



2 Smart 4 Drugs roadshow - P3



Civilian officers - centre pages



Snow sporting awards - P11

MOVING YOUTH ISSUES FORWARD

THE force's pioneering approach to youth strategy will be fanfared by Home Office Minister Hazel Blears later this month when she opens a two-day conference in Essex.

Ms Blears will give an opening address to Essex Police's Youth Strategy

Conference at Five Lakes in Tolleshunt D'Arcy - kickstarting two days of discussion around engaging young people involved in the criminal justice system.

The conference, on March 16 and 17, will be attended by speakers from across the police service in England, as well as from local authorities, social services, Youth Offending Teams and education.

By Ben Pennington

Presentations will come from Thurrock's final warning scheme, safer schools partnerships and youth inclusion programmes.

The conference will also see case studies enacted by the London Bus Theatre Company.

The force's youth strategy,

catchlined *It's never too early, it's never too late* comes in six parts: engaging with young people; young people as victims and witnesses; pre-crime prevention; post-crime reduction; post-crime deterrence and detection; and human resource development.

Chief Constable David Stevens said: "I am delighted the Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and

Community Safety will be joining us to look at the way forward in dealing with youth issues.

"Essex has always taken a strong lead in youth matters, and we are one of a small number of police forces who have a comprehensive Youth Strategy.

"I am confident, that in this way, we will continue to find innovative ways forward."

New chief officer choice is Bliss



● Chief Supt Andy Bliss joins Essex as the new Assistant Chief Constable (Personnel).

THIS month sees the arrival of a new chief officer following the retirement of Assistant Chief Officer Philip Onions.

Andy Bliss takes up the post of Assistant Chief Constable (Personnel) where he will be responsible for staff issues and training development.

Mr Bliss will be reunited with current ACC Liam Brigginsaw as the 43-year-old also arrives from Sussex, where he joined the police service in 1982.

Following his appointment by the police authority, Chairman Robert Chambers said: "Andy will get our full support in order to further develop the force and support staff."

Mr Bliss graduated in history from Durham University. He spent his time from constable to inspector in a number of uniform and CID roles, including two spells at Gatwick Airport.

In 1994, he was seconded to the Regional Crime Squad in south London, working against international and organised crime, before returning to Sussex as detective chief inspector.

In 1997, he was promoted to superintendent as head of community safety, sitting on the Home Office Working Group which produced guidance for crime reduction partnerships between police forces and local authorities.

Between 1999 and 2002 he was divisional commander at Brighton, initiating the amalgamation to form Brighton and Hove Division. During that time he commanded the Millennium celebrations which attracted around 60,000 revellers to Brighton.

"Having met some of the staff in the last few days, I am impressed with their commitment and

professionalism," said Mr Bliss. "I am really looking forward to working with my fellow chief officers, the police authority, colleagues across the force and local people, in improving performance."

Mr Bliss is married with a nine-year-old son. The family enjoy skiing and mountain-walking.

Mr Bliss' personal interests include reading history and politics, and archaeology, with a recent participation in the excavation of a Roman villa.

Chief Constable David Stevens said: "I am extremely pleased to welcome Andy.

"He will lead an experienced and highly-skilled team to further develop our workforce to improve the service we give to the public. Andy comes to Essex with an excellent track record and will be a valuable addition to our team."

Troubled waters lie ahead

IT IS surprising that, after all the years in which the number of civilians working in police forces has increased, only now are we considering the effectiveness and efficiency gains they bring to the police service.

Let me stress that, contrary to popular opinion, the Federation values the huge contribution that police staff make to the success of operational policing.

As far as civilianisation is concerned, we accept that, in general, police officers should not be deployed on tasks that do not require the exercise of police powers.

Traffic wardens were just beginning to be employed to relieve beat police officers in towns. It was the start of a process that has continued unabated and now shows signs of acceleration.

It is true that for many years, the prevailing

Federation Newsline

by Terry Spelman



culture in the police service has regarded civilians as ancillaries who are there to assist with the smooth running of police forces, but not as an integrated part.

I see no reason why police staff should not be regarded as equal partners with police officers - they certainly should also be adequately rewarded.

We are not "better than you" or "more valuable than you" when it comes to assessing the respective roles. We are - to put it in one word - different.

There are those who seek to blur the edges. It is unclear today where the demarcation lines are, or for that matter, whether they are any.

Let me remind you that a constable is a citizen who is locally-appointed, has authority under the Crown, maintains order, prevents and detects crime and prosecutes offenders.

Officers are civilians in uniform. We are non-political, impartial and accountable.

Civilian staff provide services without which we, as police officers, would not be able to function.

We have seen a slow, but gradual expansion of non-sworn officers into areas of policing that involve the exercise of authority over citizens.

However, the most glaring departure that causes us the greatest concern is the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

Let me make it clear, the Federation actually agrees with the Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner Sir Ian Blair and others who enthusiastically support PCSOs.

There is a need for an official, uniformed police presence patrolling the streets.

What a PCSO cannot do is take immediate action when crime or disorderly behaviour is going on in their presence, except to send for the police.

We are concerned that the Government clearly intends

to press ahead with the extensive recruitment of more PCSOs even before the evaluation of the current pilot schemes has taken place.

The PCSOs represent a fairly radical departure from the principle that police powers on the streets are vested in duly sworn and empowered police officers.

Danger

We see a danger that, as an absence of adequate police powers becomes more apparent, the Government's solutions will be to increase those powers and thereby create second-tier policing.

There are those in Government and the police service who seem to view the PCSOs not as a supplementary police presence, but as eventually replacing police officers as patrol officers.

They have not been so bold as to say this in so many words as yet, but their demeanour is unmistakable, and we regard this as a retrograde and potentially disastrous idea.

The principle of investing in civilian employees with police powers could well be extended to other areas, so before we go any further we need a truly independent and informed examination of the whole idea.

It is because of our experience with police reforms under previous governments that the Federation continues to argue that these issues would be best resolved by an independent examination with the status of a Royal Commission.

Governments come and go. This government has embarked on a massive and ambitious programme of constitutional change.

We say that the future shape of the police service and the ethos of policing in this century should not be left to any particular government, but to the kind of intellectual scrutiny that only a Royal Commission can provide.

We are not saying that we expect a Royal Commission

to agree with all, or even most, of the agenda for change the Federation would like to see. In our desire for change, we must ensure we don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

Probationer-training is undergoing radical change, with promotion and selection procedures also facing a total revamp.

If we do not sure what we want our police officers to be or do, how do we know who to recruit, how to train, what to pay, how to equip?

Ever since the Federation came into being, national conditions of service have applied and those conditions are specifically intended to reflect the unique role of the police.

We do not and will not accept that bringing our civilian colleagues fully into the fold means that in future, the determination of police pay and conditions will be conducted as a joint exercise.

There are features of operational policing that fully justify the benefits our members enjoy. Those features are unique to the duties and responsibilities of police officers.

Restrictions

We are governed by statutory regulations that restrict our private lives. We, along with the Armed Forces do not enjoy the civil rights that apply to the rest of society - no right to take an active part in politics, no right to belong to a trade union and no right to take industrial action.

The fire brigade's union uses strikes and bans on overtime and certain kinds of duties to pursue its aims.

Recently, thousands of civil servants walked out on strike. Civilian employees of the police service are able to take action of this kind. Commendably many have signed no strike agreements, but these do not have the force of law and breaches do not carry the penal sanctions that apply to the police.

We carry personal, legal and criminal responsibility. We are accountable for every action we take. We are a

disciplined service, with a rigid hierarchical structure that is not found in any other occupation. We are obliged to obey lawful orders and instructions.

Where and how we are deployed is in the hands of police management, and we are subject to instant redeployment and transfers.

We see no reason why the aspirations of our civilian colleagues, in terms of their own pay and conditions and service, cannot continue to be determined within their own negotiating machinery.

I could be accused of looking this gift horse in the mouth, especially when it was the Federation that pressed for an end to the policy of allowing police officer numbers to fall.

It would have been preferable to have seen a long-term rolling programme of guaranteed expansion of police numbers, supported by the essential infrastructure of probationer-training, supervision and mentoring that would have guaranteed its success.

I am worried that we are doing these recruits no favours at all by pitching them in at the deep end without the support mechanisms from which we all benefited in our early days.

I fully expect that within the very near future we, in the Federation, will be engaged in serious negotiations with the Government, police authorities and ACPO over the findings of the HMIC's report and the future make-up of the police family.

We will approach those discussions in a responsible and constructive frame of mind, and we will of course be consulting our own members about the implications of any proposals. We will not simply defend the status quo.

At the same time, let me give due notice that the Federation will defend to the utmost of our ability, the unique status of the sworn police officer, and all that this implies.

Frenetic few months

PHASE two of the Freedom of Information project is now entering a busy nine-month period as the force works towards the January target date.

The second phase involves assessing the data we hold, how policy is written, keeping the publication scheme current by proactively publishing material and looking at how we will handle requests for information from the public.

When the FOI Act became law three years ago, it required public authorities to make available certain information previously withheld. Phase one of the project saw the implementation of the publication scheme.

The public can now access information, including minutes of the five main force policy and programme board meetings, from the website.

Project Manager Darren Thomas has been overseeing work on a survey of electronic, paper and audio visual records held by the force.

"The Act has been designed to make publicly-funded bodies more accessible to the general public," said Mr Thomas. "The work being done by the project will ensure that the force meets its obligations under the Act by the deadline of January."

From 2005, the force will have to consider requests from the public for any piece of recorded information it holds, although there will be exemptions to prevent disclosure of certain sensitive information.

Requests for information will generally have to be answered within 20 days and a fee may be charged.

Essex is where it's at

THE good news from Training and Development is that Essex is the force to join, with some former officers returning after "having found the grass is not always greener" on the other side.

Figures for the last six months show that 42 officers have transferred in from other forces, while only 33 have left. There are also another three officers due to join this month.

The force is currently approximately only 20 short of its establishment figure of 3,116, but the number of people wanting to join is in the hundreds, with the recruitment section busy with applications.

Head of Training and Development Supt Dave Folkard said: "This is good news for us as there has been a lot of talk about the number of officers that have left Essex for other forces, especially the Met."

"However, our figures show that since this January we are only at a loss of one, with the recent trend showing more joining than leaving."

Picture success

THE mystery of the unknown police station has been solved by two readers who recognised the photo published in *The Law* at the beginning of the year.

The station is Great Bardfield and was familiar to the widow of Pc Hubert Plummer who served there from 1951-1957, and then by former Sgt Henry Quinnear who took over from him, serving from 1957-1965.

The building, in the high street, is now converted back to a residential house.

A new era beckons

THIS is the year the police service loses its exemption from the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It is likely to herald a new deal for disabled officers.

We are pleased that the physical requirements for entry will be justifiable and job-related, with the automatic disqualification of candidates with disabilities no longer applying.

We already have officers who are physically disabled and the new atmosphere will enable many others to be open about their condition and be treated with due consideration.

We have had a long-standing problem with disabled officers who have been injured on duty. In the old days, such members could be found non-operational posts but, with increasing civilianisation, this has often not been possible.

The result has seen many officers retire on ill-health pensions when they could still have made a valid contribution, with the service retaining the benefit of their experience.

As a result of the new Act, we look forward to a more considerate and imaginative approach to the redeployment of disabled officers.

Educating children about substance misuse the fun way

Offbeat

A ROAD policing inspector, working as half-night county cover, was rather surprised at the huge tailback of traffic behind the patrol vehicle as they made his way to Great Totham.

Mystified that the following vehicles had also stopped at the destination, the inspector got out, only to discover that the matrix display on top of the marked Volvo was 'POLICE, FOLLOW ME'.

Recycling scheme saves the trees

CONFIDENTIAL waste has now gone green at sites throughout the force, resulting in the saving of 1,925 trees last year.

Previously, confidential waste was sent to Edmonton, north London to be incinerated, but a best-value review showed that it would be more cost-effective for waste to be shredded on site by a contractor and recycled.

In 2002, the property services and purchasing departments set up a forcewide trial to test the services of shredding contractors and review costs.

Chelmsford Division had already set up a scheme and other divisions joined the trial, although two divisions have now dropped out.

Facilities Services Manager Rob Holden said: "As soon as we ensured people weren't leaving paper clips and staples in paper bundles placed in confidential sacks, the initiative began running smoothly."

The trial is rated a success and figures show that nearly 2,000 trees were saved by recycling the paper. The process has proved to be not only more cost-effective, but it also reduces waste and is environmentally friendly.

Radios ready to roll out

A MILESTONE in the move to Airwave was passed last month when Essex accepted the system as being "ready for service".

This means that we accepted Airwave as meeting our requirements in terms of coverage and performance.

Training in the use of Airwave will begin this month, with Crime and Mobile Support Divisions who have countywide responsibilities, the first to have use of it.

The first 'go-live' date is planned for June, with the whole of the county using the system by the end of the year.

Drink and drugs and hockey roll

THE perils of drink spiking and the implications of cannabis reclassification are to feature in this year's award-winning drugs education programme - 2 Smart 4 Drugs.

The scheme, run by Essex Police in association with Essex FM, has also become such a victim of its own success it has been forced to transfer to much bigger venues, such as the Cliffs Pavilion in Southend, and the Civic Theatre in Chelmsford.

Entering its eighth year, the organisers of 2 Smart 4 Drugs continue to work relentlessly to ensure the roadshow remains fresh and keeps up with the trends of the day.

Sport will have an impact on this year's shows, acknowledging the influence celebrities and sports personalities have on today's youngsters.

Ice hockey team, the Chelmsford Chieftains, will be taking to the stage for a roller-skating extravaganza.

By Kim Perks

Their message will be that sport and drugs don't mix and they will involve children from the audience in a competition in the style of The Generation Game.

The ever-popular quiz will be hosted this year by police cadets. Aged between 16 and 18, the cadets are ideal candidates to relate to the young audience whilst promoting the police service as a potential future career.

Guest DJ for this year's shows will be Essex FM's Mikey Porter, well known for *Mikey's Missions* on the breakfast show as well as heading his own drivetime slot.

2 Smart 4 Drugs guests will have the opportunity to register their ideas for a 'mission' and Mikey Porter will carry out the winning suggestion.

Joining Mike Porter, and showing their continued support, will be singer Tina Cousins, the Chain Reaction Theatre Company and the Essex FM dancers.



● The show's stars practise one more time during dress rehearsals.

Community Safety Officer Pc Victoria Wilson said: "Keeping a campaign like this alive year after year is no easy task, but when it comes to protecting and educating our future generations it is vital we don't become complacent.

"We are confident that the programme we have devised this year will be as fun as previous roadshows, but still as effective in driving home the message about the dangers of

substance abuse.

"Certainly the feedback we have received from previous audiences, particularly those individuals who are now working adults, satisfies us that this type of educational awareness does pay off."

For the first time ever, each division in the county will receive a visit.

The 10 events will be staged throughout the next couple of months.

Street soliciting gets red card

THE lights have gone out in a red light district of Southend after six local women received anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) from the courts which prohibit them from entering an area in Southend between the hours of 6pm and 6am.

The order also prevents harassment, alarm or distress being caused to any resident in the area.

This positive action taken by the police and magistrates has been a strong deterrent to other prostitutes who previously worked the York Road area of the town.

Southend Community Policing Team officer Pc Adam High said: "This has come as a great relief to the long-suffering residents of the area.

"However, we are still having to deal with kerb-crawlers who come to the area and drive around looking for prostitutes, without success.

"Prostitution has simply moved away from this area and we would urge kerb crawlers to do the same."

Southend Divisional Commander Chief Supt Mick Thwaites said: "Not only will we reduce crime but we will tackle anti-social behaviour and the problem of prostitutes.

"We are pleased that the action that we have taken appears to be working at the moment, but we won't step back and will continue to deal with those who blight the lives of Southend residents.

"We consider this is a serious issue for residents."

Changes ahead for police complaints

A NEW body for dealing with police complaints aimed at boosting public confidence in policing is gearing up for its launch next month.

The organisation, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), will replace the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) as part of wider measures under the Police Reform Act 2002.

The new system will mean major changes for professional standards departments across the country, as well as making matters more open and transparent.

Led by 18 independent commissioners, the IPCC will have stronger powers than the PCA, including its own investigators.

There will be four kinds of formal investigation, ranging

from local for police-only inquiries to IPCC-managed and IPCC-led investigations.

It is anticipated that only one in around 100 cases a year will the body either manage or lead a complaint investigation.

Acting Head of Professional Standards T/Supt Peter Hood welcomed the new proposed changes, hoping they would "change the current systems".

"There are real opportunities to speed up the process from the time of complaint to adjudication," said T/Supt Hood. "The vast majority of complaints will now be dealt with in-house without any reference to an external body such as the PCA or IPCC.

"However, a final decision on the new regulations has yet to be made, especially on

those parts which, for the first time, will cover police staff.

"Once all the regulations have been agreed and published, we will ensure everyone is updated on the new systems and how they will be affected."

One key change is that instead of the PCA writing a letter on the outcome of a case, forces will take on the task.

For the first time, witnesses or other people 'adversely affected by an incident' can make a complaint, and the IPCC has new powers to call in any matter, even when no complaint has been made.

New standards will be set for recording of complaints, with the IPCC and not the Home Office gathering and publishing this information.

Cameras are poor substitute for cars

I WOULD like to thank Brian Ladd for his reply to my original letter in the February issue of *The Law*.

Unfortunately, I remain totally unconvinced.

Mr. Ladd, I feel, makes my case even stronger by the statements which he has made.

Quote: "Essex Police is but one of six constituent members".

This to me reads as if there are five others to share the blame for failure.

Quote: "The partnership's aims and objectives have always been to

reduce overall speed and casualties".

This to me reads as if there are lots of meetings which look at the ideal world, yet ignoring the real world.

Quote: "There are many other activities, too numerous to mention, save to say that Traffic Management co-ordinates a vast amount of road safety issues and talks and meets with colleagues in the local authorities on a daily basis".

This to me reads as if there are a lot of meetings, but people don't really know what to do.

I am sorry to labour the point, but serious and fatal road accidents are

rising at an alarming rate. The public can see it almost every week, as headlines in their local newspapers.

Dare I say that in my time of service, Essex Police had a traffic division which was renowned for its enforcement of traffic law.

It was well acknowledged by every driver, be they, lorry, coach, or car drivers, that when in Essex you complied with the lawful limits.

Statistics reflected that style of policing and were lower than now - that all appears to have been lost.

The patrol car has been replaced with a speed camera, which just isn't working to reduce casualties, but brings in good revenue.

I think these days it is called progress by those who sit behind a desk.

But in the real world, there is no substitute for a physical police presence, be that on foot or in a marked vehicle, in order to maintain a policy of fair and firm boundaries, regarding both crime and casualty reduction.

Essex Police once led the way in traffic enforcement, with a low casualty rate. We now seem to lead the way in revenue collection at the cost of casualties.

John Newberry
Retired (traffic sergeant)

Old boys made Band just gets better eye contact

I FOUND the following letter in the *Southend Standard* of December 15, 1949, whilst catching up on the newspapers:

"53 black eyes on the beat. Police Sergeant Gerard "Gerry" Sutton of Quebec Avenue, Southend has been a policeman for 30 years during which time he has received 53 black eyes, but on Thursday he finished his duty at 10 o'clock and hung up his uniform for the last time. He is retiring to "take it easy for a little while."

He was one of three left of a gun party of eight after action on the "Vindictive" at Zebrugge in 1918. Following this action, a ballot was taken for the VC and Sergeant Sutton drew a blank, but he

received the Croix de Guerre and also holds the Mons Medal for General Service and the King's Coronation Medal.

In the services, he was a keen boxer and in the police force was at one time captain of the football team, captain and vice-captain of the cricket eleven and in 1921 won the amateur sculling championships in Southend Regatta."

Sergeant Sutton served in the Southend-on-Sea Borough Constabulary 1920-1949.

Could those who understand these things advise upon the level of counselling to which he would have been entitled?

Fred Feather
Leigh-on-Sea

LAST month, I attended the annual Metropolitan Police concert at the Barbican where their male voice choir performed alongside The International Band of the Salvation Army and the Essex Police Band.

Sitting next to former Met officers, I was pleased to boast

that not only do we still have a band when the Met Band no longer exists, but our band is of top quality - ours was on excellent form.

I was very pleased to see that amongst the audience were Mr Broughton and his wife and was glad the evening ended with the national

anthem.

In these times, when my fellow retired officers are always saying that things were better in our day, I am pleased to report that I consider that band to be better than it ever was.

Gordon Oakley, retired
Wickford

Thanks for your support

ON behalf of my family and I, we would like to extend our very sincere thanks to all former colleagues, both serving and retired, who attended the funeral of my late wife Lyn.

It was a great source of comfort and support to us to receive the messages, cards of condolence and we are very grateful for the donations to Cancer Research UK.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Graham Sharman
Retired

Do we segregate ourselves today?

I WRITE with regard to Jack Faulkner's letter (January *The Law*) and heartily concur with his sentiments.

It is human nature, when groups of people swell in numbers, for the group to break up into smaller groups. As an example I would cite the proliferation of denominations within the Christian Church.

However, in such a cosmopolitan society as ours with so many ethnic groups striving to integrate within that society, I feel it is counter-productive when minority groups risk creating the prejudice which they are attempting to fight by segregating themselves from the majority and then demanding rights over and above those enjoyed by that majority.

I recall writing on this subject some years ago with regard to the gay community and, to use Jack's example,

we have a Gay Police Association with no hint of a heterosexual police association. We have a Catholic Police Guild and a Christian Police Association. Do we have a Jewish Police Association? Or even an Atheistic Police Association? No. Probably because the majority of English, white, heterosexual, non-denominational, agnostic two point four children and dog-orientated police officers get on with life and give no thought to such affiliation.

The new millennium came whether we wanted it or not. The good old days were a valuable part of our education to get us through to the present, but they are the past and they should stay there. It is time to accept society as it is today, with all its faults and not teach our children bigotry and racism.

David Ward
Retired

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Setting standard for all

INCIDENT recording is set to change with the introduction of a new system to further assist police by identifying and tackling low level crime blighting quality of life.

The National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) is initially being introduced as a six-month pilot scheme, with a view to it 'going live' across all 43 forces.

The NSIR will focus on 36 specified incident types (notifiable incidents) to gain an accurate picture of the types of 'non-crime' incidents, such as nuisance behaviour, occurring across Essex, and subsequently throughout England and Wales.

Project manager and Force Information Room (FIR) Inspector Nick Morris admits there will be a small increase in the current number of daily incidents created, but believes there will be little impact on individual workloads.

"We monitored the situation in FIR for seven days and found, that in the majority of cases, we were already creating incidents for dealing with calls from the public," said Insp Morris. "There were only 20 or so more added to the system so, in the main, it will be front-office and service desk personnel who will be affected."

"Effectively, anyone who comes into contact with the public and takes a query which relates to a notifiable incident will be required to record it, including divisional commanders who receive letters from the community."

A force incident registrar will be appointed to oversee the new system, with Insp Morris visiting all divisions during the course of this month in order to explain the system in more detail.

A Special weekend

THE county's volunteer officers took to the streets in February to raise the profile of Essex Special Constabulary.

National Special Constabulary Weekend saw Specials taking part in a range of activities from recruitment drives to high visibility patrols.

The local work reinforced the national *Could You?* TV and radio advertising campaign, and included a promotion in partnership with Essex FM radio station.

Specials Commandant Alan Hill said: "This weekend helped to raise the profile of the Special Constabulary and show local people how interesting the work can be."

Force guns for accreditation by developing 'greatest assets'

Staff are key to brighter future

THE force's commitment to staff development could pay dividends in the coming months as the organisation aims to achieve the national Investors In People (IIP) accreditation.

Essex Police has been working towards IIP for the last 18 months and will get the verdict this summer when assessors visit the force to see if working practices live up to the accreditation's standards.

In preparation, the organisation underwent an assessment by Business Link, which highlighted both good practice and areas for improvement.

Head of Personnel Charles Obazuaye says there is no doubting the force's commitment to its staff.

"IIP is extremely important to us," said Mr Obazuaye. "People can see the accreditation as just a badge or fad, but if we are talking to our people and treating them well, overall performance will improve. There's an old cliché about people being our greatest asset; IIP is about how we improve those assets."

About 10 per cent of staff will be interviewed as part of the assessment. The assessors will be looking at a range of 'building blocks' which the force must demonstrate are in place for staff.

Those 'blocks' will include:

- HOW the force communicates to staff.
- THE link between their roles and the aims of the force.
- HOW induction is used to address the gap between skills that staff have and those required, and to engender the organisation's approach.
- WHETHER recruitment processes are being used to

get the right person for the right job.

● THE effectiveness of appraisal in maintaining performance.

● WHAT training is provided for staff.

● HOW that training helps the force to develop and improve.

Mr Obazuaye said: "Forget IIP - if you look at those building blocks you cannot disagree that, whether you work for the police or in a fish and chip shop, these are the things you need to get the best performance."

"These practices are reflected in our employment policies and are being reinforced by the new Action Leadership programme."

Budget agreed

THE police authority has agreed a budget of £222.08 for the next financial year - an increase of just 12p extra a week.

The 6.8 per cent increase will see a police precept for a Band D property cost £99.27, a rise of £6.30 from 2003.

Chairman of Essex Police Authority Robert Chambers said: "I believe this funding means that residents will see much more visible policing for their money, and more officers released onto front-line duties, to try to bring more criminals to justice."

"For just 12p extra, I believe local people will see an even better police service in Essex."

Public to pick Pcs

MEMBERS of the public are for the first time going to be involved in recruitment of police officers following Home Office recommendations.

Essex has selected and trained 19 Community Lay Assessors (CLAs) for the selection process of the new assessment centre stage of the recruitment process.

They were picked following an advertising campaign in a local newspaper which saw an overwhelming number of people contact the force.

Recruitment staff had to telephone each of the 172 applicants as part of the screening process, with the numbers further reduced following a week-long training course which candidates undertook in their own time.

Each CLA is paid £100 per day for the five days they are required. The 19 people all have differing backgrounds, with some employed by the fire service, airline industry and retail companies.

Recruiting manager Sue Adkins said: "This new system will demonstrate that Essex has a transparent recruitment process which actively encourages the community to take a proactive role in selecting the officers of the future who will serve their area."

"It will also have benefits for the organisation as a whole during the process, as managers and divisional commanders will no longer lose their staff for days on end during these selection processes."

The Home Office is encouraging forces to use members of the public rather than the organisation's own staff in a bid to reduce costs and staff abstraction during the selection process.

Cheryl's day at the Palace

BRAINTREE Inspector Cheryl Callow was at Buckingham Palace recently to collect her Queen's Police Medal.

Insp Callow attended the ceremony with her partner Moira, mum Betty and Chief Supt Sue Harrison, courtesy of the Chief Constable's car and driver for the day.

She said: "I want to thank everyone who sent me emails, cards and letters of congratulations after I received my QPM. It has been overwhelming - I received 350 emails alone."

The party ended the day with a meal overlooking the Thames and a ride on the London Eye - a treat for Insp Callow's mum.

Insp Callow was nominated for her outstanding contribution to police diversity issues.



● Insp Cheryl Callow proudly displays her QPM.

Leading the justice reform

SWEEPING changes made to the criminal justice system have been influenced by Essex, with care for victims and witnesses improving.

The force is currently taking part in three projects, which will see major changes being introduced to the way in which cases are progressed through the courts.

The project initiatives aim to reduce unnecessary work, provide a better service for victims and witnesses and change the emphasis from progressing cases through court quickly to progressing cases through court to an agreed timescale in order to produce quality cases and results.

Currently, there are six Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) lawyers based at various divisional headquarters who are on hand to

give advice to officers and ensure that all cases have the right charge and sufficient evidence to proceed to the courts.

Greater emphasis has been placed on witness and victim care, with a statement form designed to encourage officers to complete victim impact statements which assess victim and witness needs.

The CPS assesses the timescale required to secure evidence and serve it on defence and, in cases where there is a lot of forensic evidence, the standard time of five weeks may not be enough.

Once the timescale is determined, the Criminal Justice Department liaises closely with the witness care

team, who maintain contact with witnesses to take account of any changed circumstances when setting the trial date.

Resource and Operations Manager Tricia Brennan said: "We have been heavily involved in the design of the new processes."

"With a greater involvement in setting the trial date and keeping everyone informed of progress we will see real benefits and minimise disruption for officers."

"There have been many changes following the review of the criminal justice system and a lot of upheaval has occurred but, I believe that, with commitment from police officers and staff and with the benefit of inter-agency co-operation, we will see significant improvements in the whole process."

By Heather Watts

Serious crime team additions

IN the past few years, nearly 200 families have come into contact with Essex's serious crime investigators. People have been murdered, raped and kidnapped by criminals, with their loved ones left devastated.

However, justice has usually been delivered, with the imprisonment of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

Detectives are expected to produce watertight cases from scene to arrest and from charge to court appearance. If they fail, a victim's family is left shattered, a walk free and morale is sapped.

Since the introduction of the Police Reform Act, police forces have been allowed to employ civilian investigators and last October saw the first set of investigating officers (IOs) recruited to Essex's Major Investigation Section.

The IOs have been deployed across the four Major Investigation Teams (MITs), at Brentwood, Harlow, Rayleigh and Stanway, in order to carry out the same work as detective constables.

They form an integral part of investigation teams - conducting searches, seizing exhibits, gathering intelligence and compiling witness statements.

They work the same shift patterns as the detectives during the week, while being available at all other times.

Former defence solicitor and now IO Laura James said: "We are technically unsworn police officers who investigate and detect major crime, just like any other detective."

Frances, or Fliss to her friends and colleagues, was a former station office assistant with the Metropolitan Police before joining Essex in the autumn.

As an expert in the analytical field, Fliss also spent many years working as a crime analyst with the Met's Serious Crime Directorate.

"We all have a lot to learn in this trade, but we all have the fundamental basic knowledge of policing," said Fliss. "However, these new skills will be picked up in due course, especially as we are receiving a lot of support from our colleagues."

Kazi Quinton was one of the force's coroner's officers, before changing her post-mortem examination clothing for clean, crisp suits.

"I've learnt a great deal from my experiences during my rewarding four years with the force," said Kazi. "I've worked alongside bereaved families and other agencies while investigating death. I've also observed incredible courage from many devastated individuals and I now feel honoured to be part of professional and highly-skilled team."

"I've a great deal to learn from my experienced colleagues and from the brave

A new breed of investigating officers were born here in Essex last autumn. NISHAN WIJERATNE spent some time with those at Harlow.

families we work with. I hope that in time I will become an essential part of such an effective crime-fighting team.

"I've only been here for just over four months, but already I am finding it a fulfilling and rewarding job."

Roy Tyzack, a 57-year-old former detective with the Metropolitan Police, is one of 12 IOs drawn from a range of backgrounds.

Roy, who lives with his wife near Brentwood, retired in the late 80s after having worked as private investigator. He joined Essex Police as forensic vehicle examiner.

"Like myself, many of the new investigating officers around the county have come from a police background which means that, despite having to catch up with recent changes to legislation, we were able to get up to speed very quickly and complement the teams that we have become part of."

The IOs completed a one-week foundation course upon joining, with other skills to be 'fine-tuned' within a two-year period.

Ds Nick Stoneman said: "As there is no national programme, I formulated and delivered a week-long course which provided the IOs with a basic knowledge of law on which they can build on. We get together on a monthly basis to discuss any issues that arise so that we can take forward any of the IO's ideas and suggestions."

All the IOs have had experience with dealing with people and, in part, it is these skills which will stand them in good stead as they work closely with their colleagues and become key players.

Dc Ed Mayo, an experienced officer in both investigations and family liaison, is well aware of the qualities that IOs have to offer.

"The IOs bring a different viewpoint to the investigation as well much-needed resources," said Dc Mayo. "Here at Harlow, we now have officers from a range of backgrounds and who all bring varying forms of expertise."

"We are now in possibly the best position ever to address, investigate and solve the major forms of crime we deal with."

Senior Investigating Officer Det Supt Kevin Macey said: "We look to constantly improve upon the quality of service we deliver. From the first attendance at a crime scene through to the trial, our every move is scrutinised by the prosecution, the defence and the court."

"The IOs offer a fresh perspective on our outlook towards cases, bringing with them a wealth of experience from their previous careers. The strength of the teams is the diversity within - the different levels of experience and knowledge of life generally."

"It is important to avoid the mindset of following routine, without necessarily seeing the bigger picture. The successful integration of these officers into the team environment ensures we continue to produce high-grade evidence to achieve the objective - the search for the truth."

Where are the investigating officers based?

Brentwood MIT: Danniella House, Brendan O'Mahony, Roy Buckley.
Harlow MIT: Kazi Quinton, Frances Bol, Laura James, Roy Tyzack.
Rayleigh MIT: Julie Alger, Martin Oakley.
Stanway MIT: John Guillam, Richard Hopgood, Tony Allison, John Wright.



● Det Supt Kevin Macey briefs Julie Alger prior to the execution of a search warrant.



● Roy Tyzack interviews a potential witness to a serious sexual assault in woods near Harlow.

Lawyer turned gamekeeper

LAURA JAMES is the youngest Investigating Officer (IO) recruited by the force.

However, what the 23-year-old may lack in life experience, she gains in her knowledge of law, for the Harlow IO was a practising defence solicitor before she joined Essex Police, probably making her more aware of criminal procedure than many experienced detectives elsewhere in the organisation.

Laura graduated in 2001 from London's Queen Mary University with a 2:1 law degree, before completing her Legal Practice Course (LPC) with a distinction.

"I had studied law for seven years and became fascinated with the way the police pulled together their cases," said Laura. "I was intrigued by this and thought: 'How can I learn more about they build up a case?'"

An advert in one of the Essex weekly newspapers gave her the opportunity to join the police and fulfil this curiosity.

Laura, who lives in Basildon and who is set to marry next year, applied for one of the new positions, with the fallback of being able to continue practising

as a defence solicitor if she did not get the job.

"The two roles are completely different. I had no previous police experience so I wouldn't have got the job without my law degree and LPC."

"I've brought with me a vast amount of legal knowledge which is especially crucial in the areas of criminal investigation procedure, disclosure and public interest immunity. I knew the 'ins and outs' of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and warrant execution."

After her and her fellow IOs were introduced to their colleagues by Harlow MIT's Senior Investigating Officer Det Supt Win Bernard, Laura was soon working on two murders cases and also involved in the more sensitive kidnap investigations.

"It's essential for any investigating officer - be they police officers or not - to have good analytical skills as you then have the ability to disseminate the salient points from the one mass of information that is given to you."

"For example, having interviewed witnesses to murder,

I've been able to illicit fundamental information which has allowed us to progress further."

As the young IO was no stranger to courts, Laura has already been present at magistrates courts for committal proceedings and listened to bail applications at crown court in her short spell at Harlow MIT.

"I and my IO colleagues have been welcomed wherever we've been - at police stations, custody suites and courts."

"I have never personally experienced any negative feeling towards me or my role. We have just introduced ourselves as IOs and got on with the job in hand."

Laura emphasises the pressure on all the staff working on the MITs by highlighting the raw fact that, as they are dealing with the most serious of crimes, "it is down to them whether they make or break a case".

"I certainly have been given every possible assistance from the detectives at Harlow, with Ed (Mayo), Richie (Adams) and Jon (Cornish) offering support; they also rib me on every possible occasion though!"



● Laura James runs through bail application papers associated with a murder suspect.

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Members wanted for BPA

THE Essex Black Police Association (EBPA) celebrates its fourth birthday later this year and is still keen for minority ethnic members of staff - police officers and police staff - to join.

The EBPA is committed to enhancing the relationship between the force and the small minority ethnic community here in the county.

The EBPA was set up in response to a host of different issues, one of which was the under-representation of minority ethnic people in the force and in the county.

Full membership is open to those from African, African-Caribbean, Middle-Eastern and Asian origin; with associate membership open to all other staff.

For further information, contact the Essex BPA coordinator Anita Scott on extension 54102 or via email.

Force rises to IT challenge

STAFF across the organisation are becoming well versed in IT literacy, with over 1,000 applications received for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), including one from the Chief Constable.

The training package, which is available on either CD-ROM format or conducted via the intranet, has had 50 people complete and pass the course - a pass rate of 90 per cent.

Dc Paul Alabaster became the force's 1000th ECDL applicant, with the 42-year-old from the Essex Crime Squad set to take on the course and its exams.

"The world today is an evolving one in which IT is an important tool used in the investigation of crime," said Dc Alabaster. "We are all now using various IT applications each and every day so it's good to be literate in what you do, rather than having to keep relying on the assistance of others."

Captain Rob Mitchell, chief pilot at the Air Support Unit, is the current record-holder after completing the exams in just under 1hr 24mins.

Rob and Paul are just two of the 591 police officers and 428 police staff members who have signed up to the course since its launch in July 2002.

IT Training Manager Tony Kavanagh said: "The high pass rates being achieved are definitely encouraging, but we want to push these up even higher. It has become apparent that a number of students are experiencing difficulties with Excel, Access and Powerpoint and, as a result, we will be holding one-day seminars to assist those candidates."

Tackling crime in communities

A NEW police post is proposed in a Braintree shopping centre as the division takes a firm grasp of the force's problem-solving policing style.

Seminars re-affirming a more formal and consistent approach to problem-solving using the SARA (Scanning, Analysing, Responses and Assessment) model are still ongoing, but the Yuletide festivities provided a perfect opportunity for Braintree to put the model into practice.

It began with a two-phase initiative in the town and Freeport leisure complex. At night, officers, special constables and police

community support officers (PSCOs), focused on drink-related disorder in identified hotspots. By day, PCSOs were replaced by the proactive team to tackle crime, disorder and property offences, such as shoplifting. In total 34 arrests were made, 52 were stopped and spoken to and 17 pieces of intelligence were gained.

Fostering partnerships with shop security was key to the initiative and the result is a more formal arrangement between the police and the George Yard Shopping Centre.

The plan, which is still being finalised, is for four officers from the Town Patrol Unit and two PCSOs to use an office at the centre as a base to patrol from and to deal with administrative tasks.

Insp Luke Collison said: "We have an excellent working relationship with the George Yard shopping complex, without their support it is unlikely we would be able to secure such a suitable venue right in the town centre."

Meanwhile, everyone with a vested interest in Freeport, such as local managers, the taxi association and the local authority, have also met to discuss ways to improve the site.

Work has now begun to segregate pre-booked and general taxi ranks, improve public telephone facilities and use advertising and liaison with managers to reduce the incidences of drunkenness in the area which can lead to violence.

The number of calls for police to attend has already dropped significantly.

The town of Halstead now boasts the lowest criminal damage rate in the division following another effective initiative. Over six weekends, 14 people were arrested for public order, six for criminal damage and two for drink-driving. A further 65 were people were spoken to primarily about issues of youth nuisance and under-age drinking.

Insp Collison added: "Operations like this, based on sound intelligence and data, enable us to reduce crime and reassure the public."

Getting tough with road killers

MOTORISTS who kill others now face longer prison sentences following new government legislation that came into effect last month.

Causing death by dangerous driving and causing death by drink-driving will both now carry prison terms of up to 14 years.

The increase from 10 years is as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and will help ensure that drivers who kill can be properly punished.

This increase is just one of a number of reforms introduced by the Government to modernise the criminal justice system in favour of victims, witnesses and communities.

Road policing Insp Simon Morgan welcomed the increase in length of sentences imposed to killer drivers, but draws attention to the continued focus on the innocent victims.

"Incarceration can never compensate the bereaved families for the tragic loss of a loved one, but stiffer sentencing will at least ensure that justice is seen to be done," said Insp Morgan. "Hopefully, this increase will act as a deterrent to those irresponsible drivers and help reduce the unacceptable levels of carnage on our roads."

Classroom call for former cops

GOING back to school for NARPO Secretary Tony Cooper has proved to be a rewarding experience for both him and useful for the school.

Tony advocates that a few hours of free time can usefully be spent at a local school where he initially was tasked to listen to children read on a one-to-one basis, but has now been involved in a variety of other activities.

"To date, I have been pond-dipping, watching a puppet show and origami, where the children knew as much, if not more, than I did," said Tony. "One morning I went to the local college and saw a play performed by students called *Gargling with Jelly*."

He also speaks to groups of children about the police, taking them through the many transition periods using props and photographs.

His other interest is the RSPB and involves the children in their work.

Tony added: "There must be many other NARPO members who have some free time and could make visits to their local school."

"Contact your local school and show your interest by asking for a check form which you will need to fill in and get clearance before starting at the school. It is very rewarding work."

Agony leads to mercy mission

ROAD policing officers from Laindon demonstrated their sensitive side when they managed to help convey a man to his daughter's bedside in Scotland - in under five hours.

Sgt Mark Estall and Pc Andy Gladman were asked to deliver the agony to a man who had to be told his ex-wife and son had been killed in a road crash in Scotland which had also left his only daughter seriously injured.

Armed with only this information, they accepted the request from the

Force Information Room and arrived at the man's house in Grays.

Naturally, emotions ran high as the news was broken, but the officers were mindful that the man had to see his daughter who only had distant relatives to comfort her.

The man began talking of starting his 10-hour drive, before the officers put a stop to the idea.

After communicating with FIR and, unsure of protocol and procedure for ensuring the man's safe travel to Scotland, they contacted a budget

airline company.

The airline had two seats on the next available flight to Scotland - departing in 40 minutes from Stansted Airport!

After urging the man and his partner to pack their suitcases quickly, the officers travelled to the airport.

Despite having to pay £230 for two seats, the man was grateful to both officers and flew north to be reunited with his injured daughter and assist with funeral arrangements.

Another dogged performance

ESSEX was unable to repeat last year's performance in the regional police dog trials as they were beaten by Suffolk who grabbed both first and second places.

However, the force's excellent pedigree in this specialist form of policing was once again highlighted by dog handlers from Laindon and Rochford.

Laindon's Pc Colin Elsegood and Ronnie finished third, closely followed by unit colleague Pc Belinda Chapman and Kai who grabbed fourth spot, while Rochford's Pc Pat Lyons with Henry took eighth spot.

In addition to their third-place finish, Pc Elsegood and Ronnie also won the individual trophies for obedience and criminal work.

As the first female dog handler from Essex to reach this level, Pc Chapman paid recognition to her four-legged companion.

"Kai has been brilliant, especially when you consider that he would have been put down had he not made it as a

police dog," said Pc Chapman. "He grew up in Dagenham before ending up in rescue kennels. This is when we took him on.

"He goes wherever I go and integrates with my friends just like any other pet."

A total of 16 forces competed in the three-day event, with Essex the only one to submit three dog handlers due to their performances at individual force trial level.

Head of the Essex Police Dog Section, Insp Martin Parkin said: "The weekend's events were well attended by police officers, members of the police authority and relatives of the dog handlers. We received fantastic support from everyone and this is a credit to everyone here at Essex Police who assisted with the organisation of the event. A special mention should also go to lady luck who prevented any snow from falling during the event and ruining the trials."

Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) John Broughton



● Chief Constable David Stevens congratulates Pc Belinda Chapman following her fourth-place finish.

was "extremely proud" to have hosted the trials for the first time.

"Police dogs have, do and will always continue to form an integral part of policing as they are present at almost nearly every incident -

whether it be searching from a person ejected from a vehicle which has just crashed or tracking down and cornering a suspect following an assault or burglary. Both dog and handler are an asset to any police force."



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The game's all white



● Melanie Warren and Marina Ericson show off their tally of medals at the post-event celebrations.

A HOST of medals and a move up the ranks made a trip to Austria for the National Snowsports Championship worthwhile for the Essex Police team.

The event was held in Hintertglemm and the disciplines consisted of skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding and snow blading.

Melanie Warren was top on the medal stakes when she took gold in the snowboarding giant slalom, dual slalom and boarder cross and as overall best competitor. Not content with that hat-trick, she also took silver place in the Border Cross, a friendly competition including guest snowboarders from the RAF.

In skiing, Marina Ericson was awarded bronze in the individual English Championship.

The team, which also comprised Pat White, Simon Morgan, Phil Golding, Chris Mathlin, Trevor Hall, Cliff Collings and Steve Millbourne, have now moved up to ninth place, with all individuals improving on their best times.

Lottery winners

WINNER of the February lottery was Colchester's Pc Adrian Ruddock who scooped £1,500.

Stansted's Dc Chris Heaffey won £750, with £375 going to Pc Doug Rawden, Southend, and Dc Rob Dix from Saffron Walden winning £200.

Consolation prizes of £50 went to: Pc Chris Turner, FIR; Pc Mark Yorke-Wade, Thurrock; DI Tracy Hawkings, Harlow MIT; Dc Graham Faux, Stansted Airport; Dc Mark Pickett, NCS; Sgt Brian Wilkins, Stansted Airport; Pc Pat Foster, Pitsea; Pc Danny Harris, Brightlingsea; Pc Jane Goldsborough, Clacton; Pc Karl Help, Shoebury.

Easy access to cheap deals

THE Essex Police Sports Association website was launched this month, packed full of innovative and exciting services and providing comprehensive contact details for sports representatives, lottery updates and member benefits.

The site is accessible via the intranet's left menu under 'divisions and departments'.

Sensational sell out

Jenny Hillyard goes behind the scenes on the set of Kiss Me Kate.

PACKED houses were on show every night as the Essex Police Musical Society's Production of *Kiss Me Kate* ran for seven nights, and an afternoon matinee.

Months of rehearsals and all the other work involved with the costumes, the scenery, sound and lighting paid off when audiences gave a rousing reception to the performances each night.

This was their 37th February production and the fourth main show to be directed by Pam Corrie, who is bringing out the very best in the society, aided by musical director Jim Dougal.

This was the society's second production of *Kiss Me Kate*, the previous one being in 1982.

It will probably take another 22 years to pluck up the necessary courage to stage it again but all concerned delivered wonderful performances and comments from audience members ranged from "colourful" to "professional".

Technically, for the cast, it's a demanding show covering dialogue from present day, and excerpts from Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, on which the show is based.

The show jumps from the present day backstage at the Ford Theatre Baltimore, where Fred Graham's touring company are preparing to perform a musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, to excerpts from the troupe's performance of this show.

The latter are coloured with added dialogue and events, as an aggrieved leading lady berates her ex-husband on stage (although of course they have been in love all along and it's a happy ending of reconciliation!), while gangsters, who are trying to recoup an IOU signed by one of the cast, end up on stage with the troupe dressed as jesters in an attempt to ensure they get their money back.

Interestingly, in both the 1982 version and this year's version, the principal gangster has been played by a police officer!

The sparring Kate and Petruchio (played by the troupe's principals Fred Graham and Lilli Vanessi) were played by long-standing members husband and wife Claire and George Lambeth, who both excelled in their roles.

Maybe it's just as well they're married, as the production called for much forgiveness and understanding as numerous slaps around the face were given, coupled with some elbowing, kicking and not to mention the leading lady being placed across the 'hero's' knee and smacked!

A cast of 28, together with a four-piece band, performed to audiences with 20 backstage hands assisting with stage management and crewing, props, lighting and sound.

We welcomed three new members for this production and are always willing to welcome new faces whether your interest is in performing or assisting with the many varied roles backstage.

Our next production is our Summer Show which will

take place in July. This will reflect our favourite numbers from shows, from the charts and indeed anywhere where good music can be found.

The EPMS would like to thank everyone who supported last month's show.

If you would like any further information, please contact either Jenny Hillyard, Justina Becousse or Lynda Barkway at force headquarters on 01245 491491 or via email.

● CLAIRE LAMBETH turned in a feisty performance, acting as a foil for husband George who had more than his fair share of lines, but who none the less was excellent, writes Heather Watts.

Colin Day and Michael Pearce were firm favourites with the audience as the most amusing and lovable gangsters you could wish to meet.

Young Shelley Barkway shone, pouring a lot of feeling into her numbers, giving pathos to what is essentially a light-hearted show.

Ambitious choreography moved the show up a pace, with the costumes colourful, the scenery professional and scene changes smooth.

An or-egg-estral evening for all

THE Essex Police Band will be playing their annual Easter Egg concert on Friday, March 26 at 7.30pm at the Marconi Club in Chelmsford.

Tickets are £1 plus admission by Easter egg on the door. The eggs will be distributed to less fortunate children in Essex. For tickets contact Joy Madigan on extension 50788 or via email.

● BAND enthusiasts can see the Royal Marines in action in Colchester on Saturday, March 20.

The event is being held at the Garrison Church in Military Road and tickets, priced £12.50, can be obtained from Lt Cdr JHC Tupper-Carey RN at 13 The Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO3 3PA or contact the band secretary on 01803 677190.

● A LITTLE further afield and a collection of well-known classical music will be performed by the British Police Symphony Orchestra at Lichfield Cathedral.

Established for over 14 years, the British Police Symphony Orchestra has a reputation as one of the top amateur orchestras in the country.

With more than 80 members drawn from police services throughout the country, it includes both serving and retired police officers, police staff and close family.

Tickets for this event on Saturday, May 8 are available from the Lichfield Tourist Information Centre on 01543 308209.

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St George's Day Knees-Up (April 23)

We don't just provide a friendly atmosphere for you to unwind during the week. We offer an ideal venue for any special occasion, from birthday parties and quizzes to anniversaries and wedding receptions.
Cost of hire is £25 plus a returnable £100 deposit.

FOR QUERIES ABOUT EVENTS OR TO BOOK FUNCTIONS AND MEETINGS CONTACT SAM OR JO ON EXT 58884 BETWEEN 9.30AM, AND 12.30PM WEEKDAYS

Bond snatches the victory tape

Putt your force first

TALENTED swingers of the golfing variety are being recruited by the force as the new season's preparations get underway.

The six-month season begins next month and organisers are looking to strengthen the pool of new players as they take on other forces in the various events throughout the summer.

Membership is £25 for new recruits, with existing players paying £20.

With nearly 25 fixtures, both friendly and competitive, home and away, numerous prizes are on offer at the end of the season.

Anyone who is interested in joining should contact Nigel Ginn at Newport RPU on ext 65125 or via email.

Relay running

RUNNERS from across the force are being asked to put their feet forward in aid of charity this summer.

A 3,000-mile sponsored relay run from Land's End to John O'Groats, in aid of the children's charity *When You Wish Upon A Star*, is being organised by Greater Manchester Police.

The Essex leg will take place on Wednesday, June 9 and will run from the A113 at Woodford Bridge through to the Hertfordshire border at Bishop's Stortford, with the 28-mile stretch taking just over four hours.

Essex organiser Liz Chalk said: "I'm looking for 28 people to take part on the big day, with each runner setting themselves a goal of raising £100."

Anyone who wishes to participate should contact Liz Chalk on extension 28130 or via email.

CHELMSFORD'S Mick Bond was crowned champion of the south east/eastern police cross-country league after a nail-biting three-way run-off in the final race of the season.

Deemed as the 'most exciting final race in the 34-year history of the league', Bond, Colchester's Derek Walker and Kent's Nigel Cook all knew they had a mathematical chance of winning the title.

After a cautious start, the contenders pulled away from the rest of the field at a relentless pace.

Still locked together up the final incline of the 10km course, Bond made the break,

quickly losing Cook, but then only to be passed by the fast-finishing Walker.

The win on the day for the Colchester service desk assistant was not enough to prevent the title going to Bond for a record-equalling fourth time.

Despite finally achieving victory over Kent in the individual stakes, Essex had to settle for runners-up spot to the southern force in the overall league.

Another fine performance by Andy Hynes ensured the Maldon man finished ahead of Russ Welch, veteran Don English and Alex Webb; with support from Tony Benjamin, David Wood, Chris Mathlin and Mark Finbow.

The Masters finished behind Kent in the overall league, with Bond and English

helped considerably by the efforts of Pete Bryan (40th), Steven King (43rd) and, on this occasion, a rare appearance from the retired Roy Kebell (46th).

Kent made it a clean sweep by snatching the women's league title, again at the expense of Essex.

With Rachel Crosby injured, up stepped a new face to lead the team. Pippa Dove finished 10th on her debut, closely followed by Michelle Birkovitch and Lisa Bolton.

Although not available for the final race, the efforts of Amanda Pollard and Pauline Bowers during the season should not be forgotten. The chance for more awards comes later this month when the regional police cross-country championship is hosted by the City of London at West Wickham.

A Thespian theatrical treat



● The Essex Police Musical Society once again enticed audiences to their latest show, with George and Claire Lambeth (pictured above) playing the lead roles in *Kiss Me Kate*. See page 11 for a behind-the-scenes look at the production, including a review of the performance.

America or Australia for your holiday?

THE Braintree Sports and Social Club secretary Dave Bouckley invites you to a three-centre trip to Florida.

This three-week trip overlaps the Easter school holidays with a departure date on Saturday, April 2.

The first week is in Miami at the Thunderbird beach resort, where you can take in the sophisticated Bal Harbour, the Aventura Shopping Mall and the nightlife at South Beach.

Then, travelling north to Orlando, you can visit the Universal Studios, Wet 'n' Wild and Walt Disney World.

The last week in Clearwater is ideally situated for trips to Busch Gardens with a comfortable stay in the Ramada Inn.

The price for an adult is £960, with children aged 12-16 just £450 and children under 11 at £350.

● FANCY Australia instead? Stopovers in Hong Kong or Singapore en route Down Under can be organised by Dave.

Contact him on 07974 947106 for further details and prices on either of these trips. Remember that the more confirmed bookings, the more discounts and special offers are included.

A hard grind

THE Tri Club is again staging two events this year, with the Basildon Off-road Triathlon in Basildon on Sunday, May 9 and the Braintree District Triathlon at the Riverside Centre on Sunday, June 6.

The Basildon event is open to Croker Cup participants, with the Braintree event organisers also hosting the national sprint championship.

People who can help set up, clear away and marshall the races are greatly sought after.

Anyone interested in participating or assisting with either event, please contact Kevin Rowe on extension 68140 or via email.

Cut price deals at peak time prices

ALL the facilities at Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre are now available to Essex Police staff at special rates.

The centre in Victoria Road, Chelmsford, is offering a Direct Card scheme which entitles holders to unlimited use of all the facilities between 6.30am and 10pm daily.

Certain facilities, including ice-skating, a newly refurbished gym, a 33m swimming pool, sports hall and squash courts, will operate at

different times and some of these can be pre-booked.

The scheme has two sections, a gold card at £27.50 per month and silver at £22.50 per month. The main benefit for gold card holders is that they enjoy longer and more flexible opening hours.

For more details contact the centre on 01245 615050 or visit their website at www.riversideiceandleisure.com.

