



AVON FIRE & RESCUE

Magazine

Issue 3 | October 2004

For Employees of Avon Fire & Rescue Service



Contents

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 2 | WELCOME |
| 3 | INCIDENTS |
| 4 | ROUND-UP |
| 5 - 6 | OUR PEOPLE Pensioners - Where are they now? Merv Osborne |
| 7 | FOCUS ON... The CFA |
| 8 | OUR PEOPLE Retained Graduation Core Values in Avon Fire and Rescue |
| 9 | PARTNERSHIPS - BREC |
| 10 - 11 | ROGUES GALLERY |
| 12 - 13 | COMMENT The way I see it... Then and Now... life on station What's it like being a firefighter? Anonimouse |
| 14 & 15 | EQUIPMENT... Round the World |
| 16 | SPORTS AND SOCIAL Firefighter games Fishing Champions |
| 17 | HEALTH AND WELFARE Recipes Top Driving Tips |
| 18 | A BIT OF A RELIEF Dear Dippy Who are they now |
| 19 | TEA TIME QUIZ |
| BACK PAGE | A PEEK AT THE PAST... fires of Avon |

From the Chief

I think you'll agree that since the last magazine its been an unsettling time for us all. However with an agreement being reached by the employers and the FBU we can look forward to drawing a line under the past and moving on. We all have a lot to be proud of.



The Audit Commission's Phase Two results in July prove that our hard work towards the Modernisation Agenda is being recognised. With five green lights and three ambers for the eight diagnostics (finance being the new addition) Avon was placed in the top fifteen fire and rescue services in the UK. As we continue our work both internally and with our community I hope that you all take pride in the fact that we have achieved great things. We could only have achieved this thanks to our people, with their many skills and talents. Keep up the good work.

Kevin Pearson
Chief Fire Officer

Editor's note

As usual, a big 'Thank you' to everyone who has contributed to this magazine. Please keep your ideas flowing in as we do take note of every piece of feedback we receive, good and bad.

Back by popular demand is the "Who are they now" section - so don't forget to keep sending us those photos of dodgy perms, mullets and tashes for the next issue!

If you would like to contribute to the January 2005 edition of the magazine, then please contact me on Ext 338. Final copy deadline is 26 November 2004.

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THE EARLY PROBLEMS WITH THE MOBILISING SYSTEM HAVE NOW BEEN RESOLVED.



VIDEO SHOP ARSON SEES FULL SCALE CALL OUT
11 August (23.01) - Blockbuster Video, Winterstoke Road, Ashton - Green Watch



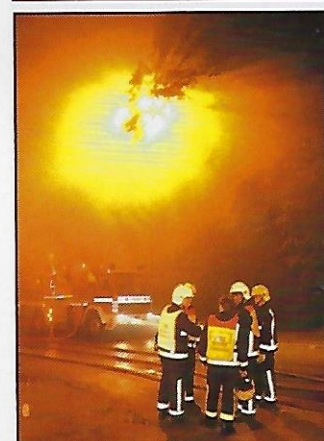
FIREFIGHTERS PRAISED BY PARAMEDICS FOR WORK IN DELICATE RESCUE OF FEMALE CYCLIST
3 September (09.34) - City Road, St Pauls - Red Watch



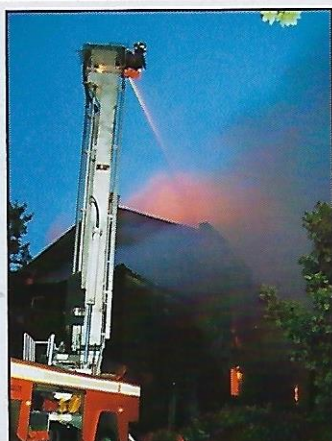
HOMES EVACUATED FOLLOWING GAS LEAK
19 August (14.35) - Seymour Road, Easton, Bristol - Red Watch



COMPLEX RESCUE FOR CREWS ON SECOND SEVERN CROSSING
2 September (10.06) - Second Severn Crossing, Westbound, Welsh Tower - Green Watch



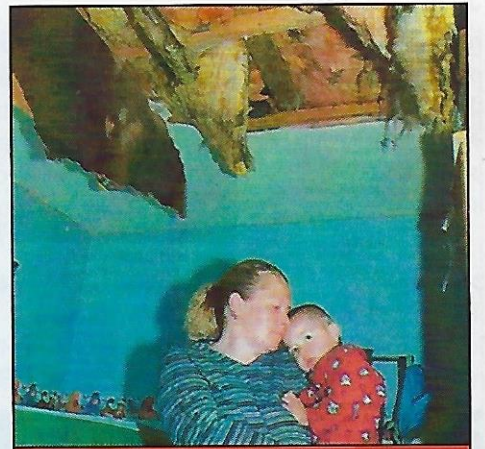
DERELICT CHAPEL FIRE SEES AERIAL APPLIANCES IN ACTION
14 July (19.55) - Wesleyan Chapel, Kingswood - Blue \ Green Watch



EXPLODING GAS CYLINDER OBLITERATES VAN
11 August (07.38) - Keynsham - Retained



FIRE LEAVES FAMILY HOMELESS
28 July (00.32) - Speedwell - Red Watch



TWO HOMES HIT AS CARAVAN FIRE SPREADS
15 July (18.51) - Sunnyside View, Peasedown St. John - White Watch



RABBIT PERISHES IN SHED FIRE
24 August (15.24) - Strawberry Close, Nailsea - Retained

Classic Bristol Appliance lives again

Jon Chambers (Bedminster, White Watch) and his father, Roger, have been breathing new life into a classic Bristol Fire appliance and giving people a glimpse of the good old days this summer. Together, they've attended events in and around Bristol with their 1971 ERF appliance.

The vehicle originally saw action at the old Bridewell Fire Station, and was amongst the very first appliances at what was then the newly completed Temple Back Station. It also served at Patchway and Yate, before finally being withdrawn from service in 1985. Pinewood Film Studios then purchased it, where it remained until Christmas 2003, when the Chambers' bought it.

The years of service took their toll and it's taken a lot of hard work to get it into its current condition...and there's still more to do! Major projects to come include completing the cab, getting hold of the correct electric bell, two tone horns, hooked roof ladder and short extension ladder. Also the 50ft Merryweather escape and rotten wooden bodywork and aluminium panels all need refurbishing.

Jon and Roger now need somewhere to store the vehicle as it's currently kept in the open. They are also calling on senior firefighters to help restore the escape. Anyone who can lend a hand or has a storage space please contact Jon at Bedminster.

DAE 621K Facts and Figures

MAKE ERF

MODEL 84PF

DIMENSIONS Wheelbase 12'6" Width: 7'6"

ENGINE Perkins 8300cc V8 Diesel developing 170BHP at 2800RPM

PERFORMANCE 0-40MPH in 24 seconds fully laden

WEIGHT 12.5 tons fully laden

WATER TANK 450 gallons

EQUIPMENT 50ft Merryweather wheeled escape ladder



Community Events

The Community Safety Team has been out in force over the last few months. The team has been providing safety advice at numerous events, often assisted by colleagues from across the Service. Children were challenged to home safety quizzes, receiving balloons, frisbees and key rings on successful completion. Fireman Sam made guest appearances, much to the delight of children, who also had the chance to play with our Firefighter AVI robot. Adults had the opportunity to ask for fire safety advice and take away leaflets to read at home. The chip pan demonstration unit also featured at many of the summer's community events.



Bristol Harbour Festival : Saturday 31 July – Sunday 1 August /
St Pauls Carnival : Saturday 3 July



The Galleries : Thursday 29 July



Bristol International Balloon Fiesta : Thursday 12 August - Sunday 15 August

Avon Fire & Rescue shopping experience

Ever fancied a fire service mug, pen, pencil sharpener or teddy? Or perhaps a 'Fireman Sam' mask or colouring-in book takes your (or your little one's) fancy?

Well the place to visit is the Benevolent Fund cupboard at Lansdown. There's a magnitude of fire and rescue memorabilia to choose from and it's open all year round. Natalie Venn, Louise Blackwell and Samantha Lamborn (Control) work tirelessly to boost sales, with all profits going to the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

If you're planning an event, open day, fete or fair just contact Nat, Lou or Sam, who'll organise some goodies for you to sell. You don't have to buy in bulk, all the items are for sale individually, and can be delivered free of charge directly to your Fire Station or working location. There is a huge selection of items, some are special order but most are in stock.

Ian Satherley, Shop Treasurer: 'On behalf of the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund I'd like to say a huge Thank you to Lou, Sam and Nat for their continued efforts and hard work, without which the Benevolent Fund would not receive the £1,000 a year that is generally donated.'

Pensioners - Where are they now...

Bob Poots



"Having just read the July issue of the Brigade Magazine, I felt moved to add some comments.

"In August 1963 I left the Royal Navy and applied to be a firefighter. The interview and enrolment procedure (application letter to interview) took three days! I was riding number five in the back of an escape two days later.

"I saw a few small jobs, learned some basics, and then went to training school. At this time some brigades were only just starting to send men to training school. We had a SubO colleague who was only just doing the basic course.

"Twelve weeks later and back on watch, it would be two years before we touched a B.A set."

"Yate, the training school, A1 Temple Blue Watch, H.Q and A Div. H.Q. all had the benefit of my company.

"Eventually, after 31 years and three days, I retired in August 1994. In the ten years since retirement I've never been so busy. I have two jobbys (hobby-jobs)...of course they're paid; I'm not that silly. The repair of council deck chairs and a daily report to the Meteorological Office of weather conditions in sunny Weymouth, my hometown.

"The only thing that I wish I had done was to keep a diary! There were many times when I wish I could remember a time, a place or an action."

Ralph Fryer



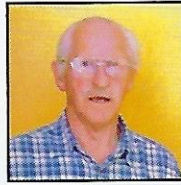
Ralph was the leading hand at Clevedon Fire Station for 35 years from 1946 to 1980.

Since leaving life as a retained firefighter, Ralph has declined to take the pipe and slippers retirement avenue. His many post operational ventures, have included helping to establish The Somerset & Avon Fire Brigade Old Comrades Association, of which he is still Treasurer.

Ralph has also retired from his second vocation...running his own building business, but not before managing to build two of his own detached houses! He is also Chair of the Bristol, Somerset & Wiltshire branch of the Russian Convoy Veterans Association (formed of WW2 Navy veterans).

Keeping in with the water theme Ralph was Rear Commodore of The Clevedon Sailing Club and still spends time on his own motorboat. He was also Chairman of The Clevedon Pier Supporters Club for 18 years, campaigning tirelessly to help raise funds for the restoration of Clevedon Pier.

Bob Gee



SubO Bob Gee will be best remembered by those who joined Bristol or Avon Fire Brigade between 1962 and 1977, during which time he ran the breathing apparatus training department.

Bob joined Bristol Fire Brigade in December 1953 after serving in both the Gloucesters and Parachute Regiments. He served at Bridewell for 20 years, in between running basic BA schools and BA refreshers. In 1973 the newly formed Avon Fire Brigade moved to Temple Back where Bob continued to run the BA department.

In April 1976 Bob suffered a brain haemorrhage whilst cycling home from work. He eventually made a full recovery but was sadly unable to return to firefighting duties and retired in June 1977.

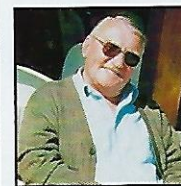
He went on to work for W.A. Blyths, serving and instructing BA for industrial users before finally retiring at age 70 in 1995.

Bob is married to Jean and they celebrated their golden wedding this year. Bob's still fit and active. His eldest son, Andy, followed in his footsteps and is currently a StnO on Temple.

Ron Osborne



"I joined Bristol Fire Brigade in 1947, having previously been in the Portsmouth Brigade and the army before that. I was posted to the Ashton Drive Station, off Winterstoke Road. We had ambulances there too and most of our time in those days was spent on them.



"Over the years I was promoted and served at Bridewell and Station 2 in Stoke Hill. When I was ADO I took over the duties of the Auxiliary Fire Service Officer and then was Training Officer for 15 years. In 1967 I

took on the role of DO, later becoming the third officer when Mr Wookey left.

"In 1973 I moved to HQ where I served under Tom Lister. When Tom came to me one day and said "Ron - I got that job in Birmingham as Chief"...I handed my resignation in there and then. I had worked under many different Chiefs and felt it was time for a change. I left the Brigade in November 1975.

"Well, that opened a whole new world for me. I'd been a widower since 1972 and after I left Avon I went on a cruise. Whilst docked in Majorca we met three Austrians - one of them later became my wife!

"That was 30 years ago. We now live six months of the year in Bristol, seeing family and friends, and then six months in Austria during the winter. I'm 84 this year and am going on another cruise - why stop now?!"

We're looking for other pensioners to let us know what you're up to. Please contact the editor on 0117.926 2061 ext 338

Spotted...

StnO Tony Sim worked in Fire Safety. An old colleague of his saw this in the June 2004 edition of the Costa Blanca News.



Farewell Merv Osborne...

After 30 years service ACFO Merv Osborne is retiring. We chatted to him about his time with us and his plans for the future.



WHY DID YOU JOIN THE FIRE BRIGADE?

"It was 1974 and I was a French teacher living with my wife at my father's. We wanted to buy our own home but I couldn't get a mortgage as a teacher. The £1 difference between a teacher's and a firefighter's wage meant a mortgage back then. So in April 1974 I joined the County of Avon Fire Brigade."

WHERE WAS YOUR FIRST POST?

"White Watch, Bedminster - and I thoroughly enjoyed it. On my first day the first person I met was Pete Taylor and we've been the best of friends ever since. It was a great time because we put the fun into it. Yes, there was lots of hard work and it was really strict but there were also lots of water fights and ribbing, as well as a good social bond between watch members."

THEN WHERE DID YOU GO?

"In 1977 I became an Lff at Brislington and sat the nine weeks of the strike out there. I've a great photo of Chris Palmer and me on Christmas day on the picket line wearing newspaper hats."

In 1978 I became a training sub. Then in 1984 I was StnO at Speedwell Green Watch. Now that was a watch full of characters - some of them are still there!

In 1988 I was transferred to Fire Safety in Bristol. I didn't want to go, but it was the best move I ever made as it gave me a completely fresh set of challenges. I worked on the Galleries with John Rice and Bob Kendall and then became ADO, Fire Safety, and then DO in 1993.

DIDN'T YOU HAVE A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT?

In 2000 they found a 35mm hole in my heart. I'd been born with it, but knew nothing about it. It was only my fitness that had carried me through. I waited over a year for open-heart surgery. I had the op in January 2002 and thought I'd never return to the Brigade. However, I did come back, and ended up as ACFO.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER?

Overall, it's been an absolutely superb job working with great people. I've had memorable incidents too. I remember a caravan fire about ½ mile from Bedminster station. It was so close we got there without all our firefighting kit on. The van was well alight and a woman was screaming that her baby daughter was inside. Two of us ran in with no tunics on. We thought we'd found her but it was a teddy. When we did bring her out her heart was beating but she'd stopped breathing. Two of the crew breathed for her and brought her back to life. If one event in 30 years sums up the value of this job, that's it.

The W Shed fire in 1974, on the Bristol Docks was my first big fire. The glow from that could be seen all over Bristol. In my enthusiasm I leapt out of the truck and promptly got my boot stuck in the railway lines and couldn't get it out, so I spent a long time running out hose with just one boot on. Andy Raikes kept telling me what to do and where to go, all the time standing there with a cigarette and a cup of tea!

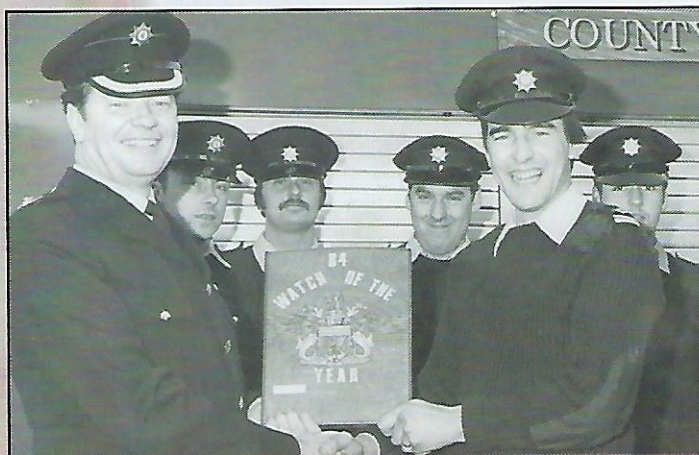
Another memorable fire was the one at Portbury Dock in 1995/96. It caused a total loss to the port of £18m and we had problems firefighting as they couldn't shut the electrics off to it.

SO WHAT NEXT?

I'm going to spend more time exploring me - I've bought a Yamaha electric piano and want to develop playing and writing music (blues and rock mainly), I'm also returning to motorcycling. My grandchildren are very important to me and I wish to be a part of their lives. I had a family quite young and I'm seeing and experiencing things with the grandchildren that I've almost forgotten.

I also want to stay fit. The heart operation changed my perspective. I never expected to have this time. Everyday is a good day even if it's a bad one, just because I'm here."

As of the 1 December Merv Osborne can be found in various mosh pits at rock concerts round the world.



Lurking in the background behind Merv are Ian Thompson, Bernie Bennett and Dave Pound



There are a few other familiar faces in here as well as Merv (third row, third from right). People that still work here are Paddy O'Leary, Graham Blight, Terry Caddy, Ben Hollier, Martin Cowley, Chris Radford-Hancock, Stuart Youngs, Andy Peat, Steve Shipway and Steve Benham. Can you spot them all?

The Combined Fire Authority

We've all heard of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) but what is it and what does it do? We spoke to the Chair of the CFA Cllr Terry Walker and vice chairs, Cllr Gerry Curran and Cllr Sheila Cook to find out.

The CFA is the legal body responsible for the provision of the Fire and Rescue Service. The members of the CFA act in much the same way as the directors of a company. The CFA directly employs all operational and support staff and also has a legal responsibility for Fire Safety enforcement in the community.

Councillor Terry Walker said: "We have to provide a reliable, vibrant fire and rescue service for the people in Avon. The responsibility stops with us. We're responsible for all non-operational matters; we employ the CFO to deal with operations and we entrust the day-to-day running of the service to the officers and managers.

"Our main responsibilities are approving our Fire and Rescue Service's budget, ensuring we get sufficient budget from the local council tax, monitoring the service's performance, and ensuring it's efficient, effective and economic."

Councillor Gerry Curran added: "We're also the final level of appeal in disciplinary and grievance procedures and we appoint the principal officers."

The CFA's responsibility for budgets is even greater now, as Councillor Sheila Cook explained: "We used to get money from the unitary authorities but now we go directly

What is the CFA's relationship to government?

The Government is responsible for setting national priorities and objectives for the fire and rescue service. This is undertaken through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The Local Government Association (LGA) represents all local authorities (including fire and rescue authorities) and lobbies government on local government issues.

to the tax payer. That means the people of Avon see on their council tax bills how much they pay for us. It's more important than ever to show that we are an efficient and effective organisation."

The CFA has a number of professional advisers, who assist members in decision-making. Three of these have to be appointed by law: the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Treasurer and Clerk.

The CFO is the Authority's Chief Executive and principal policy adviser. The Treasurer (Malcolm Shorney) is the Chief Financial Officer of the Authority and is responsible for the administration of the Authority's financial affairs and ensuring that the Authority does not exceed its budget. The Clerk (Chris Gray) is the Authority's monitoring officer who ensures that the Authority keeps within the law and also acts as a legal advisor to the Authority and Management Board.

The members only receive a nominal fee for being on the CFA, so why do they do it? Terry Walker said: "I've always found it the most pleasing part of my work. We need more champions in the Fire and Rescue Service, as people take for granted the excellent service we provide."

Cllr Curran is just as passionate about the Fire and Rescue Service, "It's a very tangible service that is dear to people's hearts. It needs people to defend it and argue its corner."

Councillor Cook added: "It's a very easy organisation to work with – you're always made to feel welcome and a part of it."

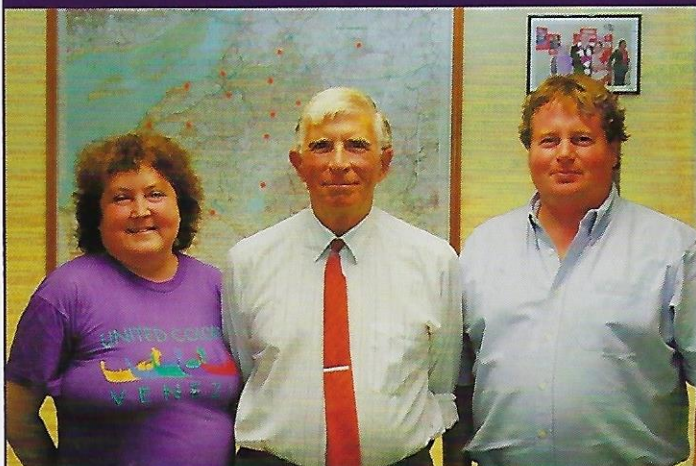
All three councillors take their responsibilities on the CFA very seriously. "It's our job to look after every member of staff. We appreciate every single one of them whether wholtime, retained, support or control – they are all vital," said Councillor Curran. Councillor Walker added: "As Chair of the CFA I want to thank and praise all members of staff. We are so grateful for everything you do."

If you'd like to see members of the CFA in action, any member of the public can attend a meeting of the CFA. The next meeting is Friday 17 December.

Who are the members of the CFA?

CHAIR: Cllr Terry Walker (Labour)
VICE CHAIR: Cllr Gerry Curran (Liberal Democrat)
VICE CHAIR: Cllr Sheila Cook (Conservative)

25 elected members in total:
 11 are Liberal Democrats
 8 are Conservatives
 6 are Labour



Core Values in Avon Fire & Rescue

Can-Do / Integrity / Learning / Openness / Respect / Trust

No one can deny that the Fire and Rescue Service is undergoing many transformations. With this in mind we spoke to Jerry O'Brien on the need for values at the heart of any organisation initiating change.

"To change a service or organisation you have to be different...you have to act differently. You can't move in a new direction if you use out-dated approaches to learning and development.

"Common values are key to change and in turn the modernisation of our service. When the idea of values was introduced, many people felt overwhelmed. Although most already worked to values, what we needed were values that related to both our people and service.

"Not only did we need to choose our values, but we had to put something in place to educate staff about them. We decided to do this by introducing a Values Centred Leadership (VCL) programme - to help increase self-awareness and promote emotional intelligence.

"During the first few VCLs a number of core values kept popping up. People felt that our service has a 'can-do' attitude, strives for integrity, is receptive to learning, open to new ideas, respectful to others and trusted by its community and each other. It was VCL that helped us develop a common culture based on these values.

"Our values are now being mirrored in everything we do, from how we approach everyday tasks to the way we present ourselves at community events. We have always had values, however it's only since VCL that we've started to collectively live to these values - in doing so we are grasping the fundamental concepts of equality and diversity."

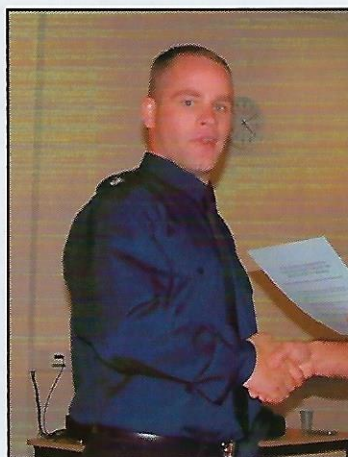
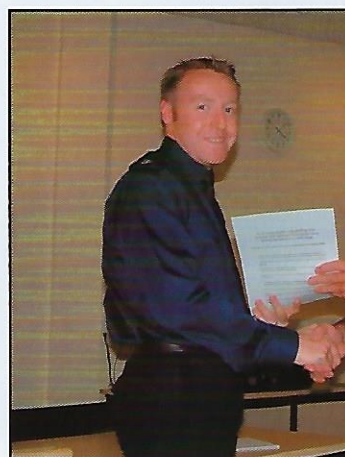
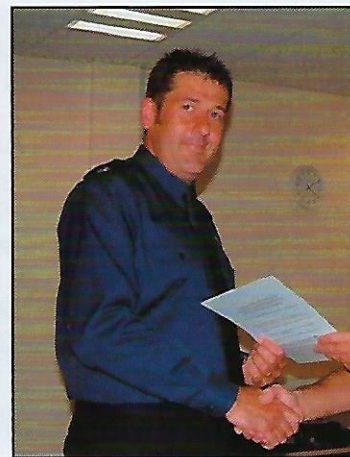
Avon Fire & Rescue was singled out in 'Core Values in the Fire and Rescue Service' (Prepared for Chief Fire Officers' Association - March 2004) for its exemplary work in integrating values into its everyday practices.

Eight more retained firefighters join the ranks...

On 25 July 2004, eight retained firefighters graduated from their training course at Severn Park, and went off to join their stations. The 14-day course was spread over four months. The graduates were:

HELEN AYRE
DAREN BEACHAM
TIMOTHY GOODMAN
MATTHEW HAMPTON
SINBAD HUNT
DANIEL LEQUELENEC
DEAN MAHONY
ANTHONY VENN

Radstock
Portishead
Clevedon
Clevedon
Bath
Bath
Weston-super-Mare
Portishead



Bristol Racial Equality Council Connecting Communities Partnership

We know that our Fire and Rescue Service works with other partners but how many of us know why or what we achieve together?

One of our key partners is Bristol REC Connecting Communities Partnership. Bristol REC is the lead partner in Bristol for the Home Office's Connecting Communities Race Equality Support Programme entitled "Access to Jobs and Services".

The programme aims to build trust, respect and confidence between Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities and public authorities.



As Manak Singh, Community Outreach Worker, explained: "Our remit covers increasing the level of BME people employed in public services and improving access to the services that these agencies provide. Avon Fire & Rescue is one of the partners that we work with to do this.

"Our activities are split into four distinct areas: assistance to individuals, community events, community involvement and developing policy with our partners.

"We've continued to develop our relationships with our partner agencies and we now have an input into the recruitment policies of our partner agencies. All our partner agencies are aware of the issues involved around increasing the representation of the BME Communities in their workforce."

Some of the work that Avon Fire & Rescue has done with Bristol REC Connecting Communities Partnership includes attending recruitment events, facilitating workshops, cultivating good race relations in the community, providing a support network and allowing use of facilities such as the mini bus.

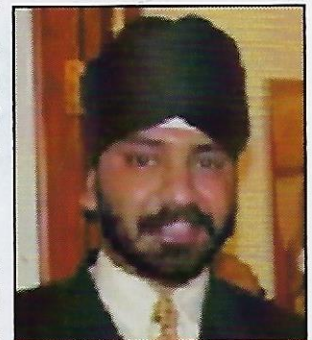
Bristol REC Connecting Communities partnership also commissions mentoring training courses, which allow experienced individuals to provide support and assistance to younger or less experienced people.

If you are interested in any of Connecting Communities Partnership work or want to get involved then please get in touch with the team by writing to: 1st Floor, 176 Easton Road, Bristol, BS5 0ES.

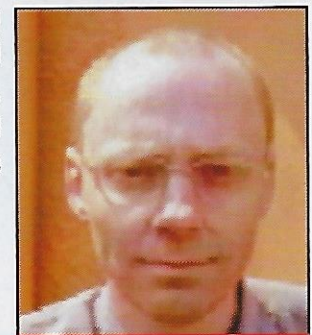
Email: enquiries@bristolrecc.co.uk or calling: (0117) 941 5184.



Cynthia Dalphinis-King



Manak Singh



Mike Martin



**BRISTOL
RACIAL
EQUALITY
COUNCIL**



**CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES**





The way I see it...

We all have views on certain things: someone has obviously thought long and hard about the following topic...

Why the fire service is making us lose our hair...

Have you ever noticed that in old watch photos everyone had a lot more hair?

Now look around - what do you see? A sea of skin I'll bet. So what has changed to increase the number of baldies in the job?

It can't be diet. 'Cheese-ons' and full breakfasts have been around for years. In fact if you look carefully at some of the old photos you can see the remnants in some of the tashes. There's also plenty of medical evidence to suggest that a high protein diet promotes hair growth. With all the cheese on toast I've eaten I should have a barnet like Mongo Jerry!

We can also rule out things like shift patterns and working routines, which haven't changed that much.

The thing that has changed however is fire kit - more specifically our helmets! Back in the days of flowing locks everyone wore traditional wide brimmed cork helmets. They were light and allowed a flow of air around the neck and ears, and the big duckbill on the back stopped rain running down the inside of your collar. This was the era of the big side burns and luscious top growth, no problem with hair loss then.

These cork helmets were replaced with fiberglass lids, similar in design but heavier and sweater. Burns started to die out and the aforementioned top growth began to look rather bedraggled.

Fast forward to the new motorcycle style helmet, fully enclosed with integral visor. A huge step forward in head protection but at what cost? The last remaining side burns were unable to survive and the gently receding hairline accelerated to become a baron landscape.

The obvious exceptions to the rule are fast trackers - who haven't been on station long enough for their heads to succumb to the new helmet, and quiet stations - who don't get enough shouts to require prolonged helmet wearing.

But these examples only serve to strengthen my case: our hair loss isn't middle age hitting us and we're growing old - it's all due to our new helmets!



Do you have an opinion you'd like to share? Please send it in to the editor. All articles will be printed anonymously.

Then and Now... life on station

In each edition we look at life on station to see how much its changed over the years. In this edition we spoke to a trainee firefighter and an experienced Station Officer to find out their views...

THEN



Martin Lowrey recalls what life was like when he first joined in 1982:

"Everything was very rigid. The OIC had little flexibility - kit check was 08.00 to 8.30, then there was 30 minutes volleyball. At 09.00 everyday we went on drill until 10.30. If you weren't drilling when a visiting officer came

round, you were in trouble...unless you were on a shout of course.

"At 11.00 or 14.00 we'd do fire safety visits or 9As. 9As were annual inspections of small commercial premises. We'd check exits and fire extinguishers, then hand draw a map of the premises to scale. The rest of the time we'd check hydrants or carry out further fire safety.

"Life on station was militaristic. You had to march into an interview and salute the senior officer. You never called anyone above the rank of Sub by their name. We had to wear collars, caps and ties on parade.

"One big difference is that we didn't have health and safety. I remember turning up to a job and Bath crew coming out, as the heat was too intense. (It was so hot that the transfers on their helmets were peeling off.) The officer asked us if we were 'man enough' to go in there after them. We had to put out the fire, even though our ears were burning.

"BA was for really big fires and we seldom used it. If we did, it was only for the initial knock down. When you heard there were two BA on a job you'd think: "Crikey, that was a job."

NOW



Dan Southcombe joined in September 2003 and is a trainee firefighter at Bedminster.

"We get in between 07.30 and 08.00 and exchange kit on the truck. On the first day of tour we wear shirts for parade, but it's quite informal. We're told who's riding where and what's in the diary.

"Then it's kit checks and routines. There is no set time for PT - we tend to do our own fitness at lunchtime in the gym. When there's a quiet period I tend to study. More experienced members of the watch test me on facts and figures, how things work or how to do a certain drill.

"The day isn't rigidly structured - it all depends on what needs to be done.

There is a lot of pre planning, looking at jobs in different ways to develop specific routines to tackle them.

"I guess some things haven't changed though, my watch runs on tea and there's a lot of watch banter!"

What's it like... being a firefighter?

We were kindly sent a copy of the following poem and a fraction of a speech about what it's like being a firefighter.

**Speech to the Brixton Rotary Club at the YMCA
Stockwell Road 1973,
Joe Milner CPO London Fire Brigade**

'The Fireman begins each tour with a parade, when he is given precise directions about which appliance he is to ride during his shift. He places his gear on the appliance to which he has been assigned and always in the same place, so that when the call comes in there can be no confusion, no hesitation. His routine continues with checking of the appliance and its equipment. He makes sure that his breathing apparatus fits and is properly functioning.

The appliance lockers are opened, their contents are checked and the position of individual items is noted, so that they can be instantly picked up in an emergency - whatever the time of day or night and whatever the weather.

After this there will be "continuation training" - drills. These are repeatedly practiced, until each man instinctively knows his part and the roles of the others in his team and can act speedily, efficiently and virtually without any directive - as he will have to do under great stress, when the chips are down. The bells go down, the fireman is on duty; whether at drills, lectures, meals or rest, race to their appliances. The drivers wait while the teleprinter chatters out the address of the emergency. Brief directions are given while the appliance doors swing open and the appliances turn out.

Now comes the often hair raising drive through dense traffic. Speed is vital so is safety. Horns blaring and blue lights flashing to help clear the road and serve also to reassure those in trouble that help is on the way. While the driver concentrates on the route, the others in the crew are struggling into their fire gear and checking locations of hydrants. The Officer-in-Charge is mentally running through his topographical knowledge of the area, wondering what kind of property will face them - what particular operational problems the property and the occupants will present. The

adrenalin is pumping through each man, keying him up for action, making him ready for some as yet unknown demand on his system Yet often the arrival is an anti climax - a false alarm, an insignificant incident. The adrenalin drains away. The men feel washed out, lethargic, though no real effort has been expended..... Many times, however, the adrenalin is needed. Some super human effort is demanded of them and is always, thank God forthcoming.'

Fireman

By Charles Clisby

Reporter asked me: "what's it like?"

I shrugged him off: "I couldn't say"
You see, I'm not a one for that,
Not one for bragging anyway.

He pressed me hard - and so I tried:
I hoped my tale he understood.
Could it be that telling him
Might do some good?

"If you put on six overcoats -
And though you suffered hell from corns
You crammed your feet in army boots -
Wore on your head a crown of thorns -
Lay in a bath, first hot, then cold -
Got out and ran a mile or so -
Into an oven squeezed yourself
And turned to nine the regulo;
If, with a bandage round your eyes,
A wooden peg on your nose,
You then crawled through a concrete maze,
Your feet wrapped round with yards of hose -
You'd get a notion what's it like."

Reporter laughed: "It can't be true".

I looked at him in the eyes and said
"You're right. Five overcoats will do".

Thank you to the person who sent these two items in. If you have something you'd like to see in print, please send it to Creative Services, Avon Fire & Rescue Headquarters, Temple Back, BS1 6EU or magazine@avonfirebrigade.gov.uk

Anonimouse

Out of Office Assistant / How to let people know when you are away by email



Just before you leave the office to go on holiday etc, take the time to do the following:

In Outlook, go to the 'Tools' Menu.

Go down and select 'Out of Office Assistant'. If it doesn't appear, go down to the double downward arrows, then the full menu should appear with 'Out of Office Assistant' about halfway up the menu bar.

Click the option that says: "I am currently Out of the Office."

Type your chosen 'out of office message' in the top white box, then click 'OK'.

Anyone who then emails you will receive your automatic reply!

Round the World in 80 blazes – A Look at

There are many fire and rescue services around the world, however each country is different in its methods of life saving and equipment resources. Here in the UK we're lucky enough not to have to deal with earthquakes (no not the noise you make after a satisfying fry up), tornados or landslides of mammoth scales. International fire and rescue services though have to contend with densely populated areas and geographical extremes in the areas they cover. Some have little in the way of equipment, where others have impressive equipment portfolios that would make James Bond feel inferior.

France has Star Wars style helmets, Croatia is very proud of the fact that its latest vehicle was purchased in 1991 and New South Wales Fire Service, Australia, complete their impressive line up with a helicopter. Maybe we should ask the Chief for a helicopter, though not sure whether HQ would cope with a heli pad; things would get very windy! But if maintenance costs were too high, we could always offer sightseeing tours of the surrounding area.

Both Hong Kong and Tokyo have Fire motorbikes and matching fire vehicles (Batman and Robin would be most jealous). Perhaps the way forward for Avon is on two wheels as opposed to four...at least the ADOs would get to shouts quicker!

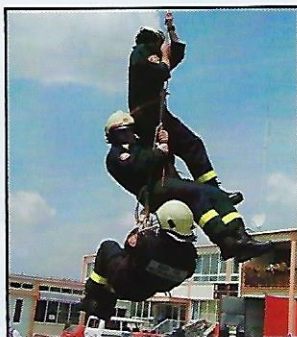
Anna Comerford takes a little look at how other fire and rescue services equip themselves...



Luke wondered whether life as a French firefighter would pay better than his current Jedi salary

Croatia

- The Bjelovar Fire Brigade in Croatia has 42 uniformed staff.
- They have a fleet of 11 - their newest appliance being purchased in 1991



Sweden (Stockholm Fire Department)

- The rescue operations centre (main control room) in Stockholm is one of the world's most advanced alarm and control centres. It is built into rock, 30 metres below one of the capital's main fire stations.

Bahamas

- The Bahamas has an all-volunteer fire department that is funded by donations from the community and visitors to the island.
- Their apparatus includes a 1965 Land Rover used as a utility vehicle.
- Their primary response vehicle is an Isuzu NKR, which carries 650 gallons of water, five firefighters and medical equipment - designed to fit the narrow roads on the island.

Malaysia Fire & Rescue Dept

- Malaysia's Fire department includes multi skilled task units which include:
 - High-rise Firefighting and Rescue Unit
 - Airborne unit
 - Underwater Rescue Team
 - Forest Fire Unit
 - Smoke Jumpers (Firefighters who jump from aircraft into areas such as forest fires)
- They have 72 Aerial Platform/Turn Table Ladders, four helicopters, 115 fireboats, 486 fire tenders, 217 fire stations and 10,198 uniformed staff.



international fire and rescue services

Hong Kong

- The Hong Kong Fire Service Department is reputedly the best in the world with 8675 uniformed personnel.
- Hong Kong Fire Department also provides an Ambulance service.
- They have 12 Special Rescue Squads trained to deal with disasters such as earthquakes, tunnel fires and mountain rescue.
- They operate 779 fire appliances and supporting vehicles
- Recently the department acquired nine hydraulic platforms, two fire motorcycles and two mini fire and rescue trucks.
- They also operate the world's most advanced purpose-built fireboat, which has an electric automatic firefighting system with a range of up to 150 metres.



Australia (New South Wales Fire Brigade)



- The NSW Fire Brigades consists of approximately 6500 firefighters, 3500 community fire unit volunteers and 330 administrative and trades staff.
- A network of 338 fire stations across the State and a fleet of 882 vehicles.
- NSW owns a helicopter with NSW Police. Its primary role is to respond to terrorist incidents and urban search and rescue.
- The NSW Fire Brigade prides itself in its specialist rescue expertise in swift water and alpine rescue, and vertical / confined space rescue.
- Resilience to deal with bushfires, storms, floods, landslides, building collapses, earthquakes and other emergency situations.
- NSW also provides cold and extreme climate clothing - for work in the Snowy Mountains and when fighting bush fires.

France



- In 2002 French firefighters carried out 3612 incidents which means they went on an incident every 9 seconds.
- In France 85% of firefighters are volunteers and 15% wholetime.

Task Force Training Facility, Texas

In January this year, ADO Rob Davis, New Dimensions, attended a fortnight with other UK fire and rescue services at the Texas task force training facility.

The training centre is known as "disaster city" and is used to train emergency responders from all over the USA and overseas.

The Texas task force is formed under the banner of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), whose role in a disaster is to provide search and rescue assistance, long term assistance in the rehabilitation phase of the disaster cycle and to provide specialists in various aspects of emergency management such as hazardous materials officers etc.

FEMA is made up of 1st responders (i.e. Police, Fire and emergency medical support staff) and can respond anywhere in the world if the host Government requires international help. The training facility at College Station Texas can re-enact any large-scale disaster including building collapse, train incidents or major petro-chemical fires.



Firefighter Games



The 8th World Firefighter Games took place from 28 August to 4 September and saw firefighters from Avon travelling to compete in a multitude of activities against firefighters from across the globe.

Although not quite as glamorous a location as Las Vegas, Perth or Durban as in previous years, all those who attended had an outstanding time and returned with tales of glory and camaraderie. There was a huge range of events at this years games, from beach volleyball and fishing to archery and 'Toughest Firefighter Alive'.

This year's team was the most diverse we ever had. We competed in eleven different sports over the eight days, and came back with a medal, with Pat Foley brining home a Bronze in Mountain Biking.

Gordon Turner, games team co-ordinator, said: "On and off the sporting field everyone had a great time. Old acquaintances were renewed with firefighters from across the world and past adversaries were competed against.

"It was great to finally come back with a medal - congratulations Pat! Pat also just missed bringing home another two medals by coming fourth in the 80k Road Race.

"Most of the competitors from Avon are looking forward to the games in two years time when they can taste the delights of the Orient in Hong Kong. They have already started training in earnest in hope to bring home more medals. Keep up the hard work everyone!"



Results

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Nick Baldwin | Badminton Doubles (with Gordon T) | 5th |
| | Mountain Biking | 7th |
| | Road Race 80k | 15th |
| | Tennis | 17th |
| | Triathlon | 16th |
| Phil Bond | Beach Volleyball (with Danny M) | 17th |
| Simon Hill | Road Race 80k | 60th |
| | Time Trial (cycling) | 40th |
| Matt Hunt | Toughest Firefighter Alive | TBA |
| Pat Foley | Mountain Biking | 3rd |
| | Road Race 80k | 4th |
| Pete Moore | Archery | 5th |
| Danny Munden | Beach Volleyball (with Phil B) | 17th |
| Brian Penny | Half Marathon | Top 20 |
| Rob Seaman | Triathlon | 41st |
| Gordon Turner | Badminton Doubles (with Nick B) | 5th |
| Tony Wittcomb | Course Angling | 19th |
| Chris White | Triathlon | 13th |

Fishy winners tales...

When it comes to a sport that requires sitting around, Gareth Lloyd (Avonmouth, Blue Watch) seems to be able to produce champions. As manager of two Avon Fire & Rescue fishing teams, he's having success after success. The A team, Avon Gold, won the National Fire Service Coarse Fishing Championships in Leicester this August, with the B team coming thirteenth out of 60 teams.

The A team:

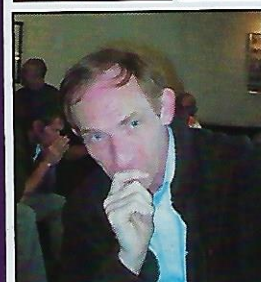
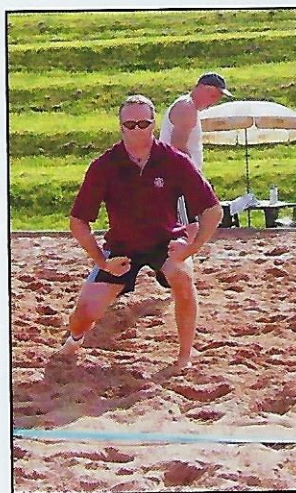
Lff Tony Wittcombe (C)
Ff Rich Lynn
FF Rob Lynn
Ff Chris Jones

The B team:

Ff Rob Mills
Ff Dan Pratt
Sub O Gareth Lloyd
Ff Graham Pownall

Tony Wittcomb, Captain, came 2nd overall on the day with the 2nd highest bag weight.

Tony has also recently returned from the World Firefighter Games where he competed in Course Fishing - coming 19th out of hundreds of competitors. Well done Tony!

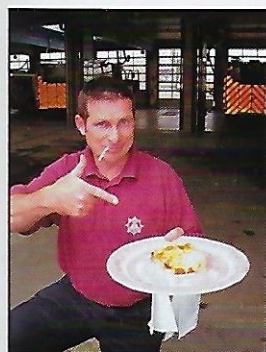


Avonmouth White Watch ...honey hunt

On the hunt for those legendary Avonmouth honey recipes (see Issue Two) our intrepid reporter managed to track down 05 White Watch to their kitchen.

However those renowned chefs were keeping things under wraps and their sweet tasting recipes remain as mysterious as the eleven herbs and spices in KFC's chicken coating!

Instead we were treated to a recipe for the now famous fire service 'Cheese On' by ex-marine Ash Wright...supposedly it's all down to the timing!



'Cheese On'... in the words of Ash

Grate some cheese on some bread.

Put under the grill for exactly three minutes 28 seconds - serve immediately!

If you'd like to try some variations to Ash's simplistic, yet utterly scrumptious 'Cheese On' why not try the following:

For a Dutch version make with Gouda cheese

For an Onion Cheese Toast use some chopped onion, pepper and mushroom, minced garlic, mayonnaise, extra strong Cheddar, Parmesan and some splashes of hot chilli sauce. Mix well and top toast. Grill until golden brown.

For an Italian version (one to impress the ladies and gents!) preheat oven to 180 degrees, drizzle toast with Balsamic vinegar and olive oil, add some diced plum tomatoes and top with mozzarella. Sprinkle with herbs, salt and a generous amount of ground black pepper. Bake in the oven for four to six minutes or until the cheese is soft and melted.

News Flash

Our reporters have uncovered a bit of honey obsession. It seems not only Avonmouth White Watch worship the stuff... use of our sticky friend has now reached Headquarters. Acquiring Lori McManus' (Supplies) Honey Cake recipe was not such a covert operation and we are delighted to disclose it below.

Honey Cake

Makes one 11 x 7 inch (27.5 x 17.5cm) cake

7 oz (200g) self-raising flour
Pinch of salt
5 oz (150g) butter
4 oz (100g) soft light brown sugar
6 oz (175g) clear honey
1 tablespoon water
2 eggs
Flaked almonds - for top

Heat oven to 350°F (180°C) / gas 4. Grease and line tin - ensure greaseproof paper is long enough to overlap sides. Sift flour and salt - set aside.

Gently heat butter, sugar, honey and water in a saucepan until the butter has melted. Then blend together. Allow to cool. Once cool beat eggs in one at a time. Add the sifted flour / salt and beat with wooden spoon until smooth.

Pour into tin and spread level. Sprinkle with flaked almonds. Place into the centre of oven and bake for 30-35 minutes, until well risen and firm to the touch. Cool in tin for 30 minutes. Loosen sides and, holding the paper ends, lift out cake and place on a wire rack to cool completely. Remove paper and cut to desired sizes!



Top Motoring Tips ...a matter of emissions.

Exhaust emissions are harmful to our environment and can cause headaches, respiratory problems such as asthma, and even death. There are a few ways that we can reduce exhaust emissions - not only will this help the environment, but it also saves money by reducing the amount of petrol we use!

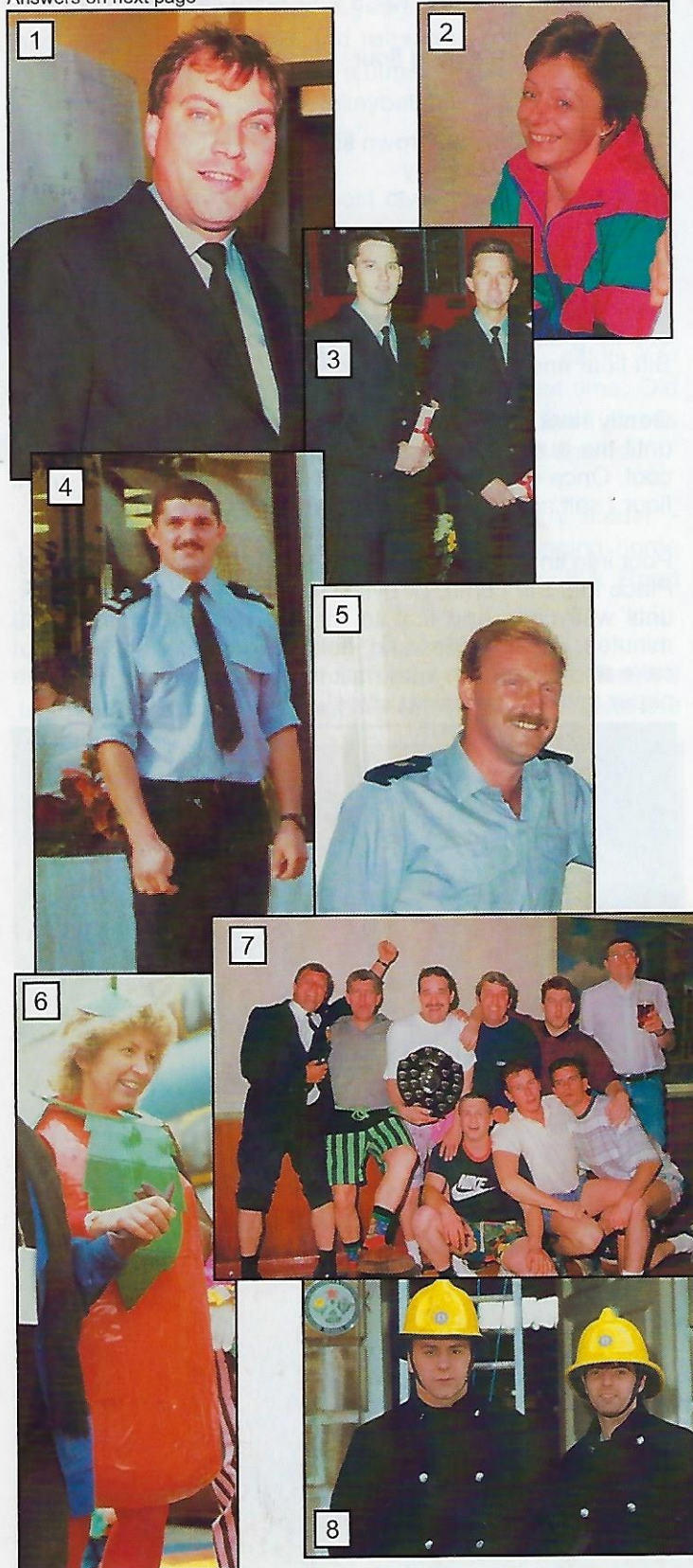
TOP TIPS TO CUT DOWN YOUR EMISSIONS

- Service your car regularly - maintains engine efficiency / cuts fuel consumption.
- Plan routes to avoid getting lost - which add on unnecessary miles
- Pack roof racks to keep luggage as low as possible. Packing luggage in plastic sheeting can improve fuel consumption by 2%. Remember to remove the roof rack if you don't need it.
- Use air vents first before opening a window.
- Check your tyre pressure regularly - increase pressures when carrying extra loads.

Who are they now?

Last issue's 'Who are they now' - photos of those we know and love when they were younger, thinner, hairier etc - seems to have brought out the mischievous streak in you all. We've been inundated by photos and calls for this feature to return. Therefore, back by popular demand, we're delighted to print the following pictures of your colleagues. Can you guess who they are now...

Answers on next page



Dear ~~Dippy~~ Kev...

It is with regret that Dippy wasn't available to answer your burning questions and solve the unsolvable for this issue of the magazine. However all is not lost as the highly capable Kev stepped in at the last minute instead!



Below is the one printable letter received with thanks!

Dear ~~Dippy~~, Kev,
There's a bloke on our watch who is always playing jokes. Everytime we try to come up with something to catch him out, the clever so-and-so rumbles us. We need a smart old trick to get him back. Any ideas?
Yours, Seriously Perplexed.

Dear Seriously Perplexed,
This one never fails. First, start a station water fight. Then, when things have reached fever pitch, run up to the joker with a pair of fire boots shouting at him "quick, quick, fill up (insert name of colleague - preferably another joker, who your 'so-and-so' is likely to want revenge on) boots". After he has filled them up to the brim, run off and when at a safe distance inform him they are in fact his own fire boots.

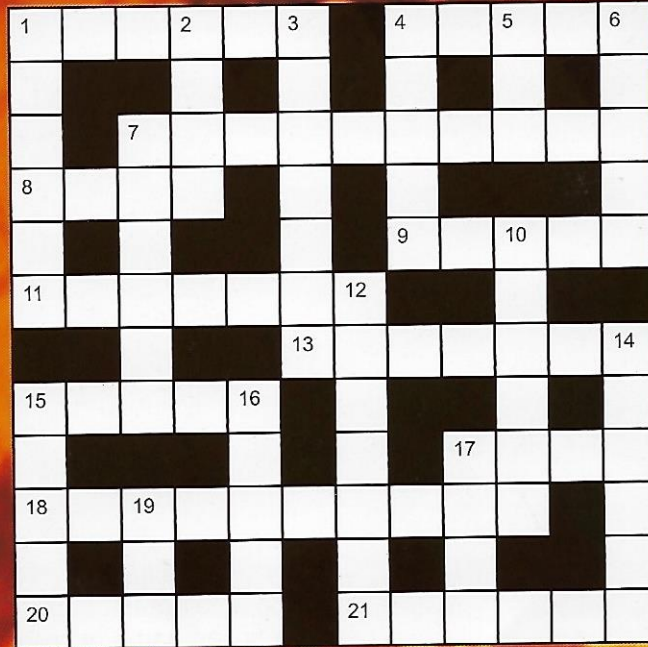
I would never ever be so stupid as to fall for this trick at all. No really, I would like to state that I was not tricked into filling my own fire boots with water...

If you have a problem you'd like to put forward to Dippy please send it to the Magazine editorial team, Creative Services at HQ - marked 'Dear Dippy Post Sack'.



Crossword...

Here's a fire & rescue tea time teaser quiz for you, with a few hidden extras, designed by former SDO Tony Townsend (now retired).



Across

1. Rescues from such places are dirty and dangerous (6)
4. Nautical term perhaps used on fireboats (5)
7. The spread of the Kings Cross underground fire was blamed on these (10)
8. Drill yard order used when a point of clarification is necessary (4)
9. Important part of BA sets (5)
11. To give up (7)
13. ***** Roll boards were once carried in the cabs (7)
15. To live or reside (5)
17. An item of uniform not seen so much today (4)
18. Liquid measure denoted by the letters cl (10)
20. One of the states of matter (5)
21. One of the ways a line is laid (6)

Down

1. NATO alphabet term for letter S (6)
2. Compass point (4)
3. Could house an engine (7)
4. What you sound on discovering a fire (5)
5. Shortened term for rank above station officer (3)
6. Brigade equipment is subjected to such standards (5)
7. Wheeled ladder not seen to-day (6)
10. Ice cream embellished with fruit (6)
12. County town of Norfolk (7)
14. Surname of the first Chief Officer of the County of Avon Fire Brigade (6)
15. Avonmouth for example (5)
16. Scottish landowner (5)
17. An appliance is ineffectual without it (4)
19. Zero (3)



Who are they now?
 (1) Alan Middleton (2) Helen Matthews (3) Bob Leppier & Geoff Hutchings (4) Dave Leeworthy (5) Tony Clarke (6) Lorraine Abrahams (7) Back row: Knockner White, Paul Drake, Bob Strong, Paddy O'Leary, Liam O'Driscoll Front Row: Nick Carlier, Paul Cullen, Matt Jones (8) Martin Collins & Mark Webb (9) Lesley Lee, Andy Wilcox & Bob Smith (10) Martin Hill (11) Martin Lowry

A peek at the past...

Anna Comerford looks at the fire and rescue service of yesteryear...

This issue: Fires of Avon

Did you know?

- The Theatre Royal, Bath, was destroyed by fire on Good Friday 18 April 1862. The theatre burned from end to end, with nothing but bare walls remaining. According to *The Bath Journal* 'The conflagration was one of the most grand and terrible ever witnessed in this city'.
- On 28 & 29 June 1942, Weston-super-Mare was devastated when almost 100 bombs and some 10,000 incendiaries fell from the skies. Over 102 people were killed, 400 injured and 3,000 made homeless. Water from the seashore was used on the blaze at the Tivoli Cinema in the Boulevard, but to no avail.
- On Boxing Day 1897 a destructive fire destroyed Birnbeck Pier. The Weston Mercury printed a very descriptive account of how firefighters responded 'like grease lightning' to the call - the driver was complimented on "the tooling of the horses into position" at the fire.
- One of the most destructive fires occurred in the old walled city of Bristol in 1647, when flames swept across the timber houses on Bristol Bridge, destroying twenty-four of them. As a result, the town council ordered a fire engine from London (at the cost of £31 10s) plus 48 buckets (£8. 8s.). Each member of the council was told to keep six buckets in his house.
- In November 1905 Pickfords Warehouses on Colston Avenue, Bristol caught fire. The blaze was so intense that it began to spread to adjoining properties including an electrical engineering works. Thousands of supporters returning from Bristol City's ground gathered to watch the spectacular blaze.



Tivoli Cinema 1942



Weston town viewed from the Marine lake area, 1942

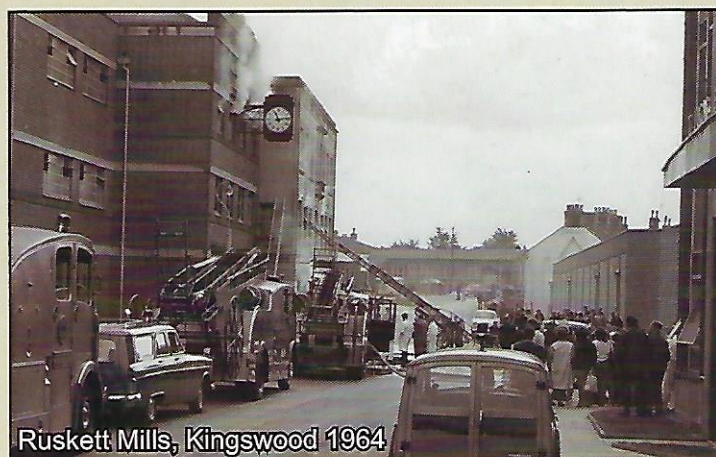
Other fires of Avon...



Fairfax St. Bristol 1913 FIRE IN BRISTOL



Elmtree Inn, Bristol 1906



Ruskett Mills, Kingswood 1964