

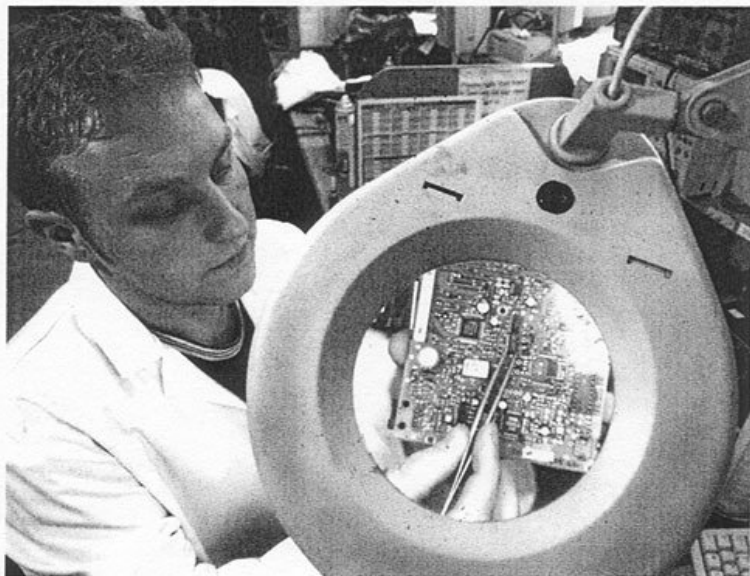
# Still going strong

**PUBLIC SAFETY** Central Repair (PSCR), based in Kippax, Leeds, has just celebrated its 30th anniversary at the site, but change is on the horizon.

"The site was part of the national Service Centre consolidation plan and was sold to developers," says Dave Singh, technical operations manager. "However, we've agreed a one year lease-back and the search for a new site will start in September – so it's business as usual for us."

And what's business as usual? Well, over the last couple of years the team on site have been busy migrating the Police Forces to the Airwave System, assisting with the Firelink Continuity programme and carrying out assembly and configuration of Mobile Data terminals for the Metropolitan Police. They've continued to provide specialist repair services for a comprehensive range of equipment from pagers to state-of-the-art mobile radio and control systems.

"This is a long way from the early days of the site, which started life around 1943 as the Regional Wireless Depot,



supporting the regions detachments," says Dave. "It then went on to become the Northern Area Maintenance Unit in 1976, before eventually becoming the sole Central Repair facility.

"We're still providing the high levels of service our customers demand and there are plenty of new challenges too," says Dave.

"One of our upcoming challenges will be the programming and distribution of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 9,000 pagers, which looks like a two-year roll-out plan."

*Above: Richard Crossley, a radio bench technician, removes an IC from a Racal digital radio control board.*

*Bottom left: Dave Singh, technical operations manager (front, centre), with PSCR team members, who continue to provide a specialist service.*



## Key facts

- 18 multi-skilled staff perform around 28,500 repairs each year
- There are more than 750 varieties of equipment repaired and turned around in five working days
- More than 21,000 Airwave terminals programmed and asset tracked
- More than 1,500 Mobile Data terminals assembled and configured for the Metropolitan Police.

## Surplus equipment improves tsunami warnings

**SURPLUS EQUIPMENT** is helping the Sri Lankan police improve its tsunami warning system, thanks to hard work and determination.

"Following the tsunami on 26 December 2004, the Sri Lankan police looked to enhance its radio system to circulate warnings, especially in the outlying areas of the country. We were approached by assistant commissioner Sir David Veness of the Metropolitan Police to offer technical assistance or suggestions," said Kevin Carrig,

contract and service manager – Public Safety.

"As it happened, the UK police service was switching to airwave at this time and no longer needed its previous radio systems, which could be usefully redeployed to help the Sri Lankan Police Authority."

So far, 300 handheld portable VHF radios and various test equipment and radio base stations, donated by a variety of police forces in England and Scotland, have been delivered to Arqiva's Cranbrook site in Kent.

"The equipment will shortly be delivered to the British High Commission in Colombo, who will arrange for it to be supplied to the radio department of the Sri Lankan Police for installation at six or seven remote locations in Sri Lanka," said Kevin.

"This scheme has made our initial visit to Sri Lanka worthwhile. It's great to be able to work together to provide something of value to an effective and competent police force that is constrained through lack of funds."



*Sri Lankan Police officers, from left: Rohan Siriwardena, director of communications and superintendent of police; Mr Wijewardena, assistant superintendent of police; and Mr W.S. Parakrama, officer in charge of control complex.*



After 50 years, Jean Woodcock once again enters the old Kippax building.

# Buried deep: fact or fiction?

The Public Safety Central Repair team has successfully moved location, but will it uncover the old site's hidden secret before it's demolished?

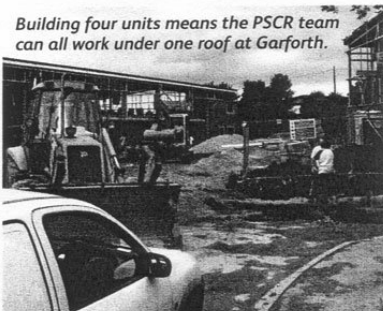
EVERYONE LIKES a mystery and there's nothing more mysterious than the rumours and urban myths of hidden Leeds.

With everything from nuclear bunkers to part-completed subway systems abandoned in Victorian times, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction. But the Public Safety Central Repair (PSCR) team, based in Kippax, Leeds, has a mystery of its own to solve – has it been sitting on an underground receiving transmitter station for the past 30 years?

The rumour began when the team moved to its new premises last month, because the old site was part of the National Service Centre consolidation plan and was sold to developers.

"Two weeks before moving, a passer-by asked what would happen to the underground communication room when the building was demolished. This was the first I'd heard of such a room and I couldn't help but feel intrigued," said Dave Singh, Operations Manager.

Building four units means the PSCR team can all work under one roof at Garforth.



Other than knowing it was built in 1943 to house a regional wireless depot to support the emergency services, little else was known about the building's use. So, when enquiries around the area fell short of solving the mystery, Dave turned to the local radio station for help.

"BBC Radio Leeds managed to get in touch with two people who worked at the site in the 1950s," said Dave.

"They shed some light on the matter, but we still don't know much."

Jean Woodcock, who has lived across the road from the Kippax site for the past 50 years, worked for the Home Office for nine years from 1953. However, although she visited the site and talked to the team, she didn't know anything about an underground communication room.

Bert Hare was another past employee who came forward after a plea for information was announced by the radio station.

"Although I can't tell you anything about an underground communication room, there was definitely something different about the walls," he said.

"I remember whenever contractors came in they would always struggle when they got to the old brickwork. Unlike the newer brickwork, it never seemed to budge and stopped them in their tracks. The roof structure is also blast-proof."



Originally an empty warehouse...



... the PSCR team's new home was soon transformed into this.

## Under one roof

Moving the PSCR team took more than six months of planning and, apart from uncovering a little mystery, everything went smoothly.

The new home, which is only 2½ miles from the original location, is a new build consisting of four units.

"When I first sourced the site, it was being built as a warehouse but, during the negotiations, we were able to persuade the landlord to build an office, kitchen, mezzanine area and a room to house the disaster recovery unit for Emley Moor," said Dave.

Since transferring to the new site on 19 March, the team of 18 is finding the working environment more efficient.

"At the old site, we were all working in different buildings, but here, under one roof, there's a much better working atmosphere," said Dave.

"The move went very smoothly and I'd like to thank everyone for their support."

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