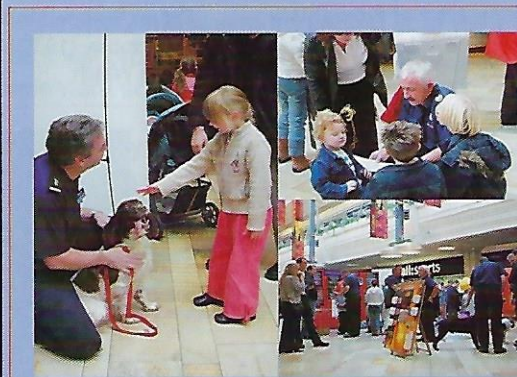
We've had a few educational achievements among staff in the Service Support directorate recently. Annabel Brito from the Creative Services Unit achieved a Masters Degree in European Business Studies, Lorraine Abrahams the Business Services Manager, gained her Masters Degree in Management and the Director, Chris Palmer, finished his BSc in Social Sciences. Well done to them all.

Community Events

Firework bonanza...

On Thursday 28 October The Galleries, Bristol came alive with our Firework safety event. Held during half term, the event helped raise awareness of firework and bonfire safety in the run up to Bonfire Night and Diwali.

Fire Safety Officers, Support Staff and firefighters from Temple helped passers by with their fire safety queries.



Dog handler Ken Bennett and our two fire investigation dogs, Cracker and Kilo, were also on hand - much to the delight of the many children!

Bedminster Christmas Grotto

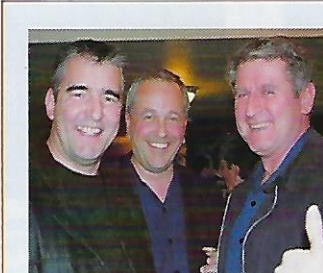
Every year firefighters from Bedminster organise a Christmas grotto for family and friends of the firefighters. This year was no exception with Father Christmas on hand to make Christmas dreams come true!



He's behind you...

On Sunday 19 Dec Green Watch Avonmouth put on their fancy dress gear and to play the cast of Snowwhite and the seven dwarves. The whole station produced by panto for over 140 children and adults which was followed by a Christmas party and Father Christmas paying a visit. Billy Banford was the lovely Snowwhite and Ian Hawkes his/her Prince Charming. Sean Spearing featured as the wicked witch.

Merv Osborne retires...



We all wished Merv Osborne a fond farewell on Friday 12 November at the Knight's Templar, Bristol. The Ceremonial Unit and band, alongside firefighters from Temple joined the festivities by carrying out a surprise display and drive by.

Pensioners - Where are they now...



Dave Perryman

I'm a young 73 year old ex-fireman, who joined Bath Fire and Ambulance Service in 1956. As Firemen we were also ambulance men, watch room attendants and I helped out as watch mechanic. We worked a 60 hour week on 3 watch systems. As ambulance men if we moved a dead body we'd get three shilling and sixpence, but

only if the body had been certified by a doctor. If it hadn't we didn't get a penny.

The photo of the Albion Escape below shows how things have changed. It carried a 50ft wooden Merryweather escape ladder, a monster of a thing. Imagine seeing it speeding through the city, bell ringing, firemen hanging on trying to dress as it sped around corners.

A lot of things have changed for the better. The main change in my service came when the Ambulance and Fire Service in Bath separated. I made the wise choice of staying in the Fire Service. We had a few changes of Chief Officers, some good, some not so good (enough said). Then came the big one, the take over by Bristol. It all worked out and I made a lot of friends. I spent 3 great years at Brislington as a Sub Officer. The support from all the men on there was 100%, and I look back on that time as some of the best in my career.



1960s Dave in back row, 2nd from right

I returned to Bath and found I was working with a lot of young men, most very keen, always wanting to get on the branch and getting stuck in. We've all been there! I was pleased to see many of those young men rise through the ranks -Chris Palmer,

Merv Osbourne, Nick Baker, Malcolm Jenkins and many more. I always say there are many others who don't go after promotion yet have the ability to make first class officers. The rank and file are after all the backbone of the service.

I enjoy my retirement, keeping busy with DIY, my garden, enjoying the company of our grandchildren and helping my son with the mechanical side of restoring classic cars. My wife and I celebrate 50 years of happy marriage this year and after a few lows are enjoying making the most of our time together.



1980 Bath From L to R Chris Palmer, Pete Morgan, Dave Perryman, Pete Mash, Malcolm Jenkins



Pete Till

Peter was the Stn Officer at Clevedon for the last eight years of his thirty year service. He joined in 1961 and left in 1991. Previous to this he was a member of the Royal Air Force for five years. During his time at Clevedon, Peter was a member of the station's own very successful quiz team. He was also a member of the Somerset First Aid team who reached the all England finals where other competing teams were from whole time stations. Peter was also a member of St Johns Ambulance for many years. In 1979 he broke both his heels, and had a temporary break from station life, but was soon fit again to continue with the job he loved. After retiring in 1991, Peter did some part time work but now spends most of his spare time perfecting his newly acquired PC skills. He works on maintaining a website for former Clevedon residents who now live in America, Canada and Australia.

Pete is married to Lilian and they celebrated their golden wedding in October this year.



Pete Spindler

Pete, or 'Spindley Pete' as he was known to some of his colleagues, joined in 1964 and was a fire fighter at Weston for the duration of his service. Since retiring in 1993, Pete has kept up with his culinary skills gained outside of fire fighting (City & Guilds Chef), and spent some time as a relief cook in nursing homes and The Tropicana at Weston. Pete's love of gardening led him to work as

a garden advisor at Great Mills garden centre for a time. Pete now spends a lot of his time puppy walking for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and is Vice Chairman of the local guide dogs association where he has been an active charity campaigner for the association.

F.S.N.B.F – Certificate of Appreciation



Following his retirement as the Brigade Secretary of the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund, Avon Brigade Council, Lyn Lloyd has been awarded with a FSNBF National Certificate of Appreciation from the National Chairman of the fund, to thank him most sincerely for all the work he has undertaken on behalf of the Benevolent Fund within Avon Fire and Rescue Service.



One Watch: thirty years



Blue Watch 09 on Paul's last day

The recent retirements have meant that many familiar faces have moved on, including a few who have spent all their time on one watch. We caught up with Paul Fear and convinced him (reluctantly!) to share some of his memories and tell us about 30 years on Blue Watch Temple...

"I joined on 4 July 1974 following in my big brother's footsteps. When I first got to Blue watch, I kept my head down and got on with it. It was such a new experience. I'd never been in a disciplined service before, as it was then. In those days Station officers could only grunt!

Blue watch has always been full of characters. I remember one of the old boys, Adrian Brimble, saying to me "Stick with me kid and you won't go far". How true that turned out to be! Back then we all played the game, even the officers. We knew it was a game and sometimes it was scary. Nowadays it's much more relaxed and easy going.

There are so many things that stick out... Adrian being told to take an inch off his sideburns and shaving a perfect inch out of the middle... Alan Perry wimpering that he couldn't eat his crusts cos he wasn't feeling very well... Alan Lawson telling us we're going to "Hotel Yumca in Totterdown" (it was actually the YMCA)... throwing dummies off the roof past the Stn O's office... or the time when Mickey Evans and I went for our usual snooker game with Martin Shergold and John Martin to find them sat there in frilly shirts and dickie bows, looking like they were at The Crucible...

So why didn't I ever leave Blue, Temple? Because I was never asked to! I was always happy where I was and in what I was doing so I never really saw the need to change. Early on I talked to my StnO about promotion and he said "They've promoted enough idiots, they won't want another one!" – I was only trying to be keen!

I've been a line rescue instructor for the last 13 years. I was bullied by Dick Green into getting involved. He fed me a load of flannel about me being one of the best on my course, that I was a natural, etc I didn't believe it but I fell for it!

My scariest moment was a ship fire at Avonmouth in the hold. I was sent down an inspection hatch with another BA wearer and at each level our cylinders popped out. I didn't know how we'd get back and I really thought I might die there. That's when your training and own

survival instinct kicks in. You just do what you were told in training and you survive. Afterwards my Sub said that when he saw me go in there he wasn't sure how I'd get out again.

It's been interesting being on one watch for so long. I knew I'd turned a corner when in the days of volleyball I was booted off the young 'uns team onto the old 'uns! It's strange but as people come and go over the years before too long you do find you're one of the older ones. In some ways it's not nice as you sometimes get the feeling you're not up to it anymore but on the other hand you can't change getting older so you just have to accept it. I liked seeing people like Bob Leppier come back on the watch as StnO having been a probationer. He came back more chilled out as an officer than as a firefighter

– it's normally the other way round!

I will miss the watch and the company and the mick taking but I would like to thank them all for the gifts and wonderful send off they gave me. It's been overwhelming."



The tradition of a mid morning cooked breakfast has seeped into Headquarters over the years. Here's one person's take on it all...

10:AM

10am and the queue has already started
The blue shirts and support are hungry hearted
A warm solidifying glow forms over the bacon,
eggs, the doorstep toast
But whose plate has filled the most?
The smell of burning fat fills the room
But still the hoards loom
A mug of wet hot stuff follows
But is it 'milky' or 'War' tea that you choose to
swallow?

The choice is made and we all sit
On the long school room tables
In our same old cliques
Between mouthfuls of toast and beans
Conversations take on familiar themes
Talk of cats, dogs, gerbils, meat, grand kids and
inconsequential things
And also the goss on office flings
I once heard the words 'How's the crack?
Which slightly threw me off my milky tea track
It's a funny set up this communal tea break

Our regular
Monday to
Friday date
And a 20
minute
chance to
flake...!



Focus on Arson Task Force

The Arson Task Force (ATF) is based at Bath Fire Station and has been in action since early 2004. It is a partnership between Avon Fire & Rescue, Avon & Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Fire & Rescue. With a number of high profile successes under its belt, the ATF is working hard to raise the profile of arson prevention and investigation.

Car Clear

Arson in the Avon area was highlighted by the success of the Car Clear Partnership - started in February 2002. This partnership between the Police, Fire and Local Authorities, has experienced huge success winning a national award and demonstrating what can be done when working together.

In its first two years Car Clear saw a 30% reduction in vehicle arson. The scheme removed over 5500 vehicles, each one within 30 minutes of being reported.

A combination of Avon Fire & Rescue and Avon & Somerset Constabulary the team are:

Ken Bennett - Stn Officer - Fire Investigation Officer & Dog Handler

Paul Bunt - Police Inspector - Joint Team Manager

Linda Fayers - Ff - Arson Intervention Officer

Malcolm Jenkins - Stn Officer - Joint Team Manager & Co-ordinator of Fire Investigation Team

Heather Jones - ATF Administrator

Ian Strand - Ff - Arson Intervention Officer

Ali Quinn - Detective Constable

Youth Worker - post holder to be confirmed in January 2005



The beginnings: At the end of 2003 Avon Fire & Rescue, Avon & Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Fire & Rescue, bid to the ODPM to set up an arson reduction team.

With the expertise and success of Car Clear behind the Avon & Somerset bid the submission was successful and £460,000 was awarded to form the ATF.

Arson costs the country £40 million each week. Last year Avon & Somerset Constabulary recorded 1800 incidents of arson, with Avon and Somerset's Fire & Rescue Services combined attending over 8,000 arson incidents.

The ATF holds two main responsibilities...

- to ensure that arson incidents are reported, then investigated thoroughly and effectively to improve the current detection rate.
- to work with young people on prevention and intervention to reduce the number of arson incidents.

In achieving these objectives the ATF will ensure that we are working towards the Government objective of reducing the incidents of arson by 10% by 2010.

The ATF strategy has four key themes:

- **Education** - to positively change the attitudes of 7-16 year olds towards firesetting and those already committing offences. Educating the public about the problem.
- **Prevention** - encouraging local authorities, public agencies, private businesses and the community to work together to prevent arson, and set up protocols to address the problems of vehicle, property and rubbish arson.
- **Investigation** - working together with all agencies and share data.
- **Detection** - the regular use of ATF data analysis to help detect arson offenders and to obtain the maximum amount of evidence from any arson scene.

Firefighters Linda Fayers and Ian Strand, who have been in post since summer 2004, have been working with six Avon schools in identified hot spots. They use a structured approach to prevention and intervention as part of the Citizenship curriculum.

Over the course of a year the team will visit all year seven and eight school children. They will talk about the dangers of fire and the consequences it can have. Linda and Ian also go into schools where there is an immediate problem, for example where there has been a spate of arson attacks in the nearby area, to deliver hard-hitting presentations on the consequences of fire.

The investigation and detection work carried out by the ATF is also done with the help of firefighters. Recently all Stations received an **Information Exchange** binder. This contains details on how to contact the ATF regarding information on possible suspects, and/or witnesses and protocols on how to report them, alongside guidance notes. From information received using the **Information Exchange** ring binder, there have already been successes, with a number of arrests and charges being made.

Please contact the ATF if you need help with an arson issue, would like one of the team to speak to a school in your area, or you know of a vulnerable location.

The ATF can be contacted on 0117 9262061 ext 452 or via e-mail atf@avonfire.gov.uk.

Vulnerable Waste Removal

Most recently the ATF has been working with the Unitary Authorities to set up a scheme to remove vulnerable waste within 48 hours, or less, of it being reported. Firefighters will need to call a Council hotline number to report any rubbish / waste that they feel could be targeted by arsonists. A laminated document on this latest scheme will be sent out during December 2004 / January 2005 to put into the Information Exchange ring binder with all relevant details.



The way I see it...

We all have views on certain things; someone is obviously going through a mid-life crisis here...

You know you're getting old when.....

..... policemen start to look young. I turned 40 last year and have noticed some even more obvious and disturbing tell-tale signs of my increasing age.

- For the first time in my career I am old enough to be the father of some of the fire fighters on the watch, and even more worrying is the fact that they regard me as a father figure. The first time a recruit said that I was like a dad to him I was both pleased with the compliment but also a little concerned as he was 28 and actually looked older than me!
- The scantily clad females who are normally to be found around the city centre on weekend nights moving between clubs and the taxi rank are now more annoying than attractive. Do their parents know they're out this late, dressed like that and without a coat?
- The thought of a night out clubbing fills me with dread. The lure of a quiet pub and a nice meal is much more appealing.
- I'd rather be comfortable and warm than trendy and "cool".
- The last car I bought because of its safety features and not its performance.
- They don't write songs like they used to! Radio 1 play awful music but I found a great alternative recently called Radio 2. Apparently it's where all the old DJ's go for a few years before they get put out to grass.
- Policemen DO look young. I asked the last copper I saw at an RTA if his mum knew he was knocking off school. He thought I was joking!

The only question that remains is what to do about it. A mid-life crisis is always a favourite but I don't think I could carry off leather trousers and a peroxide hair do, it's just not me. Plastic surgery is out! I'm too mean to pay for it, too chicken to take the pain and just not vain enough to put myself through it.

That only leaves one option that I can think of.....accept the new status that my years now give me. Woolly cardigans and comfy shoes here I come!

Do you have an opinion you'd like to share or a view to express? Please send it to the editor. Articles will be printed anonymously if you wish.

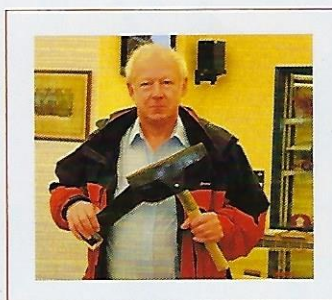


Then and Now...

The Fire Brigade Axe

by Roger "Rip" Smith

The 'Then and Now' article in the October edition (Issue 3) of the Avon Fire & Rescue Magazine led me to reflect on the 'Then' year of 1964, and in particular the wearing of personal axes. "Then" axes were a prominent part of a Fireman's personal kit. They were worn around the waist in a pouch on a leather belt. As a new recruit posted to A3 Avonmouth, I noticed that some men's axes had very thin wooden handles when compared to my own brand new one. After several months I twigged that the thinnest axes belonged to the longest serving men. But this alone wasn't the reason for their thin axe handles.



The answer lay in a routine which took place on a Monday morning at 08.30 hours for the day watch, and 17.30 hours for the night watch. Then we had to parade in full fire fighting kit for an inspection by our Station Officer. One of

the requisites was the cleanliness and whiteness of the wooden axe handles. To ensure such a state, men could be seen scrubbing their axe handles with Vim scouring powder, and then bleaching them white with Chlorox. Thus, over a period of years wooden handles became thinner and thinner, almost to the point when you thought they might have snapped in half the next time they were used in anger!

This practice of cleaning the wooden handle and the metal head with emery cloth and oil eventually vanished as new equipment and methods of maintaining it evolved.

Among the more user friendly methods introduced was the use of varnish both on the axe handle and its head, as a method of preserving its readiness for action on the fire-ground. Therefore the axe handle 'thinning' process ceased, and with them the archaic ability to judge a man's service by the width (or lack) of his axe handle!

Roger Smith joined the Bristol Fire Brigade on the 3 January 1964, and retired on 4 October 1999 a day before his 55th birthday. Older members of the Brigade and most pensioners would remember him as 'Rip' Smith, but that's another story!



Why not go Organic for New Year?

What's your main concern with swapping to Organic Produce? Most people answer "It's too expensive." While this is currently true, there are many reasons to consider going organic. Nick Duncan sets some of them out below....

How is paying more better for me?

- Supports small businesses and (if you buy from local farms) the local economy,
- Produces much (guaranteed from experience) better tasting fruit and veg',
- Helps support our ever fragile eco-system which is all about the birds and the bees in more ways than one,
- Promotes animal welfare – happy pigs and chickens make tastier bacon and eggs!

That's a great overall picture but what am I, personally, going to get out of it?

Some chemical pesticides are known to have a detrimental effect on our health.



By buying organic we're avoiding meat containing unnecessary antibiotics and growth hormones, produce sprayed with chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers, and all the artificial colourings, flavourings, preservatives, emulsifiers, stabilisers and sweeteners that manufacturers think makes low quality food taste and look better. It stands to

reason avoiding these can only promote better health.

So what's the next step? Think about where the food you buy comes from and who you are supporting in buying it. Have a look at Organic box delivery schemes, there are loads in the South West delivering veg', fruit, eggs, cheese, meat and breads. Try checking this out on the Soil Association website: www.soilassociation.org.uk

Why not visit your local Farmers' Market. To find out more check out www.farmersmarkets.net

Nick Duncan
Green Watch, Southmead.

photos courtesy of Fresh and Wild, Clifton

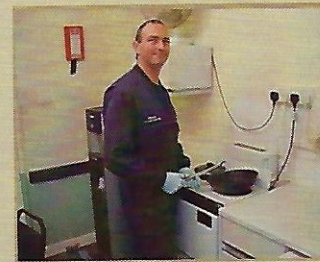


Hot Hot Hot Curry!

Tony Bailey, Workshops

Serves 4ish

4 shallots
1 onion
6 chillies
3 tomatoes
4 chicken breasts
handful of mushrooms
one carton passata
madras curry powder
chilli powder



Stir fry the four chopped shallots and one onion.
Add the chillies.
Peel and chop the tomatoes and add to the pan.
Cut the chicken breasts into dices and add to the mix.

Cook for about five minutes.
Add the mushrooms and the passata (tomato puree).
Now the good bit: Two heaped teaspoons of madras curry powder and one of hot chilli powder.
Give it a good stir and put a lid on it for about 5 minutes then with no lid to reduce a little.
Serve with brown rice or naan bread.

And get ready for the heat to kick in!

The way it could be...



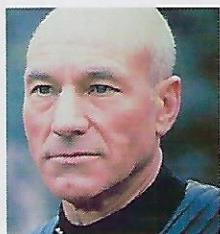
"And, I'll be able to retire in another five years!"

Drawn by ...a firefighter

The next generation...new vehicles for Avon Fire & Rescue

by Anna Comerford

Not since the invention of the Robin Reliant has a bigger or brighter roadworthy fleet arrived within our sights. Avon Fire & Rescue introduces our next generation of appliances, complete with 4 wheels, a fetchingly dangerous red exterior and new stick-on logos (Pritt Stick suddenly became thin on the ground around the finishing stages of decoration. Strange).



Captain Jean Luc Picard understood only too well the term 'helmet hair'



Who chose to dress up as the Klingon asked Blue Watch as they posed for their annual watch picture

Please note, our generation does not include Klingons, or skin tight space worthy jump suits for the crew to wear. However, if the urge permits Stores can provide you with the necessary Star Trek gear- just remember to fill in a Store 1. Previous Trekkies need not apply.

We took a look at the latest developments in our fleet from new appliances to sprinklers.....

Some facts about the new trucks:

- the new range are based on a MAN 14-285 chassis with John Dennis bodywork
- we have a new contract with John Dennis coachworks via the National Procurement Association
- appliances are crew cab safety enhanced with the cab still complying to EC29 regulations
- they features new individual seating in back of appliance, as opposed to bench, which also incorporates BA for four people
- major changes in the appliances include an inboard generator system delivering a main output of 5 KVA (110 volts electric)



- other features on the new appliances are similar to their predecessors, apart from a new design of body work which is more user friendly

- there is also an improvement in stowage arrangements which overcomes a number of manual handling issues
- each new appliances carries a PPV fan, (Positive Pressure Ventilation) enhanced road rescue gear and a water filtration system for supplying drinking water.

We have 3 new Ford Transit Connects. Long wheel base hydrant vans have been introduced, which undertake the servicing and repair of all hydrants.

We've also got a new BA Support vehicle based at Temple. It's a Ford Transit 350/430 EL with a 2.4 TDi 124 PS Diesel engine. The tender's bodywork was undertaken by M&A Bodyworks Ltd with equipment slides and trays by GFS Ltd. The appliance, which went on the run in October 2004, carries BA Cylinders, Air Shelters, tables, lighting and generators.



Rescue's fleet..

There is also a new Rope Rescue Vehicle. Based at Temple, the Landrover 130 2.5 TDS replaces the existing old Landrover and trailer. It has all round better manoeuvrability and off road performance. Extensive kit additions include an airline rescue kit, winches and Troll equipment for use with cliff/quarry rescues plus essential communication equipment.



Another addition is the Environmental Response Unit which will be based at Brislington. In another life this was known as the Chemical Incident Unit. It will carry extensive equipment supplied by The Environment Agency, including chemical suits and decontamination showers.



A new command support unit is currently in its final stages of build at Saxon's. The command support unit will be used when 5 or more appliances attend an incident. It will act as a mobile control unit and will have many features including, satellite communications, lap tops with interactive screens and a state of the art CCTV system. It will be on the run from January and will be based at Stn 10 Kingswood.



Sprinkler Demonstration Unit

Community Fire Safety has recently introduced a sprinkler demo unit, as part of their continuing drive to promote the use of sprinkler systems in commercial and domestic properties. The Community Fire Safety team will be around the Avon area showcasing the new unit. The demo unit display takes only 30 seconds and produces 60 litres of water a minute from one single sprinkler head.



Sprinkler facts: Did you know...

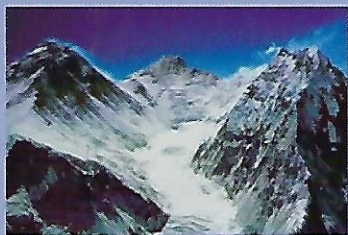
- Chance of accidental operation is 1 in 16 million
- There has never been a recorded case of vandalism against sprinklers in schools.
- A sprinkler fitted for domestic use, uses a controllable and limited amount of water – much less than the fire service have to use when tackling a fire.
- The sprinkler operates within seconds and will react to temperatures of 68 degrees.
- Sprinklers reduce the possibility of flashovers – giving greater protection for Firefighters.
- 95% of the fire will be extinguished by one sprinkler head only.
- In newly built domestic housing (3 bedroom semi) a sprinkler system would cost in the region of £ 1,800 – 2,000.



This wasn't what she had in mind when she heard the words, 'Firefighters' and 'Sprinklers'

It's just not cricket

Research for the last two issues of the Magazine has revealed what a sporting bunch we all are. Therefore we'd like to introduce a new section to the Sports and Social page...It's just not cricket.



In this issue we talk to Dave Hodges about his accolades in the world of mountaineering:

"I first got into mountaineering when I was at school. We took part in the Dartmoor Ten Tors challenge,

which introduced me to climbing in the UK and gave me the mountaineering bug!

"Since then I've been to the Alps and climbed numerous summits. I've now been selected for the British 2006 North Ridge Everest expedition (subject to getting the time off that is!!).

"The build up to that is climbing Mont Blanc, Elbrus in the Caucasus, (the highest mountain in Europe), Aconcagua in Chile (the highest mountain in South America and the world outside the Himalayas) and others in the UK. When I climbed Mont Blanc last year I raised over £500 for Portishead lifeboat and the Benevolent Fund.

"I think the most essential piece of equipment is good shades! The problem is you only realise how important they are when you break them. Snow blindness can give really bad headaches.

My advice to anyone who wants to get into mountaineering is try Cribgoch, an exposed ridge in Snowdon, to see how you get on with it. Then go on an organised led trip, unless, of course you're experienced in mountain navigation."

Some 'Mountaineering Lingo':

Adventure Climbing. What the British regard as normal and the French generally see as idiotique: anything traditional, scary or otherwise likely to result in broken and shattered bits.

Decking Out. Falling and hitting the ground, usually hurting oneself, through lack of protection. Not recommended. Also known as a Desmond.

Disco Leg. Uncontrollable shaking of one or both legs on a climb. Curable by pushing the heel of the leg downwards while the toe stays on the rock. Usually indicates imminent retreat, either voluntary or gravity-assisted.

Ramp. A rising diagonal piece of rock, usually used for foot holds.

(1) **Zone To be "in the zone"** is to be in THE perfect mental state for climbing. Some climbers can consciously achieve this state through meditation.

(2) **Death Zone** - above 8,000m. High-altitude mountaineers know this as the height above which there is not enough oxygen to keep the body alive; either bottled oxygen or remarkable fitness are needed to survive it.

Avon Fire & Rescue- Golf society annual report

by Graeme Watson

Once again the end of the fixtures calendar is rapidly approaching. We've had a busy year with numerous society events held at Clevedon golf club. This year Avon hosted the prestigious Southwest Championship with our own Brian Lindsay from Speedwell station winning the title for the second consecutive time with a two round total of 157. Brian subsequently qualified and went on to play for England this summer in the four-nation championship. Our other success on the day was Mick Keeping from Bedminster in third place who also qualified to play for England Fire Brigade against Scotland.

We beat Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton in a match in August with a rematch scheduled for later.

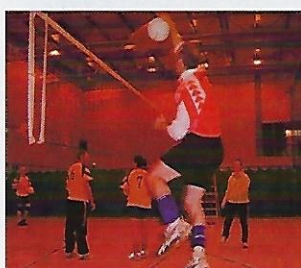
The Avon Fire Brigade Championship was held on the 10 Sept at Clevedon Golf Club. The 2004 Brigade Champion was Mike Parker (retired), 2nd gross Alan Alvis, 3rd gross Steve Mankowski, Best Net Ricky Fear, 2nd net Jim Britton, 3rd net Dave Gaydon.

The last fixture for the year was meant to be the Turkey Trot on the 15 November at Stockwood vale Golf Club. Unfortunately though someone had got a digger and ruined the course... some people will do anything to retain their title!

Next year we're hoping to play society days and matches at different courses within Avon. For further information about the golf society please contact me, Graeme Watson, IPDS, Lansdown 0117 926 2061, ext 616

Yes We Still Play Volleyball!

by Danny Munden



Well, this weekend we did anyway. After a sterling effort by crewing I got all my sports releases granted for a weekend of festival volleyball at the fire service nationals. On Saturday 28 October

at 8am the five of us set out to Chesterfield (yes it takes 6 to play) using Brigade transport and having our accommodation sorted by the 1000 club.

We borrowed a player from Cleveland called Margaret who played a blinder. Former new boy Russ Jenkins gave a great display of power volleyball and looked after new boy Neil Griffiths who slotted



From L to R: Russ Jenkins, Neil Griffiths, Mel Creton, Margaret, Phil Bond, Danny Munden

into the team effortlessly. Led by veteran star Phil Bond, myself and Mel Creton had a fine time smacking the ball around almost at our leisure. We made it into the semi's after knocking out last year's winners

Cleveland much to the delight of our borrowed player Margaret whose husband, daughter and son were among the opposition. During the course of the 2 days we all helped Sussex, who had also only 5 players, into the final against Humberside which Sussex duly won in fine style with a little help from myself and lots of vocal support from the Avon team so we came 3rd with Russ and I picking up winners medals for our efforts on behalf of Sussex.

All in all, a very successful weekend was had with some Champagne Volleyball and rampant partying on the Saturday night. Thanks to those who came and those who made it possible. The next tournament is the last weekend in April 2005 again in Chesterfield so if anyone is interested in coming to play, yes Tim even you, I would like to hear from you.

Higgins Overcomes Major handicap to Triumph Once Again!

by Alastair Dunlop



Steve Higgins, in his fifth year as organiser of the annual Squash Championship, put in a supreme effort to retain his fifth title in succession. The pre-championship field of around eleven players had shrunk dramatically by

the start time, as five beleaguered souls gathered at Lansdown Squash Club, Bath, on Monday 1 November.

It was more like a family affair, with four of the five players coming from White watch, Bath, the other competitor being retired firefighter Len 'Moxey' Harvey. Play got underway with good support from the gallery in the form of two old crocks, Chris Bailes and Al Dunlop, while 'chief marker' was even older crock and honorary President, Steve 'Horace' Batchelor.

We trialled a handicap system and gave Steve 'Strawberry Blonde' Higgins an enormous deficit to overcome, if he was to retain his title. With debutants

Martin Coward, Martin Hewett and Chris Bengey fighting hard for the minor placings, it was left to the two more experienced players to make their way to the final.

Despite his valiant efforts as a pensioner, Len was unable to hold off his younger and fitter opponent. Congratulations to Steve on another fine win! Martin Hewett won the plate, complaining bitterly afterwards that if he had known his gluteus maximus could feel so sore, he'd never have played in the first place.

Thanks to Steve for organising the event and Lansdown Club for hosting it. Steve is happy to organise next years' champs, but he hopes that more players, new and old, will come forward to take part in a thoroughly enjoyable day. If you want more information about the Squash Section, please contact Steve on White Watch, Bath.

A way with words....

This is a copy of an A42 the Equalities Officer, Barbara Brown, received recently when she advertised in the Bulletin for staff with language skills to come forward... thank you to the author who gave a copy to the magazine and allowed us to publish it.

"Dear Barbara,

In Brigade Bulletin 20/04 you asked for any personnel with language skills to come forward.

After travelling widely, I have become well used to conversing with foreigners whose grasp of English is often sadly lacking and while I hesitate to use the word "fluent" I feel confident in a number of foreign tongues, including American and Australian.

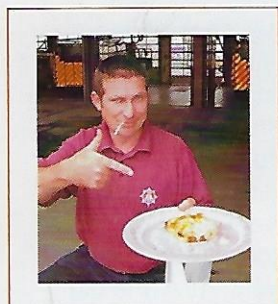
While these may initially appear to be very similar to our own "Queen's English" there are many subtle nuances ready to trip the novice linguist and even more cultural differences that must be considered. For example, not many people are aware that Australians live exclusively on a diet of vegemite sandwiches when at home and often carry large quantities of it when travelling. If an Australian offered you some of his sandwich (which he may refer to as "tucker"), you may feel insulted and repulsed by the brown stuff between two slices of bread, when in fact the traveller is trying to be friendly. The correct response would be to either accept and eat the sandwich or reply along the lines of "Strooth mate, I wouldn't feed that rubbish to me Sheila!" at which point he will probably burst into laughter and suggest you "go for a couple of cold ones" (beers).

I note that you mention a possible enhancement of pay, so if you could complete the necessary paperwork your end as quickly as possible as I could do with the cash before Christmas.

I trust that these are the type of skills you are looking for but if you need to test me or discuss the matter further, please feel free to contact me."

Letters

In the last magazine we featured the exciting recipe for a cheese on by SubO Ash Wright. Unfortunately our intrepid reporter was trying to get the intrepid editor beaten up and told her that Ash was an "ex-marine", which was printed. Here is Ash's indignant reply:



"Let's examine the facts of a rather large gaff, made by your part time reporter and editorial staff, which has led to much ridicule, humiliation and misconceptions on the subject of cheese ons. The article in the last magazine should have read FOR an ex-marine not BY an ex-marine due to the very simplicity of the instructions. An ex-para's cheese on would have been a

much more sophisticated affair, involving more planning and preparation, resulting in a very much superior finished article.

Do not be deceived by the press branding us loud, brash, drunken Neanderthals – far from it. So let us put an end to these cap badge wars, let there be no more talk of a cheese on too far or the cheese ons have landed. This can only add fuel to an already smouldering fire! I leave you with a little para's motto: *utrique paratus!*"



To irritate Ash even more here is the badge of the 4th para regiment which is the volunteer regiment.

Apologies to all ex marines for suggesting that an ex para was one of them.

Stuff the Euro, save the Pound!

"There's a simmering of unrest down at Red Watch Temple, and a campaign has been launched to try and convince the powers that be that **"WE DON'T WANT CHANGE"**. No, it's not IRMP or IPDS but the serious matter of Station Officer Pound being moved back to White Watch in January 2005. The Status Quo among the watch is **"DAVE PLEASE DON'T GO"**.

Nick Carlier a stalwart of the Watch said: "After eighteen years, and numerous good Station Officers, I've now just come to realise since Station Officer Pound has been with us, the importance of a long and detailed Stop Message."

Rick Jenkins said, through his interpreter, that this was "Jaw Breaking News".

Stewart Caie, commented, "Since the boss came to the watch, because of his help and enthusiasm I feel a foot taller".

These comments are the tip of the iceberg; all the members of the watch chipped in with their views on how well thought of Dave is amongst them.

The longest serving member, Paddy O'Leary, summed up his feelings by saying: "I was really looking forward to my retirement, until Dave arrived. He's been a breath of fresh air for my career. Since he's been here, he's got me doing the daily routines, taking my turn as fifth man on the ladder, and I've mellowed so much under his guidance too". Unfortunately, Paddy broke his wrist during a fall, while putting up a protest banner, such is his commitment to this cause.

The firefighters in development said as a collective group. "We're not happy about this, the Station Officer's legendary question and answer sessions are invaluable to our development."

So as you can see, from the six firefighters in development to the longest serving members the message is: **STUFF THE EURO, SAVE OUR POUND!**

Yours, Red Watch, Temple

The campaign was a success - Dave is staying on Red Watch.

Dear Dippy

After slacking off to Bath for the last edition and Kev having to step in, Dippy is back to help the curious, the scared and the sweaty...



Dear Dippy,
In issue two of the magazine there is a photo of the Chief as a young man. His nose looks very different to how it is now. Has he had a nose job?

I have spoken to the chief about this and he said "no, no nose job. Anyone who knows my nose will know that I have the same nose now as I've always had and I know that if it was a new nose, heaven knows I wouldn't pick this nose."

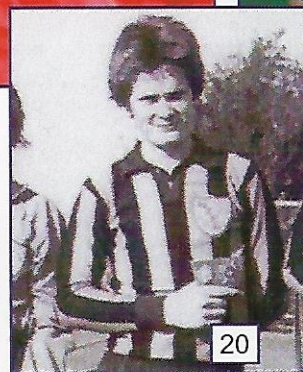
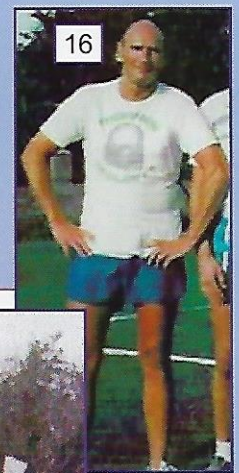
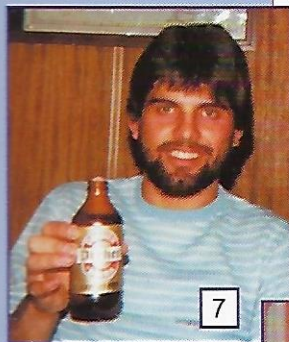
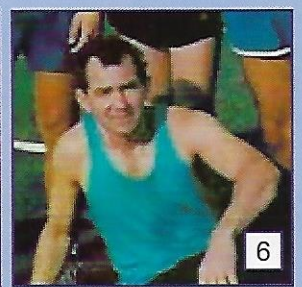
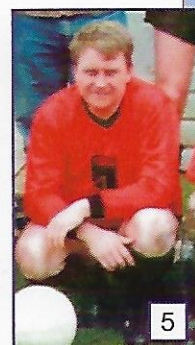
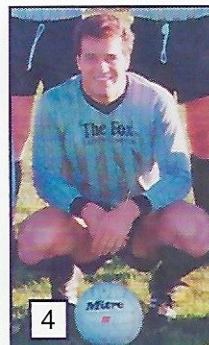
Dear Dippy,
I'm allergic to Polyester and worried that my sweat stains will show through it easily. How will I be able to wear the new corporate uniform then?
From, a concerned member of support staff.

Don't worry. No-one in support staff breaks into a sweat anyway!

If you would like Dippy to sympathetically answer your questions and concerns then perhaps you are approaching the wrong person. Send them in to the editor of the magazine and we'll see what he comes up with to help you.

Who are they Now...

You can't seem to get enough of humiliating your colleagues and loved ones with embarrassing photos of them... so back by popular demand, try and guess who this crop of beauties are...



Answers:
(1) Alan Ellis (2) Bob Leppier (3) Chris Harding (4) Darren Main (5) Dave Coles (6) Greg Fish (7) John Davis (8) Lyn Lloyd (9) Martin Shergold (10) Natalie Venn (11) Paul Beard (12) Paul Fear (13) Paul Willmot as Chief (14) Pete Hamblin (15) Robbie Roberts (16) Tim Lovell (17) Tony Jackson (18) Tony Venn (19) Tony Whitcomb (20) Warren Radford

If you have any photos that you would like to send in for who are they now, please send them to Kara Simpson, Creative Services, Fire and Rescue Headquarters. Include who the photo is of and your name and work location if you want to have the photo back.

A peek at the past...

Anna Comerford looks at Old Uniform...

- Original fire uniforms were brightly coloured, red, green, blue, brown to distinguish the various fire brigades in operation.
- Breeches were worn by all firemen in the 18th century.
- In 1800, firemen began wearing a low top hat known as a 'beaver', despite its apparent unsuitability for firefighting. The 'Beaver' evolved into a top hat in some brigades by the 1830s.
- There was no standardisation of uniforms between the 1860s and 1941. Old photographs show a large number of variations in uniform, in some cases between men in the same Brigades.
- Brass Helmets remained in common use until the 1930s, when the increasing danger of electrocution led to their replacement by non-conducting cork helmets.
- Rubber boots first appeared in the 1900s but were not widely adopted until the 1930s.
- In 1938 a campaign was launched to recruit Auxiliary Firemen for WW2. The issue of uniform at this time was meagre – a pair of overalls and rubber boots.
- The 1970s were a period of experimentation with different types of uniform, one of the more unusual being a battery powered heated tunic lining for use in conditions of extreme cold, but it was not a success.
- In the mid 1970s firemen's helmets were painted canary yellow, in place of black, with those of officers painted white with black rank bands.

