Celebrating 20 years of BAWP
Dealing with dyslexia
Mentoring in the Met
Welcome to the Winter issue of Grapevine. This is a really busy edition with coverage of our Autumn PDD showcasing specialist roles, and the celebration of 20 years of BAWP. The reception at the House of Lords was a great opportunity to reflect upon how far women in policing have come in the past 20 years. It also reminds us all that there is still work to be done to ensure representation across all areas of the service. On a more serious note I must thank the two officers from the MOD Police who have shared their experiences of overcoming dyslexia in the workplace, with some great practical advice for colleagues who may be facing similar issues. There are lots of positive stories in this edition sharing what individual forces are doing to assist female development in the police service and how you can seize interesting opportunities to develop yourself. I am sure those responsible will be more than happy to share their experiences and good practice in more detail should you wish to contact them. No doubt there are more examples out there so please get in touch if you would like us to include a story in Grapevine.

From the Editor

Dates for your diary

2008

BAWP Annual Awards – the deadline for nominations is January 31. Find out more about the award categories from www.bawp.org


Spring Professional Development Day – Forest of Arden Hotel, Warwickshire. Monday April 28 (dinner) and Tuesday April 29.

46th Annual IAWP Training Conference – Darwin, Australia, September 6-12.

Autumn Professional Development Day – Venue and date in October to be confirmed.

Features

Report from Autumn Professional Development Day
Find out more about careers in specialisms

BAWP for BAWP’s 20th Anniversary
See the pictures and hear reactions to the event from some of BAWP’s founder members

The Fulbright Awards Programme
Find out how you could spend six months in the USA researching policing and hear from one woman who did just that

Mentoring goes formal in the Met
Read about how mentoring is being used to recruit more women into the force’s specialist firearms unit CO19 and get a mentor’s point of view

Dyslexia – how two Ministry of Defence Police Officers got help

IAWP News from Denver

Membership details

Cover photograph reproduced courtesy Lindsay Wilson Photography Ltd
Three of BAWP’s founder members celebrate its 20th birthday at the House of Lords. From left: Tina Martin, Carolyn Williamson and Joan Lock.

Copy deadline for Spring issue is February 9, 2008

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PSNI women get new association

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has launched its first women’s police association.

Both the force’s Assistant Chief Constable Judith Gillespie and Deputy Chief Constable Paul Leighton have pledged their support to the committee.

Mr Leighton said at the launch: “This association is important because it is from the ground up and you can do what you want with it.”

The association was created to promote good working relations between women and men and improve the equality of treatment for all, both within the service and in the community.

The PSNI Gender Steering Group oversees the work of the women’s police association committee. BAWP committee member Chief Inspector Patricia Foy sits on that group and says the association will be key in highlighting practices which may have a negative impact on women and men in the workforce. “We want to establish a working environment in which both women and men feel their contribution is valued and respected.” She said.

The association will also support the force’s work to increase the number of female recruits in line with the Gender Action Plan, which was launched three-years-ago.

The plan was written in response to Section 48 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act, which in turn was the legislative vehicle for many of the recommendations contained within the Fatten Report. It contained 34 suggestions around recruitment, deployment, retention, promotion, networking and composition of specialist departments.

Chief Inspector Foy says many of the recommendations have been actioned and could be credited in part for the increase of women in the force from 1513 (14 per cent) in 2001 to over 2000 (22 per cent) in 2007.

“Small yet significant changes such as the removal of the ‘PW’ prefix for female officers have been implemented. New grievance, bullying and harassment policies and procedures have been put in place. “Opportunities for networking have been embraced including a cross-border event with colleagues from An Garda Siochana, which was attended by the President of Ireland, Dr Mary McAleese.” Said Chief Inspector Foy.

“We realise there is much work still to be done and are revising the Gender Action Plan. We must continue to make the PSNI an organisation of choice for women.” She added.

Chief Inspector Foy says Northern Ireland is changing and its policing is too.

“In 2001, only eight per cent of officers were drawn from the Catholic Community, despite the fact that Catholics made up half of the population. Today that figure is at 23 per cent. This has largely been brought about by 50/50 recruitment, which means half of recruits must come from the Catholic Community and half from Protestant and other groupings.” She said.

“It has been a long and sometimes difficult path for all those involved which includes leadership at all levels. There is a responsibility on women to accept and rise to the challenges ahead and maximise the opportunities they are presented with. The work continues and there will always be more to do.”

If anyone would like further information on the changes or experiences in PSNI, please contact:

Chief Inspector Patricia Foy
Patricia.Foy@psni.pnn.police.uk
(pictured left) or
Chief Inspector Barbara Gray
Barbara.Gray@psni.pnn.police.uk
Collecting the award on behalf of the force

West Midlands Police has been named as one of the top 50 places women want to work for the second year running.
The Times Aurora award was bestowed on the force in recognition of its efforts in the past year in helping women progress.
West Midlands Police was the only police force to make the grade and one of two public sector organisations to be placed in the top 50.
The submission was pulled together by the West Midlands Association for Women in Policing (WMAWP). Its chair Inspector Jane Parry said the award criteria had changed significantly since last year. “We had to demonstrate how West Midlands Police is a progressive organisation and an employer of choice for women. Evidence had to be given in a range of areas from opportunities for development and openness to change to corporate and environmental responsibility.”
Jane added: “If anyone is interested in finding out more about the best practise which earned the force its award please contact my colleague Danni Corfield email: d.corfield@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk”

Find out more about the awards at www.wherewomenwanttowork.com

Cleveland women given a choice
CLEVELAND Police has launched a helpline for women being forced into marriage, or who are the victims of honour-based violence.
The dedicated telephone line will be staffed 24 hours a day by 20 female police officers, who are all part of a new unit set up to tackle such crimes.
It was Detective Superintendent Tony Hutchinson’s idea to create the unit. “I am of the opinion that these issues are hugely under reported,” he said. “The memories of those who have been killed in the name of so called ‘honour’ should act as our motivation to tackle this issue head on. The launch of a dedicated Cleveland Police telephone line now casts the net wider to trap those who perpetuate this dreadful abuse.”
The helpline was officially launched at a conference to raise awareness of honour-related crimes last month (November).

New committee members

The BAWP has four new committee members.
Tara Swann, the chair of PSNI’s first women’s association (read about it on page two) brings her 18 years experience of policing in Northern Ireland, most recently in Neighbourhood Policing, to the table.
PC Karen Burton has more than 21 years service with Leicestershire Constabulary. She has a wealth of knowledge on equality and diversity issues which she hopes to use to help the BAWP.
Inspector Pam Bridges from Northumbria Police rejoins the committee after a spell away. She has worked in the diversity and criminal justice fields and is now in charge of a Neighbourhood Policing Team where she is instilling the importance of citizen focus.
Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Inspector Sian Lockley hopes to improve the links between the BAWP and Gay Police Association where she was formerly the deputy chair.
Sian has recently returned to force after a HMIC secondment where she was part of the HMIC Race Equality Inspection Team.

Back issues needed
BAWP Secretary Carolyn Williamson is appealing for all BAWP members past and present to go on a Grapevine hunt. Carolyn is trying to track down issues published before March 2000.
“It seems over the years copies have been lent out and not returned. Other copies have gone missing in house and office moves leaving me without a complete set,” said Carolyn. “Please have a dig around in your old filing cabinets, lofts and basements and if you turn up any issues pre-March 2000 please let me know.” She added.
Find Carolyn’s contact details on page 16.
Women needed to test the tools to tackle terrorism

The search is on for female police officers to take part in trials for new uniform and equipment to be used during CBRN – chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear – incidents.

Candidates should be trained CBRN responders and want to help decide the look and feel of clothing and equipment set to be rolled out nationally.

The lack of female staff at the Police National CBRN Centre has prompted the appeal for help.

Staff at the centre are currently working on the Police Operational Response Programme, which is a long project to develop the police service’s response to CBRN terrorism. This includes procuring equipment and developing the tactics and training needed to tackle such incidents. But, they are short of female officers to test the equipment and techniques as they are developed.

Grapevine Editor Inspector Kim Rowley is staff officer to the National Co-ordinator for CBRN Terrorism under the ACPO Terrorist and Allied Matters portfolio, and is leading the search for volunteers.

She said: “There is a real shortage of women working both at the centre and in force CBRN roles. But, this is something we are already trying to address for the future, making it crucial that any new equipment and clothing is suitable for both men and women.”

The next trials start in April 2008 for quick donning personal protective equipment (PPE). This will be used to speed up the police response should a CBRN attack occur in the UK. The current equipment takes much longer to put on and this kit will mean officers can be fully protected and on the scene of an incident much faster.

The views of the female triallists will be crucial to ensure the fabric, styling, overall weight and of course sizing is suitable for both sexes – in line with the Gender Agenda 2 strategy.

The clothing chosen during this trial will eventually be used by CBRN responders across the whole of the UK.

Further triallists will be needed throughout the project’s life as new equipment and eventually training is developed.

Kim, who only started her role at the centre in July, says times are changing. “The centre bosses have already taken steps in the right direction to address the gender balance through the BAWP Autumn professional development day.” She said.

“The trials are a fantastic opportunity for female officers to influence decisions about uniform and equipment from the start. It is still a relatively new area of work and if we can ensure its tools are inclusive for both men and women from inception, then we are well on our way to a greater policing equality.”

Spending a penny made easier for women

A Hampshire PC has made answering the call of nature while wearing overalls much simpler for her and her colleagues.

Helena Temple, who works in the force support unit, discovered P-Mates.

It is a small cardboard funnel that when used allows women to ‘wee’ standing up.

She was so impressed with the simple, yet effective, device that she submitted a suggestion to the force’s Brainwaves Scheme for all female officers to be issued with them.

“Some of my colleagues now don’t travel without them,” said Helena. “It is ideal when you are wearing overalls especially with ‘full kit’. You don’t have to remove your body armour, arm guards, utility belt, thigh guards and the top half of your overalls to answer the call of nature.” She says.

Helena now wants to spread the word to other female staff. “I know many women go without water for long periods of time (I had been guilty of this) to reduce the need to visit the toilet. Those days are over for us.”

Find out more at www.pmate.co.uk or visit www.shewee.com for a similar device.
Surrey promises new motorbikes for women who sign up

Surrey’s women officers have been urged to give motorcycling a go.

The force’s roads policing unit boss, Chief Inspector Moira Munro, has even pledged to source new motorbikes more suitable for shorter male and female officers.

The move comes after the prohibitive size of the force’s current bikes was highlighted at the first open day for would-be female motorcyclists.

The event gave women across the force a chance to speak to members of the road policing unit and Special Escort Group rider Sergeant Eugenie Brooks, who flew the flag for the specialism.

Eugenie, who was featured in the Autumn 2006 issue of Grapevine, has organised similar events within the Metropolitan Police Service and is a member of the BAWP’s specialist network.

She was contacted by officers in Surrey through the network for advice on ensuring their event was a success.

Chief Inspector Munro says her vision is for Surrey to have a full special escort group by 2012 to lead and support Olympic events. “We will also need to expand capacity in our motorcycle fleet to meet the demands of an increasingly congested road network. Representation of women in the roads policing unit is currently at 12 per cent. A key part of the day was to encourage more women to join, as I believe the unit should reflect the force average, which is 30 per cent.” She added.

For one officer the event clearly struck a chord. PC Vicki Riley described it as a “fantastic day” and said that she had gone home with a “huge smile on my face”. She added: “I was already enthusiastic about getting into RPU beforehand and the day made me even more determined. I’d love to become the force’s first female motorcyclist.”

Specialist network there to help

More than 170 women have joined a specialist network set up by BAWP.

The women, both officers and police staff, have jobs across the specialisms from dogs to firearms, air support to roads policing.

And they have all volunteered to help colleagues who aspire to join them.

The network has been tapped into more than 20 times by people looking for role models in specialist areas, or good practice in recruiting says BAWP National Co-ordinator Liz Owsey.

“Some forces struggle to recruit women into certain specialisms and use the network to find women carrying out similar roles in other forces. These women are often used as role models and asked to share their experiences to encourage others to follow in their footsteps,” said Liz. “The network can also be used by the women working in the specialisms to find colleagues in the same boat, as being in one of these departments can often be an isolating experience.” She added.
You don’t need to be special to join

Join us – was the resounding message from the female officers and staff who took to the stage at the Autumn professional development day to share their experiences of working in specialist posts.

Each woman explained how they were in the minority and urged others to put their skills to good use and take the plunge.

DC Joanne Latta acknowledged the secrecy of special branch is probably a barrier to women applying. She admitted when she joined in 1986 it was so secretive she didn’t even know what they did. Joanne shared her concern that they couldn’t truly tackle terrorism if they didn’t have a diverse mix of people gathering intelligence.

The work of a dog handler is anything but anonymous says PC Mandy Chapman who showed delegates snaps of the four police dogs she has worked with. When she joined the Met Dog Unit in 1989 she was given the “biggest dog on the course in a bid to get rid of her.” She says. But the trainer didn’t count on Mandy’s tenacity to pave the way for others and scoop the top student of the year award in the process. Mandy says being a dog handler is physically demanding and requires a real commitment. “A dog’s working life is nine years and it is important the dog gets handler continuity.”

If you can multi-task then a posting to the air operations unit should be your perfect job said PC Anita Williams from Devon and Cornwall Constabulary.

Anita told the audience she believed the biggest barrier to women joining their unit was an aspect of their training called dunker training. This is where they are plunged into a pool in a helicopter simulator, turned 180 degrees with the lights off and have to escape. Anita admitted while it may be frightening it could save your life especially in Devon and Cornwall where they police miles of coastline.

PC Tracey Gladman, who appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of Grapevine, said how perseverance and determination helped her secure her ideal job in the roads policing unit. While PC Pat Wheelan from Greater Manchester Police firearms unit said such units had "changed for the better" since she joined. She urged other women to train as authorised firearms officers.

How Lancashire broke down the barriers

A lack of female role models, a lack of interest, a lack of knowledge, a perceived ‘van culture’, difficult fitness tests, limited vacancies and the belief that such posts were incompatible with caring responsibilities.

That was what Sergeant Janette Bashall, vice chair of the force’s women’s network, found when she quizzed women in the force about why they hadn’t signed up for a specialist post.

The research didn’t lay idle in a report for long as the force took immediate action to tackle these barriers head on. They reviewed all fitness testing, identified both male and female role models within each specialism and made their details available to staff, brought in interview coaches, held career fares and are reviewing all equipment.

“We have since introduced a lighter public order shield, a two-piece public order suit and lighter firearms,” says Janette.

Since the campaign six women have moved into specialist posts. However Janette says they are not complacent. “Cultural issues are still being addressed. Staff have to believe that coaching and mentoring is acceptable and that it is fine to be different and require different equipment.” Work is still ongoing to review flexible working practices, raise awareness of specialisms to new recruits and to look at the retention of women in such posts when they go on maternity leave.”

Fitness testing

There should be national mandated levels of fitness for recruitment and all specialisms. That’s the goal of a newly formed ACPO fitness testing working group which BAWP is part of.

National Co-ordinator Liz Owsley says the group’s early research revealed a complete lack of continuity nationally for fitness tests and standards across the breadth of specialisms. “Specific work also needs to be done to ensure any new tests are fair to all and don’t discriminate against any particular groups of people.” She said.

BAWP President Julie Spence agreed. She told delegates that she believes job related fitness tests are important if they properly reflect the level of fitness needed to fulfil a role. However when they are used as a part of selection procedure and 99 per cent of men pass, but many women fail, they become a test for women, she said.
You don’t always have to make sacrifices to have a career in the police service and a family, said Lynne Copp, Managing Director of The Worklife Company. Lynne told female delegates that they just had to:

• Have confidence in their skills and abilities – many women still focus on what they lack, rather than what they can do. Keep an achievement portfolio linking skills, competencies and behaviours.
• Create a compelling horizon – have a vision for the future you and focus on it daily.
• Create opportunities to project yourself towards your vision. Attend programmes, events and network with those that can support your vision.
• Create a positive image of yourself – physically, emotionally and behaviourally. Project yourself in the way you wish to be regarded and be authentic at all times.
• Make connections with women internally who already work in the area that you want to be in. Build alliances in other forces and external environments that will support you.
• Be eager! Be hungry and passionate about your desired success. Bounce out of bed knowing that you are one day closer.
• Celebrate success – recognise the little steps as well as the big.

What’s stopping you

Monday September 10
BAWP Annual General Meeting
Networking dinner with pre-dinner speaker DCI Sharon Fielding of Humberside Police

Tuesday September 11
Working in specialist posts
Superintendent John Buttress – Police National CBRN Centre
DC Joanne Latta, Special Branch, Greater Manchester Police
Shona Pointon, Complaints Investigation, Kent Police
PC Anita Williams – Air Operations, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
PC Tracy Gladman, Traffic, Essex Police
PC Pat Whelan, Firearms, Greater Manchester Police
PC Mandy Chapman, Dog Section, Metropolitan Police Service

ACPO update on fitness testing
Liz Owsley – BAWP National Co-ordinator

Barriers to applying for specialist posts
Sgt Janette Bashall, Lancashire Constabulary

What’s stopping you? – Lynne Copp, The Worklife Company

Nottinghamshire Police’s Women’s Integrated Network hosted its sixth Professional Development Day last month (November).

Annette Saunders, an ex-superintendent from Wiltshire Police, opened the event with an insight into her experiences over the past 30 years. Her amusing anecdotes clearly reflected the experiences shown in ‘Life On Mars’.

This year’s focus was ‘Positively Working Together’.

The 250 delegates had a choice of ten workshops, from which they were able to attend two. The workshops, which were chosen as a result of feedback from last year’s event, included: Safety on-line; How healthy are you? Positive Mental Attitude; A specialist workshop with CID; Dealing with conflict and Positively working together.

The various workshops allowed the women to:

• Think about how their existing behaviour and beliefs affect relationships and circumstances
• How to work as a team
• Resolve conflict in a working situation
• Write constructively about themselves for PDRs and application forms
• Eat to increase energy levels
• Undertake practical exercises and stretches that can be done whilst working
• Maximise their potential and enable them to make the move they have always dreamed of
• Utilise their financial assets to their best advantage
• Share data and send files to partners in a secure fashion, and not become the next victim of e-crime
• Understand opportunities and specialisms within the Force Crime Directorate

This year’s networking opportunities included a chance to speak to colleagues from Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, who also attended the event.

The force’s chief constable, Steve Green, praised the work of the Women’s Integrated Network. He said it had, in the past six years, helped women in the force realise their potential, which ultimately benefited the force by creating a more motivated and professional organisation.

Chair of WIN, Julie Wilson, said there was lots of new faces at the event with many women attending for the first time. “There was such a buzz in the main hall where all the women congregated – it was amazing to be part of it.”

By Fleur Winters,
Business Marketing Manager

Notts women get professional
Celebrating with House of Lords reception

Baroness Angela Harris hosted 120 BAWP members and guests to mark the association’s 20th birthday. Officers and staff, past and present, travelled across the country to mark the occasion and pledge their commitment to the organisation.

Three of the BAWP’s founder members, who are pictured on the cover of Grapevine, were reunited at the event. Joan Lock, Tina Martin and Carolyn Williamson had been at the first meeting in 1987.

It had been Tina’s dream to form a British Association of Women Police after attending the International Association of Women Police (IAWP) national training conference in 1986. It was her letter in Police Review in 1987 inviting policewomen from across the country to attend a meeting which created BAWP.

However it was Joan who had unknowingly planted the seed in Tina’s mind to attend the conference in the first place. She had written a small article in Police Review about the IAWP which had prompted Tina, at her own expense, to attend the conference in the USA.

Tina, who retired from policing in the mid 90s, described the reception as ‘fantastic’. 

‘In Accord’ who entertained guests at the reception – BAWP committee member Sue Lampard is a member of the group.
She said: "After that very first meeting I had a dream that BAWP could achieve something special. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined BAWP celebrating its first 20 years at the House of Lords.

"I am in awe of the women that have developed BAWP into what it is today. I am grateful to all the individuals, both men and women, who have supported BAWP. But I am particularly grateful to those women who stood up in the early days against a backdrop of discrimination and harassment in which at least one chief constable referred to us as a 'witches' cover'. They were courageous women, many of whom paid a high price for their commitment to BAWP and the police service."

Tina added: "I have to say a big thank you to my friend Carolyn Williamson. She was with BAWP in the beginning and is still going strong. I wish I had her energy – she deserves a medal."

Joan shared Tina's praise for the event. "It was stunning to see all those confident, successful women members of this influential organisation, and to think it all grew out of something I wrote all those years ago in Police Review. At the time, I wrote many such articles, plus a regular page in support of women police during what was a tricky phase for them, but often wondered whether anyone noticed. Fortunately, Tina Martin did."

Joan Spence, Association of Police Authorities, BAWP committee member, Chief Inspector Robyn Williams and Jon Roberts, Metropolitan Police Authority.
The Fulbright Awards Programme provides grants or awards for the exchange of post graduates, scholars and professionals between the United States and the United Kingdom. It was created in the aftermath of the Second World War through the efforts of Senator J. William Fulbright and designed to ‘promote peace and understanding through educational exchange’. Senator Fulbright believed that this would be an essential vehicle for mutual understanding between individuals, institutions and future leaders.

The Fulbright Police Research Fellowship, which is one of eight tailored schemes, funds two serving police officers or staff each year to study in the US.

The scheme is designed to enable students to develop real professional expertise and experience in American policing says Director of the Fulbright Awards Programme, Charmian Norman-Taylor.

The application process is tough. Applicants have to submit a project outline, endorsed by their line manager, showing clear reasons for going to the US and the relevance of the project to their own force. They also need to find an American university to link with.

Ms Norman-Taylor elaborates: “Candidates don’t have to follow a degree course while in the States, but should have an academic affiliation there, usually in the criminology, Students will work directly with local police forces for a period of three to six months to carry out the research to complete their report.

If the thought of spending three to six months in the USA carries an area of policing close to your heart then the Fulbright Fellow should be right up your street. Nicky Phillipson reports on the scheme to combine real policing with academia.
carrying out research into an area which enables students to move forward to repair the damage. It revealed he had even waved at the other man as himself and his language from Sue and I. He also e-mailer admitted he had learnt things about point of view. At our final meeting the frequent managed to get them to understand each other's time we spoke to each of the families and two families were dividing neighbourhood. Over 'get my hands dirty'. It was a nice area and the centre, believed restorative justice was the massive step forward.

Back in Leicestershire I will be using my experiences in a pilot project to help resolve disputes in two local neighbourhoods. I will be working alongside neighbourhood policing teams. I also hope to introduce peace circles to schools here – although this tribal way of resolving issues will require a change in thinking from those involved.

Before I went to Rochester I thought I knew a lot about restorative justice. But I realised I worked in isolation. I now can see the bigger picture and am confident I am doing the right thing. It was a life changing experience and my time to be proud of me.

I was supported in Rochester, New York by staff from the centre including a man who has become a lifelong friend, Jim Termotto. He helped me get my studio apartment in the same block as him and took me to many of the community peace building events he was working at. I also helped him and other staff with awareness raising sessions with senior police officers, judges and district attorneys. In Pennsylvania I saw first-hand how restorative circles were being used in schools.

One of the highlights of my six-month trip was co-facilitating at an event run by Howard Zehr, who is described as the ‘grandfather of restorative justice’. For the final three months I worked alongside a Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (similar to police neighbourhood policing team) in Maplewood, Rochester, New York.

A conflict between two families had reached its peak. One man had sent the local police chief 742 complaint emails by June. The situation was draining resources and I and Sue Klassen from the centre, believed restorative justice was the solution.

Sandie’s restorative study

PC Sandie Hastings, 54, from Leicestershire Constabulary, was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2006 to study restorative justice. She says the experience has changed her life and enabled her to see the much bigger picture of policing as she explains:

I joined the police in 1970 as a police cadet and left seven years later to have my children. You couldn’t be a full-time policewomen and full-time mum in those days and there was nothing in-between. I rejoined in 1993 as I realised the jobs I had may have been well-paid, but I wasn’t fulfilled.

I have spent the past seven years working for the Youth Offending Team. This is where I developed an interest in restorative justice. It is about bringing together those affected or harmed by crime or anti-social behaviour and helping them to move forward to repair the damage. It can sometimes be as simple as someone broke their fence and they want it repaired.

I saw the Fulbright Scholarship advertised on our force intranet and decided to go for it. Hilary Banks, from Northamptonshire Police, who was awarded a fellowship in 2003, helped me with my statement of purpose. In fact you could say she mentored me. When I was short-listed I realised I hadn’t really taken it seriously as I didn’t think I had a chance and needed to find an educational establishment to affiliate with which felt right. The Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Centre did just that. The board members were very excited I was coming to work with them and even asked me to arrive early to speak at their annual conference.

It was a daunting prospect to leave my husband of 34 years behind at Birmingham Airport. I needed him to be behind me, which he was, along with my children who were immensely proud of me.

I was supported in Rochester, New York by staff from the centre including a man who has become a lifelong friend, Jim Termotto. He helped me get my studio apartment in the same block as him and took me to many of the community peace building events he was working at.

I also helped him and other staff with awareness raising sessions with senior police officers, judges and district attorneys. In Pennsylvania I saw first-hand how peace circles were being used in schools.

One of the highlights of my six-month trip was co-facilitating at an event run by Howard Zehr, Staff at the centre were amazed I volunteered to ‘get my hands dirty’. It was a nice area and the two families were dividing neighbourhood. Over time we spoke to each of the families and managed to get them to understand each other’s point of view. At our final meeting the frequent e-mailer admitted he had learnt things about himself and his language from Sue and I. He also revealed he had even waved at the other man as they both put out their rubbish. This was a massive step forward.

Back in Leicestershire I will be using my experiences in a pilot project to help resolve disputes in two local neighbourhoods. I will be working alongside neighbourhood policing teams. I also hope to introduce peace circles to schools here – although this tribal way of resolving issues will require a change in thinking from those involved.

Before I went to Rochester I thought I knew a lot about restorative justice. But I realise I worked in isolation. I now can see the bigger picture and am confident I am doing the right thing. It was a life changing experience and my time to be creative.

Find out more www.flrj.org
The Metropolitan Police Service has launched a mentoring programme to support women applying to join its specialist firearms department CO19.

The mentors, existing female firearms officers, are designed to provide long-term help and encouragement to colleagues hoping to take up a career in firearms.

The initiative is just one of several measures the force has utilised to increase the number of women in the unit. With an overall strength of 555 officers only 18 are women.

HR Manager Carole Vaughan says they already offer positive action recruitment events, but found many women failed to follow up their interest with a formal application.

The decision was taken to go a step further and offer the mentoring, and a formal three-day workshop based on the ‘Encompass Programme’ which had been suggested by the gender strand of the Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate.

“It was designed to enable candidates to take a fresh look at their career and personal development, focusing on what it takes to be a firearms officer,” said Carole.

But despite all this help women were still failing at the final hurdle – the paper sift.

“Both male and female officers have struggled to fully understand how to evidence against the competency framework, which is essential to pass a paper sift,” said Carole.

So a bespoke two-day workshop is being introduced for officers who were unsuccessful on their last application.

Carole says this will be an opportunity for them to review their development plans and learn about how the National Competency Framework is used as a selection tool.

“This will allow officers to evaluate their evidence and be better prepared for completing their application forms and undertaking practical assessments,” added Carole.

“This element of the course will also be integrated into both the female and male positive action recruitment events for new applicants.”

Candidates will also be able to discuss their fitness requirements with the force’s head of physical training Paul Buckle and be tested against the ARV standard. Bespoke fitness programmes will be designed for anyone needing extra help.

BAWP National Co-ordinator Liz Owsley says she has been impressed with the support the force has given would-be female firearms recruits.

“The Met has really pulled out all the stops to support women hoping to join CO19. Their initiatives should be seen as best practice by all and prove they are committed to redressing the balance of the sexes in this specialist area of work.”

A mentor’s story

There has always been “informal mentoring” for women looking to join CO19. It was a case of knowing someone who knew someone, who knew someone who was in the department, who would put you in touch with them. Those female officers would then put aside some of their own time to have a chat about the department, show people around the base, or just give words of encouragement.

Women are represented in all areas of the operational department from ARVs, firearms training, TST (Tactical Support Teams) and SFO (Specialist Firearms Officers).

The “Girlie Mafia”, as we have been called, offer help and support to each other and have become a group of friends as well as colleagues. So when we were asked to take part in a more formal mentoring programme we saw an opportunity to formalise what was already taking place.

Initially we were given a two-day introduction to mentoring. As a group of officers there was a general feeling that it would be “beany baggy”, but we were keen to see what was in store. The facilitator spoke to some of the female officers in the department, myself included, to find out what specific requirements we had. As such she had some idea of the role we performed and had
Tailored her workshops to reflect this.

We were expecting to be told exactly how to be a mentor, how to deal with troublesome individuals and how to best assist those officers who had volunteered for the mentor programme. We weren’t. We were provided with the basic tools to adapt to our own personal style in a structured setting. The rest we had to work out for ourselves.

“I was asked to mentor two officers. I had already worked with one of the women in my previous role as a POLSA officer and so it seemed common sense that I should mentor her. The other officer I was assigned decided that her career path lay elsewhere and withdrew from the programme.

I was anxious that my rank (sergeant) would be a barrier to the PCs I was mentoring as they wouldn’t feel they could be frank with me, but this hasn’t been the case.

The officer and I spoke regularly on the phone and communicated a lot via e-mail. Prior to the advert being published we met to discuss how things were going, how her fitness training was progressing and the quality of her examples for her paper application. Personally I think this was invaluable to remind her I wasn’t a remote contact in a distant department, but someone who was interested in her development and progression.

She did apply but was unsuccessful at the paper application stage. Whilst steering her towards areas where her best evidence would lie I had no input in her application, nor would it have been appropriate for me to do so. Many other officers fell at the same stage and support is now being given to all future applicants.

The mentoring scheme has been a positive experience for me. I have taken a more active role in the next round of mentoring by co-ordinating the applicants and mentors, and the flow of information to both groups from the department.

The “Girlie Mafia”, as we have been called, offer help and support to each other and have become a group of friends as well as colleagues”
Difficulties with words

Dyslexia is regarded as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act placing a legal obligation upon police forces to make reasonable adjustments to help staff who are dyslexic. One police force has realised the limitations of a one size fits all approach and has supported two officers on two very different paths to resolve their learning difficulties. Here the Ministry of Defence Police officers share their individual journeys.

Sue Russo’s story

I have experienced difficulties with reading and writing for as long as I can remember and have to read articles time and time again in order to comprehend the content.

During training for an Advanced Diploma in Integrative Humanistic Counselling my clinical supervisor suggested I could be dyslexic. I approached a Davis® Dyslexia correctional facilitator who tested my perceptual ability to determine whether I had the positive mental talents associated with dyslexia.

During a five-day intensive correction programme the questions I had always asked myself became clear. People who have dyslexia see language in terms of pictures, instead of words. The English language includes around 240 words for which there are no pictures e.g. from, to, up, the etc. Therefore when I read a sentence I understand the words that I can picture, but block out those I cannot, which means I don’t immediately understand the sentence.

The Davis® Programme offered me orientation counselling to help me recognise and control the mental state that leads to distorted and confused perceptions of letters and words and become more relaxed and focused. It also taught me Davis Symbol Mastery® which uses clay to create both the alphabet and punctuation marks by making three dimensional mental pictures. I have since independently created a clay model and definition for each of the 240 words to use as a permanent way of remembering them.

The course didn’t end there, it offers ongoing mentoring and support. It has also prompted me to train as a Davis® facilitator to help others like me.

Liz Hambrey’s story

Having always struggled with my English I enrolled in a basic English course at a local education college. Whilst I was there it was obvious that my progress was not matching that of my fellow students, even though it was evident that my intelligence outweighed most of my counterparts.

I couldn’t easily comprehend anything I read, lacked confidence in my writing ability and had poor spelling.

I spoke to my lecturer about this and she re-evaluated some of the initial assessments I had completed and suggested dyslexia may be the cause of my problems. I underwent a screening with Dyslexia Action and realised I had been disguising my English ability most of my life, and that it had seriously affected my self confidence. Basically dyslexia makes you feel thick. I had concerns raising this issue within the force for fear of a prejudicial response. But my line manager was very supportive and I undertook a training course with Dyslexia Action.

With small classes there was lots of opportunity for one-to-one tuition on the Adult Learning Programme I undertook. There was plenty of practical exercises to consolidate what I had learnt. It has improved my listening skills, grammar and my reading comprehension no end.

My self confidence has also vastly improved and I have an increased ability to cope with everyday English requirements. E-mailing is no longer a nightmare and when I use the computer spell check it can normally work out what I am trying to spell which is a real result.

Liz and Sue’s divisional commander Chief Superintendent Wendy Benson says the MOD has a number of excellent policies in place, one being to support staff with dyslexia. This enabled them to tap into the external training budget to provide tailored learning for the pair.

“However we can all make simple changes in the work place that may assist staff with dyslexia,” says Ch Supt Benson. “Typing in Arial size 12 font and using off white paper are just two.”

“I have great admiration for Liz and Sue, they are both truly inspirational officers and I thank them for providing us with a personal insight into dyslexia.” She added.
IAWP News
from BTP Chief Inspector, BAWP committee member and Vice President of IAWP Jane Townsley.

IAWP’s 45th Annual Training Conference

This year’s theme was ‘Taking policing to the highest peaks’ and took place in Denver, Colorado, USA in September. The training provided was geared towards helping all who attended to reach their full potential; be that gaining advancement or excelling in a particular subject area.

Delegates could devise a training plan to suit their individual circumstances with workshops on practical policing issues, gender and personal development.

In a change to previous conferences the workshops were longer, lasting whole mornings or afternoons. At first this seemed limiting as fewer subjects could be covered, but it actually allowed the sessions to cover the subjects in more depth with more opportunities for discussion between the delegates and facilitators.

I attended workshops on human trafficking, counter terrorism and police perpetrated domestic violence, all of which were extremely informative.

Gender Agenda 2

I assisted Liz Owsley to stage a workshop on Gender Agenda 2. The session started with some background to the original Gender Agenda and the reasons for GA2. We then divided the delegates into groups and gave each group one of the five key aims to identify both bad and good practice. All the groups came together at the end and shared with the class. We actually could have used more time as everyone was fully involved, some even missing their morning coffee break and cookies.

There was a range of countries represented in the class which benefitted both Liz and I as we were able to understand some of the issues faced by women in other countries. We also picked up good practice to bring back to BAWP and our own forces.

Awards

For me one of the highlights of the week was the awards ceremony. Four of our 2007 BAWP award winners were honoured: Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Spindler and Susan Medley who are both from the Met and DC Gill Matthews and DS Becky Driscoll from Cleveland Police.

Cleveland’s Chief Constable Sean Price and the Chair of their Police Authority both flew all the way to Denver on the Tuesday to be at the awards ceremony on the Wednesday. Mr Price (pictured above with Gill and Becky) saw for himself the value of the conference and I hope he will be an ambassador in the future and encourage other ACPO colleagues to support it by sending delegates.

The event obviously had a real impact on Gill Matthews as she sent me an e-mail when she got home: “I am still walking on air but wanted to express to you how impactful the whole experience has been. For me, Denver has been a ‘once in a lifetime’ experience (and certainly one to tell anybody that will listen about it). We fully intend to become members of both the British and the International Associations and we are ‘spreading the word’ that the opportunities offered should not be missed by anyone.”

Next year’s conference is in Darwin, Northern Territories, Australia in September 2008.

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• You can attend national and regional training days and social events.
• We can link you to other police professionals in this country and abroad.
• We can enable you to share your expertise or specialist knowledge with others.
• We have a ready-made network for work-related and social contacts.
• We can keep you informed of training opportunities and conferences.
• We can help your voice be heard in matters affecting women in the police service.
• You will receive regular copies of this magazine.

Membership details

Full membership is open to all officers and police staff, female and male, serving in the UK, along with retired officers.
Associate membership is open to anyone with a professional interest in criminal justice.
Corporate membership is now available for £350 p.a.
Please contact BAWP Secretary Carolyn Williamson for more details.
Please complete the form below and send it with your payment to: BAWP, PO Box 999, Bordon, GU35 5AQ.

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I believe I am eligible to join, and enclose a cheque payable to ‘BAWP’. (If for any reason, your application is not accepted, the fee will, of course, be refunded in full.)
Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

BAWP
British Association for Women in Policing
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