

# The Law



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February 2005

## DILUTING DRINK

**NEW licensing laws are unlikely to lead to 24-hour drinking in Essex and could be an opportunity to keep the streets safe, Chief Constable David Stevens believes.**

Speaking as the change over to the Licensing Act 2003 began, Mr Stevens said the force and its partners were prepared for the move and did not envisage a significant change in drinking patterns.

The start of the month saw local authorities replace magistrates as the new licensing bodies. By November this year, new licences will come into force as part of the biggest overhaul of licensing laws for years.

But while much of the media has hyped up the chances of round-the-clock drinking, the reality is that the initial signs do not point to an increase in local licensing hours.

Mr Stevens said: "We have been working with our partners - in particular local authorities and the industry - for some time in preparing for the change.

"We see this as an opportunity because the new laws, particularly the greater degree of regulation of control of licensed premises, will undoubtedly help us in the task of ensuring the streets of Essex remain safe."

Mr Stevens added that he did not anticipate an increase in pressure on frontline policing, but that the situation would be closely monitored to identify and address any issues.

"Early indications are that the much-vaunted 24-hour drinking will not materialise in the short-term," said Mr Stevens. "However, it is too early to assess whether there will be significant changes in drinking patterns, but we will be monitoring to ensure that, where there is any impact on staffing levels, we draw that to the attention of the Home Office."

Report by  
**Ben Pennington**

## DOUBTS



● Heavy drinking by young women is more of a concern to police across Essex.

PHOTO: Evening Echo.

The changes in legislation will raise a number of other issues for the force, many of which will be tackled with a computer-based training package later this year.

Substance Misuse Co-ordinator, Sgt Nigel Dermott, said: "Applicants for new licences will be required to provide certificates from the Criminal Records Bureau which don't yet exist, but in the meantime officers and staff can help licensing officers through what will be a very busy year by seeing enquirers through the simple current process."

A PNC certificate can be obtained by putting 'A96 form' into the search field on the Essex Police website and following the instructions. Even payment can be done online.

### Signed, sealed and delivered

THE commercial world of transportation needs to take heed as Essex proves itself a force to be reckoned with.

Over the last few years, the force's Transport Services Department has made vast improvements to the internal delivery service and is now generating income with external contracts, including the transportation of magistrate court papers.

The contract was signed and sealed by Head of Transport Services, John Gorton, after the previous courier service being used by Essex Magistrates Courts (MCC) proved expensive and unreliable.

The recommendation to take on this contract initially came from a member of staff in a criminal justice unit who has experienced the success of a similar system for transporting prosecution files to the courts.

Employing mail drivers in the evenings has led to a reduction in the number of prosecution cases being withdrawn.

Mr Gorton said: "This is a major coup for Essex Police Transport Services as, not only have we improved the mail service for the force over the last few years, we now have a reputation to behold in the commercial world and are seen by many as the preferred provider."



# Playing political football

**THE Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill's main purpose is to establish the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) which will absorb the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service, together with the investigative arms of HM Customs and Excise and the Immigration Service.**

The Government says that SOCA will be an intelligence-led organisation, with its core objective to reduce the harm caused by organised crime.

It will use a variety of strategies, including the investigation and prosecution of criminals involved in serious organised crime, the disruption of supply networks, the confiscation of assets and the taxation of undeclared earnings.

It will co-operate closely with the police and other agencies, with its remit extending throughout the UK.

The Federation is supportive of the concept of SOCA, but criticises the Government for proposing to differentiate between policing and law enforcement in the way that it proposes SOCA should be established.

There are 1,140 police officers in the National Crime Squad (NCS) and each is being interviewed with a view to becoming a SOCA employee.

However, the Federation is currently advising officers not to accept an offer of employment as pay and conditions have still not been agreed.

The Federation points out that, as the Bill stands, officers who are expected to transfer from NCS and the National Criminal Intelligence Service to SOCA will lose their status as officers of the Crown.

They will become employees of SOCA, subject to appointment

and dismissal in the manner of general employment law.

Although the Government has indicated its intention to bring police officers into line with all other employees, the fact is that it is a constable's status, as an officer of the Crown, which affords protection from arbitrary dismissal.

The Federation states that a person holding the office of constable has to be satisfied, when exercising the powers of a constable, that the exercise of the powers is appropriate and they are personally accountable for such action.

However, proposals under the Bill state that the Director-General of SOCA will be able to confer the powers of a constable on a member of staff.

Such designation can be limited to specific operations, specific powers and can be time-limited.

This, the Federation has argued, would lead to a lack of independence and accountability on the part of those exercising the powers.

The Federation adds that there is a clear risk that, placing such powers of designation, could lead to a politicisation of the agency.

The Federation argues that the right to remove a person's liberty should be strictly limited to specific individuals in specific circumstances, rather than distributed among persons on a pick-and-mix basis as circumstances arise.

## Custody

The Bill also introduces a new category of designated police staff – custody officers – who will replace sergeants in this crucial role.

It also extends the powers of other designated staff introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 – investigating detention and escort officers.

The Government says this is part of its programme to build a "more united police service" in which police staff will play a full part in strengthening operational effectiveness.

The Federation is totally opposed to these proposals. It points out that it is the custody officer who determines whether an arrested person should be detained in custody or go free.

This involves a decision, often at speed and under pressure, first as to whether an arrest is lawful and, secondly, whether there is sufficient evidence to justify detention.

This is a decision of the utmost importance and should only be taken by a custody officer who is a police officer.

Experience, gained over the 20 years since the Police and Criminal Evidence Act was brought in, demonstrates the value of having police officers as custody officers.

The Federation is also strongly against proposals to confer additional powers on a wide variety of individuals in a wide range of circumstances.

These include extended police powers to Police Community Support Officers and to police staff engaged in custody suites or escorting prisoners.

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## Dedication will be missed

I MUST thank Mick Englefield who has now left the Federation office after serving for many years as my deputy, and also for his role in dealing with civil and criminal injuries compensation claims.

His style of working might not have always pleased everyone, but he was a conscientious and hard-working individual who it has

been my pleasure to have worked with. On behalf of yourselves and the Federation office, I wish him well in whatever venture he now decides to embark upon.

I also wish his successor, Roy Scanes, who took over the mantle at the end of last month, well in his new position as a full-time Federation member in the office.

## Red alert across the force



• Sgt Jack Frost shows off the ACTION board at headquarters.

ACTION notice boards are springing up in all divisions and departments across the county, in a bid to keep officers and staff abreast of news on the leadership programme.

Each notice board has been assigned a local co-ordinator who will regularly update it with information, ideas and achievements which demonstrate the six strands of ACTION.

# A case for less court action

**THERE has been a substantial reduction in the need for officers to attend court following a national case management scheme that has been piloted in Essex.**

Traditionally, there could be anything up to five hearings in between a first appearance and trial for a defendant pleading not guilty.

On many of these occasions, officers would turn up at court only to be stood down again because certain reports or witnesses were unavailable.

Towards the end of 2003, Essex became one of six forces nationally to pilot a case-progression scheme which involves the prosecution, defence and associated agencies working together to ensure a trial date is only set once everything is in place.

The changes start even before charge, with lawyers now working within six custody areas to issue pre-charge advice on cases that meet certain criteria, such as violent crime, racial incidents, sex offences and those cases with special measures such as vulnerable witnesses.

It is intended that lawyers will be located at all divisional sites towards the end of this year.

by Kim Perks

The charging programme will also be extended to cover a wider range of cases which will further reduce the amount of work undertaken by police officers on cases which are currently discontinued.

After a first appearance, a defendant is not bailed back for a court hearing, but simply bailed back to the court building where they are then given the date on which they will stand trial.

Concerns that defendants would fail to appear for this administrative process have proved unfounded.

This new-style of management has resulted in court listings falling by half for those case-progressed prosecutions. This in turn reduces the unnecessary attendance at court for officers.

Southend and Harlow are already fully case-progressed and it is expected that, within the next few months, all of the county's trials, with the exception of youth and traffic offences will be case progressed leading to even greater savings on officers' time.

In the meantime, the Criminal Justice Department (CJD) is recording all occasions when an officer is required to attend court on a rest day as historically courts have scheduled cases without considering availability,

and rest day attendance should only be a last resort.

Resource and Operations Manager for CJD, Tricia Brennan, said: "The results from this initiative at magistrates' courts have been very positive this year, with further improvements envisaged as the scheme is extended and the charging programme develops.

"The challenge for the coming year is to mirror the same level of success for cases listed for hearing at crown courts in the county. We are fully committed to working with partner agencies in the criminal justice process to achieve that objective."

## Leaving a big smile on young girl's face

**THE efforts of a 10-year-old girl to help the Tsunami appeal were given a welcome boost by the sweet-tooth temptation of FSU officers.**

**The youngster baked a stack of cakes to sell on a stall outside her home and a passing patrol car failed to resist.**

**After a swift radio message, other officers dug deep to help the worthy cause helping to raise £62, and the young girl's mother showed her appreciation with a letter of thanks.**

## High-flying cops hope to have heavier shoulders

FIVE officers who have the ambition and will to succeed are the latest recruits to the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS), writes Helen Cook.

The HPDS, a modified version of the old accelerated learning scheme, aims to identify those officers with leadership qualities and progress them through the ranks.

HPDS, unlike the previous scheme, does not stipulate the need for officers to have academic qualifications and tailors officers' careers.

Staff Development's Sgt Chris Galley says the scheme seeks to "identify potential police leaders of the future" by developing them towards promotion to superintendent level.

"The scheme is open to anyone from constable to chief inspector rank and candidates go through a rigorous selection process," said Sgt Galley. "Once through this stage, we will seek to actively support and encourage, ensuring a career path is structured to enhance development.

"They will attend also have the opportunity to attend leadership modules at Bramshill and automatic funding to study for a masters degree or equivalent."

Steve Worrton was a sergeant when he joined the scheme in September 2002 and has since been

promoted to inspector at Brentwood.

The 33-year-old said: "The scheme allows greater input to influence your own development. When I was promoted to inspector I was able to discuss with staff development what would best suit my career needs and got the post at Brentwood as I felt I needed to work with a local community."

Thurrock's Sgt Lucy Robinson said: "HPDS allows officers to take time to specialise and develop, and many officers are now choosing to join with years under their belt.

"The support within the force is excellent - from Staff Development to Mr (ACC Personnel) Bliss as ACPO overseer. I also have a superb mentor in Supt Michelle Dunn who challenges and questions every career decision I make until I can justify it - then supports me until the next big discussion takes place."

The scheme is advertised three times a year and the next application process is due in April.

Sgt Galley added: "We will soon be advertising an open day when officers who are interested can come and find out more about the scheme and the application process."

The other officers on the scheme are Ds Pippa Dove at Wickford, Pc Ben Hodder at Basildon and Southend's Dc Morgan Cronin.

## No let up in the Asian assistance

STAFF at Braintree Police Station have raised more than £700 for tsunami relief by holding a sale of home-made produce, unwanted Christmas gifts and other items.

Organiser, Carol Bailey, said: "I hold a fund-raiser every October for breast cancer, so we felt it would be good to add a special event for the flood victims. We're pleased with the result."

● Braintree Division's mobile police office - a regular visitor to 63 communities - is celebrating its second anniversary.

During this time, it has made 1,600 calls, covered 30,000 miles and welcomed more than 5,000 visitors.

Thousands of other people in rural communities have been able to talk to driver PC Kevin Wilson during his walkabouts when the office is parked.

He said: "In my 16 years' police service this close contact with the public has given me the greatest satisfaction."

# Donor drive draws dozens

**STAFF and officers across the force have responded magnificently to the appeal to sign up to the NHS's national donor register to help the 7,000 people a year awaiting a transplant in the UK.**

**Every year nearly 400 people die while waiting for an organ donation, yet just one donor can give life to several people and restore the sight of two more.**

**Over 100 employees have joined the register of donors following a campaign in December to raise awareness of how easy it is to offer so much.**

**Internet Manager, David White, who is drumming up support for the NHS Organ Donor Register, said: "People may already have a donor card, but it's still important to join the register as you may not always be carrying the card.**

**"I would like to thank all those who took the time to visit the site to find out more."**



● Chief Constable David Stevens helps publicise the campaign.

**HAVE YOUR SAY:** Write to Kim Perks, Law Letters, Press Office, Police HQ, PO Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6DA.  
Letters and emails must include full name and home town. We reserve the right to edit letters.

# Battling the booze cruise culture here

**JUST recently, we have seen on television the appalling results of binge drinking in Folkestone and, in particular, Southend which must be an affront to all decent people, especially when one considers what our police have to contend with.**

There are, I am led to believe, around 600 pubs and clubs in the Southend area to which

thousands of youngsters are attracted at weekends.

So, it is indeed a credit to Southend's divisional commander, Chief Supt Thwaites, and his dedicated, albeit limited number of officers, that they manage to sustain any semblance of law and order when confronted by the scenes and abusive language we have witnessed on television.

And now, via the muddled approach of government to alcohol-related laws, we are about to see 24-hour drinking.

Forget the tranquil continental

boulevards with drink on tap all day and late into the night for well behaved groups.

I doubt if that scenario is likely to be enacted here in Britain with its established lager lout (the bain of continentals) and now ladette culture.

We are facing a breakdown of law and order (if that Rubicon has not already been crossed) on the streets of our large towns and cities which bodes ill for the future of this nation.

One alternative that might redress the problem, seeing the Government's lacklustre approach

to the issue, is to draft in contingents of unarmed military as back up to our sorely-trying police officers.

I would imagine the legal ramifications would have to be addressed, but faced with what, in my opinion, will be escalating problems, what other alternatives are left?

It is the Government's responsibility to safeguard the law-abiding public; to that end the state's obligation is paramount.

**Alex Jennings  
(Neighbourhood Watch)  
Burnham on Crouch**

## Radical recourse

I AM surprised by John Emmerick's letter of offer of breaching the veil of secrecy amongst Essex Masons in the last issue of *The Law*.

At times, I have worn high-profile yellow jackets for Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council, so could not Masons wear these in the street with their insignia on the back – then we'll all know they're out in the open and recognisable?

**Mr R White  
Chelmsford**

## Fond memories

ON behalf of all my family, we thank all those who sent cards and messages on the loss of my wonderful mother, Maggie Nevin.

I also wish to thank all those that were able to attend last month's services in Chelmsford.

Your support has been of great comfort.

**Sarah-Jane Rudge  
Chelmsford**

## Bureaucracy baloney

THE new year commenced with a laughable article headed 'Good riddance to red tape', complete with its worthless, but all too common corporate symbol, proclaiming 'Stamping out Bureaucracy'.

Who's trying to kid who? In my 26 years' service, it seems, that as an organisation, we have more paper than ever before.

Every computer terminal and printer within the various departments of Essex Police breeds more paper than a zealous Chief Constable can shake a Swan Vesta at!

January saw the introduction of the new collision form. What a document! Lots of new abbreviations, none of which are understood by many officers and

enough statistics to truly take a lead in making Essex safer.

Only towards the end of the month did some guidance trickle down from headquarters as to how to fill some of it in.

The biggest nonsense of all is that the officer completing the collision report now has to photocopy and retain a copy of the document.

Why not computer format reports and documents? Once completed, a touch of a button would immediately send the document to whichever department requires it.

It seems that in 2005, as in previous years, we will continue to be a slave to bureaucracy, rather than be its master.

**Pc Tony Stevens  
Chigwell RPU**

## It's bloody amazing

I HAVE been an avid reader of *The Law* since my retirement as an inspector at Tilbury in July 1996, after completing over 33 years service.

It is nice to read letters from the oldies now and again and I wondered if people would be interested in my experiences as a blood donor.

I have been donating blood for 50 years since starting my service in the Royal Air Force at 18 and I have just been awarded the National Diamond Award for donating 100 pints.

I set myself this target after an altercation with a large timber lorry when I was a young teenager and required two pints of blood to keep me alive.

Hopefully, health allowing, I can continue for a further 18

months bringing the final total to 106, as unfortunately you are prevented from donating after reaching 70 years of age.

The National Blood Service at Brentwood informs me that, if more new donors are not found in the very near future, it has been estimated, that in 10 years' time, there will be an extreme shortage of blood.

If you don't donate blood, I wonder if you would seriously consider attending the next blood donor session in your area.

It doesn't hurt and only takes a few minutes of your time and blood can be donated three times a year.

Who knows how many lives you can save?

**T H Bates  
Corringham**



## Gone . . . but not forgotten



**Police Constable 754 - Essex Police.**

**Served from November 9, 1967. Died January, 5 1978.**

POLICE Constable Leslie Bloom spent all his police service at Colchester, where he qualified as a class one driver and is remembered for his great interest in traffic and road safety.

Leslie Bloom married his wife Hazel in 1969 and they lived with their two children in Elmstead Market - a village where he became very active in village affairs, being involved in the establishment of the community hall, the local carnival and a dramatic society.

In the early hours of a January morning, Leslie Bloom was riding his motorcycle along Greenstead Road in Colchester on his way to work for an early turn, when he hit the back of a parked transit van. He died from his injuries shortly afterwards.

**For details of all those featured in the Essex Police Roll of Honour visit the Memorial Trust website at [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk). If you have any information you feel could be added to the website email [memorialtrust@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:memorialtrust@essex.pnn.police.uk) or write to the Memorial Trust at police headquarters.**

## Stoking the memories of the coffee and pot

BETWEEN 1966 and 1969, the Harold Dog Café, a basement coffee bar in Southend, was the 'in' location and, as such, was a popular meeting place for young people.

The drugs of the day were cannabis and Purple Hearts. Almost on a weekly basis, drug-bust police raids were carried out at the dark and dingy premises.

To assist with current research I am currently undertaking, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with any former police officers or staff who have memories of the café and associated police activities.

Similarly, I am seeking information concerning a double fatal house fire that occurred in November/December 1979 at Palmerston Road in Westcliff

when young girls, believed to be sisters, died.

The fire in question took place during the long-running fire brigade strike and the incident was attended and dealt with by the military who made use of the Green Goddess fire tenders.

The servicemen were assisted by fire brigade personnel who broke their strike conditions.

Any information, however limited, would be much appreciated and thanks are extended in anticipation.

Please can you contact Angela Smith on 01245 452506 or email her at [angela.smith@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:angela.smith@essex.pnn.police.uk)

**David Bright (retired)  
Southend**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Updating records

JUST seven weeks and counting before the first phase of a national personnel records system goes live across the force.

The replacement for DELPHI in April will be delivered by the National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) Human Resources (HR) system and, as the system settles down throughout the year, its scope will widen.

A pilot for the Health and Safety Reporting (HSR) aspect is expected in July and preparation for the Duty Management System (DMS) is planned for June, with the first live pilot expected in January 2006.

If you have any questions or queries about the system you should contact Project Manager Russell Bush on ext 61633.

## Keeping it site safe

A MUCH-anticipated web forum to exchange ideas on an initiative which encourages the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures has gone live.

The ACPO site is designed to encourage discussion and information-sharing on all topics relating to *Secured by Design*.

Information about the forum, including usernames and password to enter the site, can be obtained by contacting ACPO CPI on 0207 227 3423 or by email at [acpocpi@acpo.police.uk](mailto:acpocpi@acpo.police.uk).

## Cost-free crime calls

THE UK's first-ever freephone number for people wanting to report hate crime has been launched in Thurrock.

The free 24-hour service has been introduced by the Safer Thurrock Partnership for residents within the division.

Callers dialling 0800 138 0519 are greeted with a message asking them to select one of a choice of nine languages, then are given information and asked to leave a message reporting the incident confidentially.

It is a third-party reporting line which means calls can be referred to the police.

## Changing lives in eastern Europe

THE children of Romania have a brighter future, thanks to the tireless efforts of a group of volunteers who have given up their time and their money over the last five years.

Convoy 2000 was born in 1997 in the Sahara desert when former Essex officers Jim Dickinson (DCC) and David Bright (Det Supt) were chatting with, the now retired, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir John Stevens, about how they could use their experiences to undertake a major aid mission to coincide with the Millennium.

With a desire to help children and vulnerable people, Romania became an obvious choice and others soon joined the mission.

In May 2000, the first of 12 articulated lorries left England loaded with £250,000 worth of aid and 90 volunteers flew to Bucharest to undertake a week's work.

In the first year, two orphanages were refurbished and redecorated with new beds and toilet facilities.

In 2001, volunteers tackled an orphanage and school for over 150 children including the construction of a playground, computer room, medical room and a fully-fitted laundry.

As one project was completed, a new one was identified and the volunteers ploughed on. Over a five-year period, £3million worth of aid was taken to Romania.

Mr Bright said: "Our efforts would not have succeeded had it not been for the superb support from all the sponsors to Convoy 2000.

"The vast number of people who couldn't physically lend a hand, but donated goods and services should also not be forgotten."

Meanwhile, officers and staff in Essex have continued to show their support with a 30-strong group travelling to Bucharest just last summer.

Chief Constable David Stevens said: "I have been privileged to be a trustee of Convoy 2000 and to see the results of the outstanding



● The orphans try out the new playground facilities.

efforts made by so many people. The support of staff and sponsors has been tremendous and there is no doubt that many Romanian children, who were living in the most atrocious conditions, now have a better life."

Sadly the journey of Convoy

2000 has come to an end but projects in Romania will continue to be supported by volunteers and fundraising and it is not too late to get involved.

If you are interested in helping, then why not email [david.o'grady@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:david.o'grady@met.pnn.police.uk).

## Ahead of the rest in crime clear-up

## Shop crime shattered

AN operation to combat shoplifting at Braintree's Freeport outlet retail centre has resulted in 25 arrests.

Operation Tower Bridge ran for six weeks, with two uniformed officers on foot patrol, supported by plain-clothed colleagues on observation.

This initiative followed Operation 3C – short for Christmas Crime Cracker – which was carried out in the local town centre and employed similar tactics. Twenty-eight arrests were made, most of them for shoplifting.

Acting Inspector Tony Benjamin said: "Both operations were successful in sending a message to shoplifters that they'll find it tough if they target Braintree."

Traders were also given advice by crime reduction officers.

## THE number of offenders being brought to justice in Essex is rising significantly as officers and staff around the county embrace new policies impacting on crime detections and bringing offenders to justice.

In April last year, a new crime investigation culture was introduced and officers were encouraged to conduct quality investigations and make full use of tools such as cautions and fixed penalty notices to ensure a positive conclusion to an investigation – a sanctioned detection.

At the time, Essex regularly sat around seventh and eighth position for sanctioned detections in its family of eight forces.

However, as the year passed, performance figures began to improve and, by December, Essex was fifth with the force on target to be fourth, possibly third, by spring this year.

Corporate Support's Det Supt Graeme Bull believes sanctioned detections are one way of providing the best quality of service to our customers.

"Our primary customer is the victim of crime and, by responding to them

by Kim Perks

quickly, we are also addressing other issues such as the public perception of us and customer satisfaction," said Det Supt Bull. "Raising our game to the extent that we have since last April has been no mean feat and everyone should be proud of the achievement.

"In fact, the achievement is attracting 'competitive' interest from other forces, but that's not to say there is room for complacency."

The pendulum effect, and an apparent cautiousness to use 'Detected No Prosecution (DNP)' as a means of disposal in cases such as those lacking public interest to prosecute or a willing victim, led to a slight drop in overall detections in the autumn. Officers are reminded that DNP is still an option, just not the preferred one.

One sanctioned detection per officer per month would put the force among the best in the country, so it is particularly important for the crimes of burglary, robbery vehicle crime, violent crime, drugs and racially-aggravated offences.

Det Supt Bull said: "It remains equally important to properly record crimes, as errors in this area can affect detection targets and over-inflate recorded crime statistics. There is no shame in seeking advice if unsure."

Enhanced training is being designed and delivered, along with an enhanced

quality assurance process in the form of the Investigative Support Unit (ISU) which will be on hand to offer advice and practical support.

Det Supt Bull added: "The targets we want to achieve may seem out of reach, but they are possible if everyone focuses on getting the best results for victims."

"While many officers are already delivering way beyond a sanctioned detection a month, it needs the determination of every operational member of staff with equal commitment from the support departments."

See next month's *The Law* for examples of how divisions are increasing sanctioned detections.

## New addition to policing family

DISTINCTIVE black and yellow vehicles, with staff in high-visibility jackets bearing the letters VOSA, are what the new highways officers are using and wearing on the county's streets and roads.

Essex is the latest force to accredit staff from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) with the power to patrol the county's highways and stop goods and passenger vehicles for spot-checks and help remove dangerous vehicles from our roads.

Prior to the Police Reform Act

2002, only police officers had the power to stop and check vehicles, but now, after receiving police training, four VOSA personnel have qualified to undertake these checks with another two due to begin soon.

The VOSA staff will be issued with photo identity cards and they will be operating in yellow, black and orange Ford Galaxies.

They have the power to prohibit the use of dangerous vehicles, issue orders to repair defects, check emissions and tinted windscreens.

# Volunteer a helping hand

**SUCH is the importance of strong relations between the police service and Victim Support that in 2003 the charity locally restructured in line with Essex policing divisions.**

The Home Office was the driver behind these changes after recognising the complexities of having over 400 schemes across the country, and the need for best value by aligning schemes to 42 national criminal justice boards.

"It has not been without its challenges", said Essex Area Manager Tom Elliot. "There were some areas of resistance as schemes were having their autonomy removed, but there was a broad recognition that there were variances in the service being offered and a need for consistency." And this change is not the only one that has rendered the charity unrecognisable from the myths of yesteryear.

Mr Elliot said: "We still have volunteers over the age of 60, but the average age of volunteers is reducing. In fact, we have a lot of students seeking practical experience who work with us for a shorter term. Younger victims attune to a younger face.

"I fully believe that changes in working habits have also resulted in a difference in the volunteer profile. Less people are doing nine-to-five, and more people are working from home, giving them more flexibility. Plus, of course, more are retiring early."

However, changes in domestic situations also lead to a continuous turnover which means the charity is also on the look-out for more volunteers.

National Victim Support Week begins on February 21 and there will be a focus on volunteer recruitment as well as an appeal for people to take part in The Sunrise Appeal fundraising week from April 25.

**What image do you conjure up when you think of Victim Support...an elderly lady having a cup of tea and a chat? Well, times have changed and so has the charity that provides such vital support to the police service.**

**Dispelling myths however can be an uphill struggle and, as Victim Support embarks on a bid for more volunteers and funding, KIM PERKS takes a timely look at the reality behind the rumour.**

Like any charity, finance is an issue. Home Office funding makes up 80 per cent of the charity's turnover, with a need to find the other 20 per cent locally.

Assistance is sought from local authorities, charitable trusts and the private sector, but that still leaves a shortfall of about £100,000 to raise each year - which is a big target.

## Heart strings

Victim Support does not have the 'tug-at-the-heart-strings' appeal that attracts donations to children's charities and medical funds, yet the service can be a life-line to people of all ages touched by crime.

A better understanding of the service can aid both fundraising and recruitment and this is where police officers can play such a vital role.

Mr Elliot added: "I think victims of crime have suffered badly over the years, but with the advent of police family liaison officers (FLOs), there is a better quality of service.

"I can't speak more highly of FLOs and the criminal justice service is now thinking more highly of victims, with projects like *No Witness No Justice*, but there is still a long way to go.

"FLOs, for instance, are very influential in high-crime categories, but in lower-level

nature but, as Mr Elliot pointed out: "When I went into a court for the first time I was shocked. It was like a TV drama in the making. It can be incredibly traumatising for a witness."

Another myth, even among some in the police service, is that Victim Support is an arm of the police as opposed to an independent charity.

Although 93 per cent of business comes from the police, self-referrals are accepted, as are referrals from other agencies.

For instance, there is currently a pilot project ongoing with Essex County Council and Broomfield Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department, focused on hate crime, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour; crimes where victims might seek medical help but be reluctant to involve the police.

Another pilot in Basildon with the Essex Children's Fund has resulted in an increase in referrals from children, particularly aged 11 to 14, suffering from bullying.

"This is a particularly good success in our view," said Mr Elliot. "As research suggests, victims of bullying have a higher chance of becoming perpetrators, and the response from parents is that children referred to us have turned themselves around."

With the added introduction of an electronic referral system, Victim Support clearly bears little resemblance in 2005 to the historical picture painted in many minds.

Michael Payne, a name many will be familiar with from his days as Essex Police's Director of Intelligence, has shown his support by joining as Operations Manager and says: "The perception is that things done on a voluntary basis are amateur, but Victim Support is a far more business-like and professional organisation than ever and provides a vital community service."

Why not show your support by becoming a volunteer? If you haven't got the time for that, surely you have time for a fundraiser?

crime such as bogus callers, victims, quite understandably, don't get a FLO service. It is in these areas that a positive response by an officer attending a scene is crucial.

"A better understanding among officers of what Victim Support is about and the way they deliver that message to crime victims can make such a difference.

"We don't underestimate the whole raft of things that police officers have to contend with, but they are the first line into victims and simply handing out our leaflet can open the door to us.

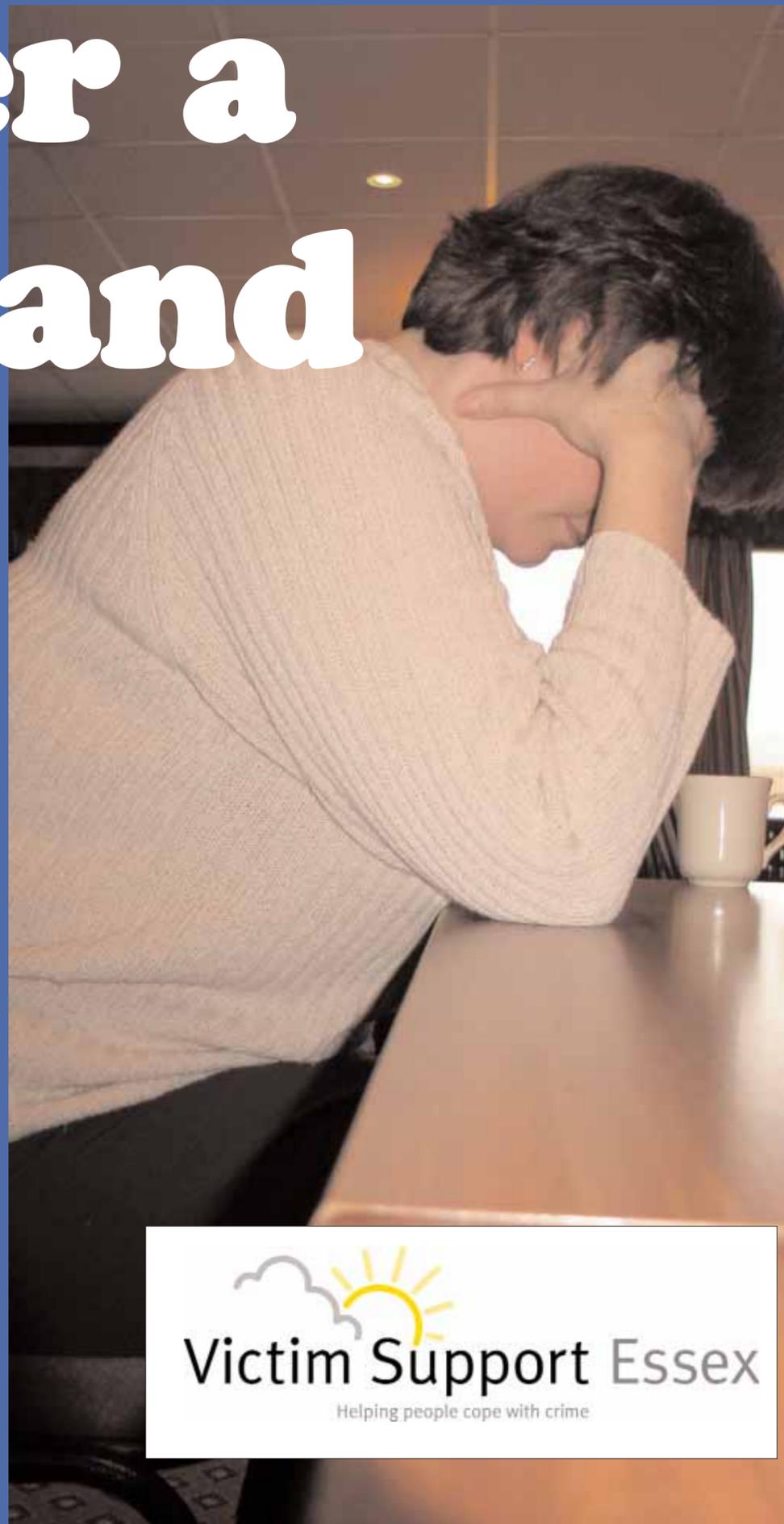
"In the long run it helps the police, as victims who feel more confident are more likely to speak to the police and ultimately, give evidence."

## Training

Once in the hands of Victim Support there is a need to ensure that adequate training is in place for staff and volunteers, and this too has changed, with training now in line with national standards of service delivery. That is not to say the service before wasn't good but now it is more consistent.

There is also soon to be enhanced training at police headquarters which will be based on supporting young witnesses in court.

To police officers, court is second



## VOLUNTEER - Brian

BEING a Victim Support volunteer is not rocket science, but it does require compassion and, most importantly, the ability to listen.

Brian Adgo from Chelmsford has been a volunteer for the charity for about three years. He was looking to give something back to the voluntary sector and went along to a local umbrella organisation who came up with a list of options - Victim Support was at the top of the list.

"I must admit I hadn't really heard of Victim Support," said Brian, "but they seemed ideal for the level of support I was able to offer.

"I was then working as a training manager which meant travelling to various other European destinations, but now I work as a freelance trainer so I am unable to work regular days and times. Victim Support was able to fit in their requests around my work commitments."

Having attended the initial training sessions, volunteers are able to make use of a buddy system working in tandem with a colleague until they find their feet.

Brian gets about two requests a month and the advice is not to spend more than two hours with a victim.

"Clearly the charity doesn't want us to get

emotionally involved," said Brian, "and I feel I have the ability to remain slightly detached, enabling me to provide more practical support."

Although Brian has mainly dealt with elderly victims of bogus callers, the age-range is vast and he has also provided support to young people who have suffered serious assault and men attacked on their way home late at night.

He is frequently asked to help fill out the criminal injuries' compensation award form and often gives crime prevention advice. When an elderly person is duped by a bogus caller, he can arrange for a key safe to be fitted so that they no longer need to leave the door unlocked, but regular callers can still have access.

Brian is 53 and most of the volunteers he meets are mature people but there is still a fair sprinkling of younger volunteers.

Brian said: "There are occasions when a young victim will relate better to a younger volunteer, but I feel that I have the right skills to listen to people of all ages and provide appropriate advice."

Once established as a volunteer, there are options for more advanced training in bereavement support and dealing with victims of serious sexual assault.

## VICTIM - Amy

WHEN Amy became one of the thousands of women affected by domestic violence, it was Victim Support who helped her turn her life around.

The abuse Amy suffered began as emotional as opposed to physical, limiting the extent to which the police and courts could intervene.

Her controlling husband was making her life "a living hell", following her around, intimidating her, and preventing her from having any financial independence.

When a neighbour suggested she contact Victim Support Amy reached out.

"They were absolutely marvellous," said Amy. "I didn't think I had much to say until I was given the chance."

It was no instant solution. The problems at home deepened and Amy turned to drink for comfort. Not only was she too ashamed to admit what was happening she was unwittingly providing her husband and his family with ammunition to use against her.

Social services were called in. There were attempts to make Amy out to be an unfit mother and there was eventually physical violence.

"The situation spiralled out of control," she said. "When I look back now, it seems hard to believe. I never so much as had a detention at school, I was the perfect citizen, and then suddenly I was this drunk."

Amy can't speak highly enough of Jackie Apps who was the Victim Support volunteer assigned to her.

"She was fantastic," said Amy. "I was hitting rock bottom. I was so embarrassed with what I had become; I didn't want to rely on someone else so I was putting on this pretence. Jackie was there every step of the way and she let me be myself without judging me."

When the local police domestic violence officer got involved and meetings with social services were called, Jackie supported Amy through the process, liaising with the other agencies to ensure they had a true picture.

Amy continued: "It was an awful time, airing our dirty laundry in front of these people that were discussing the future of my children as if I wasn't even in the room, but Jackie was there at every meeting."

Amy honestly believes that if it were not for the intervention of Victim Support, her children might well be in care now.

"I'm not one who likes to cling on, so I don't contact Victim Support now, but I know they are there if I need them," said Amy. "I think it's really important for people to know that help is out there even if you haven't been physically abused."

"I have a great deal to thank Victim Support for; they helped me get my life back on track and my life now is wonderful."

## How do you become a volunteer?

VOLUNTEERS come from all walks of life and include people who have actually used the service as a victim and regained some stability.

They can end up helping witnesses for both the prosecution and the defence, and victims of the most minor and major crimes. Families touched by the tragedy of the recent Asian Tsunami have benefited from the services of Victim Support.

For the community-based service, which includes visiting victims, there is a need for flexibility, but cases are allocated according to a volunteer's availability.

Some might only take on one or two cases each month and telephone support has risen significantly with a decline in victims seeking face-to-face support. Core training is a three-day one-off commitment.

The court witness service is less flexible, with volunteers needing to be free for a specific day in court and core training is a

four-day one-off commitment.

The support that is offered is equally varied and includes:

- Help with applications for criminal injuries compensation;
- Working as a key partner with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to reduce the fear of crime and provide practical assistance such as home security;
- Assistance with housing issues;
- Pre-trial court visits.

Essex Area Manager Tom Elliot said: "What we don't do is counselling but we do have access to counsellors and we can provide emotional support.

"Our role is about facilitation. We have the contacts and know when to push the right buttons at the right time."

If you want to become a volunteer, telephone Victim Support Essex on 01245 455980 for further information.



# Another great benefit of your Federation membership

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**Hamilton Direct Bank**

## Romford reunion

PLANS have been finalised for a reunion of police officers who served on 'J' and 'K' divisions of the Metropolitan Police in the 1960s and 1970s.

On Saturday, May 28 at the Peelers Restaurant at New Scotland Yard, a hot buffet will be served up.

Beginning at 11.30am, the day's invitation is also extended to those officers who remained in Essex after Romford Division went over to the Metropolitan Police in 1965.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Metropolitan Police Authority' and sent to Mike Hughes at 15 Queens Court, Goring-on-Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 0EW.

For further information, Mike can be emailed at hughesmike@supanet.com.

## IPA evenings

AN enjoyable and well-attended dinner dance was held in December at the Sports and Social Club with an excellent attendance of 42 members and friends.

AGMs are an essential part of the running of any organisation, but the lure is a delicious fish and chip supper at the end of the meeting.

So, diarise the Mid-Essex Branch meeting on Thursday, March 10 at 7.30pm and the Region 10 meeting on Thursday, March 17 at 7.30pm.

# In-car data recorders to be fitted forcewide

# Switching on to car safety soon

**A NEW red button will soon be appearing on dashboards as Vehicle Incident Data Recorders (VIDRs) are installed in police vehicles around the force in a bid to "reduce collisions and lower insurance costs".**

A VIDR constantly monitors wheel speed, braking, indicators, lights and whether blue lights and sirens are being used in a vehicle, with the information being overwritten every 30 seconds if nothing unusual happens.

The VIDRs will be fitted to approximately 140 vehicles in the first phase of implementation

by **Helen Cook**

prior to going live in April, with others across the force kitted up during forthcoming months and years.

Following a collision, data can be downloaded onto a computer, either at the scene by a Traffic Investigation Unit officer or by a garage workshop technician a few hours later. The evidence is disclosable and can be used in court or coroner's hearings.

Project Manager, Terry Scott, believes the device will be used to support the driver while also being a good aid to safety.

"It's an independent witness that can tell us what the vehicle was doing at the time of the incident and will be valuable back-up for an officer who is single-crewed," said Mr Scott. "The new safety device has been in use by the Metropolitan Police for four years and also with a number of other

forces, all of whom have seen a reduction in the number of police collisions since the device was fitted and lower insurance costs."

The button on the dashboard means that the device can also be triggered manually. For example, the driver may wish to prove that, prior to a non-collision incident, the vehicle had slowed, brakes were used and that the siren and lights were in use.

The system, which does not have a voice-recording facility, can also be activated if the vehicle is driven over rough ground and would then need to be reset.

However, the activation would alert the driver that the vehicle should be checked out in case damage had been caused to the underside.

Mr Scott added: "This new system is supported by the unions and has proved very useful to the forces using it already."

## Criminal clear-up

ESSEX offenders who have skipped bail are this month facing imminent arrest and the threat of prison, as Operation Turn-up gets under way across the county.

Home Office Minister for Criminal Justice and Reform, Baroness Scotland QC, launched Operation Turn-up during a visit to the Essex Criminal Justice Board at Chelmsford's Shire Hall.

On the first day of the blitz, arrests were made at offenders' homes and workplaces. Courts are setting aside additional days to bring them swiftly to justice and offenders will face separate sentences for failing to answer bail, in addition to any sentence imposed for the original offences.

Launching the Essex initiative, Baroness Scotland said: "For justice to be done it is vital that trials go ahead on time and that key people turn up at court. We have already introduced a range of measures to support victims and witnesses so that they can give their evidence successfully. Now it is time to remind defendants that they cannot escape justice by ignoring court orders."

## Handing out poetic justice at school

A CRIME reduction initiative, which has gone from strength to strength in north-east Essex over the years, has now found success overseas.

The Harwich Rhyme Against Crime project will be adopted by police in Belfast after a community constable saw the project on the internet.

The scheme was launched when local councillor Garry Calver thought children making up poems with anti-crime messages would be retained in the way nursery rhymes are remembered for life.

Little did anyone realise that the project would be so successful, including former Chase Lane Primary School pupil Ian Birch, who was one of the first youngsters to write a poem for The Harwich Rhyme Against Crime initiative.

This year he will be taking part as Pc Ian Birch as the project



● Chase Lane School's Deborah Carter and constables Dave Callen and Ian Birch with pupils Thomas and Emily. PHOTO: Evening Gazette.

celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Pc Birch said: "I distinctly remember watching Councillor Calver give the presentation on vandalism and then we all set about writing our poems."

"Unfortunately I didn't win, but no one could suggest that I didn't take

on board the message about us all doing something important to help the police."

New recruit Ian will be saying goodbye to Sgt Peter Wood, who has organised the yearly event over the past 10 years, as he is retiring.

Sgt Wood said: "Every police officer who has

been part of Rhyme Against Crime has found it to be a very rewarding experience.

"I am sure Ian will be no exception and that Rhyme Against Crime will continue to flourish."

"I am proud to have been associated with it throughout its first 10 years."

## Making the right gesture?

IN a bid to provide a better service to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, Essex Police wants to know how many officers and staff have sign language skills.

The proposal is to form a scheme where each division will have at least one person who can act as a link between the police and Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people in non-emergency situations.

Typical examples would be where a Deaf person attends the front counter, is being held in custody or is having anti-social problems with neighbours.

A link officer could be able to offer advice, reassurance, give accurate explanations of police actions and speed up the custody process.

Being a link officer would be secondary to that individual's normal role, and they will not be interpreters, who will be called out separately under the legal requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

Vulnerable Victims Co-ordinator, DI Alan Stevens, said: "Communication can be a huge barrier to accessing police services and information. The aim of this scheme is to break down this barrier and provide an appropriate link both for members of our community and for advice to police officers when attempting to communicate with our Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people."

At this stage, the appeal is purely to ascertain whether such a scheme is viable in Essex.

Sign skills at a level of BSL Stage 2 or above are preferable. If you can help, contact DI Stevens on ext 54235 or via email.

## Sport &amp; Leisure

# Music is the food of love

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Water result for Braintree

THE recent swimming gala at Gloucester Park saw a massive turnout of 80 enthusiastic competitors and some guest swimmers.

Braintree fielded a large team and, with the help of their champion Brett Lummis, won the competition.

With 50 people taking part, the relay churned up the water and excitement before Basildon took the relay cup.

Event organiser, Chris Mathlin, said: "This was the 10th year the competition has been held at this venue and feedback from everyone gave the unanimous decision that long may it continue."

## Tough enough?

IF you like punishment, discomfort, a challenge and would like to be seen as something of a tough guy, then this is the one for you.

The summer 'Tough Guy' event known as 'Nettle Warrior VIII' will be held in Wolverhampton on Sunday, July 31.

Tougher and wetter than the winter event, the competitors will have to negotiate an extreme cross-country army assault course through murky ditches, barbed wire, tunnels, A-frames, climbing ropes, electric fences, lighted hay and an abundance of mud.

If anyone is still interested, then visit the website address at [www.toughguy.co.uk](http://www.toughguy.co.uk) or contact Allan Barley for an application form on ext 47140 or by email.

## Marathon Mandy

WHEN Mandy Copleston found herself agreeing to run the London Marathon this year it was not difficult for her to decide which charity to support.

Mandy's uncle died whilst still a teenager of muscular dystrophy and Mandy herself is also a carrier of the disease.

She is not a seasoned runner and is starting from scratch. She has set up her own website giving details of her progress and sponsorship details.

It is an amusing account and anyone who can help her raise at least £1,250 for this worthy cause can visit her website at [www.runmandyrun.info](http://www.runmandyrun.info).

## Cricketing nets

AFTERNOON sessions are available for those who like to dress in white during the summer months, with net sessions at the County School booked throughout March.

For further information, contact John Stonehouse.

## ARE you familiar with the names Nanki-Poo, Yum-Yum and Ko-Ko? Then you need to book your tickets for Essex Police Musical Society's next production of Hot Mikado.

It is a hilarious 1940s style update of the Gilbert and Sullivan classic. The story and characters remain the same, but the familiar songs have been refreshed in the style of blues, swing and hot gospel.

The zoot-suited, tap dancing, colourful show is an ideal evening out for the whole family, showing just what can happen if there really were laws against flirting. For tickets to the shows

which are to be staged during the last week of this month, contact Lynda Barkway on ext 50739 or Jenny Hillyard on ext 50335.

• The Sports and Social Club have availability on some of their trips. The classical spectacular at the Albert Hall is on March 18 with tickets priced at £28 including coach.

Theatre show Billy Elliot is available for £42 for the performance on June 17. A trip up north to the Beatles Experience and Blackpool illuminations is scheduled for the weekend of September 23, with two nights B&B costing £129 for members and £149 for non members.

Those wishing to travel further afield may be interested in the German Christmas

Markets trip starting December 8. Three nights B&B is £169 for members and only £20 more for non-members. Contact John Stonehouse for further details.

• For those with a love of military band music, advance notice is given of a not-to-be missed concert at Southend's Cliffs Pavilion on Thursday, May 19 by the band of HM Royal Marines.

The concert is in aid of Southend Fair and Little Havens hospices, Healing Hearts appeal and John Grooms Association for disabled people. Tickets are priced between £19 and £15 and are available from the box office on 01702 351135.

Early booking is advisable for what will be a sell-out concert performed by one of the world's premier military bands.

## Heralding the Harlow success

MUD and hills faced competitors for the penultimate cross-country race of the season, with a record Essex turn-out helping to score some excellent results.

Nineteen Essex runners battled through what is generally considered to be the toughest course of the year at Deanne Park in Horsham.

While some struggled to make it to the finish, Harlow's Russ Welch floated effortlessly to victory, with Chelmsford's Mick Bond finishing fourth - assuring him of retaining the V45 title.

Following closely behind, Chelmsford's Andy Jopson and Colchester's Derek Walker ensured an emphatic win for the men's team, ahead of rivals Kent.

Essex was further boosted by the performances of Braintree's Alex Webb, 23rd, and the improving Phil McCulloch (25th) from Colchester.

The veterans' team improved its team position thanks to fine performances from John Mackenzie (headquarters) and Colchester's Chris Lacey and Paul Fieldsend.

Fine team work from the women was rewarded with a win. Katherine Southall (Harlow), Lisa Bolton (Southend) and Amanda Pollard (Harlow) finished in sixth to eighth positions and the result moves them to within a shot of the lead, currently held by Hampshire.

The final league fixture of the season took place at Maidstone's Mote Park earlier this month. See the next issue of *The Law* for a full report.

## Help deter running a disappointment

SADLY, members of the Essex Police Triathlon Club have been unable to take part in the two competitions they host each year, due to a lack of support with setting up and marshalling the course, writes Kim Perks.

This is particularly disappointing as one of the two events now incorporates the national police 'sprint' competition - real prestige for the force. Even chief officers enter a relay team in both the Basildon and Braintree competitions in a constant bid to out swim, out run and out cycle their staff officers.

The Basildon event is on Sunday, May 8 with 100 competitors from around the country. The Braintree event on Sunday, June 5 can cater for 250 entrants and is always oversubscribed.

Marshalling would mean giving up just a few hours of your time on one or both of these Sunday mornings and gives volunteers the opportunity to witness some of the best sports men and women in the country in action.

If you are a member of Essex Police taking part in the Basildon event as part of Croker Cup, your entrance is free so why not give something back by enlisting the help of a relative or two to lend a hand whilst cheering you on?

Please help more of our team members take part in this year's events. Contact Mark Harman at Bocking Road Policing Unit or Peter Bryan at Laindon Road Policing Unit.

## Bowled over by a deal

CRICKET fans are in for a treat, with the EPSA able to offer entry to Essex County Cricket Club for just £10 per person per day throughout the forthcoming season.

Although the discounted tickets will not be valid for the 20/20 matches, the deal allows for discounted entry for these games.

For further information, contact John Stonehouse.

## A helping hand is required



**CAN you help identify these photos?**

The one on the left was discovered by chance in the back of a picture frame bought on a boot sale.

The collar number is clearly 476 which would point towards it being Arthur Strait (1909-1911), Charles Anner



(1911-1914) (before being recalled to colours) or Frederick Arnold (1925-1954).

The other one could be post 1914, but this is speculation based on the fair row of medal ribbons worn by the young man, suggesting he may have served in the Army prior to

joining the police service.

If you can help judge the date from the uniform, hairstyle or other clues, the museum curator Sarah Ward would be pleased to hear from you on 01245 457150 or email her at [sarah.ward@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sarah.ward@essex.pnn.police.uk).

# Stop and search under scrutiny

**OFFICERS across the force are soon to be making a record of all police stops as part of a national policy which resulted from the Macpherson Report - the inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence.**

One of the recommendations was that a recording of all police stops must be undertaken if the force is to "promote community cohesion and build trust and confidence in Essex Police".

Pilot schemes have been running in several force areas ahead of the nationwide

by **Helen Cook**

implementation in April.

They have shown that the completion of police stop forms does not significantly increase the workload of officers, but has increased public confidence by making officers more open and accountable.

A police stop is when an officer asks someone to give a reason why they are in a certain place, their behaviour or their possession of something.

This is not an additional power, but a requirement to record. The power to detain applies only to stop and search and not to police stops.

A record of this questioning must be completed at the time and a copy given to the person who was questioned.

Only in exceptional circumstances, such as public

disorder or urgent attendance of the officer elsewhere, can the officer defer making a record but must complete and submit it before going off duty.

The need to record applies to officers, specials and police community support officers, but is not applicable when having a general conversation, dealing with witnesses, when intervening in an incident, conducting a breath test or traffic stop under the Road Traffic Act or when completing a HORT/1 or fixed penalty notice.

Project Officer, Sgt Liz Roberts, believes police stops are essential in tackling crime and disorder effectively and, in essence, nothing new.

"Explaining to the public why we will be making records of those stopped and questioned is very important," said Sgt Roberts. "Selective recording of stops and

searches leads to disproportionate numbers of records of black and ethnic minority people stopped and searched. We need as accurate a picture as possible about police street activity.

"The recording of police stops and being transparent about what we do is a positive step towards promoting confidence in the force."

Research has been carried in the pilot areas and a MORI survey showed that, when an officer had explained why the stop was happening and was being recorded, then the encounter was far more likely to be perceived as positive.

Intelligence gleaned from stop records will greatly assist briefings and form part of the tasking process.

Sgt Roberts added: "The people officers stop or search today are the witnesses we approach for information or help in the future."

## The hand of technology

OFFICERS in Braintree Division are pioneering computer technology which puts a wealth of information in the palm of their hand.

It also offers the benefit of them spending less of their shift being deskbound and more time out on patrol.

The small computer, called a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), is only slightly bigger than a mobile phone and gives direct, speedy access to a host of valuable information. They can also use it to access email and send messages while out on patrol.

Based on mobile phone technology, the system under trial is being provided by two suppliers, O2 and Orange.

Its tiny screen displays a keypad, which is activated at the touch of a stylus - a metal pointer smaller than a pencil.

Project Manager, Sgt Phil Stimpson, said: "It is hoped this technology will see officers spending more time out on the streets, working more efficiently and effectively by having remote access to important data."

Fifty PDAs are in use across the division and the three-month trial ends on February 24, with a decision to be taken on rolling it out forcewide after the evaluation.

## Stick it on!

SIMPLY remembering to add data promptly to PNC gives police greater opportunities to retain fingerprints and DNA and will help redress some of the problems that were highlighted by the Bichard Inquiry.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides greater opportunities for taking fingerprints and DNA from everyone who is arrested for a recordable offence, but who may not be immediately charged.

However, samples cannot be added to the National Automatic Fingerprint Image System (NAFIS) or the national DNA database until a PNC entry has been made.

Under new statutory codes of practice, the PNC entry must be made within 24 hours.

Whatever the result of the case, even if no further action, bail or a penalty notice is issued both the samples and the PNC entry will be retained.

Since the implementation of the Act last April, a review has been undertaken. Involving just 11 forces, including Essex, the legislation has been instrumental in the arrest of four murderers, 11 rapists and numerous robbers and other serious and repeat criminals.

## The future of the frontline

**THE FORCE has begun its first cadet recruitment drive of the year, with teenagers from across the county being encouraged to take the first step to becoming a fully-fledged police officer.**

**Cadets are paid an annual salary on a par with modern apprenticeships, with between £6,780 and £7,540 on offer. Applicants must be aged between 17 and a half and 18 on September 18, 2005.**

**Cadet Co-ordinator, Pc Simon Knightley, is adamant that life as a cadet is "not about just sitting in a front office all day and more about developing people's life experience".**

**He said: "For many, being a police officer is what they've always wanted to do so we need to use their time constructively in order to give them a rounded view of the police service."**

**As well as learning policing skills, the cadets will also take part in activities such as orienteering, first-aid and conservation work as well as community work. Alongside this, they will also attain a BTEC Award in Public Services.**



● **Ex-cadet Nicola Land, now at Ashford completing stage two, trains on the QE2 Bridge with the Rope Access Team.**

**Pc Knightley added: "By introducing cadets to the police service in this way allows the force to get the very best in home-grown staff to hopefully eventually police ours and their own communities."**

## Cold cases back in the spotlight

THE murder of a café owner in Westcliff 30 years ago has become an active investigation again following a review of the evidence and a positive response to a public appeal.

Ivy Davies was found dead in her home on February 4, 1975. She had multiple scalp wounds and a ligature around her neck.

The case was one of 10 featured in a Crimestoppers appeal last summer which brought forward some valuable information.

The Essex Police Investigative Review Team has since been following a number of lines of inquiry and looked to see whether the advancement of forensic technology might help solve the crime. The review has led to the case being actively pursued by a major investigation team.

To mark the anniversary and progress of the Ivy Davies case, Crimestoppers has launched a second public appeal which also includes two other unsolved crimes, those of Martin Broom, found dead in his Boreham home in 1989, and Kay O'Connor, found stabbed and strangled

in her Colchester home in 1974.

Both cases resulted in calls from the public during the latest Crimestoppers campaign despite Kay O'Connor not being one of the featured cases.

Head of the Investigative Review Team, Det Supt Simon Coxall, said: "Last summer's campaign put the spotlight on these serious crimes. It proved it's never too late to do the right thing...people are still willing to come forward with information that can make all the difference in solving these cases, and providing the loved ones of these victims with the answers they have sought for so long."

Isabel Cross, speaking on behalf of Essex Crimestoppers, said: We are only too pleased to keep up our campaign. As a charity we recognise that individuals, often with the most valuable information, may have personal pressures that prevent them from coming forward to the police. Crimestoppers is here to support them to do the right thing for themselves and the community."