



AVON FIRE & RESCUE

Magazine

Issue 8 | Spring/summer 2006

For employees of Avon Fire & Rescue Service





Issue 8 / Spring/summer
2006

On the cover

In May we joined forces with other agencies to help highlight the dangers of smoking. We took part in a successful event on Weston-super-Mare seafront which emphasised the health and fire risks caused by smoking.



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From the Chief



It's time for another magazine and for me to look back over the last few months at what we've achieved. Here I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on our continued commitment to helping others.

Many of our staff have hosted young people in the workplace, offering them a chance of work experience with our service - from Workshops and our kitchens, to Creative Services and reception. We've also been busy teaching youngsters about the dangers of fire, from within the classroom and on our stations to at community events.

Hardly a week goes by without news of one of our staff testing themselves to the limits for charity, from arduous sponsored runs to hikes across the arctic. No matter what you choose to do, you do so with good nature, compassion and commitment to the cause.

Last year a member of our staff, ADO Rob Davis, led a SARAID team to the Kashmir capital of Muzzaffarbad, to rescue people following the horrific earthquake in Pakistan. Other members of our staff are gearing up for our 2007 training trip to The Gambia, under ex-CFO Dave Hutchings. With so much dedication to helping others it is hard to do justice to the many things you undertake - this is barely a snapshot.



3 January - Arsonists target pub
13:40 - Happy Cocks, Bamfield,
Hengrove, Bristol

16 January - Three people rescued
following RTC
17:43 - A370 between Hewish and
Congesbury

25 January - Driver dies following RTC
12:13 - Keynsham Road, Willsbridge

6 February - Fire in empty office block
15:37 - Bristol & West Tower,
Broadquay, City, Bristol

15 February - Crew bring boat to safety
The Jolly sailor, The Shallows, Salford

20 February - Flat destroyed by fire
09:06 - St John's Lane, Bedminster

14 March - Tealights set television and
curtains alight as occupant sleeps
05:43 - Gloucester Road, Bishopston,
Bristol

22 March - Pallet fire threatens cars
17:40 - West Hay Rd, Wrington

30 March - Snake removed from flat
by fire service
11:31 - Monsdale Drive, Henbury

2 May - Explosion and chemical spill at
city college
13:38 - City of Bristol College, Folly
Lane, Barton Hill, Bristol

10 June - Lamb rescued from river
09:10 - River Avon, near Cadbury
Factory, Keynsham

19 June - Six rescued from fire
20:21 - Marsdon Road, Clevedon

Life for a Life memorial forest

Initially 'Life for a Life' was a scheme set up to commemorate lost loved ones by planting a tree in their memory. However, people now chose to plant trees for many different occasions, such as wedding anniversaries and births.

The 'Life for a Life' sites are across the UK and are open every day of the year so that people can visit the forests to remember loved ones or special times.

We have recently planted a tree at the memorial forest site at Chew Valley Lake. CFO/CE Kevin Pearson attended the opening ceremony of this particular site and a tree was planted on behalf of all members of the service. The site is at Woodford Lodge, just off the B3114 south of Chew Stoke. Our tree is on the right hand side of the road, just as the lake comes into view and is marked with a plaque.



WAG update

The Women's Action Group (WAG) has been busy raising funds for various charities, as well as holding its usual regular meetings.

A recent quiz night helped raise more than £275 for the British Heart and Lung Foundation and the group's sponsored African child, Nina.

In a recent update about Nina, the group was able to learn more about her and her way of life in her community. Among Nina's pastimes that she enjoys, is getting together with her friends, singing, playing games and helping her family to take care of her younger siblings.

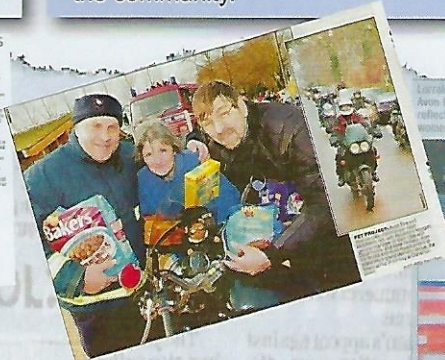


She is currently in the second grade at the local primary school and her favourite lessons are maths, sport and writing poetry and rhymes. It takes her less than 30 minutes to get to her school on foot.

Youngsters complete Prince's Trust course

A Prince's Trust Team, which has been working with one of our Sub Officers, has successfully completed its 12-week personal development course.

Team 132 worked with Roger Farrant, and team leader Jon Burn to complete the project and held a presentation at City of Bristol College to mark the end of their hard work. For its community project, the team extended and rejuvenated a playgroup's garden at Longwell Green Community Centre. Their final challenge was raise enough money to complete a project for a deserving group the community.



Media round-up

We have been in the media spotlight for a number of reasons over the past few months. Coverage has included our firefighters taking part in a fitness challenge in a department store window to raise money for the FSBNF and our football team winning a regional trophy. As well as these more unusual stories, we have also received coverage for the usual incidents and fire safety messages. One event which was of interest both to the local media and the trade press, was the launch of Community Television, a project which was led by us. We also received some national coverage on the See Hear programme following an incident where we fitted smoke alarms for a deaf couple. And of course we mustn't forget coverage of our charity involvement, work with young people and our various graduations.



Our hero





New principal officers appointed

We have appointed two new principal officers.

Service Management Board member Lorraine Abrahams, Business Service Manager for Strategic Planning & Communications, has been promoted to Assistant Chief Officer on a temporary basis for six months. Alongside Lorraine for six months will be Area Manager John Dando, who has been promoted to Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

ACO Lorraine Abrahams started her career with AF&RS in 1987 and has worked in a number of departments, including Service Delivery, Fire and Community Safety, HR, Crewing and Planning & Performance. Lorraine has been a member of the Service Management Board since 2002 and was appointed Business Services Manager in 2005, with responsibility for ICT (Information Communication Technology), Performance Support, Performance Improvement, Corporate Planning, Strategic Development and the newly formed Creative Services Unit (Marketing, Media & Communication and Production, Graphics & Web).

During her time with AF&RS Lorraine has achieved a postgraduate diploma in Management Studies and a Masters degree in Management from the University of the West of England. She plays an active role in service life and chairs Avon's Women's Action Group. Her new role will see her as Director of Service Improvement with additional responsibilities for the Improvement Co-ordination Unit and Health, Safety & Welfare.

Lorraine said: "The fire service is changing rapidly and I'm proud to be part of that process. As a woman in the fire service I believe I bring a different perspective to the table. Traditionally woman in the service wouldn't have expected to achieve my position. In today's service however, women, whether in operational or support staff roles, have more opportunities available to them. There can be no doubt that the service nationally will be enriched by this."

ACFO John Dando began his career with AF&RS in 1979 as a firefighter at Patchway Fire Station. During his 27 years with the service, John has worked on a number of fire stations as Crew, Watch and Station Manager. He has also held specialist posts in Community Safety, Service Delivery, Training, Technical Services and Press & Public Relations, as well as support officer to the Service Management Board. John has worked to obtain an HND and BSc in Fire Service Studies, Command and Management

John says that he is delighted to be taking up his post as Director of Service Support, where his primary responsibilities will include Human Resources, Finance & Asset Management and People Development. John said: "I have been very fortunate in my career to work with some incredible people who have contributed to the continued success of AF&RS. This career has enabled me develop as a person, and I hope in my new post I can create an environment that will enable people to fulfil their potential. I am relishing the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the service that has been so good to me."

Our new firefighters

The newest members of AF&RS celebrated their graduation with friends and family at Severn Park Fire and Rescue Training Centre at the end of last year.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Chris Palmer presented the 24 newest members of Avon Fire & Rescue Service with their certificates. The graduates then put on a number of displays for their watching friends and relatives.

Firefighter Tyler Garrett received the Silver Axe, following in the footsteps of his brother Zak, who also won the silver axe last year. Tyler, whose wife is Tracey Garrett from Kingswood Fire Station, joined White Watch Patchway.

Other family connections at the ceremony included Ff Andrew Baker, son of retired DO Nick Baker, who joined Red Watch Bedminster, and driving instructor Garry Hawkes' son Gareth, who joined White Watch, Weston-super-Mare.

Alan Spurway was voted Trainees' Trainee, and Mike Clayton won the award for the Best Breathing Apparatus Wearer.

The complete list of graduates and their postings is: Ff Anthony Aberdeen, Red Watch Weston-super-Mare; Ff Andrew Baker, Red Watch Bedminster; Ff Glenn Baker, Blue Watch Patchway; Ff Steve Baker, White Watch Bath; Ff James Barrand, Blue Watch, Avonmouth; Ff Christian Bellingham, Blue Watch, Southmead; Ff Pete Carvell, Red Watch Bath; Ff Scott Cole, Red Watch Kingswood; Ff Thomas Dean, White Watch, Avonmouth; Ff Oliver Ellis, White Watch Avonmouth; Ff Craig Fisher, White Watch Bedminster; Ff Tyler Garrett, White Watch Patchway; Ff Gemma Griffiths, White Watch, Avonmouth; Ff Mark Hattersley, White Watch Kingswood; Ff Gareth Hawkes, White Watch Weston-super-Mare; Ff Paul Humphreys, Blue Watch Avonmouth; Ff Matthew Hunt, Red Watch Avonmouth; Ff Jamie Jones, Green Watch Patchway; Ff Scott Knapp, Green Watch Speedwell; Ff Emma Long, Green Watch Avonmouth; Ff Ben Pugh-Jones, Green Watch Weston-super-Mare; Ff Nicky Sawyer, Green Watch Kingswood; Ff Paul White, Blue Watch Bath; Ff Gavin Wills, Red Watch, Patchway.

Congratulations to all our new firefighters - we hope you have settled into your new posts. Look out for news on our latest graduates in the next issue of our magazine.

Equalities and Diversity working with Filton College



We've teamed up with Filton College to provide better career opportunities for people with the launch of a new partnership initiative. The college has developed a programme - in consultation with us and the FBU - to provide initial Diagnostic Assessments for candidates to assess their numeracy and literacy skills. The college has also developed additional qualifications and learning workshops to further help people with future career choices, not just in the fire service, but across the board.

The college also provides a one-to-one fitness assessment at its new £17.5million Bodywise gym, with comprehensive fitness and dietary advice. Not only does this initiative equip people with skills for the workplace, but also skills for getting the job they want, by training them in interview techniques, which is essential for any recruitment process, including Avon Fire & Rescue Service's.

Michele Westlake, who manages this initiative at Filton College, said: "We have seen over 100 potential recruits to the fire and rescue service through this scheme. We cannot offer 100% success rates, but what we can do is to achieve increased employment opportunities, with not only Avon Fire & Rescue Service, but with any employer".

Mark Webb, our Equalities Co-ordinator, said: "This new scheme will certainly be valuable to anyone wanting to improve their career opportunities, not just in the fire and rescue service, but in any industry or organisation. This initiative is a culmination of a number of organisations working together and highlights the potential these types of relationships hold."





Highlighting safety

Over the past few months our staff have been continuing to work hard to highlight safety issues to the communities we serve.

A major flagship project, Community Television (CTV), was launched in south Bristol, the first time such a project has been seen in the South West. Working alongside partners from three other agencies – Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Safer Bristol and Bristol City Council – AF&RS led on the scheme which has seen 10 plasma television screens placed in locations around the south of the city. These will broadcast various safety messages from the partners, as well as national campaigns. AF&RS's messages include information about Home Fire Safety Visits and arson. The screens can also be used to broadcast national safety messages in the event of terrorist attacks, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It is hoped this project could be rolled out to more areas across the service in the future.

Staff have also teamed up with North Somerset Council and the North Somerset Primary Care

Trust to promote national and international 'No Smoking Days'. This has included working on a smoking amnesty with the local newspaper in Weston-super-Mare and planning an event on the town's seafront to highlight the dangers of smoking.

Another area where important messages have been highlighted to the community is regarding road safety issues. Firefighters and Community Safety Officers from South Gloucestershire staged a road safety display at The Mall, Cribbs Causeway. Cutting equipment was on display and firefighters were on hand to explain how it was used and what they have to do at the scene of a road traffic collision. A number of displays were also put up around The Mall carrying various road safety messages. Again, we worked in partnership with other agencies to get the messages across.

Red Watch Patchway recently held a fire safety information event at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre to give fire safety information to the public and also highlight the problems caused by making hoax calls.



ADO leads team in Pakistan after earthquake

Following news of the devastating earthquake in Pakistan last year, members of the Search and Rescue Assistance in Disasters (SARAID) team, including ADO Rob Davis, visited the stricken country to provide aid.

The earthquake struck the Kashmir region of the country at about 08.00hrs on Saturday 8 October. Measuring 7.4 on the Richter Scale, early reports were uncertain about the number of casualties.

The United States Geological Survey put SARAID on standby and, following communication with the Department for International Development and the Pakistan Government, members were officially mobilised on Sunday 9 October.

Rob Davis was leading the team which flew out from Heathrow and arrived in Islamabad on Monday 10 October. For the next six days, they carried out Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) activities within the Kashmir capital of Muzaffargarh. The city had a population of 600,000 and 90 per cent of the buildings were destroyed, leaving the team facing a huge task.

SARAID worked closely with the United Nations (UN) during its time in Pakistan. Not only did SARAID receive taskings from the UN, but it also reported its findings back to it, providing valuable intelligence of the

disaster area. During their time in Kashmir, team members worked with search and rescue teams from many other countries, including Turkey, Germany, Korea, Japan and Russia.

SARAID members carried out searches during the day and night. The second day of their stay, they were asked to carry out a search of a market area. Part of this involved searching for a number of missing children from schools neighbouring the market. Sadly the teams did not find any survivors within this completely collapsed area.

The team then headed into the market to start further search and rescue activities. The market was a warren of passageways and corridors, spread over a large area. Most of the buildings were damaged in some way and escape for team members in this area if there was an aftershock was limited. After a number of hours searching, the team found a casualty trapped in a void created by two shops. The elderly man was rescued and deemed fit and well following a medical examination. He was then taken to a local displaced persons camp.

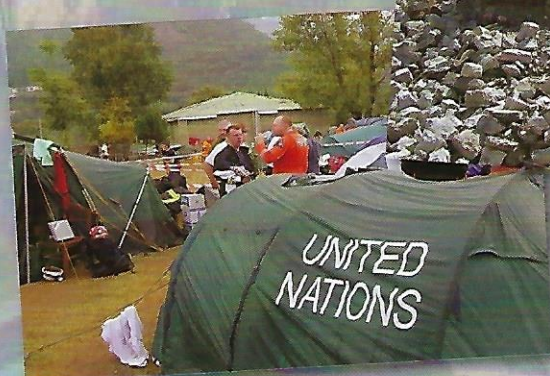
SARAID members had to withdraw from the area because of gunfire between locals and looters. They then moved onto another area, made up of residential properties. A dog and handler found signs of life under a collapsed property. Once this

was confirmed, search and rescue activities started. The building had been badly effected by the earthquake and had to be propped and shored up before the rescue could be undertaken. This took more than 15 hours.

It was looking as if the rescue was going to be successful when an aftershock hit the area, requiring the team to pull out. Following the aftershock, the building had become very unstable and after a period of assessment, a German dog and handler could no longer find a live scent. The rescuers had to make the difficult decision to abandon the rescue effort.

The team undertook many other searches during its time in Pakistan, working mostly in the Muzaffargarh area. Rob said the visit to Pakistan had provided a really useful experience for the SARAID team, both in terms of dealing with a major disaster and liaising with other organisations.

"After a number of hours searching, the team found a casualty trapped in a void created by two shops."



Somerset & Avon Fire Brigades' Old Comrades' Association



The association was first formed in 1973 and membership at that time was open to any ex-member of the Brigade who was in the old 'A' Division area of the then Somerset Brigade.

The aim of the association was to promote social activities between ex-members of the service, as well as to keep in contact with each other. In 1974 after re-organisation, the association was focused on the 'C' Division area of Avon.

By 1994, membership had fallen off and that year's AGM saw the committee discussing the closure of the group. However the committee, with support from 'C' Div personnel, was determined to rejuvenate membership. Since then, thanks to a proactive committee, activities have

increased, with regular outings and even a New Year Dance.

Most importantly the membership has grown. Each station in the old 'C' Div area is represented, including the volunteer stations of Wroughton and Banwell that closed around 1979.

Rule changes have meant that serving personnel can join, as well as associate members. With a membership of approximately 100 and growing, the association is looking forward to a rosy future, thanks to the hard work of the committee and the support of all.

Anyone interested in joining can contact either Mary Wilcocks on 01275 794318 or Merv Osborne on 01275 843414.

Pensioners' update

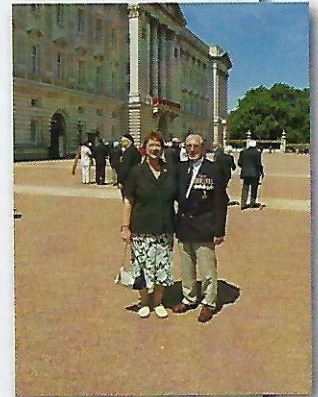
Arundel Castle

At the end of 2005, the pensioners organised a trip to Arundel Castle in West Sussex.

After the trip to the castle, there was time for the group to browse around the picturesque town. The day concluded with a stop for dinner in Winchester on the way home.

World War Two 60th anniversary

Last year, pensioner Fred Hooper and his daughter travelled to London for the weekend to celebrate the 60th anniversary celebrations of the end of World War Two. For the celebrations, 4,000 war veterans from all over the world were invited to London. A service at Westminster Abbey, lunch at Buckingham Palace and an open-air concert on Horse Guards Parade, closing with a flypast by the RAF, which dropped thousands of poppies over Buckingham Palace, was arranged for the visitors.

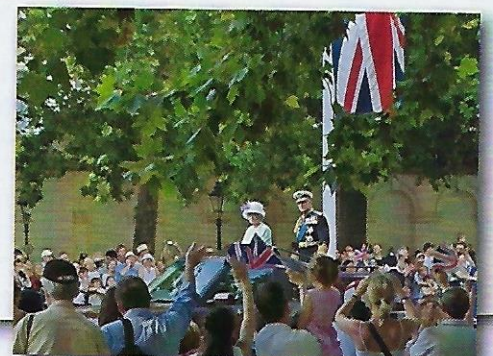


Forms were sent to various organisations to select veterans who had served in campaigns from 1939 to 1945. The Pensioners' Association received a form and Fred Hooper was chosen to represent Avon. He said: "We went straight to St James's Park, which had a 'Living Memory Museum' of World War Two. There were many military vehicles, as well as fire appliances and their crews."

Fred said: "Lunch was quite a feast with a selection of wines. Members of the Royal Family, MPs and top civil servants were sat at the tables with the guests. After lunch we went to St James's Park and sat at the NAFFI drinking Pimms and watching the afternoon concert on big TV screens. Later we had a grandstand view of the parade with the Queen and Prince Phillip, along Pall Mall and to Buckingham Palace, and later the flypast and dropping of poppies. It was a grand weekend. Thanks to those who nominated me to attend."

Would you like to join?

The pensioners arrange trips and events during the year. If you would like to join in please contact Arthur Haines on 01594 834552.



Chris Deverill MBE

You may remember that one of our pensioners, Chris Deverill, received an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Not only did Chris receive an MBE for his services to the fire and rescue service, but at the end of last year Chris was also awarded the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund's (FSNBF) Lifetime Achievement Award at The Spirit of Fire Awards 2005.

Chris joined the fire service in 1964, coming to Avon in 1970 where he was stationed at Patchway Fire Station. Since the beginning of his career in the fire service, Chris has been involved in the FSNBF holding a number of positions with the charity, from station representative to secretary, vice chair and chair. In 1995 Chris was given the prestigious position of Trustee for the FSNBF in recognition of his efforts and hard work. Chris' Lifetime Achievement Award is a culmination of all his hard work over the last 40 years for the FSNBF, something he says would not have been possible without the continued support and understanding from his family.

ROGUES' GALLERY





Thermal imaging camera



A new thermal imaging camera has recently replaced a number of older ones we had on several of our appliances and firefighters are already starting to see the benefits of the new equipment.

The new Argus 3 cameras, manufactured by e2v technologies, are held vertically and

have large handles on each side for an easy grip. These handles are removable and the camera can also be carried by a strap which goes over the shoulder or round the neck.

Firefighters say one of the main differences with the new camera is the improvements in the technology it uses. The new camera gives crews more options and is more effective at identifying hot spots and fires. It is battery powered and when switched on, the camera shows the time and date.

The camera can also take photographs which can be downloaded to a computer. As these images are time and date stamped they can be useful for fire investigations. Further to this it also has a zoom function.



The camera shows two temperature readings. One is the ambient temperature of the room and the other is the temperature of what the camera is targeting.

Heat is shown in different shades, comparative to the heat around it. For example, a warm body next to a fire might show up black, whereas in an empty room, it would show up grey, indicating it was a main heat source in the image.

Crews at Temple have recently used the camera at a property fire in Clifton, where the fire was in the roof. The property was filled with smoke but thanks to the new thermal imaging camera, the crews were able to quickly identify exactly where the fire was.

The Larkin Rescue Frame

A new piece of rescue equipment from Australia could soon be in use in our service.

Temple Fire Station will soon have a Larkin Rescue Frame for the rope rescue operators to use.

The frame helps overcome the problems faced by rope rescue teams when they are lifting or lowering anyone over an edge. The frame can be placed right at the edge of a drop and can be tilted to either lower or raise someone safely over the edge.

It can also be assembled into a half-size version for use in confined spaces.



USAR update

The Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) project is the second phase of the Government's New Dimension programme.

The USAR project team has recently been working on crewing arrangements and finding a permanent location to serve as a purpose-built special rescue facility. DO Malcolm Hawthorn, who is overseeing the implementation of USAR, said: "Crewing arrangements could have followed the normal approach, for example to disperse the equipment across existing stations, train crews and keep a 2-2-4 crewing system. However, we decided to draw from our existing staff and form a separate unit."

"The recruitment process, which is following DCLG guidelines, will provide a team of 30 staff, based on a national model, and the first training courses were due earlier this year. The project team is looking at a number of sites to house all the USAR equipment and several options are currently being considered."

Our new USAR equipment



This year we took delivery of module one of the new equipment, which included a prime mover (low loader lorry). In total our USAR capability will eventually consist of three prime movers and five equipment modules.



This module comes with a range of equipment intended for use in a collapsed building situations, including specialist propping and



shoring tools called Paratech Rescue Support Systems.

ADO Rob Davis is been involved in the USAR project and has trained on this equipment. He said: "The Paratech equipment on this module is designed to be used as first strike facility. It would be

used initially to stabilise buildings so that search and rescue can be carried out. As teams go deeper the aluminium equipment can be replaced with timber in a leapfrog manner."

These lightweight aluminium struts can be used in various ways to

stabilise walls, ceilings and roofs. They can also be used in other situations, stabilising a large vehicle at a road traffic incident or at a trench collapse for instance.

The module also contains a variety of other equipment vital in USAR incidents. It has technical search equipment such as the Delsar LifeDetector, which is a sound location device for finding casualties trapped under collapsed structures.

Module one also contains a 'snake eye' and camera. This is used after a hole has been drilled through the debris and the camera, which includes a light, is inserted through the opening to look into the void and search for casualties.

Furthermore there is also a tripod for lifting and winching, lighting, hand tools, GPS equipment and digital cameras.

ADO Bob Leppier has been appointed to support Malcolm Hawthorn in the USAR project group. Bob, who will eventually be Station Manager of the USAR team said: "It's an exciting role which gives me the opportunity to be involved in setting up a new facility. It's also extremely challenging as we've been set tight deadlines by DCLG. My role as station manager will be the day-to-day running of the facility."

We are not expected to contribute fully to a national response capability until March 2007. However, in the meantime the project team is working hard to develop solutions that will ensure the transition from a project to an effective special rescue unit. The next 12 months will see further work being carried out on recruitment and locations.



Buncefield Oil Depot fire

The explosions at the Buncefield Oil Depot at Hemel Hempstead on Sunday 11 December 2005 were widely covered in the national and international media and the incident was reported to be the largest example of its type in Europe since 1944.

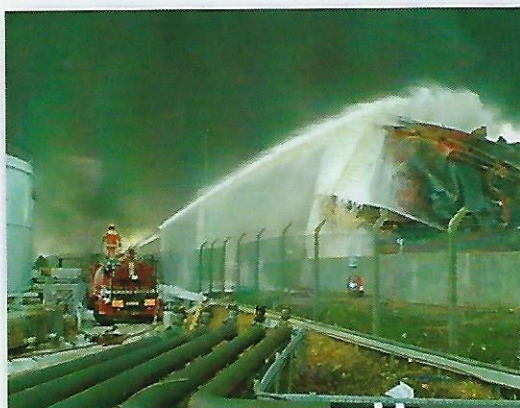
Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (HF&RS) quickly declared a major incident and mutual aid was called in from neighbouring services to assist over the following week. We contacted HF&RS early on the Sunday morning to offer 8,000 litres of foam compound and principal officer command support, although neither was ultimately required.

The initial explosions measured 2.4 on the Richter Scale and while substantial damage was caused to both the Buncefield depot itself and the surrounding industrial areas (with structural damage being reported up to 3km away), amazingly there was no loss of life.



The incident highlighted that planning for oil depot fires should be revisited. HF&RS quickly saw that other fire and rescue services could benefit from visiting the fireground to examine the tactics used and discuss the issues associated with tackling such a huge blaze.

As a result, Pete Davis, Head of Risk Planning, travelled to Hemel Hempstead on Tuesday 20 December 2005 to join a group of fire and rescue representatives from across the country to learn from this disaster. The information he collected has since been fed back to the Service Management Team and the Foam Working Group



which is looking at our capabilities for a major foam attack.

The initial explosions measured 2.4 on the Richter Scale

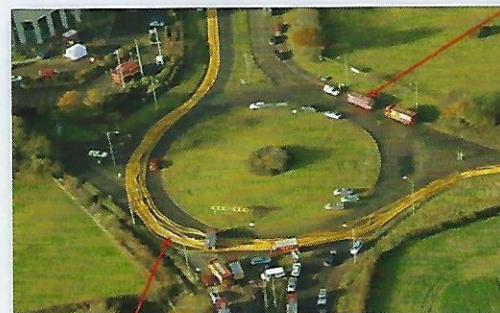
The incident is now subject to an extensive investigation by the Health and Safety Executive. However, the basic statistics give a good impression of the size of the incident and the logistics involved:

- 40 million litres of water and 600,000 litres of foam compound (from neighbouring services and direct from Angus Fire) were used.
- 10 million litres of water was recycled to minimise environmental damage from firefighting operations.
- The foam attack started at 08:20hrs on Monday 12 December and lasted for 36 hours.
- At the height of the incident, 32,000 litres of water and 1,200 litres of foam compound per minute were being applied to the fires.
- In total the incident involved 300 appliance movements, with 25 pumps on-site alongside 14 high volume pumps (HVPs) from the DCLG's New Dimension programme.
- The HVPs laid 12 lines of large diameter hose from an open water source 1.8km away and these took up an entire carriageway of the perimeter road around the site.

CFO Roy Wilsher and his senior management team from HF&RS shared a number of learning points regarding multi-agency command, control and co-operation, which will be included in a debrief report.

The incident will also inform discussions within Government and the HSE with regards to whether there is a need to revisit the Control of Major Accidents Hazard (COMAH) Regulations, or other legislation affecting the design and management of hazardous installations.

Pictures courtesy Chiltern Air Support Unit, HF&RS and Hertfordshire Constabulary



The way I see it

IRMP - Change for the sake of change

The idea of producing an integrated risk management plan (IRMP) that allows the local fire authority to use its resources to maximum effect sounds like a great idea, removing the rigid standards laid down in the 1947 Act and allowing local factors to be considered.

Sadly, some authorities have used their IRMP as a means to introduce cuts and change working conditions to the detriment of the public, the employees and the service and it would appear that AF&RS is now coming under pressure from the Government to do the same.

Our IRMP for 2006/7 was published in December, although it was widely leaked beforehand. It contained a proposal to move the second pump (093) from Temple to Patchway, a decision which appears to have no function other than to satisfy the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

There is no dispute that the north side of Bristol has seen massive expansion with commercial developments such as The Mall at Cribbs Causeway and residential developments in Emerson's Green and Bradley Stoke in the past 10 years. The development has a much greater risk (on paper) but the reality is that all of these developments are either high-quality retail outlets, benefiting from modern fire detection systems and designs, or good quality housing occupied by educated, reasonably affluent people. AF&RS's own figures show there have only been 14 fires causing damage to property (FDR1 fires) in Bradley Stoke in the last year in a population of 13,000.

There is also no dispute that the inner city area that makes up most of Temple's ground is also undergoing massive expansion and redevelopment. The Broadmead shopping area is being rebuilt, as well as massive regeneration around the docks and city centre, with many new housing developments and lots of student accommodation.

There are also the older, poorer areas such as Barton Hill and Easton which are predominately older houses, high-rise council blocks (of the 80 council blocks in Avon, 64 are on Temple's ground) and housing association

accommodation, occupied by the poorest and most vulnerable socio-economic groups who happen to make up a large sector of our "target audience" for community fire safety work. Not surprisingly, AF&RS figures show that during the same period as above there were 38 FDR1 fires in Barton Hill alone, an area less than a tenth the size of Bradley Stoke with a population of only 3,000.

So with less fires in Patchway's area and more community fire safety work to do on Temple's ground why are we removing a pump from the inner city to the leafy suburbs?

093 had more call outs than the whole of Patchway Fire Station had in total last year.

If there is a genuine case for additional fire cover in South Gloucester then we haven't heard it yet. There is certainly no evidence to say



that the centre of the city needs less fire cover. Temple is, and always has been, the busiest station. Yes there are false alarms, but this is something that can be addressed in the IRMP. Much work has already been done by the fire safety department to help reduce these calls by targeting businesses that have frequent false alarms. Other changes such as reducing the number of appliances or charging persistent offenders could also be considered.

We must also do much more to reduce the FDR1 fires in the inner city before we start removing pumps. Only after we see a sustained fall in property fires should we consider moving appliances. AF&RS figures show that there have been yearly rises in the number of fires in Barton Hill for the past four years.

Moving the second pump achieves nothing that will benefit the public or the service. Far from saving money it will cost money to convert Patchway station to accommodate the extra personnel. It will also make rope rescue operations more difficult to maintain, with less trained operators available, and the

delay in getting a third appliance from Bedminster or Speedwell to high-rise fires could seriously hinder operations.

We need to use the IRMP to channel more resources into the inner city, use CFS to educate the public to reduce fires and use the evidence of reduced FDR1 fires to make changes, not political dogma from London.

Response from the Chief

There is no doubt that the Fire Authority's 'Draft' Year 3 IRMP Action Plan has created more debate and interest than those of the previous two years. This is a very welcome and encouraging situation as far as I am concerned and I hope the level of interest and engagement from our staff continues in the future. It is, of course, prudent to acknowledge that much of this debate has centred around the proposal to move a pumping appliance from Temple to Patchway.

The final version of the draft Year 3 Action Plan has been endorsed by the Combined Fire Authority (CFA). This version contains some amendments as a result of the consultation process undertaken. An Implementation Team has been set up to manage the proposals for the move and will handle the smooth transition of skills and resources to ensure the successful relocation of this appliance. This team is led by SDO Dave Salmon and involves elected members, the Fire Brigades Union, personnel from the stations involved and members of the Service Delivery management team.

There was no secrecy about the draft plans being developed. However, it was acknowledged that the annual Action Plan is a requirement imposed on the Fire Authority and needed to be endorsed by the Fire Authority before it was published, in draft form, for consultation purposes.

We are learning all the time and if we can improve the way we do things in the future, I am more than happy to consider suggestions put forward. The priority for all of us is to ensure we provide the best possible service to those within our borders and if this means that we have to review the way these services are provided from time to time, then once again, this is a healthy position and one we should not be fearful of.

I would ask you all to keep up the level of engagement and interest shown this year because your views are valued and will help shape the future of our service.

Squash, game and match

In his fifth year as organiser, Steve Higgins (White Watch, Bath) was pleased to welcome 16 players to the Lansdown Squash and Lawn Tennis Club, to compete in the Open Squash Championships.

The philosophy of the tournament is to encourage all standards of players to have a go. And true to that ideal, Jamie Hacker, (White Watch, Bath) who had never held a squash racket, came along and ended up going home with a well-deserved trophy - congratulations Jamie.

The morning session saw the 16 players contest four leagues, from which the top two players progressed to the Championship Finals, while the remaining two players went into the Plate Finals. Scott Roberts (Green Watch, Avonmouth) and Bob Harper (White Watch, Bath), both newcomers to the event, came up against the eventual plate finalists, Mark Burton (Community Safety, Bath) and Martin Coward (White Watch, Bath), and so took an 'early bath'.

Meanwhile, an under the weather Nick Baldwin and Chris Bengy (both White Watch, Bath) despatched Hacker and Kevin Edwards (White Watch, Bath) respectively. The final was a gruelling affair, in which Mark Burton's slightly greater finesse outplayed Martin Coward's determination.

In the Championship knockout, the quarter finals saw no real surprises with Steve Kendrick (Community Safety, Bristol and Station Manager of Thornbury), Al Dunlop (Green Watch,

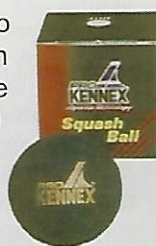
Bath), Gary Curtis (White Watch, Kingswood) and Matt Constance (Green Watch, Avonmouth) all falling to stronger opposition. In the first semi final, Chris Bailes (Station Manager, Speedwell) put up a gritty display against the number one seed and defending champion.

In the other semi, Len-oh Harvey (ex-Blue Watch, Bath) couldn't ever recapture his form of last year's final and was blown away by Harry Mountain (White Watch, Bath).

And so to the final. Steve took the first two games, 9/6, 9/4, but not without a struggle. Undaunted, Harry clawed his way back into the match with a magnificent effort in the third, 9/6. Steve was definitely suffering in the long rallies. However, champion that he is, he closed the game out in the fourth, 9/5, to claim his fifth successive title.

All the players then retired to the bar for well-earned refreshments and the presentation ceremony. In closing, Steve thanked Lansdown club for hosting the event yet again, and the AFR&S Sports Association for their invaluable sponsorship. He invited everyone to return to do battle and encouraged new players to join.

If you would like to take part in the squash championships, please call Steve on Ext 8120 or look out for posters in October of this year.

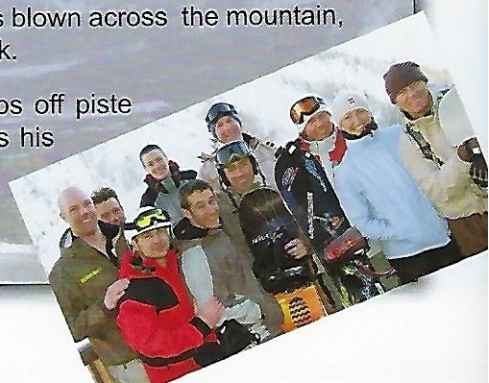


Winter X team on the piste

AF&RS's finest snow boarders (and some 'not yet competent' boarders) spent the end of January honing their skills on the slopes of Chamonix in the French Alps. After buying lift passes at a wallet crippling 270 euros for the week (that's £200!) they spread out, three novices to the nursery slopes, the rest to the top of the chair lift.

A huge dump of snow overnight left Tuesday a virtual white out as the new snow was blown across the mountain, but it meant perfect conditions and deep powder off piste for the last half of the week.

Miraculously there were no serious injuries, despite some kamikaze 20 foot jumps off piste and two different 'numpties' getting lost and ending up in Switzerland - one minus his snowboard! Sadly the exhausting, but exhilarating week, ended too soon and it was back to work with "fisherman's" tales of death-defying action.



Down at the bottom of the garden

In the last magazine we spoke to 'Chippy' for some tips on autumnal gardening. In this edition we're visiting Brislington Allotments, to catch up with another green-fingered genius, Nick Baker (Retired Group Manager for Bristol).

From humble beginnings of half a plot more than 11 years ago, Nick's allotment has grown and he now turns out a vast array of fruit and veggies. In fact, Nick's produce is so tasty he's become a victim of his own success, as he battles to persuade local bugs and wildlife to dine elsewhere.

Over the winter Nick's regular allotment haul included parsnips, potatoes, carrots and sprouts. Another of Nick's favourites is Butternut Squash. He said: "Butternut squash is fantastic and we often eat it at home instead of veg such as roast potatoes. All you need to do is preheat the oven to a fairly high heat, cut the squash into chunks, sprinkle with a pinch of brown sugar and cook on the top shelf of the oven for about 30 minutes. Delicious."

At the start of the year seeds were started off in a greenhouse, or somewhere that's protected from the elements and gets plenty of light. By the time April / May came, these little seedlings were ready to go out into the allotment.

In late February / early March Nick started to turn over the ground on his plot. Digging in lots of compost (home made), leaf mould and fertiliser in

preparation for planting in the Spring. Nick's a keen supporter of home made compost and adds to his compost heap throughout the year. Peelings and food scraps go onto the pile, which is tightly packed and covered. Nick says it takes about six months for the compost to break down, but once it has you'll be delighted with the result.

As we heard from Chippy last time, there is a science to gardening and Nick runs through the specifics of planting sweetcorn. As this veggie needs to be pollinated, the young plants need to be planted in a square, rather than a row, to allow the wind to pollinate the plants naturally. Nick also shares with us that it's a good idea to plant flowers among the crops

as it encourages a myriad of friendly bugs and bees to further aid pollination and act as natural pesticides.

With summer upon us, keeping bad bugs at bay the friendly way is big business on the Brislington Allotments. As our time in the allotment draws to a close Nick tells us how some of the old timers swear by spraying rancid rhubarb leaf water on their plants to keep the critters in check.

No matter what your view on allotment gardening, this trip has certainly left us yearning for the good life.



Horoscopes

A look at what's in store.



Aries Mar 21 - Apr 20
Hopes of an uninterrupted game are slim.



Taurus Apr 21 - May 21
Look out for cold water.



Gemini May 22 - Jun 21
Invest in some shades.



Cancer Jun 22 - Jul 23
Don't walk under ladders.



Leo Jul 24 - Aug 23
An impromptu break might be wise.



Virgo Aug 24 - Sept 23
A key phrase today is FDR1.



Libra Sept 24 - October 23
Wear your anti-snoring device tonight.



Scorpio
Oct 24 - Nov 22
Red is still the colour.



Sagittarius
Nov 23 - Dec 21
The order is wrong.



Capricorn
Dec 22 - Jan 20
Listen out for the 'tannoy'.



Aquarius
Jan 21 - Feb 19
The computer says 'no'.



Pisces
Feb 20 - Mar 20
Look inside your boots.



Anonimouse

It's easy to create folders in outlook but do you know how to delete them?

To delete a folder:

On the Outlook menus at the top of your screen click on 'View', then 'Folder List'.

A list will open to the left of your screen.

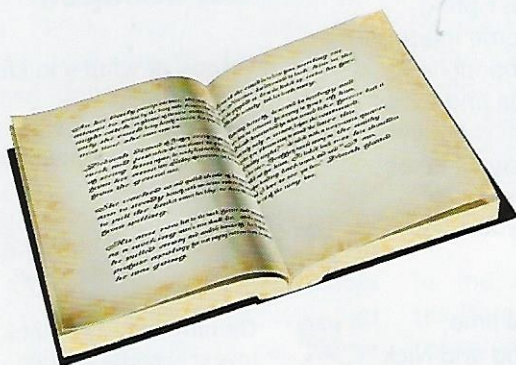
Click on the folder you want to delete.

Go to the menus again and click on 'File', then 'Folder', then 'Delete (name of folder)'. Or you can simply click on the black cross on the toolbar.

Outlook will ask you if you are sure. Click 'Yes' if you are.

Remember that as with emails, this will only move the folder to 'Deleted Items'. If you want to permanently delete it you have to perform the same actions again from the 'Deleted Items'. Also if you have added a shortcut to the 'Outlook Bar' you will have to delete that too.

Anecdotes - Remember when...?



The recent visit by the paranormal investigators was not the first time ghostly activity had been reported at Temple Fire Station (see Avon's most haunted on page 21).

A certain member of Green Watch, now at Bath Fire Station, got a shock when he woke up and realised his book was moving of its own accord next to his bed.

Convinced something strange was going on, what he didn't realise was that it was part of an elaborate trick played on him by the rest of the watch. As the chap in question slept, some of the watch attached a fishhook to the back of the book, threaded some wire through the hook and across to the other side of the room.

They then tugged on the wire to make the book move, much to the horror of the watch member who woke with a fright on the night in question.

Firefighters on one watch were a little surprised when they attended a fire in a flat in Bristol to find pictures of one of their younger firefighters all around it. It turned out to be the proud relative of the firefighter in question, even though he had either not recognised the address or chosen to keep quiet about it!

New firefighters should be wary of a prank often played on the most recent graduates. The 12-inch petrol disc cutter is notoriously difficult to start. After the new recruits had worn themselves out trying to get it going by using the cord, a watching firefighter would casually mention that it is possible to "bump start" the tool.

When asked how, they would explain that they need to put the blade on the ground, hold firmly to the tool and run along, keeping the blade in contact and rotating. The faster the better.

Have you got any anecdotes you would like to share? Contact the magazine team in Creative Services.

Cartoons



Avon's most haunted

Following on from the last magazine where we reported on the spooky visit by paranormal investigation group, PSI, we have received further media attention from those keen to find out about our supposed ghostly goings on in HQ.

Those interested have included BBC Radio Bristol, GWR FM, Bristol Evening Post, Western Daily Press, ITV West and BBC Points West. News of our infamous ghostly activities also reached as far afield as the Richard & Judy show, which featured a nighttime visit to HQ during Hallowe'en.

So, after all this interest, what did the PSI team actually find? The hefty 52 page report highlighted a few interesting findings:

A séance was conducted on the second floor where one of the participants reported that they could 'hear music like medieval chanting'. (Looks like somebody on the second floor left their Gregorian Monk Hits CD on by accident).

The reception area nearest the main stairs was felt to be a particularly haunted area, with some of the team reporting a physical sensation and a cold breeze coming down the stairs.

Some of the participants reported visions of a bloodied man crawling along the second floor corridor, while others reported seeing shadows.

The areas the team looked at included: the underground carpark, second floor corridor, rear stairs, training tower and the HQ Reception Internet zone.

However, opinion on whether there is paranormal activity remains divided. The report shows a mixed bag of findings and the myth of ghostly activity remains an interesting topic of conversation.



Who are they now... A groups' special - can you recognise anyone?



If you have any photos that you would like to send in for 'Who are they now', please send them to Helen Shrimpton, Creative Services. Please include who the photo is of, and your name and work location if you would like the photo back.

Gobblers Pie - by Phil James, Workshops, HQ



Ingredients

Lean turkey mince
1 large onion
1 chicken OXO cube
Chicken gravy granules
Peas
3 good size mushrooms
1 cup of water
2 large spuds
Lump of cheddar
Butter
Milk

Method

1. Peel and cube the spuds, and put on the boil
2. Finely chop the onion and start to fry
3. Add the turkey mince and crumble in OXO cube
4. Peel and slice the mushrooms, and add to the pan
5. Once the mince has started to brown, add three dessert spoons of gravy granules and the cup of water
6. Add ½ cup of peas (frozen are best)
7. Cook to reduce until you have a thick mixture
8. Mash the cooked spuds, adding a large knob of butter and a little milk
9. Place the turkey mixture in a deep casserole dish, top with spuds and grate cheese over the top
10. Put the whole lot in a pre-heated oven at 180°C, till the cheese browns

Serve with fresh boiled veg or chips.

Method

1. Put oil into pan over heat and add kidney beans
 2. Add onions, garlic and chillies to pan
 3. Cook until the onions are translucent
 4. Add all the remaining ingredients
 5. Add water to cover
 6. Cook until bubbling, then simmer - the longer the better
- Serve with rice, sweet potato mash or loads of chips – and a large glass of water.

Dave's Red Hot Chilli - by Dave Barnes, White Watch Avonmouth

Ingredients (serves four)

Olive oil
Tin of kidney beans
4 large onions (2 sliced / 2 chopped)
8 red chillies (chopped - with or without seeds)
6 cloves of garlic (chopped)
1kg beef
3 tins of chopped tomatoes
3tsp oregano
3tsp cumin
1tsp coriander
4tsp paprika
3tsp cayenne pepper
½ tube of tomato puree
Lots of black pepper
2 OXO beef cubes

Method

1. Put oil into pan over heat and add kidney beans
 2. Add onions, garlic and chillies to pan
 3. Cook until the onions are translucent
 4. Add all the remaining ingredients
 5. Add water to cover
 6. Cook until bubbling, then simmer - the longer the better
- Serve with rice, sweet potato mash or loads of chips – and a large glass of water.

Strawberry Pancakes, by Anna Comerford, Creative Services

Ingredients (serves two)

Preparation time five minutes /
Cooking time five minutes

100g (4oz) bar of white chocolate
2 tablespoons of double cream
Knob of unsalted butter
4 ready-made Scotch pancakes
2 scoops of vanilla ice cream
2 scoops of strawberry ice cream
100g (4oz) strawberries, hulled and halved



Method

1. To make white chocolate sauce, melt the white chocolate in a heatproof bowl with the double cream and butter over a pan of simmering water; or in a microwave on high for two minutes, stirring halfway through.
2. Meanwhile, heat the pancakes for about 30 seconds on each side in a frying pan, or in the microwave for 20 seconds.
3. Overlap two pancakes on each plate and top with the scoops of strawberry and vanilla ice cream.
4. Scatter over the strawberries and drizzle with the white chocolate sauce to serve

On this page we celebrate the hard work that is carried out by you all. Below are just a few of the letters we have received over the last few months.

FIRE

AF&RS staff

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks for the effort and expertise offered by Avon personnel to ensure the success of 'Disaster City 2005'...I believe all of the Avon team performed extremely well under often difficult circumstances.

I would particularly like to thank Gary Carr-Smith, whose tireless dedication to ensure the successful delivery of the project, proved an inspiration to us all.

Once again, many thanks for your support and please pass on this well deserved praise to all the Avon personnel involved.

Andrew Lynch, Editor, Fire Magazine

Winscombe 24

I am writing to say how grateful we are for the help you gave us last Friday. Our neighbours, noticing the smell of smoke called you out. There was nobody in the house, so the fire crew broke in rather carefully and dealt with the pan which had burned out on the cooker. Then they took great care to make the house safe again and left us a note of what happened, without making the least hint at how stupid we were to go out without checking the cooker. We also enclose a cheque to the Fire Service Benevolent Fund.

David Childs, Winscombe resident

Bath Community Safety Centre

I feel compelled to write to you to thank you for your hospitality at your centre on 11th of November. My visitor and I were so impressed with the facilities and the kind friendly service that you provided. I shall be telling my peers of your facilities.

Kristina Orion, The Law Society

Alan Middleton and team

I just wanted to take this opportunity to formally thank you (Alan) and John for all your hard work at Ashfield. You have given the lads a sense of pride and self respect, when few other 'official' organisations would take the trouble or time to do that...I really appreciate you bringing the lads and Ashfield to the centre stage and helping us gain some positive publicity...so thank you for giving some of our lads' better life chances, different coping skills and strengths and a self confidence that has come from working with you.

Vicky O'Dea, Director, HMP & YOI Ashfield



Southmead 6 - White Watch

Just a little note to say a very big thank you for a lovely visit from your firefighters to our school. All our children and staff thoroughly enjoyed your visit.

Carol Coleman, Westbury-on-Trym Church of England Primary School

SWCDC staff

Re. The official opening of the SWCDC

"The whole complex is most impressive and the opening presentation given by SDO Hunn very informative. Please give my thanks to SDO Hunn, Jane Bale and all the guides and helpers who made it such a memorable experience."

F C Hooper, Pensioners Association

"The whole concept has clearly received much input and I congratulate you on the result."

Mrs P Lawson, Upper Weston, Bath

"It certainly has changed since I was last there and is clearly going to be extremely useful...I appreciated the opportunity to meet some of those involved."

Lady Elizabeth Gass, Bridgwater, Somerset

Clevedon 17

Many thanks for your very swift attendance on Saturday morning - it was amazing how quickly you were on the scene. It makes us realise just how lucky we are to have you in Clevedon.

Caroline and Mike Coles, Clevedon residents

Temple 09 - Red Watch

Thank you again for organising a brilliant day for the children and staff.

Nicola Davies, Play Manager, St John's After School Club

Bath 12 - White Watch

We would like to express our most grateful thanks to your staff for a very interesting and informative visit to your station on Tuesday 29 November. Please find enclosed a cheque for £10 as a donation to the Fire Service Benevolent Fund.

PC Butler, CSMA Bath and Bristol Group



Fire Services National Benevolent Fund factfile

The Fire Services National Benevolent Fund (FSBNF) is the charity for members of the fire service community in times of physical and emotional suffering.

The services the FSBNF offers are available to all fire service staff, whether uniformed or non-uniformed, whatever rank or role they hold. It also supports retired service staff and all the dependents of fire service staff including spouses, children and other dependent individuals.

Among the services offered by the FSBNF are therapy, recuperation and a Beneficiary Support Policy.

The therapy service has two centres in the UK, which specialise in providing expert individual therapy to each beneficiary that comes through the door.

The recuperation service is aimed at those who need to relax and regain a state-of-mind which ensures their personal and professional lives are as rewarding as they should be.

The FSBNF is also piloting an innovative new policy offering solutions to people if their quality of life drops below a certain level. The Beneficiary Support Policy is currently being tested in some areas and, if it is successful, it will be offered to the rest of the UK soon after.

All these services are completely free and can be applied for by calling the following numbers:

- * For therapy and recuperation services, call the therapy and recuperation line on 0870 240 6543.
- * If you live in Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire or Northern Ireland, you are eligible for the Beneficiary Support Policy Helpline on 0800 783 7610.
- * For information on all other FSBNF services, call 01256 366566.

If you are unsure if you are supported by the FSBNF, call 01256 366566.

The FSBNF receives no Government funding and is completely dependent on fundraising to provide for its beneficiaries. The FSBNF is a firm believer that fundraising should be fun and organises many hundreds of events each year to cater for everyone's taste. To get involved call 01256 366566 or visit www.fsnbf.org.uk and view the event calendar.



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