

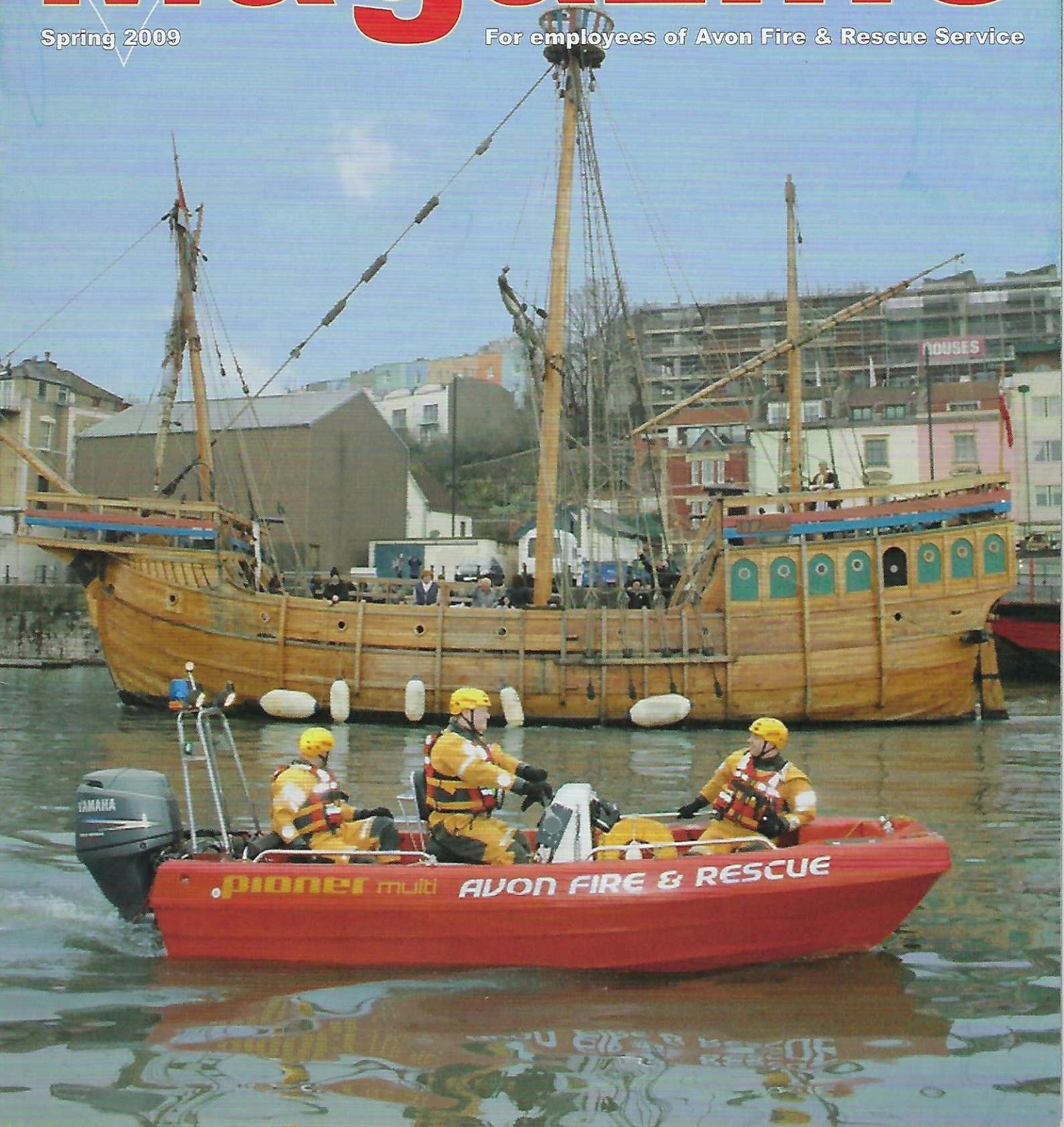


AVON FIRE & RESCUE

Magazine

Spring 2009

For employees of Avon Fire & Rescue Service



Inside: Read about the latest trainers' trip to The Gambia



From the Chief

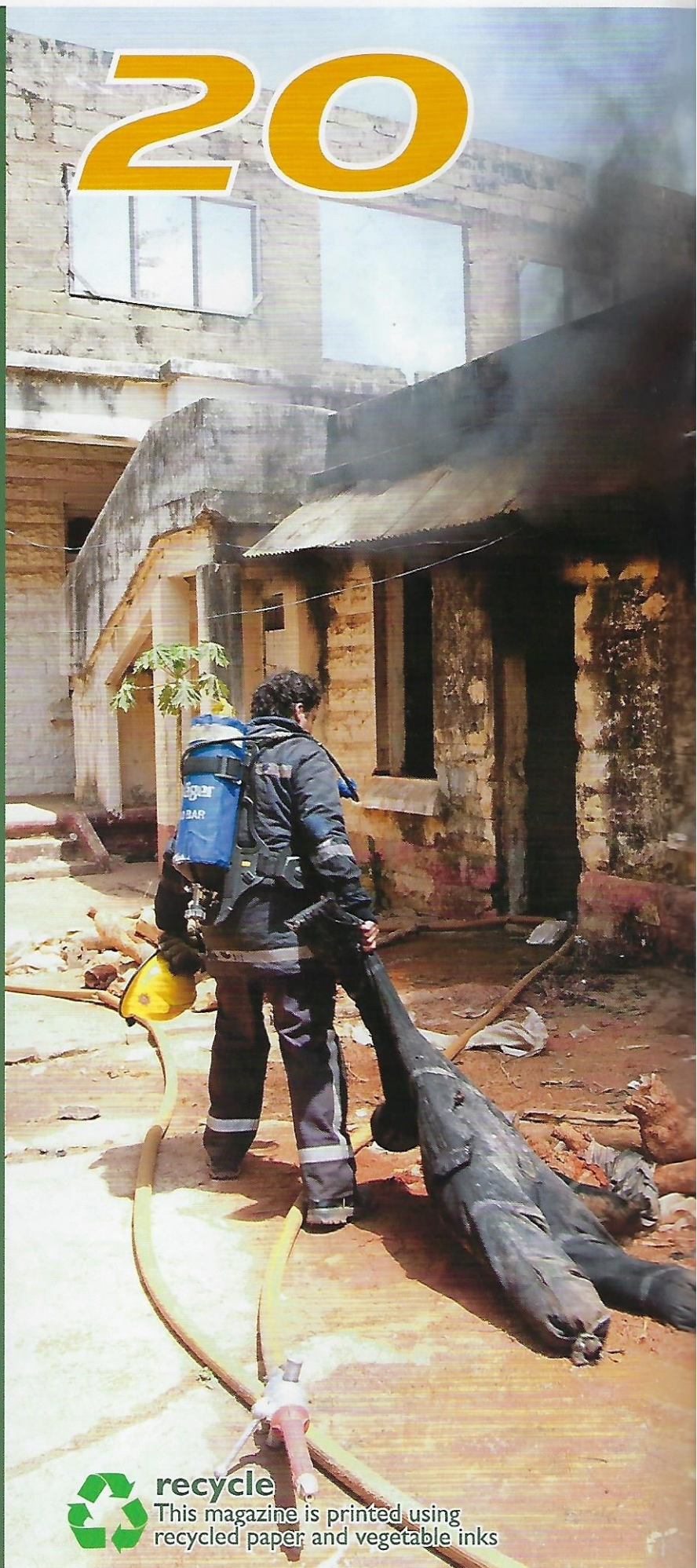
The spring edition of the AF&RS magazine is packed full of interesting and informative articles about life across the service over the last three months.

With our team of trainers recently back from a trip to The Gambia, I am delighted to say that the Gambia and Avon Fire Services in Partnership (GAFSIP) charity is going from strength to strength. Find out how our trainers got on in our special feature on page 20.

Partnership working has also been a key achievement for the service this quarter, with the Safer Bristol Day of Action taking place in March. We teamed up with police, Probation Service and the council to showcase our work and help make Bristol the 'safest city in the world'. You can read about the success of the day on page seven.

As well as these two great features there are also the usual favourites including a Rogues Gallery from days gone by and news from The Fire Fighters Charity – I hope you enjoy the read.

Kevin Pearson
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive



recycle

This magazine is printed using recycled paper and vegetable inks

Inside this issue

- 04** Incidents – take a look at some of the 999 calls we have responded to.
- 05** Community events – it has been a busy few months for the service with community safety events taking place across the area.
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- 20** Focus on – with the latest group of trainers back from The Gambia we find out all about the trip.

Have your say on your magazine. Please contact the Media & Communication Team at AF&RS if you have any comments. We welcome your feedback.

Contact us: 0117 926 2061 extension 216, email magazine@avonfire.gov.uk or by post to the Media & Communication Team, Avon Fire & Rescue Service, Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6EU.



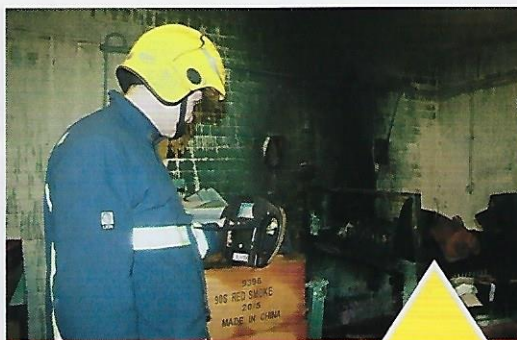
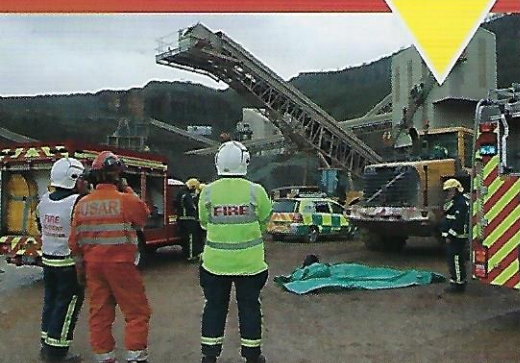
Incidents

Rope rescue deployed for man trapped in silo

Tuesday 10 March
Stancombe Quarry, Stancombe Lane, Backwell

A quarry worker was rescued after he became trapped inside a silo.

Rope rescue operatives and the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team worked together to winch him to safety.



Major blaze at fireworks factory averted

Friday 13 March
5-9 Octavius Hunt Ltd, Dove Lane, Redfield, Bristol

Workers were resealing paintball smoke bombs at a fireworks factory when one caught light.

Four firefighters wearing breathing apparatus tackled the fire and used the Thermal Imaging Camera to check the building for hotspots.



Tree fire spreads to sheds and fencing

Wednesday 1 April
19.23 Lodore Road, Fishponds, Bristol

Firefighters tackled a deliberate blaze involving a tree, four sheds, a swing seat and some fencing.



Man freed after RTC

Saturday 14 March
Walcot Street, Bath

An 88-year old man had to be cut out of his vehicle following a road traffic collision.

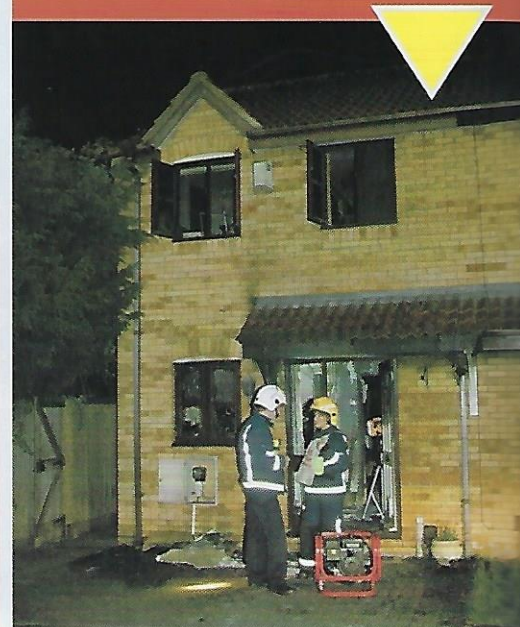
Firefighters used hydraulic cutting equipment to remove the roof. Working alongside paramedics the man was placed on a spinal board and taken to hospital.



Chip pan sparks blaze

Monday 20 April
19.51 Ripon Court, Downend

A pan of oil left unattended caused a fire to break out and spread throughout the house. A 32-year old woman suffered burns to her hands as she tried to tackle the fire.



Community events

Wednesday 28 January
Vue Cinema, Cribbs Causeway

Students from secondary schools in South Gloucestershire attended the launch of 'Damage Done' - a DVD produced by Safer South Gloucestershire aimed at deterring young people from anti-social behaviour.



Wednesday 11 February
Bathampton Primary School, Bathampton

Youngsters gave their thoughts on FireTV in return for some tips on fire safety.



Monday 9 February
Bristol City Council House

Avon's BME Advocate Nila Rehman and firefighters from Station 25 took part in the Post-16 Public Services Student Conference to talk about life in the fire and rescue service.



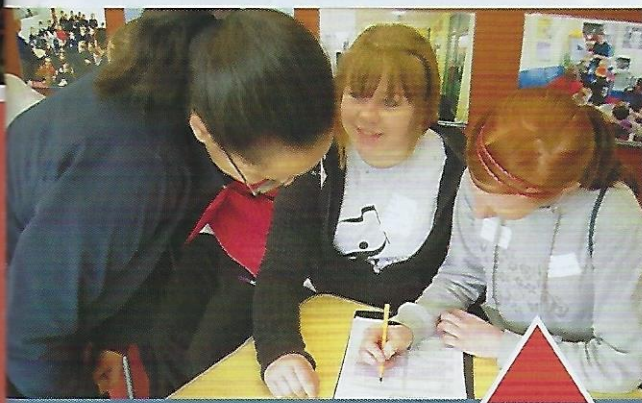
Tuesday 3 March
St Agnes, Bristol

Members of the Overseas Chinese Association's Elderly People's Club received a talk on fire safety.



Tuesday 24 March
Coombe Dingle Sports Complex, Bristol

Youngsters visited Avon's Interactive Display Unit (IDU) to learn more about fire safety during the Bristol Festival of School Sport.



Friday 27 March
St Augustine's Parade, Bristol

Local organisations joined forces for the Safer Bristol Day of Action. Various events took place throughout the city and a high profile presence could be seen at St Augustine's Parade. You can read more about the Safer Bristol Day of Action on page seven.



IN THE NEWS



Avon Fire & Rescue Service

Spring 2009

The profile of AF&RS continues to be boosted across the local and trade media.

In February there was good news as the service was judged as 'performing well' by the Audit Commission; nine members of staff passed their British Sign Language (BSL) Level One course (pictured below); Chair of Avon Fire Authority, Councillor Terry Walker, called for a public inquiry into the delayed Regional Fire Control Centre; and a charity car wash at Yate (03) raised more than £1,300.



IN MARCH



The Local Government Association's (LGA) annual fire conference came to Bristol in March, with AF&RS taking the opportunity to highlight some of its work. Firefighters at Avonmouth (05) worked with the local Sea Cadets to deliver a FireSkills course over six months (pictured above); and there were celebrations as the official opening of Yate (03) as a Wholtime station took place.

The service's charitable efforts were in the spotlight **in April** when six fire engines, no longer used by AF&RS, were handed over to The Gambian High Commissioner Elizabeth Ya Eli Harding.

Fire Control Operator Emma Reilly (pictured right) hit the headlines when she stayed on the line to a woman trapped in a burning building and gave her advice on how to stay safe until crews could rescue her.

The service's website became the first in the country to achieve Accessible Plus accreditation from Shaw Trust for ensuring that its website is accessible to all.



For more news stories please visit our website: www.avonfire.gov.uk

Making Bristol safer

Staff from AF&RS took to the streets of Bristol in March as part of a co-ordinated day of action aimed at making the city a safer place to live and work.

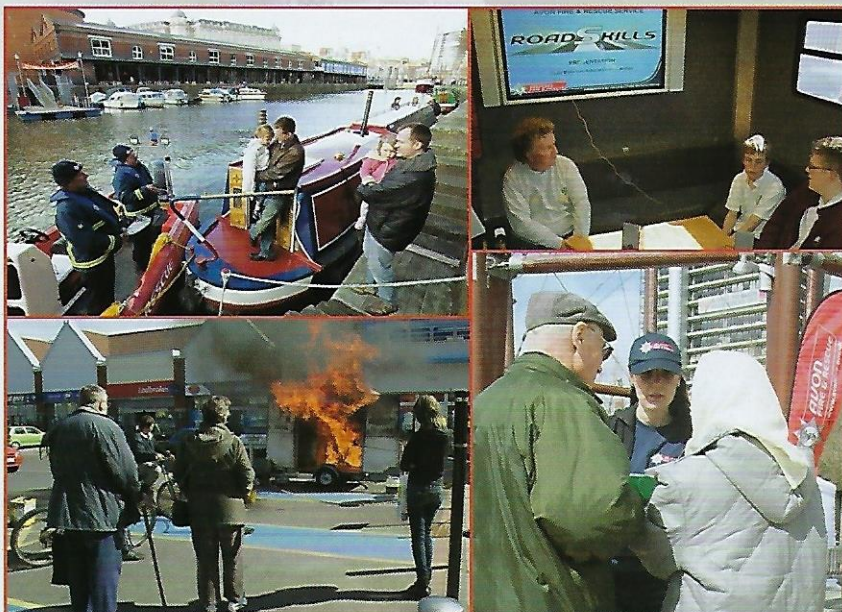
Chaired by Area Manager Brian McCutcheon, the Safer Bristol partnership is an alliance that works throughout the year to ensure organisations with common aims are brought together to deliver initiatives with mutually beneficial outcomes.

Friday 27 March marked the most ambitious event to date as organisations ranging from Bristol City Council and Avon and Somerset Constabulary, to the Probation Service and DVLA took part in a huge day of action. Hundreds of events took place across the city, all with the single focus of attempting to make Bristol the 'safest city in the world for 24 hours'.

Operational crews and members of support staff took time out from their normal working day to join forces to deliver more than 50 events providing valuable safety advice to people in areas of the city where it was most needed.

Brian McCutcheon said: "By working together, the Safer Bristol Day of Action demonstrated the commitment of all the partner agencies to making a real difference to people.

"All the staff who work day in, day out, to make improvements to communities contributed to this success. We can now continue to work towards our goals of safer communities through a joined up approach and realise solutions to problems we are all trying to tackle."



Success stories from the day



RoadSkills presentations were given to 50 teenage pupils at Gateway School, Lawrence Weston and 30 motorists were stopped by police at Ashton Gate for minor motoring offences.

Presentations were given at ten sheltered housing complexes to 300 residents, generating 170 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV).

All Harbourside pubs were provided with leaflets on the dangers of excessive drinking near water (pictured above) and 20 HFSVs were carried out on houseboats.

75 HFSVs were generated during arson and safety demonstrations at Morrisons in Fishponds.

Arson prevention advice was delivered to 200 homes in Sea Mills.

The Welfare Unit provided facilities for people on the Community Payback scheme at the St James Barton roundabout.

Pictured opposite, clockwise from top left: A HFSV on a houseboat, a RoadSkills presentation at Ashton Gate, older members of the community get fire safety advice, and a chip pan demonstration at the Community Safety Centre in Symes Avenue, Hartcliffe.

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

By Station Manager Matt Hunt

The purpose of staging exercises is to demonstrate that what we plan to deliver on the incident ground can be realised in practical terms and I am happy to say that Exercise Containment was very effective at demonstrating our model response works well.

The half day exercise was designed to test the service's emergency response to a hazardous material-based incident.

This exercise is part of a series, designed to mobilise the standard Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) to a hazardous materials or environmental incident. All watches at Brislington (14) will be involved in the programme of exercises this year, each building on the learning outcomes of the previous event. The first such exercise was held at the Cadbury's site in Keynsham and involved Red Watch Brislington (14), Kingswood (10) and Bath (12).



Points to consider at incidents involving unknown substances:

1. Who has information about the substance?
2. Should it be there?
3. What is it doing, is it leaking, is there a gas cloud, is anyone affected?
4. What does it look like, does it have a name or a UN number to identify it?
5. Is it dangerous, for example hazardous to health, toxic, a marine pollutant?
6. What can we do? Contain it, neutralize it or dilute it?





The Environmental Response Unit (ERU) and a pump were mobilised and on arrival crews were faced with a contained spillage adjacent to the River Avon with an unconnected casualty. Following a dynamic Risk Assessment crews got to work rescuing the casualty.

The ERU and decontamination structures were then set up, along with the dressing tent, in anticipation for crew decontamination. Shortly after, a second appliance arrived from Bath (12). Following a handover and risk brief, staff in gas-tight suits were deployed to find out more about the chemical.



The spillage was made safe using environmental packs carried on our appliances and 'over drums', which cover insecure containers. The use of clay mats to block drains, absorbent pads and chemical booms are basic interventions that can prevent an ecological disaster.

Crews used avoidance paths that took them around the hazard, upwind and with minimal contact, ensuring contamination was kept to a minimum.



The incident closed around 13.00hrs with a hot debrief and with an observing officer offering insight to complete the picture.

It was a successful exercise and proved that the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) C2 works. I have recently rewritten the current SOP with help from GM Rob Davis and it is being evaluated by the negotiation committee. Future exercises this year will incorporate changes to that SOP, to test them in live, but controlled circumstances.

More details about Exercise Containment can be found on the Intranet, under 'Your Development'.



LONDON'S BURNING

From Blackwall to South

An actress who appeared in a film that prompted the popular television drama *London's Burning*, has visited Southmead (06).

Katharine Rogers, who played Josie Ingham in the popular series based on London Fire Brigade, now lives in Bristol and was keen to return to see life in a fire station.

She joined Red Watch Southmead at the start of one of their night shifts where she met the watch, was given a tour of the station and took part in a Home Fire Safety Visit.

Speaking about her visit Katharine said: "It was slightly surreal, like going back in time really. I have not been in a fire station for some time, so it was quite nostalgic.

"Red Watch were lovely, but most of them were too young to remember me though."

When the film was made in 1986 Josie was the first female firefighter to become a member of Blue Watch at Blackwall Fire Station. She said: "Back then people didn't believe there were women in the fire brigade.

They thought we had just done it for the programme."

At its height *London's Burning* had 15 million viewers tuning in every week, so it was important to ensure the fire service was portrayed correctly on screen and to make the programme realistic.

"We had three weeks of training at Southwark Fire Station followed by improvisation sessions, which helped shape us into a crew. My favourite bit of the training was using the cutting equipment to cut up a car."



mead

Red Watch Southmead (06) Watch Manager John Rides said: "During one of our neighbourly chats Katharine and I were having one of those 'you seem familiar moments'. After a while it became clear that she recognised me from the '96 firefighters' calendar. It turns out she had experience of firefighting life too, so I thought it appropriate to show her around the station so we could do a bit of reminiscing."

"It was great to have Katharine on the station and really good to meet the actress behind the character

Josie Ingham. There is no doubt that Katharine's role in London's Burning influenced many women to join the fire service.

"Things have changed a great deal since Katharine was in the programme and it was good to show her how important our community safety work and Home Fire Safety Visits are. She was reassured however to see that some things hadn't changed, the doughnuts and the humour made her feel right at home!"



Katharine in London's Burning

A large collage of 15 photographs. The top row features a group of men in suits, a group of men in dark suits with two women, and a portrait of a man in a dark suit. The second row shows two women in costumes (one with a red headband, one with a clown mask) holding a green award, a group of men in dark suits holding a silver trophy, and a portrait of a smiling man. The third row includes a group of men in dark suits, a group of men in light blue uniforms with medals, and a group of men in dark suits. The fourth row shows a group of men in dark suits, a group of men in light blue uniforms with medals, and a group of men in dark suits. The fifth row features a group of men in dark suits, a group of men in light blue uniforms with medals, and a group of men in dark suits. The bottom row includes a group of men in dark suits, a group of men in light blue uniforms with medals, and a group of men in dark suits.

Rogues' gallery from years gone by



Nova Way opens its doors

The home of Workshops, Driver Training, Technical Services, Fleet and Stores has been officially opened during a ceremony at Nova Way in Avonmouth.

Members of Avon Fire Authority joined suppliers and senior managers, as well as staff who had been involved in the two-year project, during the opening on Wednesday 25 March.

It was a case of second time lucky for the event after February's blizzard conditions forced the cancellation of the original date.

Avon's CFO/CE Kevin Pearson and Area Manager Tim Bolland welcomed visitors to the centre before Councillor Terry Walker, Chair of Avon Fire Authority, unveiled a plaque and declared Nova Way officially open.

James Dack, Director of Finance and Asset Management, said: "This represents the culmination of a lot of hard work. All areas of the service have pulled together to deliver this fantastic facility. It provides us with the exciting opportunity and challenge to further develop and improve our services to all of our customers."

AM Tim Bolland said: "Following the move to Nova Way in December, the facility is already proving its worth.

"The building has meant we have been able to improve our joint working, both between departments and external contractors. A clear example of this was the recent installation of Airwave in all appliances and much of our fleet. The project was able to be completed ahead of schedule thanks to our purpose-built workshop."

Among the varied work carried out at Nova Way:

Between December 08 and April 09:

240 breathing apparatus (BA) sets have been serviced and repaired by the BA department.

Technical Services has repaired 72 items of equipment. They have also inspected 223 items carried on appliances, ranging from lamps to disk cutters.

Between 17.11.08 and 17.03.09 Workshops carried out:

134 annual services and 132 scheduled inspections of Avon's fleet of appliances and vehicles.

Serviced 361 ladders.

Since moving to Nova Way (and up to April 2009):

The Central Stores van has covered a total of 7,540 miles.

326 Purchase Orders have been raised for Central Stores stock items.



The end of an era

After 30 years or more service with Avon a number of staff have recently hung up their fire kit.

Group Manager Geoff Cater was presented with the Silver Axe by Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) John Dando at the end of February. During his thirty years Geoff carried out many roles, on both the operational and support staff side, finishing his career as Bristol's Unitary Manager.

Station Manager Ian Thompson, who was in charge of the Fire Safety team in Bristol and also managed Blagdon (23), also said goodbye to his friends and colleagues after three decades.

Crew Manager Mark Ashley, from Green Watch, Temple (09), along with Firefighter Steve Fry, from Red Watch, Speedwell (11), Firefighter Andy Dade from Red Watch, Weston-super-Mare (18) and Firefighter Allan Miles, who served 37 years at Nailsea (16), are all now enjoying their retirements.



Clockwise from top left:
Group Manager Geoff Cater is given the Silver Axe by ACFO John Dando.



Firefighter Andy Dade enjoys a last look around Weston-super-Mare (18) Fire Station.



Firefighter Allan Miles from Blagdon (23) receives the Silver Axe from Group Manager Robin Manners.

ACFO John Dando presents SM Ian Thompson with a certificate marking his 30 years.

Avon is a great supporter of The Fire Fighters events and challenges that take place each year.



How The Fire Fighters Charity can help you

Each year The Fire Fighters Charity provides support to over 13,000 people from the fire service community including firefighters, their families and support staff, as well as those who have retired from service life.

With no government funding, the charity relies on its supporters to meet annual running costs of around £9 million.

The charity provides therapy and recuperation facilities, as well as a confidential helpline.

It costs the charity:

£40 to provide a day's recuperation at one of its three centres.

£300 to cover the cost of the helpline for one day.

£1,200 to provide a week's intensive physiotherapy for an injured firefighter.

Need help or advice?
Visit the charity's Beneficial
Helpline on 0800 3

Visit www.firefighterscharity.co.uk

Charity, reflected in the many fundraising
ar across the service.

D-Day for Three Peaks team

Our record holders of the Three Peaks Challenge will be facing an arduous task when they tackle the might of Mount Snowdon in firefighting kit and breathing apparatus on Saturday 6 June.

The Jampotters – Mike Collin (Speedwell White), Nick Baldwin (Bath White), Pat Foley (Severn Park Fire & Rescue Training Centre) and Rob Atkin (Speedwell Red) – will be raising funds for The Fire Fighters Charity and Help for Heroes.

For more information visit our website www.avonfire.gov.uk, click on 'About Us', 'Charity Challenges' and 'Mount Snowdon Appeal'.

To sponsor the team and donate to The Fire Fighters Charity visit www.justgiving.com/michaelcollin

To sponsor the team and donate to Help for Heroes visit www.justgiving.com/michaelcollin1

ce? Call the
ary Support
89 8820.

fferscharity.org.uk

W-s-M charity collections net over £2,800

The charitable spirit of Weston-super-Mare's firefighters (both Retained and Wholetime) once again shone through for a series of charity collections across the town.

Each year during November and December, off-duty firefighters take to the streets to raise funds for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Their efforts, during the W-s-M Carnival, at the annual Station 18 party, as well as at Morrisons supermarket and a recent car wash, raised almost £2,900. Local pubs, including the Woolpack, Ebdon Arms and Observatory, also collected funds for the charity.

Scaling new heights

Soon to go on the run at Patchway (04), the Combined Aerial Rescue Pump (CARP) is the first of its kind to be introduced to Avon. The versatile new appliance has an aerial platform with a reach of up to 28 metres, but it is also equipped to a similar standard as a type 'B' fire engine.

The Scania appliance measures 9.5 metres in length, operates with a crew of six and comes with breathing apparatus sets, a double extension ladder, hydraulic rescue tools, life-saving equipment, an internal foam pump and a tri-pressure pump among its equipment inventory. Its variable jacking also means the aerial platform can be operated in relatively confined spaces.

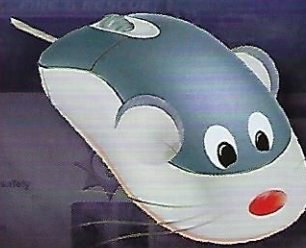


Brush up on your spelling

We all make mistakes and typos from time to time but carrying out a simple spell check should help you to reduce them. This is particularly necessary when you're sending an email, as the person receiving it may think you just don't care about your work if it's not spell checked, and this could reflect badly on you.

Like many other programs, Microsoft Outlook comes with a spell checker, but in case you forget to use it before you send an email you can ask the computer to do one automatically for you.

To set this up open your Outlook, click on the 'Tools' tab and then select 'Options'. From the window that pops up select the tab titled 'Spelling'. Then, under the General Options screen that comes up tick the second box 'Always check spelling before sending'. Then click 'Apply' and 'OK'. From now on when you click 'Send' on an email, the computer will automatically carry out a spell check beforehand.

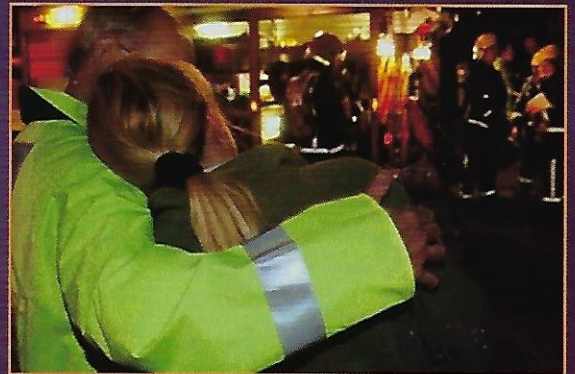


Avonimouse

Somewhere to turn in an emergency

A family loses their home in a devastating fire and has no where to turn. The Fire Emergency Support Service (FESS) vehicle can help.

It is based at Keynsham (13), ready to respond in the event of an incident where someone is left homeless.



The specially adapted vehicle is run by volunteers from the British Red Cross and offers all kinds of support including temporary shelter, first aid, emotional support, clothing, light refreshments and the use of a telephone and camera to assist with insurance claims.

Incident Commanders can call for assistance from the unit via Control, with volunteers aiming to arrive within 90 minutes of a call. The service is available from 18.00hrs to 06.00hrs Monday to Friday and 24 hours a day at weekends and on Bank Holidays.

Anyone receiving assistance from the unit is offered the service free of charge, as all the costs are met by the British Red Cross.

To find out more about the FESS log on to www.redcross.org.uk



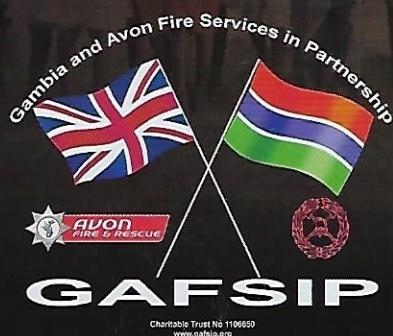
Fire and water make a great combination in **The Gambia**

Seven members of staff from across Avon have been enjoying some winter sunshine during the latest trainers' trip to The Gambia.

Glenn Baker, Phil Brevet, Sean Heighton, Paul Kirk, Chris Millard, Dave Price and Steve Putnam have recently returned from a two week trip to the African country, as part of their voluntary work with the Gambia and Avon Fire Services in Partnership (GAFSIP).

Working alongside the Gambia Fire & Rescue Service (GF&RS), the training focused on boat handling, sea training and breathing apparatus training.

With the river running right through The Gambia, water safety is a top priority, and as the country relies heavily on the fishing and tourist industries it is vital to ensure the safety of everyone working and living near the water.



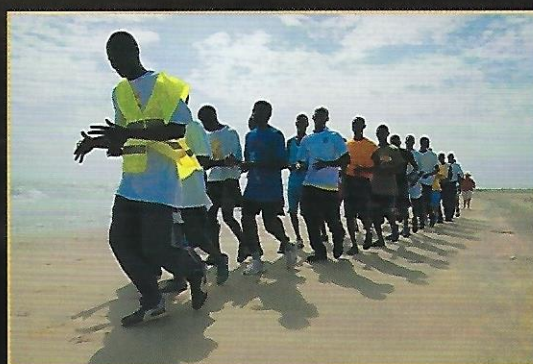


Avon's staff worked alongside GF&RS trainers to ensure they were fully competent in the skills they need to pass on to their own teams of firefighters.

Group Manager Chris Millard said: "We taught the trainers how to train crews, then observed them training their staff and allowed them to practice their new skills with a number of scenarios involving man over board and other rescue situations.

"There are now six sea rescue stations in The Gambia, with a range of equipment from Avon, including ten rigid rugged boats with outboard engines. I first visited The Gambia in 1993 and it's great to see how far they have come as a result of GAFSIP."

As well as the water safety training, the Avon team were also involved in working with the GF&RS (continued on page 22)



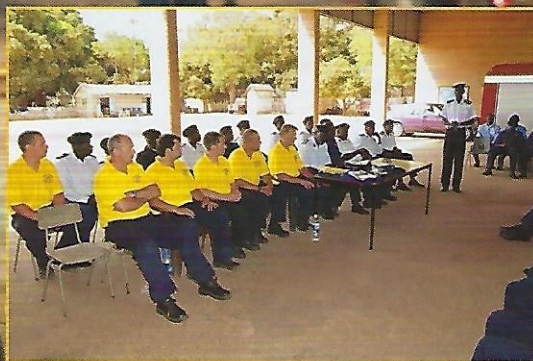
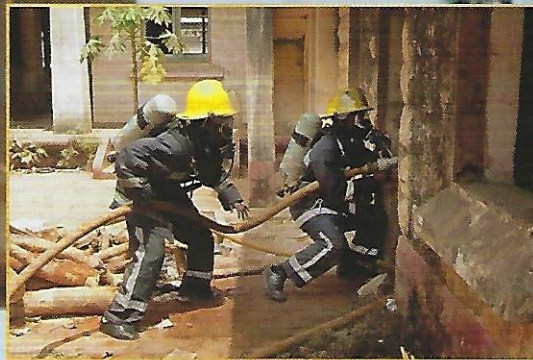
(from page 21) trainers to make sure they were happy with the breathing apparatus (BA) sets that the service sent to The Gambia in 2007. At the time initial training was given, but this trip provided the chance for Avon's staff to go into more detail about the Draegar BA sets.

The trainers were given an overview of the equipment and how to wear it correctly, as well as information about how to use it in a fire, with real fire exercises used to test their skills.

It wasn't all work and no play throughout the two week trip though, as the team from Avon were given lots of opportunities to meet local people, including an official visit to the Minister of the Interior's Permanent Secretary, and the chance to find out more about the country's culture.

"It is always very rewarding to be part of the trainers' trips. It is always a challenge, but overcoming those challenges gives you the reward and satisfaction. It's not what we do when we are there, but what they do in the other 50 weeks of the year to move things on. When I look back over the years since GAFSIP started the changes are fantastic. It's all about making a difference," said Chris.

Another trainers' trip is being arranged to take place later this year and will focus on training mechanics, airport crash and rescue training and beach lifeguards. If you would like to be involved in future training visits please contact Sandra Connolly on 0117 926 2061 extension 247 or Chris Millard on 07771 797830.



Photographs kindly supplied by Firefighter Phil Brevet.

Spot the difference

Can you find the nine differences in these two photos of Red Watch, Temple (09) taking part in line rescue training at the Avon Gorge? See below for the answers.



Pick up a penguin

Somewhere in the spring edition of the Magazine a penguin is hiding.

Can you find it?

The first person to contact the Magazine editor with the location of the missing bird will win a prize!

If you know where the penguin is please email magazine@avonfire.gov.uk

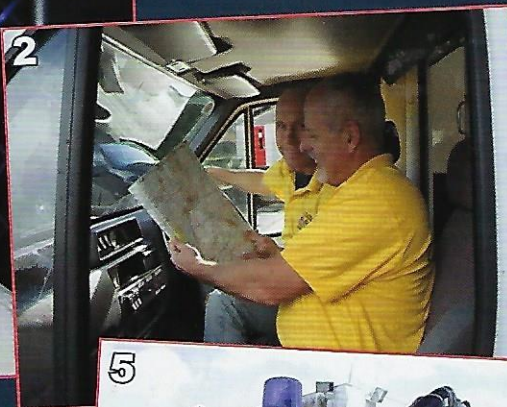
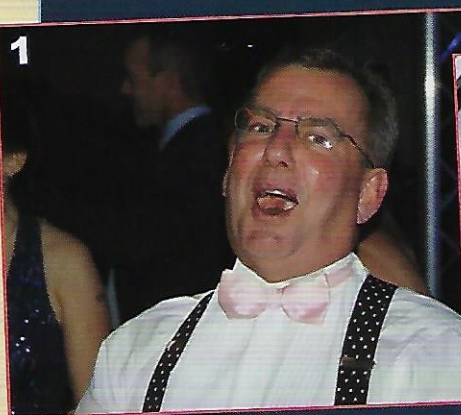


Spot the difference:
Answers: Helmet, watch, fire engine, tree, hovercraft, shark and harness.

And finally...

Caption competition

What are the people in these photographs saying? Can you think of an appropriate caption?



Send your answers to magazine@avonfire.gov.uk and we will print a selection in the next issue.

Editor: Steph Mounsey.

Regular contributors: Ruth Baker, James Bladon, Louise Hart, Helen Shrimpton.

Guest contributors: Matt Hunt, Phil Brevet, Red Watch Southmead.

Design and layout: Mark Rumble, Sharon Brewer, Annabel Brito and Sandra Connolly.

Thank you: To all our contributing writers, as well as everyone who supplied pictures and ideas.

Views expressed in opinion pieces and articles are those of the individual, and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher or AF&RS.

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