

BATON TRIAL: BOBBIES AT THE READY

New police weapon packs mighty blow



Police Sgt. Bob Bryant with the ASP.

POLICE OFFICERS in Avon and Somerset are to be the first in the country to use a new style weapon.

The weapon, called an ASP, will be introduced into the force next month, replacing standard police truncheons.

If trials in Avon and Somerset are successful, the ASP may be

introduced as a standard issue police weapon.

Sergeant Bob Bryant, of the operational training team, said: "We have been researching it for more than two years and will now be the first force to use them.

"We felt the time had come to upgrade our defensive tactics.

The traditional police truncheon is a ridiculous piece of equipment."

"Its history goes back 150 years—they were first used by Royal Navy press gangs to hit people over the head—but that is all it does."

The ASP measures seven inches and can expand telescopically to a length of 21 inches.

Sergeant Bryant spent time with the Miami police force in America, where the weapon is already in use, to see how effective it was.

He said: "ASP is very simple to use and acts as a great deterrent. It will only be used in violent confrontations as a last resort."

"The number of assaults

on police officers is phenomenal. We think this will reduce these assaults and delay the day that police are armed in this country."

The constabulary has will be tried out in two of the force's districts.

If trials are successful, the ASP may be introduced in other forces.

Sergeant Bryant said: "If our evaluation proves successful, it will become the standard issue police weapon."

An advantage of the ASP is that it can be neatly concealed and when drawn has a short paralysing effect on the assaulter. This is caused by a sharp blow setting up nerve shock wave. This brief period of incapacitation gives a police officer more time and less danger to properly restrain the assailant.

Police have chosen the ASP in preference to an American style baton called a PR24 which the Police Federation hopes to see introduced in this country.

Sergeant Bryant said: "The PR24 is too complicated to use and the average police officer is not into martial arts."

Truncheon test

NEW-style American telescopic batons are being tested by Avon police.

The ASP expanding truncheon is to be given extensive trials by the force. More than 400 officers in Bath and Weston-super-Mare districts

are receiving special training with them.

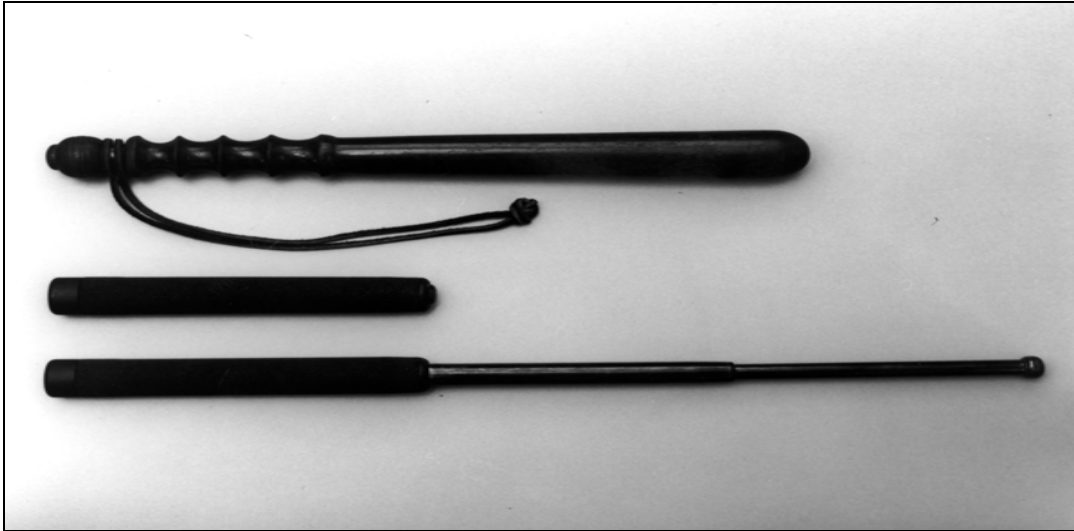
After a year's assessment the ASP could replace the standard truncheon, which has hardly changed over 150 years.

The new truncheon expands from seven to 21

inches and is carried in a pouch on the officer's belt. It is unobtrusive, but can be drawn and extended quickly, even in a confined space.

Several forces use the ASP in the USA, where it is also issued to FBI officers.

Police trials start with new batons



The old-style truncheon, little changed in 150 years.

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

The long arm of the law will be even longer as a telescopic truncheon comes into service.

The American-made ASP expanding baton is being tested by Avon and Somerset police with a view to its being used nationally: It extends, much like a retractable umbrella, from seven to 21 inches, the extra length aimed at giving protection from knife attacks.

More than 400 officers in Bath and Weston-super-

Mare are being trained in using the batons, and will have to pass a test before being authorised to carry them on duty.

The tests are going ahead despite the police's stated preference for the side-handled baton, also used in the US, and which the Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, last year ruled out because he believed they gave the police too aggressive an appearance.

His decision was taken at the time of Rodney King's beating by Los Angeles police officers, which led to this week's conviction of

two officers.

Introducing the telescopic batons yesterday, Hugo Pike, assistant chief constable of Avon and Somerset police, said: "Attacks on officers have become increasingly violent in recent years".

"This has called into question the effectiveness of the truncheon, and it is for that reason we have decided to look for an alternative."

"The size and shape of the old truncheon had hardly changed in 150 years", he said. "Officers would be taught the philosophy behind using the new one".

The ASP is designed to

cause "bouncing trauma," sending shock waves down the limb to take an assailant out of action by causing temporary pain rather than permanent injury. A number of police forces and FBI officers in the US used the baton.

The Metropolitan Police will also be carrying out tests, probably this summer.

Pressure from the Police Federation for the side-handled baton to be tested is also likely to continue. The federation has been lobbying MPs to encourage the Home Secretary to change his mind on tests.

Police trials start with new batons

AMERICAN style batons are being tested by Avon and Somerset police to give officers more protection from knife attacks.

The ASP expanding baton is a telescopic truncheon which, like a retractable umbrella, extends from seven to 21 inches.

If trials are successful the baton could be introduced nationally.

More than 400 officers in Avon and Somerset are being trained to use the American-made batons and will have to pass a test before being authorised to carry them on duty.

Last year the Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke ruled out the use of the US side-handled batons.

Officers try extending truncheon

Police yesterday demonstrated an extendible truncheon soon to be carried by bobbies on the beat. Officers in Avon and Somerset are testing the American baton in a year-long trial in Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

The baton lengthens from 7 inches to 21 inches with a flick of the wrist.

Kenneth Clarke, the Home Secretary, gave approval ahead for tests last month. He

believes the fact that it can be concealed gives it a great advantage over the American side-handled baton. The extendible truncheon is designed to cause "bouncing trauma," which sends fluid shock waves along a limb, temporarily disabling through pain rather than injury.

Its potential was demonstrated yesterday at the force's headquarters at Portishead, Avon. The head of force training, Assistant Chief Constable Hugo Pike, said: "The new baton is very simple to use and acts as a great deterrent. It is low-profile and does not detract from the image of British policing."

Bouncing baton is put on trial by West police

By Stephen Matthews

A REVOLUTIONARY telescopic police baton went on trial in the West yesterday in a move which could result in the replacement of the traditional truncheon.

Officers in Avon and Somerset are testing the American baton and will use it in a year-long trial on the streets of Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

The baton, held in a belt pouch, extends from seven to 21 inches with a flick of the wrist and officers believe it will provide much more protection than the truncheon.

The baton is designed to cause "bouncing trauma" which sends fluid shock waves along a limb, temporarily disabling through pain rather than injury.



FRIENDLY PERSUASION: Sgt. Bob Bryant demonstrates the new American truncheon.

POLICE in the Westcountry yesterday demonstrated a new extendable truncheon that will soon be carried by bobbies on the beat.

Officers in Avon and Somerset are testing the American "flick stick" and will use it in a year-long trial in Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

The baton, held in a belt pouch, lengthens from seven to 21 inches with a flick of the wrist and officers believe it will provide much more protection than the traditional pocket truncheon.

Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke gave the go-ahead for tests last month. He believes the fact it can be concealed gives it a great advantage over the controversial US side-handled baton

which some officers have called for.

The extending truncheon is designed to cause "bouncing trauma" which sends fluid shock waves along a limb, temporarily disabling through pain rather than injury.

Special training sessions have already begun in Avon and Somerset and the new baton is expected to be in use on the beat within the next few weeks.

Its potential was demonstrated at the force's headquarters at Portishead, near Bristol, by instructor Sergeant Bob

Bryant.

He brought the truncheon back after a holiday some years ago to the United States, where it is in regular use with several forces and the FBI.

The head of force training, Assistant Chief Constable Hugo Pike, said: "Attacks on officers have become increasingly violent recently, calling into question the effectiveness of the traditional truncheon."

"The new baton is very simple to use and acts as a great deterrent."

Police to be issued with telescopic batons

OFFICERS of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary will be the first in the country to be issued with a new style telescopic baton.

More than 400 officers in Avon are currently receiving training in the use of this American designed device, known as the ASP. If an evaluation period of up to a year proves successful, the ASP may well replace the standard truncheon issued to officers through the two counties.

The ASP extends from 7 to 21 inches and is carried in a pouch in the officer's belt. It is unobtrusive, but can be drawn and extended very quickly, even in a confined space. Other forces throughout the country are watching the experiment carefully and have already made enquiries about the training programme.

Assistant Chief Constable Hugo Pike, head of force training, said: "Attacks on our officers have become increasingly violent in recent years, which has called into question the effectiveness of the truncheon."

Seven officers have already qualified as instructors following three days intensive training by the manufacturers. Among those qualified is Sergeant Bob Bryant who first brought the ASP back to the force after a holiday in America where he saw the Baton in operation.

Sergeant Bryant said: "I am delighted these trials are going ahead for the time has come to upgrade our defensive tactics."

Tradition faces US challenge

By NIGEL DANDO

POLICE in Avon and Somerset will be the first in the country to be issued with American telescopic batons.

The ASP expanding truncheon is to undergo

trials by the force.

The metal baton expands at the flick of a wrist from seven inches to 21 inches.

It is considered by beat police to be more effective than the traditional wooden truncheon.

The force has ordered 200 batons and the trials are due to start in the next six weeks.

SHOCK

More than 400 officers in Bath and Weston-super-Mare are now receiving training with

the batons.

If the tests prove successful, officers throughout the two counties may be issued with them.

Other forces around the country are monitoring the scheme's progress.

A blow from the ASP sends painful shock waves surging through the limbs of a violent criminal.

Avon and Somerset Assistant Chief Constable Hugo Pike said: "The ASP is simple to use and acts as a great deterrent."