

Avon Fire Brigade

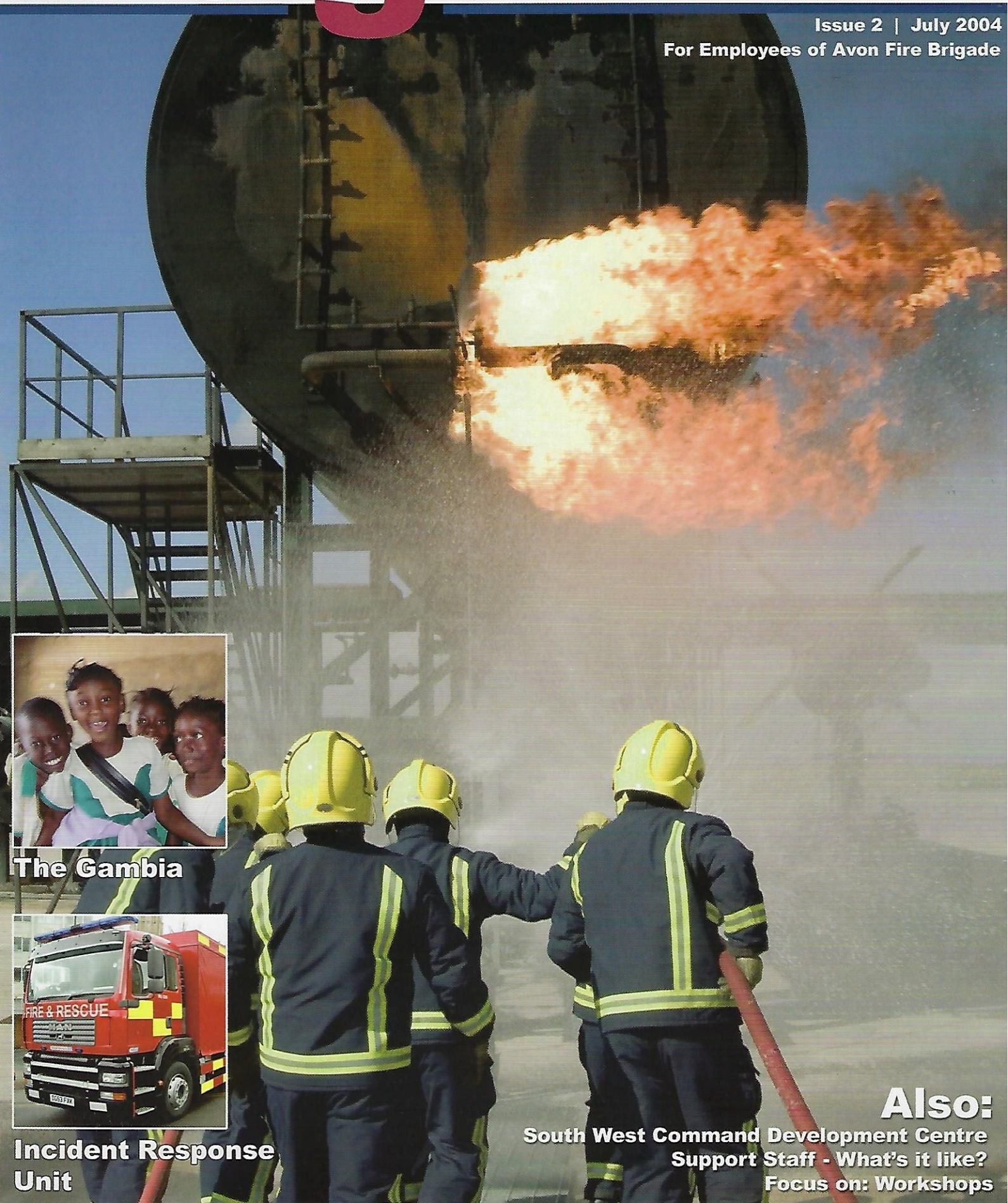


AFB
AVON FIRE BRIGADE
PREVENTION PROTECTION RESPONSE

Magazine

Issue 2 | July 2004

For Employees of Avon Fire Brigade



The Gambia



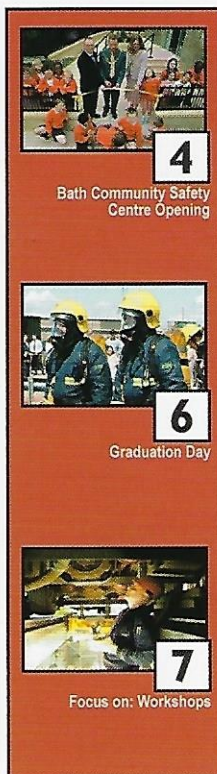
Incident Response Unit

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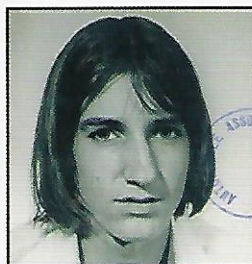
South West Command Development Centre
Support Staff - What's it like?
Focus on: Workshops

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From the Chief



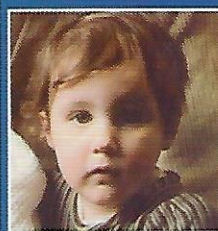
We've had a few ups and downs since the April edition of this magazine. Once again though, we hope that this magazine will provide you with a lighter glimpse at life in our Fire Brigade and provide a few laughs along the way.

This edition we're looking at "Who are they now" – a few familiar faces looking less jaded and a bit younger and even I'm not exempt it would seem.

I hope you enjoy your magazine.

Kevin Pearson
CFO

Editor's note



This edition we're having a little look at the people we know and love at work when they were younger / thinner / hairier. Look at the quiz on page 19 and see how many of them you can recognise. Many thanks to everyone who willingly stitched up their colleagues and sent in the photos!

Please keep your ideas, articles, letters and photos flowing in. Dippy received a sackful of mail to keep him occupied and the amount of photos we've had for the Rogues' Gallery has been great.

If you would like to contribute to the October edition, please contact me on ext 338. Final copy deadline is August 31.

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Design and Layout: Alex Wilson

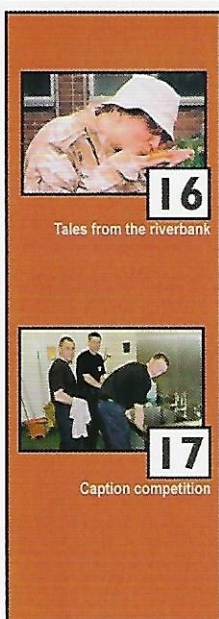
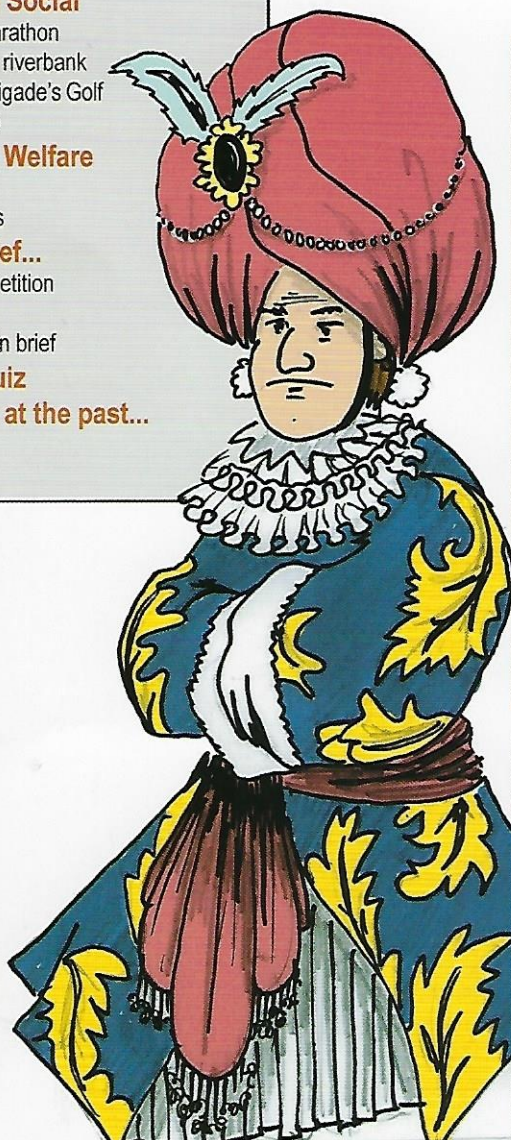
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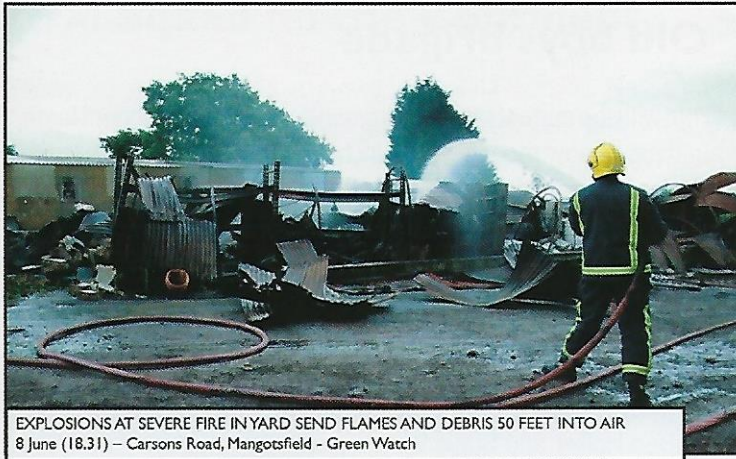
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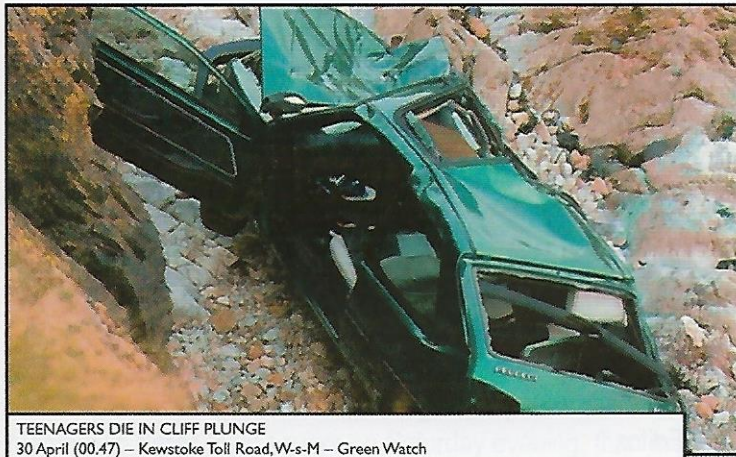
The new corporate uniform wasn't quite what the staff expected...



EXPLOSIONS AT SEVERE FIRE IN YARD SEND FLAMES AND DEBRIS 50 FEET INTO AIR
8 June (18.31) – Carsons Road, Mangotsfield – Green Watch



ARSON ATTACK ON POPULAR RESTURANT
8 April (02.20) – Bottolino's Restaurant, Emersons Way, Emersons Green – Blue Watch



TEENAGERS DIE IN CLIFF PLUNGE
30 April (00.47) – Kewstoke Toll Road, W-s-M – Green Watch



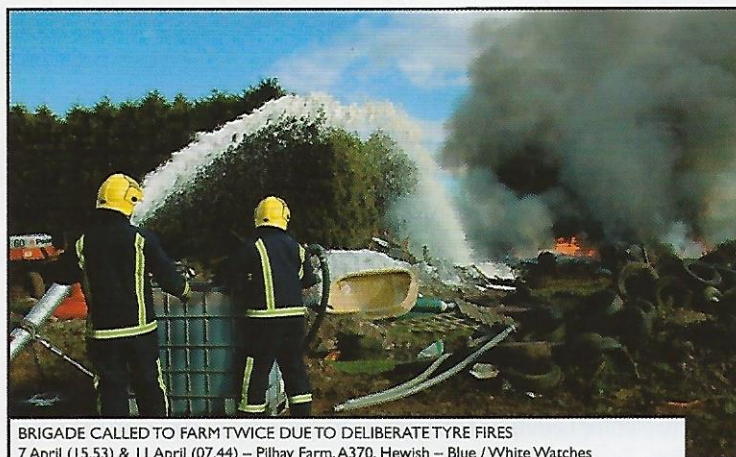
RETAINED CREWS STOP FIRE SPREADING
22 April (12.27) – Rectory Road, Easton-in-Gordano – Blue Watch



DOUBLE DECKER TOPPLE SCARE
13 May (17.24) – Charlton Road, Keynsham – White Watch



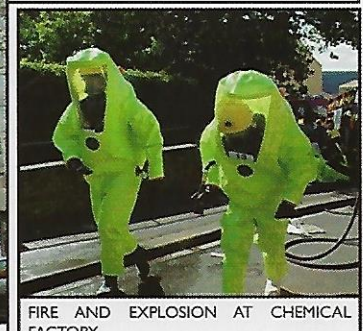
DOG RESCUE SEES FIREFIGHTERS KNEE DEEP IN WATER
1 June (13.42) – Vassalls Park, Fishponds – Blue Watch



BRIGADE CALLED TO FARM TWICE DUE TO DELIBERATE TYRE FIRES
7 April (15.53) & 11 April (07.44) – Pillhay Farm, A370, Hewish – Blue / White Watches



BLAZE IN DERELICT 15-STOREY OFFICE BLOCK
16 April (11.01) – Tollgate House, Off Newfoundland Road, St Judes – White Watch



FIRE AND EXPLOSION AT CHEMICAL FACTORY
15 June (13.42) – Redfield – Red Watch

News in Brief

Community Safety Centres...

Some of you may have noticed the changes that are taking place, making us more accessible than ever before to the general public. Temple, Lansdown, Bath and Keynsham Fire Stations now have their own Community Safety Centres

with two more due to open shortly at Weston-super-Mare and Yate Fire Stations. The centres will act as central points of information on fire safety issues for our community.

This refurbishment has also meant facilities on stations have been updated, giving our staff technology resources and dedicated spaces to hold meetings or training.

We want to encourage everyone, on and off station, to use the centres for visiting school children to neighbourhood watch groups, giving us a chance to reach a wide range of people and promote fire safety messages right to the heart of our communities.



Old boys brigade

What with the current rate of retirements and the subsequent large numbers of new recruits you may have thought that the average length of service of an Avon Fire fighter would be decreasing and you're probably right. However, there are occasionally moments that buck the trend as this photo shows. The four fire fighters here were snapped at a recent shout in Bristol. At the time the photo was taken they had served between them a combined total of 120 years 6 months and 21 days!! That's an average of over 30 years each for this crew. Pictured are Phil Bond, Steve Fry, Ben Hollier and Steve Way.



Temp in a million

You may recognise him if you ever have a breakfast at Temple... Saleem Kham is an agency member of staff who Caroline drafts in to help her out, when needed to do general catering work. In May Saleem's agency, the Berkley Scott Agency, voted him "Temp in a million" after several companies he worked for wrote in to praise him. His calm manner and good work ethic impresses everyone who hires him. Congratulations to Saleem – we're glad to have you here making sure we all get our breakfasts on time and in good shape!

We'll meat again...

R Walsh & Son has been providing Temple and HQ with sausage, bacon and cheese for the past 25 years. But now at the young age of 68, Roy himself is retiring. However because of his long relationship with our brigade Roy wanted to say "thank you" to us for our custom over the years. He very kindly donated free sausages and bacon to all four watches at Temple and the breakfast regulars from Headquarters. Thank you Roy and we hope you enjoy your retirement.



Letters

Dear Editor,

I have been a Paramedic with Avon Ambulance Service for nearly 30 years and with the Fire Service for 23 years. After the recent debate about defibrillation in the Fire Service, I'd like to share this case study to show the value of the HeartStart Defibrillator.

I was recently called to a patient who had a chest pain. On arrival, the patient was very pale and sweaty, conscious and breathing. I started oxygen therapy and was informed that the patient had central chest pain. Then the patient's eyes started to roll and they slumped sideways. I assessed that the patient was in cardiac arrest. I applied a precordial thump to the chest and attached the heart pads, then shocked the patient. Within 20 seconds the patient took a loud gasp and opened their eyes. I asked the patient how the pain was only to be told that there wasn't any! Then the patient went into VF (Ventricular Fibrillation) again and so we gave them a second shock. Within a few seconds they were breathing with their eyes open and asking what had happened. The same thing happened again at the hospital. Each time the HeartStart brought the patient back.

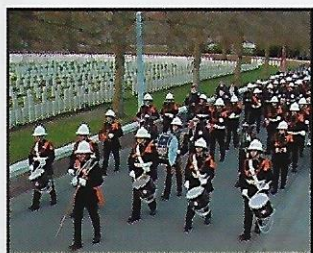
The HeartStart proved its value and has given one person at least a second chance. If when on firecalls we had a HeartStart Defibrillator, we too could save more lives.

Lff Eric Pimm, Clevedon Station.

If you would like to send a letter in to the magazine, please submit it to the Editor, Creative Services, Fire Brigade Headquarters, Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6EU.

Drill Squad do the Continent...

Friday 16 April. There's a crowd gathering outside Nailsea Fire Station with an assortment of odd shaped cases and bags... a stressed looking Garry Hawkes is trying to herd people onto coaches, while Gareth Lloyd is (uncharacteristically) shouting cheerfully at all and sundry... yes, it's Avon Fire Brigade's Ceremonial Squad (and hangers on) going on tour!



Lff Garry Hawkes and members of the squad organised the 3 day trip to France and Belgium. The highlight was the Saturday we spent in the lovely town of Ypres, site of some of the fiercest fighting in World War I and home to the Menin Gate, a massive memorial arch with the names of all the

soldiers from the First World War whose bodies were never found or identified. There's a staggering 54,000 names engraved on the gate – and all over the surrounding countryside are the graves of the thousands of other men who never came home. It's overwhelming to see the immaculate graveyards and the names of men from all over the British Empire who never had a chance to grow old.

The Brigade drill squad and marching band performed a series of marches in Ypres town square on Saturday evening, then marched up to the Menin Gate. They stood in formation while the firefighters of Ypres played the last post at 20.00, as they have done every day since 1928, to commemorate those who have died.



Many thanks to Garry Hawkes and the drill squad for a great trip and to all those who helped, especially the drivers (Gareth Lloyd from Avonmouth and John from Blue Iris Coaches) and the wonderful hostesses, who despite hangovers, sharp braking from the drivers, and awkward customers, kept us supplied with tea, coffee and biscuits for the whole trip.

If you are interested in joining the Brigade's Ceremonial Drill Squad, please contact Lff Garry Hawkes on ext 211 or Stn O Barry Doull on ext 258.

Pensioners' Lake District trip

By Dick Probert, Hon Treasurer.

On 23 April, 69 pensioners, wives and friends left Lansdown car park bound for a four night break in Penrith, Cumbria.

On Saturday we visited Hawkshead where the ladies were let loose for shopping and the men wandered off for a drink or two. On to Ambleside and then a cruise to Bowness on Lake Windermere. We made our way back to the hotel via the Kirkstone Pass, making time to meander through the pretty village of Patterdale.



During our evening meal we held a raffle in aid of the Fire Service National Benevolent Fund and raised £137.00.

Sunday morning had the privilege of a tour of Jubilee House, which is the Benevolent Fund Physiotherapy Unit near Penrith. It was interesting and entertaining. The unit is set in such a stunning location at Eamont Bridge on the river Eamont that it brought a clamour of applicants for therapy in the future! We then went and wandered round Keswick and visited the underground Rheged centre for a cream tea.



Monday saw us off to Cartmel, with its unique 12th century Priory. Then on to Grange-Over-Sands for lunch with a stop at the K Village shopping centre in Kendal.

The whole trip was really enjoyable and enhanced by the exquisite food and service at the hotel. The Lake District is a delightful area and we saw it at its best in perfect spring weather. A trip well worth repeating.

If you want to go on future trips with the pensioners, please contact Tony Townsend, Social Secretary 01454 322206



Benevolent Fund update

A big thank you to everyone for supporting the benevolent shop this year, especially to Bath retained, Chew Magna and Keynsham for recent shop sales.

If anyone is having a open day or fete and would like us to arrange a shop stall, please give us a little bit of notice so we can ensure we have plenty of stock. We have lots of new items for sale including mugs, key rings, blaze bears, jigsaws etc. For more information please contact, Natalie, Sam or Lou – Brigade Control.

Benevolent Fund Committee Changes

At the recent Brigade Council AGM, Lyn Lloyd stood down as Brigade Secretary after 11 years. Ian Satherley has now taken the additional role of Brigade Secretary along with his existing role of Treasurer.

You can contact Ian on: 07980 616644 or i.satherley@blueyonder.co.uk or satherley@avonfirebrigade.gov.uk. Ian is based at Weston Fire Safety.

Our People

Graduation Day

On 10 June 2004, 20 trainees graduated into Avon Fire Brigade ready to start work in the week of 21 June. The day provided a chance for their family and friends to see what they'd learnt on their training and get a flavour for what they'd be doing at their new work places.



Best BA awarded to Ff Anna James



Values Centred Leadership – what is it?

The rumours have been circulating that people are being sent on a course that puts values at the centre of everything we do in our Brigade... but what is it and why are we doing it?

The VCL course is designed to influence change and personal development – considering issues from a global, organisational and personal level. The aims are very broad because each person takes away something from the course that's unique to them but a broad summary is:

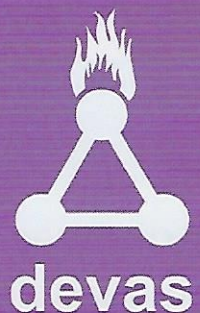
- To increase self-awareness and emotional intelligence (EI)
- To explore the current culture and values of our organisation
- To be able to positively influence and effect change by developing your own unique style and inspiring others

Over the programme, people are given an opportunity to:-

- Explore the notion that authority has to be earned through authentic leadership and is not a right of position
- Recognise that our 'organisation' is each and every one of us and the way to change our organisation is for each and every one of us to be different
- Discuss the following: that managers manage systems and leaders inspire people
- Explore our own capacity for creative thought and allow access to the emotional side of our characters
- Discover that a leader is something that people are – not something they do
- Value the choices we have made in our lives and careers – recognising that we always have these choices
- Explore the 'negative' beliefs we have about "the Organisation" and replace them with positive ones
- Value all people and recognise that we're all doing the best we can – and find ways to help ourselves – and others – do better.

If you are interested in finding out more about VCL or would like to attend the 3 day residential course, please contact either Rita Phillips ext 252 at Brigade Headquarters or your line manager.

For more information on the WoW factor, part of the devas group, which designed and runs the VCL course, you can go to their website: www.devasgroup.com

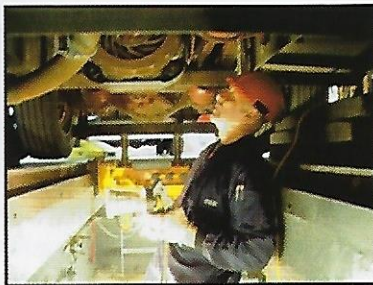


In each edition of the magazine, we'll be looking at a different part of our Brigade and finding out what they do and who they are.

Workshops

It's one of those departments that we all think we know what they do, but like so many things, once you start to look closely, you realise there's a lot more to it than just mending fire engines. The Magazine spent some time in Brigade workshops and got their hands dirty finding out.

Workshop Supervisor Phil James said: "We're responsible for the maintenance of every Brigade vehicle, plant, equipment and ladders, including ladders at Lulsgate & Filton airports which all require servicing, inspecting, checking, testing, repairing, painting, stripping, etc."



Sounds quite simple so far, but Phil continued: "What most people don't realise is the sheer amount of hard work and organisation this involves. For example, when an appliance is due a routine service we arrange for a reserve appliance to do a kit change, collect the vehicle and give it a full steam clean, service and rectify any defects found, arrange any body work repairs if required and re-arrange kit change to put back on the run."

"All Brigade vehicles are given a major service annually on a scheduled basis and we could be servicing three appliances, a couple of cars plus equipment, modifications and all the day to day jobs at any one time."

Although most of the Brigade appliances are exempt from MOTs they're still checked and inspected to a very high standard with an average service taking two to three weeks to complete.



Every fire engine is serviced once a year but they're also inspected on station every three months. Workshop veteran Jack Pitt explained what he's looking for: "The first thing we do is check the vehicle thoroughly and note all the defects. The average on a fire engine is about 40, but reserve trucks can have as many as 80 because they lead a harder life clocking up the miles."

"We're on 24-hour call to go to any Brigade vehicle or station, including fire grounds, which could range from a puncture, non start or even stuck in mud and just like the martini lady we're available any time, any place, anywhere!"

Jack continued: "We also look after Avon and Somerset's fleet of Police commercial

vehicles, horseboxes, prison vans, diving unit, lighting units and trailers. We also provide them with out of hours coverage, right down to the Devon border. This is extra revenue for the Brigade as we charge them just like an outside garage."

The workshops team consists of specialists too. Bob Fraser is the equipment technician. A former firefighter and engineer, he knows all the specialist equipment on our vehicles and if he can't get a replacement for a part he makes it, adjusts it or improves it. An electrical engineer, Norman, is contracted in to work on specialist jobs such as the deck lighting around the edge of the Bronto platform. Alan Reynolds is our full time ladder technician and Steve Skipper our expert mig / tig welder.

While Brigade HQ houses the central repair workshops, obviously the team can't function just from there so they have three fully equipped mobile workshop vans. These do all the scheduled inspection work at stations.

Obviously the technicians need to be available to provide cover alongside fire fighters' shifts and watch handovers so they work a week about early / late shift system: Mon to Thurs 7.00 to 15.00 and 11.00 to 19.00, Fri 7.00 to 14.15 and 10.30 to 18.00 - contrary to belief, they don't work weekends! Out of hours is covered by two technicians on a stand by rota.

So what do the workshop's team think of their job? Barry Vincent said: "It's varied every day. You see different vehicles and different people all the time."

For Tony Bailey there are bad points: "Standby is a chore. We do one week of 24-hour availability every month. You can work eight hours here, get home then be called out again..."

Jack Pitt, who has been at workshops for 21 years, could tell you a thing or two about the some of the dangers though. Just ask him about exploding cakes next time you pop into workshops.

The Team

Group A

**Supervisor -
Mechanics -**

Ian Havens
Neil Atwell
Tony Venn
Steve Oakley
Steve Skipper

Group B

**Supervisor -
Supervisor
/ Mechanic -
Mechanics-**

Phil James

Jon Haines
Tony Bailey
Jack Pitt
Steve Braithwaite

Ladder Technician - Alan Reynolds
Equipment Technician - Bob Fraser
Driver Handyman - Barry Breeze
Storeman - Tony Roberts



Workshop facts:

It costs £15 per metre for the fluorescent strips on operational vehicles...
This means it costs over £1000 to stripe the Bronto
It takes 3 days to stripe a truck.

The Hydraulic Platform sits on 2 different chassis in its 25-30 year lifespan.
It takes a year to put a Hydraulic Platform onto its new chassis.

One tyre on a fire engine costs £300.







The way I see it...

We all have an opinion on what's happening in Avon Fire Brigade at the moment and all the changes that are taking place. Here's one person's view on it...

How 'good' were the 'good-old-days'?

“ With all the brouhaha about modernisation currently going on, anyone would be forgiven for thinking that the fire service had stood still since the inception of the 'modern' brigade in 1947. Nothing could be further from the truth; it's just that change has been through evolution rather than the revolution we are seeing now. Free from commercial pressures, the fire service has not been forced to make hasty changes to cater for fashion or consumer demands. Indeed until recently our only consumer demand was that we turn up and put their fire out. This has sometimes worked against us however. Information technology being an obvious example where only now are we getting e-mail on stations when the business world had it 15 years ago.

Every one who has ever retired from the fire service believes that they had the best of it, that they were there in the golden era and that things were better in the good old days. It may be a natural human response, a way to cope with the inevitable life-changing event that retirement is, or is it actually true?

I can only comment personally on the last twenty years, but thinking back the changes have been many and varied.

When I first got on station I couldn't believe there was a bar. The only thing more surprising was how we hung on to bars as long as we did. The job did seem more sociable then with many retirement functions on stations to boost station kitties, but usually any excuse would do for a night out. That element does seem to have gone now but perhaps that's as much to do with drink-drive laws and a more health conscious breed of recruits than bars going from stations. Volleyball was the other bedrock in my early days and the abolition of volleyball on health and safety grounds was perhaps one of the biggest negative changes. Volleyball was a great tool for getting all the watch involved in something, both competitive and team building, but fun at the same time. People just don't get so excited about circuit training!

Our fire kit has changed immensely. A second hand cork helmet, ill-fitting donkey jacket and plastic leggings that would melt in an instant have evolved into a tailored, integrated protective suit, a bit hot in summer but that seems like a small price to pay.

Our BA sets have gotten lighter with padded straps and even a personal issue facemask if you have an unusually shaped face. Virtually all our equipment is now maintenance free or at least not repaired or serviced by operational personnel. Long gone is the endless cleaning, polishing and testing that used to fill the day.

Appliances are now faster, bigger, stop sooner, carry more equipment and offer greater crew safety.

The list is endless. The more that I think about it, it would be easier to list what hasn't changed. Maybe in ten years we will look back and remember now as 'a golden age' with rose tinted memories of nights around the brazier, a two-two and four shift pattern and those good old MAN pumps.

Do you have a view you'd like to express? Wanting to play devil's advocate? If so, please send your article in to the editors, with your name and contact number. Articles will be printed anonymously and names aren't passed on. We need items by 31st August 2004 for them to be printed in the October edition of the Magazine.

Then and Now... Life as a retained firefighter

Each edition we're looking at life in our brigade and seeing how much it has changed over the years. This time we spoke to retained firefighters to find out their views on being retained over the years...

THEN

Paul Newton joined Winscombe Station 19 years ago. He told us what it's been like for him.

"When I joined the brigade, retained firefighters did three weekends of training from 8am to 4pm. It covered all the basics of firefighting from hose drills and ladder work to BA use. I was a little on the short side to join (by half an inch) but through some clever standing up at my medical I just about scraped through!! Quite ridiculous when you think about it now!

The Station has remained pretty much the same over the last 19 years. We recently had new station house doors fitted and obviously the equipment, appliance and rescue gear has changed considerably over the years. The understanding between wholetime and retained firefighters is better now - I think due to communication and education.

I think what I enjoy most is the uncertainty of the job. You never quite know what to expect when you're on duty... an RTA, alarms or a house fire in the middle of the night. It's the variety I like. However what I do find tough as a retained firefighter is the fact I'm working so close to home. You don't know whether the next shout will involve someone you know."

Many thanks to Paul who conducted this interview whilst canal boating in South Wales. Hope the fishing continued to be successful!

NOW

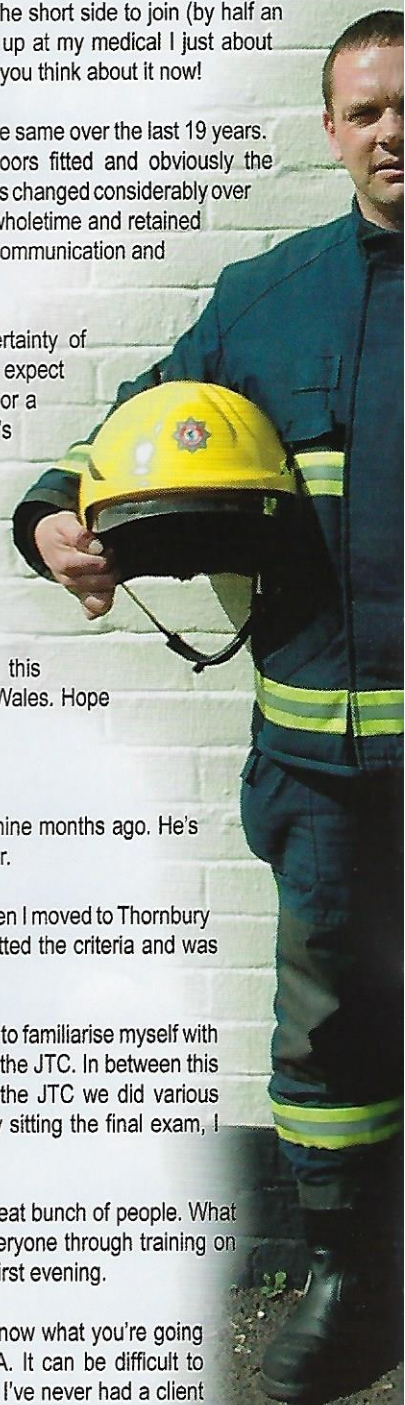
Jason Payne joined Thornbury Station nine months ago. He's a self-employed central heating engineer.

"I'd always wanted to be a firefighter. When I moved to Thornbury I visited the station to find out more. I fitted the criteria and was accepted on to training.

Initially I spent eight weeks at Thornbury to familiarise myself with being a firefighter, then basic training at the JTC. In between this training I returned to home station. At the JTC we did various modules such as BA. After successfully sitting the final exam, I was accepted as a retained firefighter.

It's brilliant to be working with such a great bunch of people. What was good too is that I'd got to know everyone through training on station so it wasn't too daunting on my first evening.

I enjoy the diversity of job. You never know what you're going to get called to... alarms, a fire, a RTA. It can be difficult to juggle everything when you're busy but I've never had a client complain when I've been called out. I explain I'm a retained firefighter before starting a job. It's a great talking point and everyone always asks lots of questions."



What's it like being a member of Support Staff in Avon Fire Brigade?

Admin staff, non-uniform, support staff, office staff, civilians – all terms that are used to describe support staff in Avon Fire Brigade. There are just over 100 members of support staff in our organisation and they make up 10% of our workforce.

Traditionally, support staff were perceived to be fulfilling lower grade administrative and secretarial roles, however that has slowly been changing over the years. Now our support staff have a whole host of skills and professions and do a wide range of jobs.

So what's it like working in Avon Fire Brigade as a member of support staff? We asked support staff members to tell us the good and the bad in their own words:

"It's good to be part of the Fire Brigade and to feel proud of the people on the ground floor but being treated like second class citizens and referred to as 'merely support staff' does get to you."

"Uniformed personnel, particularly at firefighter level, sometimes appear to resent us, or at least they don't understand why we are here".

"I have always been proud of this organisation and truly feel that what I do is as important as our front line colleagues".

"I hate being told: 'This organisation doesn't need support staff'. What, you're going to buy your own kit, get the trucks serviced yourself, sort your own pay out, do your own press coverage... get real!"



"We have a caring employer -Yes, really - try working somewhere else and then judge..."

"Excellent conditions (i.e. flexi, family-friendly policies, welfare and support network etc)."

"Uniformed officers doing similar roles to me get paid a great deal more than me. That sticks in my throat but perhaps IPDS will go some way to redressing this imbalance."

"I'm very proud of being a member of this organisation and have always done everything I can to support it and enhance its reputation - I always will."



"I believe we have terrific, forward-thinking Principal Managers - for which we should be grateful. When I hear about other Brigades and the experiences of their staff, it beggars belief."

"If uniformed staff work in the office there is no operational need for them to wear a uniform. They should leave the uniform behind, not hide behind it."

"I think a good point is that as a member of support staff you have the knowledge that you are the main backbone behind a very skilled organisation."

"It's been very nice to work for the brigade from the very first day. People are nice, cheerful and friendly."



Anonimouse



When I'm in SIR or BOSS I often find the 'Incident Details' under 'Narrative' are stuck on the last job I looked at in the 'Incident List'. At the moment I'm logging out and back in again to call up the correct details for that incident. Is there an easier way?

When in 'More Details' move your mouse to the 'Narrative' box – where the previous incident's details are - and right click your mouse. This will bring up a grey box, scroll down to highlight 'Refresh' - the details should instantly update. In fact, if you are anywhere in SIR or BOSS and need information updated, right click and choose 'Refresh'.

If you have any other IT related problems don't forget to call Imagine IT on 01635 248 148.

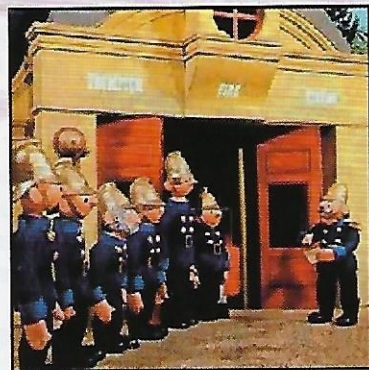
The Romans created the origins of the fire service and early fire-fighting methods. However, attending incidents in Romanesque togas with buckets of water would not feature too favourably in today's Brigade.

Not only is it dangerous (togas notoriously catch alight in all the wrong places), but the public would seriously question the sanity of these prehistoric methods, wondering whether the crew had been auditioning as extras for the Gladiator sequel. Pugh, Pugh, Barney McGrew, Cuthbert, Dibble and Grubb, Trumpton's finest, tried one better in the equipment stakes, with their state of the art early Bronto (max speed 3 mph), but failed most miserably in their incident turn out times.



'Grubb wished he hadn't pressed the 'up button' as the bridge neared...'

Fire and Rescue equipment has come a long way since the days of horse-drawn pumps, brass helmets and canvas hoses. Today's equipment has been modified and adapted to meet the needs of a 21st century Fire and Rescue service. We are currently in a period of equipment reinvention, with various new pieces presently on trial before going out onto station grounds.



"I've got a memo from the CFO- he says it's time we started wearing our new kit..."

Our fleet: some facts

- Most recent calculated cost of our fleet – £11.4 million.
- Average age of all our MAN appliances – 2 ½ years old
- Average age of all our Renault appliances – 9 ½ years old
- We have 72 appliances in our Brigade – including B-types, water tenders, aerials, special appliances, command unit, rescue tenders, hose layers, line rescue units and BA support.

What's new and in progress?

- Water Safety Throw Lines – a lightweight line that will float on the water when you throw it during water rescues
- PPV (Positive Pressure Ventilation) – which can be used to clear smoke out of a building quickly
- The Line Safety Pack will create safer working methods for working at height and the lowering and lifting of equipment.
- Ultimately there will be a thermal image camera on every station
- A water filter system – which will run off hydrants and produce filtered water for drinking on the fire ground
- A pump sprayer – which will deal with smaller fires in inaccessible places
- In the near future we'll look at BA sets and possible alternatives for the future. This will be quite a lengthy process.
- We're looking at the overall provision of toilet facilities on incident ground
- Defibrillators on every station
- A major initiative is the equipment tracking system (or Asset Management System.) This will allow us to track all operational equipment we carry, providing better servicing of it, allowing us to know where it is and what is happening to it

Adapting our equipment to the

Following September 11, governments all over the world have identified that major catastrophic incidents could affect their countries. Our Government has put into place the New Dimension project to provide resilience and capability for communities in major catastrophic incidents.

As a fire and rescue service we have to make sure that we're prepared for any eventuality and have the equipment to deal with it.

Therefore, we now have a public mass decontamination facility based at Weston-super-Mare station. This Incident Response Unit (IRU) has:

- Warm water decontamination facilities for the public, capable of decontaminating 200 people per hour
- Fire fighting decontamination facilities
- Modernised dose rate equipment for radiation
- Forklift truck capability
- Laptop computer with various databases onboard
- Main scheme radio capable of talking to any Brigade in the county

If there was an incident, the unit would take eight pumps with it

There are nine IRUs in the South West Region. The next phase, look at incidents involving people within collapsed buildings and

SOUTH WEST COMMAND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Formerly known as the Bunker, this is another new addition to our resources in Avon Fire Brigade. The South West Command Development Centre has been created to improve our training facilities.

The Centre has five main aims:

1. Simulated Command Training - This will allow every firefighter and officer to practice command and control in an exacting, virtual reality situation.
2. Assessment Centre for IPDS - complete with interview, presentation and meeting rooms.

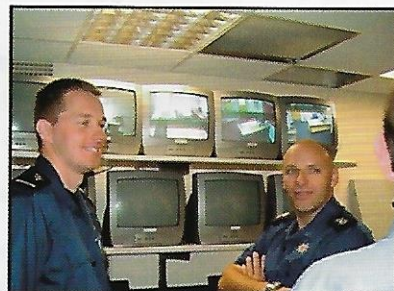
modern world



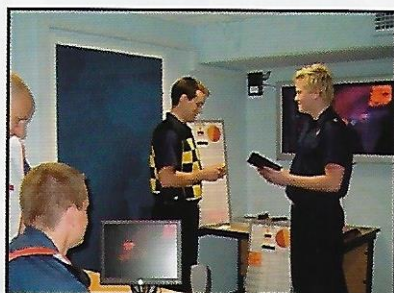
Weston, Pill, Avonmouth, Bedminster and Temple.

th regionally and nationally, is Urban Search and Rescue. This will
structures.

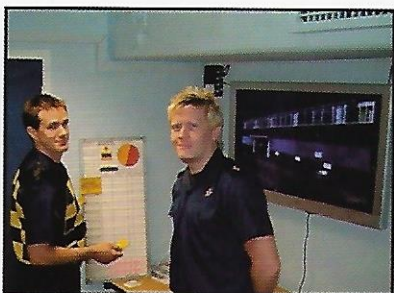
3. Gold Command providing us with a command and control centre to operate from in the event of an emergency – a centre away from the scene of the emergency that can be used to provide strategic command support to the incident.



4. Full video and audio production - so that we can professionally produce videos, and DVDs for training



5. A Conference / Seminar / Meeting Venue. The facilities will include tiered retractable seating for 90 people in the newly formed Main Auditorium making the Centre suitable for staging conferences, seminars and large meetings.



Parts of the Centre are complete already. If you would like any more information on the project please contact Ernie Coghlan, Lorraine Abrahams or Tim Bolland via switch board (0117 926 2061)

How much do we invest in giving you the best equipment?

- £190,000: Revenue budget – for all equipment maintenance in Brigade replacement etc.
- £70,000: Capital – for purchasing of new equipment*
- This is the first year we have been able to ask for capital funding for the purchase of new equipment.
- Every new fire engine is *always* fully kitted out with brand new kit and equipment.

* These figures are as of 1 April 2004.

Bristol Half Marathon

The Bristol Half Marathon takes place on Sunday 12 September. We talk to two runners from our brigade and ask them how training is going.

Helen Shrimpton – Press Officer, Creative Services

Helen's been running since school although has only recently caught the marathon bug! She's running in aid of St Peter's Hospice, Bristol, where she's a volunteer.

"I never thought I'd enjoy road running, but it's addictive! Training's going well, especially with the lighter evenings and better weather! I'm tending to stick to shorter runs of four to five miles at the moment and plan to start building them up in July / August. I've also had a new programme designed for me at the gym that incorporates more weight training."

We asked Helen about her estimated race time. "I'm not sure. I've been a volunteer at St Peter's for a number of years and they're always trying to get me to run in a costume, which will definitely hinder my performance! It's for a great cause...but I'm just not sure on the all-in-one green leotard and heavy sunflower head!"

Matt Perriman – Premises Support, Premises

Bristol's 2004 Half Marathon will be Matt's first marathon, which he's running in support of Cancer Research.

"I'm in pre-session training at the moment (Matt plays for Kingswood RFC) so it's not been too different from my usual routine! Three other lads from the team are also running with me...so it's a joint effort. It's good because we're there to encourage each other on. We meet every Tuesday for a run and have started to build them up each time. Alongside this and rugby training, I'm also continuing my regular sessions at Fitness First. So I should be prepared on the day!"

Although a first timer Matt's determined to complete the course quickly; "My parents are both running in it – I'll never live it down if I don't get a decent time!"

South West Brigades Golf Championship

On Friday 14 May, Avon Fire Brigade Golf Society hosted the South West Brigades Golf Championship at Clevedon Golf Club, North Somerset. Sixty of the South West's top golfers took part in the 36-hole competition. The weather was fine and the course was set to full championship difficulty making it a challenge for all competitors. Defending Champion Brian Lyndsay played two rounds of excellent golf to retain his title as South West Champion and qualify for England Fire Brigade Status.

Other notable Avon winners where:

- Andy Pothercary – 2nd best net score
- Mick Keeping – 3rd best gross score
- Graeme Watson – best stableford round PM
- Kevin Pearson, Steve Cornish & Andy Pothercary – 3rd place team score



Graeme Watson would like to thank all those involved in the preparation for the event. AFB has a very active Golf Society and if you are interested in playing in any of the events please contact Graeme on Ext 616 for further details.

We'd like to wish both Helen and Matt the best of luck in September and hope to hear how the day goes in the next magazine.

If you're running in the Bristol Half Marathon we love to hear how you get on...don't forget all pictures gratefully received!

Tales from the Riverbank

by Jeff Lovell, White, Bedminster

We (myself, Jacko, Rich Howell & Kevin) set off on Friday 7 May catching an evening ferry from Portsmouth to Le Havre. After a "few" drinks on the crossing we eventually arrived in France and started our journey to the small French village of Passais La Conception in Normandy.

We stayed at a superbly renovated water mill with adjoining gite and a five acre lake owned by English couple, Keith and Maxine. The lake is very private, tree clad and can be fished on three sides. There are seven swims available, but the lake is yours for the week so you can fish where you like. Keith monitors and photos all fish caught and records them daily on his web site. He's there each day and will advise the catch locations.

We set up the bivies, fired up the stoves for a brew up and set about ripping this lake apart, rods were flying everywhere, but no alarms! The week's fishing was harder than we initially thought, mainly due to the inconsistent weather. During the week we had over 40 good runs and landed 29 fish. 95% of the fish we caught were mid to high twenties.

Most fish were under the far bank and from the opposite bank it was a big cast, but what a fight it was to pull one from the far bank.

With good company, good fishing and some very good wine, the week was a joy. Without doubt another week in the future is on the cards, hopefully the next time we visit the weather will be kinder to us.

Meanwhile back at the ranch...

The watch felt a little left out following the departure of Jeff Lovell, Rich Howell and Chris Jackson on a fishing trip to France. Not to be outdone, they decided to do a spot of fishing of their own - without leaving the station! "We didn't want the ADO to catch us, so we decided to disguise ourselves in Martin's Friday night gear - which already smelt a bit fishy!"

"Suffice to say, our little fishing trip was a lot more successful than the others, all we've heard since then are stories of the one that got away..."

Please note, no animals were harmed during this.



Big fish...



...little fish

Lynn's Buns

If you've ever been into Creative Services at HQ, you'll have noticed that they're always munching on some delicious looking cake. Cake guru Lynn Brimmell has shared one of her favourite recipes with us...

All-in-one banana and walnut loaf

3 oz (75g) soft margarine
4 oz (110g) caster sugar
1 large egg, beaten
8 oz (225g) plain flour
2 level teaspoons baking powder
4 bananas, peeled
Grated rind of 1 orange
Grated rind of 1 lemon
2 oz (50g) walnuts, roughly chopped



Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 4, 350°F, 180°C
Line a loaf tin, 8.5 x 19cm with greased, greaseproof paper.

Put the margarine, sugar, beaten egg, sifted flour and baking powder into a large mixing bowl. Whisk with an electric mixer 'til thoroughly combined – don't worry if the mix is rather dry at this stage.

Mash the bananas to a pulp with a fork, in another bowl. Add to the mixture along with the orange and lemon rinds and chopped walnuts. Whisk everything together thoroughly.

Put the mixture into the prepared tin and bake in the centre shelf of the oven for 50-55 minutes, until the loaf is golden, well-risen and springs back when pressed with a finger. Leave to cool for 10 minutes then turn out onto a wire tray.

Nice sliced and eaten on its own or spread with butter!

Recipes

During our research for brigade recipes we've had a number of requests for culinary gems for possible inclusion in the next magazine. These include:

- Martin Cowley's Fisherman's Pie (Southmead Red Watch)
- Steve Clarkson's Coconut / Jam Cake Creation (Avonmouth Green Watch)
- Anything to do with honey from Avonmouth White Watch.

If you're willing to share your recipes ...and your culinary prowess, please contact us at the Brigade Magazine, in Creative Services, Brigade HQ.

Red Watch Patchway

We asked Red Watch Patchway to come up with one of their favourite dishes... they supplied it with no quantities so I guess you need to use your culinary flair and see what looks right!

Crunchy Topped Prawns

Cod or haddock
Butter
Onions, chopped
Garlic, peeled and crushed
Grated rind and juice of lemons
Fresh chopped parsley
Peeled prawns
Black pepper
Wholemeal breadcrumbs
Flakes almonds
Red Leicester cheese, grated



Remove skin from fish and cut into pieces.
Melt butter into frying pan and fry onions and garlic until softened.
Add fish and cook gently for 4 to 5 minutes.
Stir in lemon rind and juice, parsley and prawns.
Season with black pepper and cook for 2 to 4 minutes.
Spoon into oven proof dish.
Mix remaining ingredients (cheese and breadcrumbs) together and spoon on top of the fish.
Grill until the topping is hot and crispy or bake at Gas 6 for 15 minutes.

Serve with vegetables and new potatoes.

Powering the workforce... some breakfast facts

Everyone knows that the trick to getting through the day is a good breakfast – no firefighter needs to be told that twice. But did you know that the average fire brigade breakfast contains 1120 calories? Here's the breakdown:

1 slice toast = 70	1 egg = 84
and butter = 74	1 slice bacon = 64
cheese (for toast) = 172	1 mug of tea = 29
3 tomatoes = 60	cup of mushrooms = 18
4 oz baked beans = 75	100g Chips = 253
1 pork sausage = 220	

As a woman needs an average of 2000 calories a day and a man needs 2500 that's almost half our calories gained in one meal. Good job we work them off doing shouts and drill during the day...

A bit of a relief...

Dear Dippy...

Back by popular demand, the insightful and sympathetic Dippy took up his pen to help the lost, the lonely, the lovelorn and just the downright weird... these are the printable ones...



Dear Dippy,

I'm new here. The problem is that I work really hard and do my best and so get more work, do that well and then get even more. I now have loads to do but my slack colleagues just sit there picking their noses all day. What should I do?

Well Chief, you need to remember that you're in charge. You need to assert your authority and you can't let your DOs get away with such unhygienic habits either. I hope this helps.

Dear Dippy,

I joined a new watch recently and had an instant attraction to another member of the watch. The inevitable happened and now I find myself in a tricky situation, itching and scratching. I think some of my other colleagues have been in the same situation with the object of my affection, should I talk to them or just suffer in silence? Please help me.

From Itchy.

Itchy, I have received a few letters from Station 18 about this and as you suspect, you aren't alone. This problem needs to be sorted as now the summer is here and you'll all want to frolick in the yard with your colleague, having fun. Cracker is lovely, responding to anyone who gives him a bone or plays with him, but like you, he's there to work and should be left to do his job in peace. I think that a good shower and some flea powder will sort you out and maybe a trip to the dog pound so you can have your own pet and leave the poor dog alone.

Dear Dippy,

I joined the fire brigade so I could impress the ladies with my daring tales of heroic rescues and fire fighting. Instead I've been posted to a lesser known station where the most exciting thing recently was when there was a spare cheese on. What can I do to make life more exciting and get the daring tales I need?

Transfer! Lie! Others do...

If you have a problem that only Dippy can solve, please send it in to the Brigade Magazine at HQ.

Caption Competition

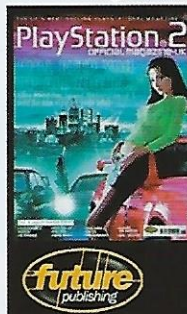
Thanks to everyone who entered last edition's caption competition. The winner is Phil James, who won a year's free subscription to Total Film magazine.



I hope his right hand is in his sack..."



Enter before August 31st and get a chance to win a year's free subscription to either of these magazines, courtesy of Future Publishing:



Official UK PlayStation 2 Magazine is THE magazine for people who have a PlayStation 2. Our official links with Sony mean we are always first with the games industry's most well-read and respected reviews and previews, and we offer a whole lot more. We focus heavily on features more than any other games magazine and take you behind-the-scenes of future releases, interviewing the industry's top creators.

SFX is the biggest, brightest and boldest science fiction magazine in the world, full to the brim with everything and anything you ever wanted to know about science fiction, fantasy and horror. Well known for our irreverent but fond attitude to SF, we are Britain's best-selling SF and fantasy mag.



NOT THE NEWS IN BRIEF

Revealed!

Last issue's celebrity chef, Kevin Rodda, is a fraud! "The man can't cook at all", revealed an insider / grass. It's now come out that Kev once decided to make a nice smooth gravy for his watch. So he carefully poured the gravy into a sieve... draining the nice smooth liquid down the sink, leaving the lumps behind. Next, people will be saying Dippy isn't really an agony aunt...

Discovered!

The world's smallest firefighter is working out of Station 18. "It's great," a colleague said, "we pop him in a small cage on a shout, take his BA kit off him and he acts like a little canary." At least he's cheap to feed.

TV stars...

Rumours of a fire brigade "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here" contest are still rife. Challenges will include: not moaning for a whole hour; paying a compliment to management or the FBU; and cooking a breakfast without using ANY form of fat. "It'll be tough," said a scared looking firefighter, "but the incentive of a 'cheese on' will help me get through."

Who are they now?

Can you recognise these people from Avon Fire Brigade?



Answers:
 (1) Ff Chris Harding (2) Sin O Phil Judge (3) Anna Comerford (4) Ff Duncan Forrester (5) Lf Garry Hawkes (6) Lynn Brimmell (7) Lf John Godwin (8) FCO Phil Green (9) Ff Derek Comerford (10) ADO Gary Weekes (11) Ff Paul Wilmot (12) Ff Steve Box (13) FSCO Bob Stone (14) Sin O Lenny Angus (15) ADO Richard Williams-Jones (16) Ian Brown (17) SDO Tim Bolland (18) Ff Rich Howell (19) DO Rory O'Connor (20) FCO Louise Garland

Thanks to everyone who submitted pictures

A peek at the past...



A look at the fire brigade of yesteryear

This issue: Equipment by Anna Comerford

Did you know?

- The first steam powered pump appeared in 1829.
- The first petrol powered fire engine made its appearance in 1903. The engine was not able to pump water and could travel at only 20 mph.
- Early fire engines had no warning bells or claxons, so the firemen would clear a way by shouting as they proceeded to the fire. From then on fire calls became commonly known as 'shouts.'
- People trapped on upper floors were encouraged to leap from windows into sheets held taut by firefighters on the ground.
- Early forms of self contained BA circulated pure oxygen to the wearer through a reservoir or bag. The exhaled carbon dioxide gas was absorbed by a chemical, with oxygen added to replace that consumed by the user.

