



AVON FIRE & RESCUE

Magazine

Issue 6 | Summer 2005

For employees of Avon Fire & Rescue Service



Training School graduates June 2005



Urban Search and Rescue comes to Avon



Who are they now

From the Chief



As usual we've all been busy and most of our focus has been on business planning. We used the CPA interim results as a chance to find our weaknesses and begin improving on them. Thank you to all our staff for their hard work and willingness to keep trying harder.

During the summer months, we'll be focusing again on the CPA result and what it means for us. We'll also be dealing with the issue of Regional Control. Please take some time to look back and reflect on the changes we have made to our service and the improvements they've brought.

Wain



Editor's note

I'm a firm believer in if you want to make something different, go out there and do it yourself. So if you've been reading this magazine thinking, "I've got good ideas for articles" or "I can write better than that", come on and have a go! We always welcome fresh ideas from different sources.

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High above the hushed crowd the officer had to remain focused. Still he couldn't get rid of the nagging thought; he was an old dog and this was a new trick.

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Justin Hobbs and Steve Harding show kids the ropes during a visit to Callicroft Primary School, Patchway

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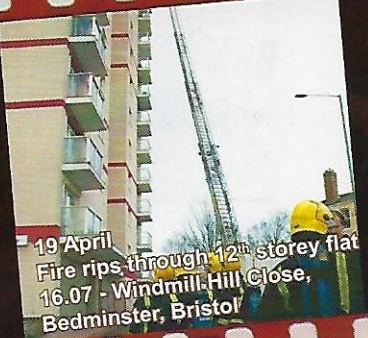
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10 April
Rope-Rescue team comes to the aid of dog on a cliff
17.50 - Leigh Woods, Abbots Leigh, Bristol



11 April
Cows rescued from manure heap
08.33 - Northwick Road, Northwick



19 April
Fire rips through 12th storey flat
16.07 - Windmill Hill Close, Bedminster, Bristol



21 April
Man rescued from trench
11.47 - Acorn Grove, Highridge, Bristol



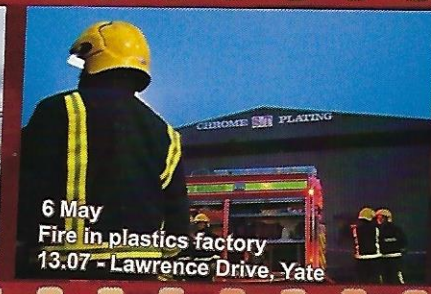
25 April
Road closed and evacuated
09.49 - Milsom Street, Bath



29 April
Evacuation after propane gas leak
08.28 - Cribbs Causeway, Bristol



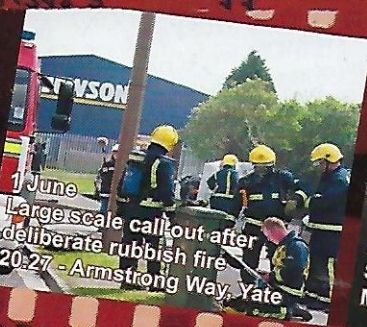
14 May
Scenery workshop hit by blaze
16.55 - Gas Ferry Road, Bristol docks



6 May
Fire in plastics factory
13.07 - Lawrence Drive, Yate



10 May
Kittens and dog rescued from fire
22.06 - Westfield Close, Uphill



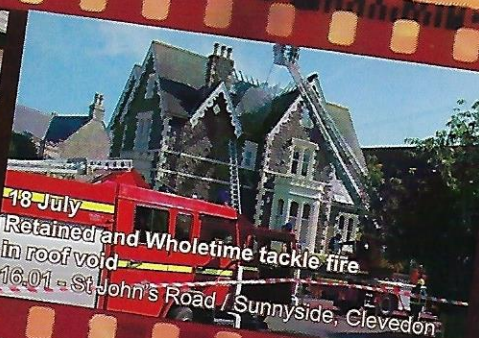
1 June
Large-scale callout after deliberate rubbish fire
20.27 - Armstrong Way, Yate



6 June
Trapped puppy rescued
20.23 - Clarence Park South, Weston-super-Mare



13 July
Smokey the rabbit rescued from under floor
11.25 - Crows Grove, Bradley Stoke



18 July
Retained and Wholtime tackle fire in roof void
16.01 - St John's Road / Sunnyside, Clevedon

Retained firefighters visit SWCDC

Members of Paulton's retained crew took part in a drill night with a difference when they paid a visit to the South West Command Development Centre. The firefighters went to the SWCDC to undergo Hydra training, an interactive simulator which provides a scenario as close to real life as possible.

The firefighters said they enjoyed being able to take part in an exercise which involved "a lot of thinking and organisation, as well as hands on experience without getting dirty or leaving the pod."

They added: "To our delight the time flew by and by the time we started, it was time to finish. This is one of the occasions where three to four hours could be well spent and enjoyed."

"We would like to thank all the staff there on that evening. Something which didn't look that interesting on the drill night turned out to be one of the best drill nights in recent years."

Forty years service...

On Monday 9 May Peter Shilton was given a presentation clock by Kevin Pearson as a tribute to 40 years service. Congratulations Pete!

Firefighters deliver fire safety messages to schools

Firefighters from Speedwell have visited 28 classes in less than two months to deliver vital fire safety messages to youngsters.



The school visits target 8 - 10 year olds and ties in with their curriculum. Originally launched as a pilot scheme, Stn O Phil Hale has been co-ordinating the project across Speedwell's ground, and it will be rolled out

across the service area at a later date.

Youngsters are learning six key fire safety messages, through the use of interactive demonstrations. The messages are: home fire escape plans, 'Stop, drop and roll', hazards in the home, how to make a 999 call, why you should not make hoax calls and why you should have a smoke detector.

Double Bells

Firefighters at Clevedon Fire Station celebrated not once, but twice, in May as two of their colleagues got married.

Lff Steve Harman married Jane on 6 May and ff Stuart Crocombe married Helen on 14 May. Congratulations to both couples and best wishes for your futures.



WAG update

Since the last magazine 14 members of the Women's Action Group have taken part in Race for Life, raising £1,900 for cancer research.

On Wednesday 15 June WAG met for its quarterly meeting at Bath Station. A number of items were on the agenda, from news about Nina, the African child the group has adopted, to IPDS and what it's like being a woman firefighter. Letters from the Breast Care Unit Support Trust and the Rwanda Women Network were passed around the group, following the funds raised during its successful quiz night at the end of last year.

The Ben Fund Lottery

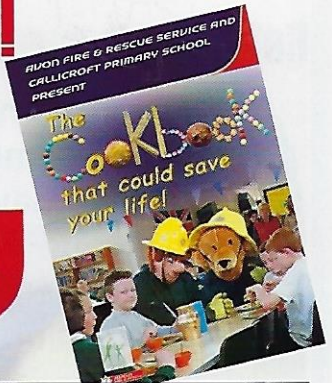
The FSNBF is currently relaunching its Ben Fund Lottery to raise more funds for the charity. For your chance to pocket a tidy £25,000 in the monthly jackpot, call the lottery hotline for more information or an application form on 0870 759 8868.



The Cookbook that could save your life!



Take one leading firefighter, a desire to protect the vulnerable in our community and one primary school. Mix well, add imagination, Blaze Bear, Fireman Sam and hard work. Result: The Avon Fire & Rescue Service and Callicroft Primary School Cookbook.



A few months ago Justin Hobbs, Green Watch, Patchway, was at his son's primary school discussing ideas for fundraising. Someone mentioned a cookbook and Justin saw an opportunity - why not get Avon Fire & Rescue Service involved and use the cookbook to get valuable fire safety messages across to Patchway's community?

Justin approached his station manager and gained backing from the service.

As Justin explained: "I began working with Creative Services and the school, developing the book. First, I collected recipes from the children, teachers and our staff. The response was great and we had a real variety of recipes.

"Next, we wanted photos of the children to put in the cookbook so we arranged for Blaze Bear, Fireman Sam, a truck from Patchway and the press team to visit the school.

"The visit was a huge success. Ff Jon Westwood and ff Matt Crovetto were more excited than the children. It must have been the heat from the costumes!

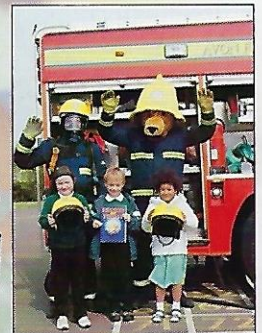
"Then the cookbook went to Creative Services, who

laid it out, put in photos, graphics and inserted the essential fire safety messages."

Justin and headteacher Sandra Lakeman, are delighted with the result. The school will now sell the books to raise funds for the PTA.

Patchway Station Manager Matt Hunt said: "We now have a primary school whose pupils are learning to be fire safe, essential safety messages being taken home, and a firm bond between Patchway Fire Station and the community we serve. Justin deserves full credit for making this great idea happen."

To order your copy of the cookbook, while stocks last, phone Justin Hobbs on ext 8040.



Retirement special

Several long-serving members of staff have left Avon Fire & Rescue Service. We caught up with a few of them.

Avonmouth's kitchen won't be the



same without cook Monica Fairley, who retired after 20 years. Joining the station as a nervous cleaner she soon found her feet. She said: "I had never worked with a lot of men before, but I soon got a bigger mouth than them. I love them all to bits – they are my boys."

Among Mon's memories is going home dressed in a black bag after a soaking from the firefighters. "During my time there I received bad news and I would go into work in despair. I would never go home like that. The boys always cheered me up. The men are the real highlight."

Among the firefighters Mon would have served in the Avonmouth canteen was Clive Leach. Clive, who was involved with the Sports' Association and the 1000 Club, joined Green Watch, Weston-super-Mare, in 1978. He particularly remembers a job at Weston College. "The fire started in the basement and spread up through the stairwells," he recalled. "It eventually involved cylinders, fuel oil, radiation and even biological hazards."

Clive served at Avonmouth, Southmead, Bedminster and Patchway, as well as Fire Safety and the Staff Office. He added: "I've

known great characters in my time. As long as you have the people and the humour it will always be a great job."

Richard 'Paddy' O'Leary became



a firefighter in 1974. He spent his entire career on Red Watch, Temple. Paddy recalls his first major job in Lower Cheltenham Place. "I went in with a hose reel but I didn't have a BA set, as I hadn't done the course," he said. "Then you didn't do it on training school but had a course after being on station for a few months." Although he has retired, Paddy will still be seen around HQ as he is joining CFS as a Community Safety Worker. He said: "I will be doing a five day week, which I last experienced when I did a TL course back in 1980. It will be different but I won't miss the nights."

Pete Hamblin, Kingswood's



ADO, has also left us after 30 years service. Initially posted to Avonmouth, he remembers his first night's duty was on the boat. "I was a bit disappointed as I joined to be on a pump," he said. Five years later he moved to Southmead to gain more experience, but within the year he was back at Avonmouth – as

Leading Firefighter. Pete then served at Temple and it was there he went to his most memorable job. "It was at Dowry Square," he recalled. "We had every ladder up the building. I shouted loudly to a bloke at the top to stay calm and we would rescue him. I later found out he was deaf."

Colin 'Sandy' Powell is the longest



serving of the retirees, joining in 1966, aged 16, as an apprentice at Bedminster. "It was good because if there was a big fire anywhere during the day we were sent on it" he said, "so we saw a lot of action." Sandy went on to Bridewell, and other stations, including Pilning. Among Sandy's memorable moments are the gas explosion at Sue Sheppard on Park Street and a bomb planted by an animal rights group at the university. "I'm probably the best example of the ups and downs in this job, but for all the good and bad times, I'd do it all again," he said. Sandy has also worked with three generations of a firefighting family – Merv Osborne, his father and his son.

Jeff Lovell also began his 30-year



career at Bedminster, as one of seven probationers in a watch of 15 people. He went on to be LFF

there, Sub Officer at Southmead, service photographer, and back to Bedminster as a Sub for 18 years. "Something must have gone wrong somewhere," he quipped. "I loved it. As Sub Officer on a two pump station you get to be officer in charge, you get to train junior officers and you can be as hands on as you want – best of both worlds."

Of his retirement he said: "It is sad but inevitable and it all seems a bit surreal. I still think I'll be here next week and the week after."

ADO Geoff Hutchings ended his



career where Jeff and Sandy began - at Bedminster, as ADO. He began his career at Temple, before becoming Lff and Sub at Avonmouth and Patchway. He also held the post of Station Officer at Weston-super-Mare, spent time in fire safety, premises and as a press officer. He said: "I've had some excellent times. I'd recommend this job to anyone and I would do it all again. To mark my leaving I had two big breakfasts this week and two cheese-ons. As I left the station some of the firefighters decided to try and get me with the hose and a bucket of water. But after 10 years with Blue Watch, I'm used to avoiding water."

Other people retiring, who we didn't manage to catch-up with include:

Bernie Beachgood, Robert Brinkworth, Martin Cowley, Malcolm Holden, Rick Jenkins, Steve Kelly, Helen Matthews, Rory O'Connor, Alan Showering, Mark Sowter and Dave Watts. We wish all of them every happiness for their future.

A Gambian welcome

We recently received a letter from a local man whose family has just returned from visiting The Gambia. Robert Burton, his wife, daughter Julie and Gambian son-in-law Wuyeh were on holiday when they were invited to the opening of a new fire station.

Roger writes... "We were in the centre of Banjul near the fire station, when several of the firefighters who had visited Bristol for training rushed over to speak with us. Then Roger, the tall Chief Fire Officer, came out and welcomed us. Suddenly he produced an invitation card for the inauguration of the new fire station."



Robert and his family were given front row seats at the ceremony and found themselves sitting next to foreign ambassadors, UN representatives and many other dignitaries. Robert's experience is a great example of the warm reception visitors from our area receive when visiting The Gambia.

GAFSIP launch

On Friday 20 May the GAFSIP (Gambia and Avon Fire Services in Partnership) charity was officially launched. To mark the occasion a ceremony was held at HQ with singing from local schools and dancing from a Tamala drumming group. There was also a display by firefighters from Blue Watch, Temple. Guests included the Gambian High commissioner, local MPs and councillors.

Gambian CFO Roger Bakurin, CFO Kevin Pearson and GAFSIP patron David Hutchings signed a charter to commemorate the event and a raffle was held to raise funds.

For more information on GAFSIP please visit www.gafsip.org.



Retained recruitment campaign is launched

We are sending out posters, leaflets and beer mats across our service area to encourage more people to become retained firefighters.

The campaign was masterminded by Human Resources, Creative Services and the retained station managers. It involved several months of planning and work before the launch. Crews at several stations were photographed, as were a number of individual firefighters.

Journalists from local papers were invited to stations to take part in drill nights, meet the crew and observe exercises. The resulting articles are already starting to roll in, with more to follow. The press also interviewed station managers for radio and television, with the campaign getting coverage on three separate occasions on ITV on the launch day.

It is hoped the campaign, which highlighted the work retained firefighters do, as well as the benefits to the individual and their community, will encourage more people to sign up and employers to allow their staff to be retained firefighters.

RECRUITING FOR
OUR SERVICE



Want a rewarding part-time job?

To find out how you can be a retained firefighter, contact us on 0117 926 2061 or our website: www.avonfire.gov.uk or drop into your local fire station for a chat.

Clare Hayes from the Weston Mercury is put through her paces at Blagdon

Sign up to save lives

A RECRUITMENT drive for retained firefighters is being launched today (Fri). Several stations in the area are suffering a shortage of staff, including Blagdon and Weston. Retained firefighters respond to emergency calls the same as full-time firefighters with the same equipment. The difference is they are on call at home or work, instead of based in a station. Once trained, they are paid a retainer fee of £2,300 per year. They are also paid to attend training nights.

Twelve out of the 20 stations in the Avon fire district are entirely manned by retained firefighters.

To find out the skills needed for the job, Weston & Somerset Mercury reporter Clare Hayes went to meet the retained crew at Blagdon.

Preventing, protecting and responding – that is the crew's motto and saved lives is what its members do best.

The retained firefighters at Blagdon and several others in the district are facing problems that rival scenes in TV dramas such as Casualty and London's Burning but somehow they manage to stay calm, focused and even keep their sense of humour.

Dealing with cave rescues and run-down cars pile-ups, the team members are rightly proud of the heroic work they do.

After being kitted out in full firefighting gear I was asked to climb into the driver's seat of a Peugeot 206. I was told I had been in a nasty accident and was badly injured.

Two minutes later I was crawling about the shooting pains in my arm and the fact I couldn't feel my leg. An intensive looking fire engine came up and the crew started to pump air into my lungs and I was told to stay calm and keep looking forward until another crew member had climbed in the car behind me to support my neck.

Norman was loading the car and started up the fire engine and started up the fire engine. Norman has been a retained firefighter for 40 years, since he was 17, and followed in the footsteps of his father and brother.

As the crew removed the windscreen and started cutting the roof off around me, I felt a bit like a penguin as the lid peeled back. I was actually quite nervous. At the time someone was talking to me, explaining what was going on and within 20 minutes I was being strapped to a stretcher on the ground.

swearing imaginary paramedics. Once fully recovered, the Blagdon crew kindly let me face my fear of heights by climbing up the very tall ladder usually kept on top of the engine and testing my strength by using a hot air blower.

Believe me, I asked leading firefighter Colin Franklin what makes him do this job. "It's simple," he said, "at the end of the day there's nothing like saving someone's life."

Anyone who would like to know more about becoming a retained firefighter should call 0117 926 2061 or visit www.avonfire.gov.uk.

RECRUITING IN
RADSTOCK



They also protect their community. For a rewarding part-time job as a retained firefighter, call us on 0117 926 2061, visit us at www.avonfire.gov.uk or drop into Radstock Fire Station for a chat.

Anonimouse

You may have asked yourself why Bill Gates is such a rich man. In a nutshell, he found a way of managing programmes on a computer in a very visual way. This is the essence of Windows, the operating system on most computers. However, it is something that many people don't take advantage of.

'Drag and drop' is a good example. When attaching a file to an email, instead of clicking on the 'attach file' button (the paperclip symbol), then browsing, simply 'left' click on the desired file / folder, keep the left button pressed and 'drag' it to your email. Let go of the left mouse button and it 'drops' in! This can also be used for moving or copying files from one folder to another. Don't worry, it doesn't delete the original copy, it just produces a copy.

Fire Investigation

Whenever arson is suspected at a fire, the job doesn't end when firefighters leave the scene. In fact it can be the beginning of bringing those responsible to justice.

Our service works closely with Avon and Somerset Constabulary to investigate and clamp down on arson in our area.



The Arson Task Force co-ordinates fire investigations, which are carried out by trained fire investigation officers, crime scene investigators (CSI) and forensic scientists. By carrying out a professional, structured fire investigation, they are able to produce an accurate, detailed report. This can then be used by the police to form part of the case they present to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

If the incident commander



identifies the cause of the fire as deliberate, they will request the nearest fire investigation officer to attend the scene. Once the fire investigation officer has carried out a



preliminary inspection and confirmed the probable cause as deliberate, a police CSI officer is requested to attend and a full joint investigation

is carried out. This aims to ascertain the origin and cause of the fire, and also to explain any unusual fire growth or spread.



CSIs will record the scene photographically, identify evidence and take samples for analysis. Areas of interest for the investigators could include more than one seat of fire, signs of an accelerant or fire precautions or alarms being disabled or made ineffective.

Just one example of the effectiveness of this partnership is a recent incident at a youth club, which was the target of arsonists. As a result of investigation and the identification of evidence, several youths were arrested and are now subject to the legal process. This highlights the consequences of deliberate fire-setting and establishes a deterrent. The Fire Investigation Team's job does not end there. It is also responsible for the training of both firefighters

and police officers. As well as providing two half day courses for junior officers in the fire service, it also runs training for the police's CID department. Fire behaviour awareness training is also given to CSIs and forensic scientists, which enables them to appreciate the conditions faced by firefighters.

The team at the ATF is also in discussions with the



CPS and police to establish the most effective communications and procedures when presenting reports and evidence to increase the conviction rates for arson. This then sends out a clear message to the arsonist that getting caught is more likely than ever.

Fleur Lombard bursary

Following the tragic death of one of our firefighters, Fleur Lombard, in February 1996, a bursary was established for developing fire and rescue staff. The bursary aim is... "To advance the education of junior members of the fire service by the grant of bursaries, to enable them to travel and study fire service related issues at other fire services in the UK, Europe or worldwide."

The bursary is open to all staff (control, support or firefighter), who are watch manager level (or equivalent) or below. Each application is considered individually and must illustrate that the trip will prove valuable to the applicant's future career and to the service as a whole. Following their trip, the successful applicant must write a report for the trustees and be willing to share their experiences with others.

The bursary could pay for flights, transfers and other reasonable costs. The successful applicants will be expected to form bonds with the service they are visiting, usually staying on station or with family of staff. Previous bursaries have funded a study trip to Canada to look at a groundbreaking fire cadet's scheme and Austria to investigate disaster relief.

Anyone interested in applying for the bursary can obtain guidance notes and more information from Chris Gray (Fire and Rescue HQ). Applications need to be submitted to the trustees, via Chris, by mid September.



The way I see it...

This edition one of our officers examines the hot topic of support staff applying for officers' roles through the new PQA system...

Personal qualities and attributes. We all have them and from now on if you want to get promoted in our service you have to demonstrate that you possess the right ones. Recently middle managers have completed theirs for the middle managers (ADO and DO) assessment and development centre (ADC).

Here's where it gets interesting: The ADC for middle managers is open to anyone - uniformed, support staff and even people outside the fire service! It's the last two, support and "outsiders" that have caused a stir among all sections of uniformed staff.

The issue seems to be mostly about credibility and 'earning your spurs' by coming up through the ranks. "It's an affront that someone with no operational experience could turn up at a large incident and be in charge" and if this were the case I would agree but reality is different.

Demonstrating the right PQAs only gets you into the ADC, acting as a sift to weed out people who perhaps lack the potential to pass the ADC and unfortunately some whose written English doesn't do them justice. Once at the assessment you have to demonstrate a range of expertise, including managerial and technical ability. If you're successful you can then apply for jobs as they come up - which might not be operational based.

Looking at it from the support staff perspective, there is little career development for them with few opportunities for promotion so it's not surprising they're expressing interest in a new route, which gives them the chance to develop.

Moving on, let's assume that a member of support staff did pass the ADC. They would have shown the right PQAs, the right management skills and learnt enough about incident command (situational awareness) to pass. Avon Fire & Rescue Service would then be failing the candidate and us if they didn't put in place the necessary training for that person to achieve competence before unleashing

them on the incident ground. That's a mammoth task, but they do it in Holland and Germany (where two tier entry is allowed), so why not here?

Part of me wants to jealously guard the old traditions where you learnt your craft on the way up, but I also realise that you need to continually develop your managerial skills as your role changes. If I can learn new managerial skills why can't a manager learn to put fires out? There's also the paradox that for a long time uniformed officers have had seniority over support professionals in areas like premises, HR, H&S and IT. A case of the boot being on the other foot now?

Change is seldom welcomed but often proves less terrible than we imagine. If Emily Pankhurst hadn't been a pain 100 years ago women wouldn't have the right to vote today, something we all take for granted now. My hat goes off to anyone who does give it a go, not because I want two-tier entry, but because it takes bottle to be the first at anything.

Firefighters still care passionately about their work and resent anything that they perceive devalues their skills and experience. They also want to be commanded by a leader in whom they have confidence. Respect on the fire ground is something you earn and no rank or ADC will give you that.

Firefighters celebrate their graduation

Friends and family gathered at the Severn Park Fire and Rescue Training Centre to celebrate the graduation of the service's newest firefighters. The 12 new members of our service marked the end of their 12-week training course in a special ceremony at the centre.

A special award was given to the top trainee to celebrate their achievements. Firefighter Darren Connolly received the Silver Axe, Mat Pember was voted Trainees' Trainee, and Mark Taylor won the award for the Best Breathing Apparatus Wearer.





Community fire safety visit saves elderly woman's life

A timely community fire safety visit by Speedwell firefighters almost certainly helped save an elderly lady's life.

Green Watch at Speedwell received a call on Tuesday 24 May to an address in King Street, Speedwell. They arrived to find the elderly occupant, Mary Morris, had fallen asleep in her lounge while a pan of fat was on her cooker. The fat had overheated and caught fire.

Crews recognised Mrs Morris instantly as they had been at the property a few weeks before on a home fire safety visit, and fitted a smoke alarm.

The 88-year-old said: "The firefighters had come round a few weeks before and fitted a smoke alarm at my house, which was lovely. "I was asleep in the lounge, with the radio on, and I woke up to hear this beeping noise. I suddenly realised it was the noise the firefighters had told me to listen out for. I got up and found my pan was on fire so I dialled 999."

The firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze, although Mrs Morris has had to have her kitchen redecorated. Leading Firefighter Jon Brown said: "The smoke alarm probably saved Mrs Morris life."

Avonsafe

Avonsafe is an important partner for our service in preventing injuries happening to the young or the elderly.

Avonsafe is a local multi-agency injury prevention alliance, under the umbrella of Avon NHS.

One area where Avonsafe works with us is in fitting free smoke alarms for older people in their homes. The Community Fire Safety Team has helped spearhead the initiative, which aims to reduce the number of deaths and injuries to older people from fire in their own homes.

Avonsafe also aims to reduce the number of injuries and deaths from falls and the road environment. The agency is working on falls prevention programmes including providing up to date literature, establishing referral protocols for those at risk of falling, and promoting physical activities.

With children and young people, accidental injuries are a particular problem and the leading cause of death from the age of one year up to adulthood. Many of these injuries are preventable and avoidable. Among the ongoing programmes of work is encouraging parents to purchase stairgates, fireguards and smoke alarms. The smoke alarms are available at low cost and fitted for free.

Lifeskills is another organisation Avonsafe uses to help children and other sectors of the community learn about safety in a practical way, while the Safe Kids campaign aims to save children's lives and prevent accidental injury.

For more information about Avonsafe and their work visit http://www.avon.nhs.uk/phnet/Avonsafe/about_us.htm

Urban Search and Rescue comes to Avon

Part of the New Dimension programme means that we'll soon be seeing Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) equipment in Avon.

The programme was established after 9/11 and provides fire and rescue services with equipment, procedures and training to respond to a range of threats including: Terrorist CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) incidents, industrial and domestic accidents, chemical spills and collapsed buildings and natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes.

In Avon we've already received phase one of the New Dimension programme, which was the mass decontamination equipment and the IRU (Incident Response Unit). Soon we'll start taking delivery of phase two - the new USAR equipment. Then phase three (High Volume Pumping) will start to roll out.

USAR training

In 2004 Rob Davis and Simon Shilton flew to Texas in the US with over 400 UK firefighters to attend the 'Disaster City' collapsed structure course. The specially designed centre allowed UK firefighters to practice rescue techniques in a safe, realistic environment and provided them with an enhanced range of specialist skills.

The 'Disaster City' training has gone on to form the foundation of the USAR courses being provided at the Fire Service College.



Phase two

Seventeen fire and rescue services across the country have been identified as having risk areas, which could need USAR equipment. With cities, flood plains and high population figures, Avon has been listed as one of them, as well as Devon in the South West.

Departments across our service are working on the deployment and staffing for our new USAR facilities. We've been given funding for 16 wholetime and 14 retained USAR personnel. These people will be fully trained in USAR equipment and will most likely

be based at a specific USAR station. A number of ADOs will also become specialists in USAR incident command, much like HIT and fire investigation officers, and control staff will be trained to deal with these types of incidents.

The new equipment includes:

- Three prime movers - vehicles like the IRU with the capability of carry and manoeuvring equipment pods.
- Five pods:

Pod one - First Strike Pod: This will contain a number of pieces of kit essential to USAR activity: listening devices, communication probes, hand tools, generators, propping and shoring equipment; safety, breaching and breaking and safe working at height equipment.

Pod two - Heavy transportation and rescue equipment pod: hot cutting and heavy hydraulic rescue and breaching equipment, lighting and confined space equipment.

Pod three - USAR Support: nailing and bolting equipment, air lifting systems, chainsaws, advanced propping and shoring equipment.

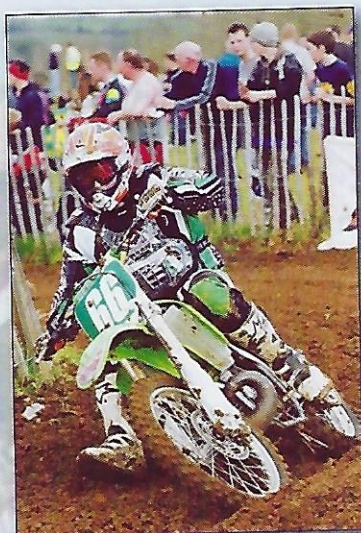
Pod Four - Mobility: a Toolcat, All Terrain Vehicle, and tents.

Pod five - Timber: Thirteen tons of timber and timber cutting work stations.

- A PCV (People Carrier)

Dirty weekend...a day in the dirt at a motocross race

Motocross is one of the oldest forms of motor sport. Early bikers rode their machines off road, until someone thought of marking out a course and racing round it. Originally called scrambling, the sport has developed into a multi million dollar business.



Until the mid 70s people raced heavy four stroke machines based on road bikes. European manufacturers dominated, then Suzuki entered the market with their first light weight purpose built two-stroke machine. By the mid 80s European brands had disappeared as the "big four" Japanese manufacturers Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki all produced fast, reliable and light bikes.

Early motocrossers struggled to attract commercial sponsors because the races are hard to televise and muddy. In the late 70s an American promoter held a race in a football stadium and "Supercross" was born; racing that was easy to package for TV and in seated stadiums.

In Europe, the outdoor Grand Prix series continues to grow with support in Belgium and Holland that football has in the UK, the top riders having Beckham-like status. To compete riders must be in peak physical condition and many have personal trainers to advise on every aspect of diet, training and injury management.

At local racing level, the "weekend warriors" come from all walks of life and while the racing can get intense, there's usually good camaraderie in the pits.

I currently race in the senior group and if I get two more wins I'll make expert. The buzz of racing is very addictive and the adrenaline rush you get hitting the first turn with 39 other riders, or charging off a jump in fourth gear is worth the pain of an occasional fall.

There are races most Sundays from March to October so why not come along and cheer on No 66. I need all the support I can get!

Andy Gee

Three Peaks 2005

Take a few hundred firefighters, romantic mountain scenery, a long weekend, lots of vaseline, and then add in a whole new world of pain. Welcome to the Fire Service Three Peaks challenge.

I joined the two White Watch, Avonmouth teams for the challenge in June. Our mission: To climb the three highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales in less than 24 hours. Add in no sleep, travel sickness, fatigue and jelly legs.



The whole challenge is about being a team. When you are shattered and your body is in shock at what you're doing to it, it's your team mates who get you through and not letting the team down

plays such a key part. The guys in my team were absolute heroes and a massive thanks to Daz Kingston – a true team leader.

The two Avonmouth teams pulled Platinum (17hrs 30) and Silver (21hrs 59). Speedwell White got Gold (19hrs 55).

Mike Collin's (Speedwell) Jampotters team went to defend their record...and beat it! They won the competition again in 15 hrs 27 mins, beating a team of commandos.



Now bring on next year's challenge!

Kara Simpson



Regional Volleyball Tournament

The South West regional finals were held back in April, with five members of the team from Avon. The team cruised through their first day and

ended a successful winning streak with some strong liquid for afters. During a fiercely contested final, the team lost out narrowly to the South East 2 – 0.

Volleyball is still very much alive in Avon, and the team proved they are still a much respected and feared force! They wish to thank everyone who supported them, including Crewing for granting time off and the 1000 Club. The next tournament is in September. Anyone interested in joining this elite force should contact Danny Munden, Green Watch, Temple.

Organ Donation Campaign

Each year, almost 3,000 people in the UK benefit from an organ transplant. However, around 400 die before a suitable donated organ becomes available. The NHS Organ Donor register is a confidential computurised database. It carries the names of more than 12 million people who wish to donate their organs to help others after their death.

Organ donation can make a difference. Dan Brinnand, aged 28, was born with the killer disease cystic fibrosis which blighted his childhood and reached a life-threatening stage by the time he was 25. Dan, from Bedminster, said: "I was always ill, my lungs just never allowed me to do the things other kids did. By the time I was in my 20s I was almost constantly on oxygen. I had to keep an oxygen cylinder under my desk at work."

Dan spent a year on the transplant waiting list before a suitable donor was found and in February 2001 he was rushed into Papworth Hospital, Cambridgeshire, for the operation.

Dan said: "I have a life now that I never had before and never would have had without a transplant, which was made possible only by the generosity of a donor."

To find out more about organ donation, call the NHS Organ Donor Line on 0845 60 60 400 or visit www.uktransplant.org.uk



Spicy butternut squash soup

Justin Hobbs, Patchway Green Watch

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash
- 2 red onions
- 1 apple
- 1 orange
- 1 and 1/2 pints of vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp margarine
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp curry power
- 1/2 pint milk
- pinch of ground nutmeg
- salt/pepper

Method

Peel the butternut squash, dice (remember to remove the seeds and fibres). Dice onions. Place squash and onions in a saucepan and fry in margarine for approx five minutes. Add flour, curry powder and nutmeg and cook over a medium heat for a few minutes. Add zest of orange and orange juice. Gradually add vegetable stock stirring continuously. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add milk and diced apple and simmer for approx 20-30 mins. Then liquidise with hand blender or in food processor.

Ancient exercise



Good for mind, body and soul, yoga is believed to date back 10,000 years. The influence of this ancient form of exercise can be seen in many of today's martial arts. Yoga reaches parts that other forms of exercise cannot even contemplate. It exercises every muscle in the body, tones and invigorates every organ, flushes and cleanses every blood vessel, pacifies, tones and harmonises the nerves, massages the brain and realigns the bones. It can help with the rehabilitation of injuries and speed up recovery time, improves posture and irrigates body tissues and can improve skin quality and generate energy.

Yoga is mainly physical but all you need to practice is a body, mind, a little floor space and little time or energy. Despite people perceiving yoga as a non-energetic form of exercise, be prepared to sweat. You don't need to be flexible to take part.

If there are any watches, small groups or individuals who would like to try a flowing style of yoga, then contact Mark Leakey at Temple, on Green Watch.

A perfect day in HQ

After the last magazine's 'A Perfect Day', a member of admin staff decided to dream about her perfect day at HQ...

10:00 Enter the building. On sweeping flexi card over the newly super accurate flexi machine am overjoyed at correct balance, which reveals: '113 hours credit' (with the option to have unconditional flexi days).

10:02 Bypass office and head straight for the canteen queue – officers gladly part so you can take your place at the head of it. Caroline offers the option of 'super sizing' for no extra cost. An abundance of unburnt food is still available. A bar of Dairy Milk is lovingly served up as afters. Blinded by newly sparkling cutlery. Have to visit BMO soon after to have eyes sorted.

10:28 Enter office. Find desk tidy and devoid of past their sell by date post-its, dirty mugs and sweet wrappers. In tray is completely empty, out tray is full of completed work.

10:31 Turn PC on to find out that system is fully functional. Citrix has been given an Extreme Makeover. Extra bonus – phone works as well.

10:34 Appreciate office now has controllable heat and windows low enough to look out of without cricking neck.

10:42 Start work but interrupted by DCFO and CFO who are pacing the floors handing out cups of tea/coffee and jaffa cakes. Jerry pours, Kevin stirs.

10:53 Attempt to start work but interrupted by call from Finance. Have been on wrong Hay grade since start date - will be reimbursed and re-graded as a matter of urgency.

10:54 Reimbursement cheque appears.

11:33 Find there are suddenly more than five ladies' toilets in the building. Spend rest of morning planning strategic trip to appreciate each toilet individually.

12:00 Two hour lunch break.

2:00 Return from lunch to find good looking, single firefighters waiting. They have all their own hair and teeth and aren't the same age as your dad. They commend you for doing a good job and insist on buying you dinner.

2:20 Go into Creative Services. Find the office tidy, spacious and everybody chilled out and comparing colouring crayons. Invited to join them in their afternoon 'Water-colour challenge' sesh.

3:00 Work interrupted by HQ tannoy: 'Home time troops' Kevin bellows. Leave building and swipe card to find flexi balance in tact. Met by non-follically challenged singleton firefighter. Exhaustive but v. satisfying day.

Hell's Kitchen – Expert cooking advice from Green Watch

Green Watch, Temple has added its own cooking advice guidelines to the art of perfecting the faultless chip. A personally designed 'chip chart' gives the final word on what is deemed acceptable to the pallets of Green Watch's chip appreciation. In time, it is hoped that the whole service will follow suit and use the 'Jaz Patented Chip Size Ready Reckoner' as the generic guideline in the quest to eliminate all burnt substitutes...



Dear Dippy



Dippy had the cheek to go on annual just when we needed him! More from Dippy next time.

Exclusive – Evidence proves Clevedon's turn out times have improved!

A recently unearthed old newspaper article, has shed some light on the attendance difficulties of Clevedon's Firefighters. The article, dated July 15 1911, reports on an incident in Claverham in which fire destroyed a range of stables stating that: 'The brigade, consisting of Captain E. Dawes, Supt. C.W. Purnell, and four men, got away smartly in response to the call, which was received at 5:30pm, the remainder of the brigade following by train to Yatton, from whence they were conveyed to Cleeve by cart...' Ironically train times would have been better in 1911 than in 2005, although it's nice to know that Clevedon utilised all manners of public transport. The ADO probably turned up on his Penny Farthing.



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: Who are they now: (1) Rod King, Terry Banford (2) Jane Bale (3) Steve Fisher (4) Sue Nicholls (5) Andy Southard (6) Craig Welsh (7) Caroline Milliet (8) Jamie Knight (9) Rob Brown, Steve Noble, Russel Bennett (10) Rick Hanratty, Dave Gaydon, Martin Cooper (11) Nick Baldwin (12) Lyn Lloyd (13) Alex Wilson (14) Adrian Mantle (15) Jim Weymss

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.

Anna Comerford looks at Ashley Road, M&M Motor Mart Explosion, 1951 – Bristol's worse peace time disaster

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