

## Young Achiever Burning Desire

Like most children, when I was growing up I wanted to be many things; doctor, policewoman, film star, but one thing that stuck with me was a fire-fighter. I always wanted to do something that made a difference, something positive. I don't know why but I always put fire-fighting to the back of my mind; I guess I didn't think I could actually do it.

### Go For It!

After completing my degree and travelling the world, I found myself back at home and working in Burford. One of the girls I was working with kept me up to date on her boyfriend's progress through last year's recruitment process. It really geared me up to 'go for it'. I rang the recruitment line and the Station Manager from Burford came to see me the next day. Before I knew it I was in the throes of retained recruitment and then, in October last year, I completed a very hard, tiring but rewarding week of basic training. I have attended many training courses since and have plenty more lined up, but in this job every day is a training session. Being a retained fire-fighter means I still have a full-time job, but I carry a bleeper with me to work and when it goes off I



have to run from my work place down to the fire station, where I meet up with five other retained fire-fighters and we all head off to the incident within minutes. My first time riding with the blue lights flashing and the sirens sounding was such a rush, especially because you never know what you will be turning up to. There are 16 of us altogether at Burford, one other girl, Lara, 14 men and myself. They have all made me feel so welcome and helped me with all my training.

### It Hasn't Been Easy

I have had to change my full-time employment because

my previous boss would not release me from work, but my new boss at the Copper Kettle Tearoom is fantastic and supports both the station and me. I have needed to get very fit and it does take up a lot of my free time but I wouldn't change it for a minute. I am in the process of applying for whole-time fire-fighting, so fingers crossed! Having met a lot of fire-fighters in the Oxfordshire Brigade and working side by side with those covering the Wychwoods area, I can honestly say you are all in very safe hands.

**Victoria Schofield**