Sarah Currie has been named winner of the National Police Bravery Awards for her part in disarming a mentally ill man who had a history of violence, schizophrenia and paranoia.

Sarah, with her colleagues PC Michael Otterson and Sgt Elliott Richardson, were lured into a trap and set upon by the violent man in September 2014 when they followed him into a Gateshead pub. After a sustained struggle, the man was eventually overpowered and disarmed. He was later found to have two handguns, a crossbow, a pack of throwing knives, home-made petrol bombs, smoke grenades and a baseball bat in his bag.

Sarah said: “You just go to work everyday and you do your job, and you don’t expect any sort of recognition for anything that you do because it’s what you do, at the end of the day. It’s really nice”.

Other female officers nominated were Derbyshire PC Caroline Holt, who saved a woman’s life by dragging her out of a burning flat.

PC Melanie Earnshaw, of Gloucestershire Police, wrestled a lighter from a woman who had doused both of them in petrol but with the intention of setting them alight.

From Gwent, PC Natasha Counsell single-handedly confronted a man who had been domestically abusing a woman and saving the victim of another violent attack.

PC Emma Benet, of the Met, was nominated with her partner after diving into a frozen pond to save a child who had fallen in.

PC Lisa Bates, of South Yorkshire Police, sustained horrific injuries from a man wielding an axe.

She suffered a number of blows to the head which fractured her skull and severed her finger. In a bid to escape her crazed attacker she also broke her leg.

Surrey’s PCs Erin Bowditch and PC Rachel Upton jumped into a dangerous river to save a vulnerable woman.

PC Jess Chick was part of a trio from Sussex who detained a hammer-wielding man.

The annual National Police Bravery Awards showcase some of the finest officers in England and Wales who have performed incredible acts of bravery, both on and off duty.
Hello everyone and welcome to another fantastic edition of Grapevine.

As the nights draw in towards autumn we can reflect on an extremely challenging and eventful policing year to date.

We have now seen five terrorist attacks in 2017, and indeed the national threat level has been raised to ‘Critical’ on two separate occasions, indicative of the new and unpredictable threat we face from spontaneous violent extremists.

These incidents have not only tested our operational response, but also the resilience of our officers and staff, many of whom have been called upon to work 12-hour shifts for extended periods.

It is crucial that the BAWP, along with the other staff support networks are on hand to provide much needed support to our people during these testing times.

Senior Women In Policing
The Senior Women in Policing Conference is rapidly approaching. I am really looking forward to the opportunity of catching up with colleagues from across the country to discuss some of the key issues facing women within the service.

This year’s theme is ‘excellence through difference’ and there is an incredibly exciting line-up of speakers coming to share their thoughts and experience.

The conference is taking place at the Brighton Hilton Metropole from the 20th November.

Inspirational Gladys
In this edition of Grapevine you will read the inspirational story of Gladys Howard, who became Portsmouth’s first female Police Inspector back in 1963 and who sadly passed away recently at the grand age of 100.

There are also plenty of other interesting articles including an update from Ch Insp Ces Agger on her deployment to the Stabilisation Unit in South Sudan.

I hope you all enjoy the read. Take care.

Dee Collins QPM
BAWP President
The proportion of female police officers in England and Wales has increased for the 10th year in a row.

There are now 35,844 female police officers across the 43 police forces in England and Wales, according to Home Office Statistics.

Female Officers now account for over 29% of all Officers across the 43 forces, up from the 24.2% they made up in 2007.

The proportion has increased every year since then.

However, there are 1,144 fewer female officers overall since the peak in 2010.

But there are 1,512 more

The police service gathered to remember the 4,500 officers who have died on duty at this year’s National Police Memorial Day in Cardiff.

BAWP President Dee Collins joined officers and families from across the UK at the 14th annual event as it returned to St David’s Hall in the Welsh capital.

A guard of honour was formed by officers from throughout the UK before the service, during which the names of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice over the past year were read out.

Remembered this year were DC Joe Mabuto and PC Gareth Browning, of Thames Valley Police; PC Paul Briggs, of Merseyside Police; PC Austin Jackson, of Leicestershire Constabulary; Insp Mark Estall, of Essex Police; and PC Keith Palmer, of the Met.

There was silence in the auditorium as petals of remembrance descended from the ceiling before the Last Post was sounded.

Speaking in the programme, Prince Charles, who is patron of National Police Memorial Day, said: “Our National Police Memorial Day is a time when we remember those who carried out their duties with professionalism, steadfastness and great courage and, in doing so, paid the ultimate price.”

“Since our last National Police Memorial Day, we have lost officers in some of the worst attacks ever seen on our soil as well as through everyday policing.

“The terrorist attacks in Manchester and London were mindless and barbaric. The enduring images from those attacks, seen all over the world, were of Police officers rushing to thwart attackers.

“Officers showed complete disregard for their own safety and it is doubtless that their bravery and sacrifice helped save countless lives.”

Candles were lit by family members of fallen officers to remember those who have died from all parts of the UK. PC Lowri Davies, daughter of Gwent PC Terence Davies, who died in 1990, lit a candle for Welsh officers.

Thelma Corkey, widow of Reserve Constable Samuel Snowdon Corkey, who died in 1982, lit a candle for Northern Irish officers.


Prayers were given by PC Ian Swales, of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, of behalf of his crew partner PC Andreas Newbery, who died in 2003; Tim Harding, son of PC Leonard Harding, of Wiltshire Police, who died in 1977; Tony Browning, father of PC Gareth Browning, who died on 1 April 2017; and Amy Mawson, daughter of Sgt Nigel Mawson, of West Midlands Police, who died in 2012.

The proportion of female police officers in service than in 2007.

And the statistics show that more women are choosing to join the service.

In 2017, of the 7,526 police officers that joined the 43 forces, 2,519 (33%) were female.

This is a 2.2% increase on the year before.

The overall number of police officers in England and Wales now stands at 123,142 officers – that is 20,592 fewer than in 2010.

Only 16% of female police officers support routine arming, a new survey has shown.

The Police Federation of England and Wales asked its members in a survey whether they thought all officers should carry guns.

The results showed that in total, 34% of all officers supported the idea of routine arming for police officers, compared to 23% the last time the survey was run in 2006.

A total of 55.2% of all officers said they would be prepared to carry a firearm if it was decided all officers should be armed on or off duty.

Low Support For Arming
Gladys Howard, the first female inspector in Portsmouth, recently died aged 100. Gladys joined Portsmouth City Police in 1947, and when she was forced to retire in 1976, because of her age, she cried when she went to hand in her uniform. The police was her family and she loved the job.

In April 1948, she reported for duty at Portsmouth Police Headquarters. She soon learned that women were not accepted by many of the men and was expected to have her lunch alone in a separate room!

Gladys was promoted to Sergeant in December 1952 and to Inspector in September 1963, becoming the first woman in those two ranks in the city. In a newspaper feature in 1963 Gladys said “When I decided to join I hoped that I had chosen an interesting and unusual career and I certainly have not been disappointed.”

Gladys received commendations four times, and was one of the few members of the force to be awarded a 1953 Coronation Medal.

Female Met officers have attended a surgery surgery day with a doctor to help them understand more about the menopause.

The brainchild of Christine Chauhan, a group was set up in Ealing to help female officers discuss HRT and how the menopause can affect their daily work, as well as the fitness test.

Dr Marilyn Glenville spoke to officers and has since offered to hold surgery days to look at omega checks, bone density and pre-menopausal checks for female officers.

PC Julia Haggett added: “I know there was so much more we could have asked as it made us all think and look at ourselves and how we live.”

We suspect that this is partly the result of the number of women who work in some particularly sensitive and challenging specialities, such as CEOP, dealing with domestic violence and abuse, and investigating serious sexual offences.

We are not pretending that the programme is a one-size-fits-all solution for everyone, but we do believe it is a significant addition to other services already out there. It will allow us to work closely with other partners to improve this level of service in the future.
In August 2014, Ch Insp Cecilia Agger was seconded to the United Nations Police in South Sudan as part of a team of four British officers tasked to implement community policing. The UN was helping the Government develop public services following its independence from Sudan. But in December 2013 the country had erupted into armed conflict along political and tribal lines, leaving many dead and hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced. Many people fled into UN compounds seeking sanctuary, leading to the establishment of a number of refugee camps. Here is Cecilia’s experience.

My UK colleagues and I developed a community policing strategy for the refugee camps. International police officers from a wide variety of countries adopted UK community policing tactics. We patrolled, engaged with locals, problem solved, worked in partnership, built community resilience and developed and deployed skills including restorative justice interventions, child protection and victim-centred services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

During the crisis civilians were killed, tortured, raped and disappeared. Many alleged perpetrators were from the government and opposition forces, but the South Sudan Police were also accused of human rights atrocities. The UK team developed training for the National Police to raise their awareness of human rights and develop community policing skills. This has become the blueprint for training all police under the current peace process.

Culture Shock
From a personal point of view, however well prepared you are, arriving in a new country and into a new organisation is a culture shock. For me, the biggest shock was the heat; it was boiling all the time. Air con became my new best-friend and suddenly sunscreen, a hat and hydration demanded my constant attention.

The accommodation was basic; the air con worked sometimes, and the toilets and showers were in a separate container about 50m away. When it rained, we needed wellies to trek through the mud for a shower.

I enjoyed the local food, regularly eating in the canteen run by South Sudanese widows. The daily fare consisted of rice, kidney beans cooked in a slightly salty sauce and chopped cabbage or greens. Some foods were less easy to obtain and I surprised myself by not missing things like chocolate. But when I came home on leave it was a real treat to have whatever cheese I fancied!

Learning Experience
There are so many things I loved about this experience. One of the main benefits was working with police officers from around the world.

The recruitment of child soldiers is a problem in South Sudan and one day, talking to colleagues from Bosnia, I realised that some of them had first-hand experience of being a child soldier.

I also learnt that skills I thought I possessed, such as being a good communicator, were context and culture specific. I could do this well amongst European cultures but I was less successful with the internally displaced South Sudanese people.

My motivation for joining the police was to help people and, over the years, I think I lost some connection to this core value and drive. My experience working in South Sudan reconnected me to my core motivation.

The harder the work was, the more satisfaction I gained from seeing the positive impact of the difference my teams and I were making.

Would I do it again? Absolutely!

Cecilia’s deployment was co-ordinated by the Stabilisation Unit (SU). Find out more at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit
New Uniform Standard

A new national standard for uniform that promises to strike a balance between professional image and freedom of expression has been set up. The guidance was published in August by the College of Policing, and addresses the issue of variable dress codes among forces.

A spokesman from the College of Policing said: “The national guidance will help forces across England and Wales to take a consistent approach to appearance standards for officers and staff.

“The document aims to provide a clear and comprehensive guidance on appearance to present a professional image, achieve and maintain standards and also allow for a level of self-expression.”

‘You Deserve Support’

The Duke of Cambridge, Prince William, spoke on 5 September at the National Health and Wellbeing in Policing Conference. Figures show a 47% rise in the number of officers experiencing mental health illnesses in the last five years, and 9,267 officers taking time off for either stress, depression, anxiety or PTSD in the last year.

The Prince said: “Being a member of the emergency services takes considerable mental strength and resilience, and I believe there is more that we can and should do to support all first responders to look after their mental health.”

New Journey For Leicestershire Women’s Network

Leicestershire Police’s women’s network hosted an event for nearly 200 officers and staff in June.

The all-day event, called ‘Your Journey’, was held at De Montfort University and was open to everyone within the force, and key partners who wanted to learn more about the network.

Speakers included Women’s Inclusive Network Chair Ch Supt Kerry Smith; Leicestershire Police Federation Chair Tiff Lynch; and Jo Ashworth, Head of Forensic Services at East Midlands Special Operations Unit.

Delegates also heard from Amy Morgan, mother of murdered Tyler Thompson, who spoke about the impact that her son’s death has had on her and why she’s supporting the force’s #LivesNotKnives campaign.

The force’s Woman of the Year was also announced. This year’s winner was Barbara O’Donoghue, a retired crime scene investigator.

A Special Recognition Award was also presented to Sarah Simms, from the force’s Corporate Services department.

Ch Supt Smith said: “It has been a real inspiration and I am so proud and pleased to have been part of the event.

“We have heard the amazing journeys of some inspiring and determined individuals and I hope that the day has been both supportive and informative.”

Tracey Wins Again

Congratulations to PC Tracey Gunn, who has been awarded her third prestigious award of the year following her innovative work in the prison service. Tracey, who was Scotland’s first prison liaison officer, picked up our Officer of the Year Award in June. And now she has been given the same honour by the International Association Of Women Police.

She was given the award at the IAWP’s International Women and Law Enforcement conference in Cairns, Australia, in September.

She won for her work on the ground-breaking ‘Meet the Police’ initiative, which forges strong links between officers’ and prisoners’ children. The scheme has successfully been introduced at five prisons. Tracey was also named Officer of the Year by Police Scotland. She said she is “humbled” by the awards the initiative has received.

PC Nicola Flanagan, of Staffordshire Police, was also a winner – being awarded the IAWP’s Coaching and Mentoring Award.

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A spokesman from the College of Policing said: “The national guidance will help forces across England and Wales to take a consistent approach to appearance standards for officers and staff.

“The document aims to provide a clear and comprehensive guidance on appearance to present a professional image, achieve and maintain standards and also allow for a level of self-expression.”
The Police Federation of England and Wales wants more female police officers to stand as reps.

"Historically, the Police Federation has been criticised for its representatives being mainly men," says Sam Roberts, who holds one of three women’s reserve seats on the PFEW national board.

Sam (pictured left) has been a rep for 20 years, and believes the next round of Federation elections in 2018 presents the opportunity to increase the number of women reps. Sam said: “The intention under the new regulations is that Federation boards should reflect the workforces they represent. So, in my own force, North Wales, there are 30% women officers and we should aim to have 30% of female reps on the board.

“Currently, only 11% of reps are female nationally, largely thanks to the Women’s Reserved Seats. Once these positions go at the next election, we might struggle to get 4-5% of women reps – a huge backward step. It is essential that we encourage more women to stand for election.”

PC Rebecca Smith (pictured right) had help from the Federation, which in turn inspired her to become a rep. She explains: “I plan my time and have family to help if I need childcare but I would say to anyone worried about the time, definitely don’t be put off because if you feel you are getting snowed under you can ask another rep and we all help each other out.

“The opportunities to learn and develop are massive. I’ve been doing this a year and it’s been really, really good, so interesting.”

Any officers up to and including the rank of Chief Inspector who want more information about becoming a rep should contact their local Branch Boards.

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Sally’s Super Support

Lawyer Sally Ramage sponsors an award at the BAWP Excellence Awards every year. She explains why she thinks it is important to support women in the police service.

Q Sally you sponsor a BAWP award every year and have recently funded the new website. How did you become involved with the association?

A As a lawyer, I used to attend a lot of police conferences. I met Carolyn Williamson in 2007 and joined BAWP as an associate and I haven’t looked back.

A year later, out of the blue I was contacted by the Society of Authors because they found someone had stolen some of my writing. They sued them on my behalf and sent me a cheque, which I then sent on to BAWP as a donation.

Whenever I have a bit of spare money now, it goes to the BAWP because I feel very strongly about the work done by women police officers about the world.

It is a difficult job, and they need help. Women go to work, and have babies, and then go back to work, but I worry about them, and their uniforms, and the weight of the equipment they carry. So for me it is important to support that.

Q Tell Grapevine readers a little more about your career as a lawyer.

A I started off as an accountant, and then specialised in forensic accounting. It was very interesting and I became very good at complex cases.

But then I had my second baby 34 years ago and was very ill with septicaemia. I had a cardiac arrest and nearly died.

I was in hospital for three months with a seriously injured hip that had rotted away and had to be removed.

I knew I couldn’t carry on doing accounting, so I decided to do law. I started reading and researching while I was recovering. I did a correspondence course at home and then when they got better I went to university. I got addicted and did a course and then did a degree and another degree.

Law doesn’t sound like an easy job either, recovering from injury and while looking after two young children.

Q No. A lawyer’s job is very strenuous. I cannot run around and carry out work like that. So I did a master’s in business administration and got a job with the Criminal Lawyer.

A I became editor in 1997 and have been doing that ever since. I also write legislation and I have annotated The Fraud Act and the Policing and Crime Act among others and I review books for Oxford and Cambridge University.

Q You had a brain haemorrhage in 2013 following DVT. How are you now?

A I was very lucky not to end up with brain damage. I am grateful to be alive. My system was totally shutting down and it took a year to learn to read again.

The doctor said I survived because I was so active and suggested that I carry on doing my work so that is what I have done. After two years I was back to speed and I am fighting fit now.

Q Tell Grapevine readers something about yourself that most people do not know.

A Most people do not know that I am disabled. I am on crutches, and I hate them. But I could have ended up in a wheelchair.

After the septicaemia I had a hip replacement, but I had to learn to walk again. I had two small children and I forced myself to do it. I am very strong-minded.

All the muscles in my legs were so wasted that I couldn’t lift my leg for a whole year. Gradually I went back to work. I didn’t want to sit around feeling sorry for myself.

Sally Ramage sponsored the 2017 BAWP Special Recognition Award, which was won by Devon and Cornwall Women’s Network Chair Nikki Leaper.