

Gerard's Speech

Hazel began her career as a Scenes of Crime Officer, with the West Yorkshire Police in January 2008. Following a training course in Durham, Hazel came to Morley for an initial three month period - so we could show her the ropes.

Hazel quickly settled, with her good nature, willingness to learn and good sense of humour, and how she needed it!

We were an office of dinosaurs, with a fashion sense stuck in the 70's and 80's. Imagine how Hazel went down, with her Vivienne Westwood's and Edward Scissorhand style haircut!

But we must have done something right at Morley, because shortly after taking up her place at Bradford, Hazel requested a transfer back.

We were more than pleased when she returned. She had many friends, in particular Simon, who unfortunately can't be here today.

They were two likeminded people with lots in common, especially food, food and more food! The Sunny house Chinese certainly benefitted, the evidence was seen in the trail of prawn crackers left around the office.

Roland's cooking experiments also went down well, even the pig's cheek cooked three ways! Though the piece of crackling that Hazel broke her tooth on was not so well received! Hazel revelled in her nickname of Princess Numpty, it was well founded. The odd piece of broken equipment, ringing up members of the public to find out where Hazel had left her torch, and her personal calling card of leaving pens in the air vents of the van are a few that I can mention.

But Hazel was a breath of fresh air, bright, positive and a really good worker. Hazel's ability and willingness to learn were obvious from her first days with us.

A consistently high performer, she loved being in the thick of it, and would do anything to help out, she was a managers dream.

Hazel's efforts were rewarded when she received an Excel award for her exceptional performance and attitude.

For me it totally summed Hazel up and was fully justified.

Hazel made a good impression with whoever she worked with, not least Officers' within the local Holbeck division, who welcomed her attitude and willingness to help, and not least how good she was at her job.

Even in the most adverse circumstances Hazel managed to maintain her positive attitude and sense of humour.

She was outside the Tommy Wass pub in Beeston, taking photographs following a large scale fight. One of the locals decided to take Hazels camera.

She struggled with him and activated her panic button, a code zero as we call it. You could hear the struggle, and the operator asked several times "CM19 are you ok?" then a more frantic "Hazel are you ok?"..... "Yeah.... I'm ok.....shaken but not stirred!"

It was typical Hazel, and she kept hold of the camera!

Even Hazel's 30th birthday party wasn't without incident. Smoke machine's she hired set off the fire alarm and we spent half the night on the street watching as the Fire brigade searched the premises.

I was Hazel's manager, and friend, for the best part of three and a half years, my only regret is that it wasn't for much, much longer.

I recently wrote Hazel's yearly review, I struggled to find words other than "good" and "excellent", there were no negatives.

Sadly I never got to present it to her in person, Hazel, I hope this makes up for it?

The news of Hazel's passing was devastating, when I think of her plans and dreams, travelling to South America. Her future with Roland and her potential.....

When I broke the news to Graeme, or Bots as Hazel would call him, He said to me "what a loss of a talent". His comments took me aback at first; "Talent" was something I associated with Footballers, Actors, and Singers..... Not SOCO's.

But he was right, Hazel was a talent, she was a star. A worker and a grafter, always helpful and eager to please. Hazel had the ability and attitude to be anything that she wanted to be.

And always positive, the glass was definitely half full. It's that positiveness that I personally have found comfort in during the past few weeks. "How would Hazel want us to react?"

I'm sure you will all have your own individual memories of Hazel. The hair, glasses, clothes. But I guarantee if you close your eyes there will always be a smile... always a smile.

A thoroughly good and genuine person. Hazel, you were much loved and you will be very sadly missed.