



Update from the Chief

As I mentioned in previous newsletters, the Service is undergoing many changes, producing numerous challenges. We continue our work with various partnerships including Fujitsu Services who are installing our Retained stations with IT Systems. This work will be completed by the end of the financial year and will greatly enhance communications and access to e-learning facilities.

In aiming to further improve our information sharing the first "Chief's Evening Meeting" took place at the Royal Hotel in Tain with representatives from Tain, Dingwall, Invergordon, Balintore and Dornoch. The evening was very successful with a high tea provided and a question and answer session arranged. Information from this evening will be available to all personnel. Our Public Performance Report for 2005/2006 has been produced and is currently being issued throughout the Service. This not only shows our performance but is also designed to provide stakeholders with an understanding and insight into the vital work of Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service.

CFO Brian A Murray

New Fire Safety Legislation for Business

The Scottish Executive has announced that the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 Part 3 will come into force on 1 October 2006. This Act represents the largest single change to fire safety legislation ever to occur, bringing in a risk based approach to fire safety provision in all buildings other than private dwellings.

An extensive TV, Radio and Press advertising campaign has commenced to inform businesses of the impending changes as it will be the duty of individuals to conduct their own risk assessments and make suitable fire safety provisions.

The link below is to the Scottish Executive's "Fire Safety Guidance Booklet" which provides further information on the new legislation.

www.infoscotland.com/firelaw/files/Summary_Guide_Full_doc.pdf

Scottish Fire Services Open Golf Competition - 24 August 2006

The Golf Section hosted the above competition at Kingussie and Newtonmore Golf Courses on 24 August 2006. Over 70 players enjoyed excellent conditions over the two scenic courses with some excellent scores posted. With 6 trophies to be contested, Highlands and Islands players had a share of the prizes. Kenny McDonald won the Best Handicap (Glasgow Cup) and Best nominated individual (James Watt) competitions shooting a 58(net) at Kingussie to snatch victory by one stroke. Second place in the nominated pairs went to Kenny McDonald and Billy Sanderson with 3rd place taken by Stevie Bassindale and Dominic MacAdam. Sponsors of the event enjoyed a Stableford Competition over the two courses. This was won by James Sellars who scored 37 points at Newtonmore and 34 at Kingussie. James was presented with an engraved Quaich by Chief Fire Officer Brian Murray who also presented all the winners with their prizes.

The winner of the Top Raffle prize was Iain MacLennan, Red Watch, Inverness. The prize was a weekend for 4 at the MacDonald Highland Aviemore Resort, with 2 rounds of golf on the Spey Valley Championship Golf Course.

Thanks go to both courses and everyone who assisted the organisers.

Winners were:-

Paterson Cup (Best Gross) - Colin Renton (L&B)
Glasgow Cup (Best Handicap) - Kenny McDonald (H&I)
James Watt Trophy (Best Net) - Kenny McDonald (H&I)
Jim Kerr Trophy (Over 45's) - Kevin Culloch (Tayside)
Secretarys Cup (Best Pairs Gross) - I Grant & G Turnbull (Tayside)
Sterling Cup (Best Pairs Net) - B Faulds & C McGlone (Strathclyde)
Sponsors Stableford - James Sellars (Sellars Joinery)

Other Prizes:-

Nearest the Pin - Newtonmore - J Crawford (Central)
Nearest the Pin - Kingussie - D MacAdam (H&I)
Longest Drive - Newtonmore - J Crawford (Central)
Longest Drive - Kingussie - C Brown (Aviemore Highland Resort)

Retained Station IT Network Update

By the time you read this, the 4 pilot stations (Inverness Retained, Fortrose, Lochcarron and Kirkwall) will have had their IT systems installed.

The project has gone to plan so far, keeping within the agreed budgets and timescales. Training in the use of the system and associated software will be carried out by Mich Curtis and Claire Fraser of the Learning and Development team.

The pilot project will be used to assess the business and technical aspects of the system, as well as the delivery of the training. The training for all of the other 91 stations will take place at the same time (as far as possible) as the installations which as previously indicated, will begin towards the end of October, and be completed before the end of the financial year (March 2007). The training has been contracted to an external provider, who will use the material provided by Mich and Claire.



Pictured above, winners from the Scottish Fire Services Open Golf Competition with Highlands & Islands Kenny McDonald back row second from right

NEWS IN BRIEF

Opening of Shawbost Fire Station



The picture above shows officers and crew along with Fire Board member Roderick Morrison attending the opening of Shawbost Fire Station on 27 April 2006.

Opening of Mid Yell Fire Station



Mid Yell Fire Station was officially opened on 26 May 2006 by the Convener of the Fire Board Mr Drew McFarlane Slack, Group Manager Duncan MacDougall acted as master of ceremonies. After his introduction he invited Chief Fire Officer Murray to address the invited guests.

Chief Fire Officer Murray thanked the Mid Yell unit for their dedication and support to the island of Yell. He added how unique the island units are because the majority of times they have to attend incidents on their own and wait for a period of time before they get assistance. Shetland Fire Board members Willie Tait and John Nicolson, and Member of Parliament Alistair Carmichael also attended the opening.

Equality and Diversity Forum

Last month saw the inaugural meeting of the Service's recently established Equality and Diversity Forum which was held at Service Headquarters in Inverness. Central Fire & Rescue Service's Equalities Officer, Robin Iffla, attended as the Forum's 'critical friend'. The role of the 'critical friend' is to assist the Forum in maintaining focus and direction in delivering on a challenging 'equalities agenda'. The Forum will act as a policy advisory and consultation group.

A brief summary of the issues discussed is provided below:

- The terms of reference for the Forum were discussed and agreed and will be made readily available within the first revision of the Service's Diversity Strategy.
- A planned roll-out programme to provide equality and diversity awareness training for all staff will be commenced next month. Further information will be provided when available.
- Separate working groups will be established to assist with the development of an action plan to address any issues arising from the Cultural Audit conducted last year (at the

Cancer Research UK Relay for Life Kirkwall Fire Station



District staff and 9 members of Kirkwall Fire Station

District staff and 9 members of Kirkwall Fire Station took part in the Cancer Research UK *Relay for Life* held at the Pickaquoy Sports Center on Saturday, 19 August from 8pm till 8am the following morning.

The liaison between the fire station and Cancer Research UK was carried out by Crew Manager Erik Stout and Firefighter Gavin Walls.

The team consisted of Group Manager David Clark, Station Manager Stephen Fraser, Crew Managers Erik Stout & Ian Croy, Firefighters Mervyn Walker, Gordon Mulraine, Derek Allan, Martin Oag, Gavin Walls, Mathew Butcher & Paul Manson.

Teams had to maintain a presence on the track for the full 12 hours of the event.

The team from Kirkwall Fire Station maintained a presence on the track by working in small teams of 4 throughout the night.

Sponsorship in the region of £850.00 was raised by the Kirkwall team.

All members of the team were footsore and weary the following day.

Over 500 people raised over £47,000 in one of the biggest fundraising events ever to be held in Orkney on Saturday night.

The Cancer Research UK *Relay for Life* ran from 8pm to 8am, with 33 teams taking part. The event saw a candle of hope ceremony and a lap of the Pickaquoy running track by those who have beaten the disease.

On the night, £45,000 was banked, with a further £2,000 pledged from sponsorship money. Including money from the raffle and refreshment tents, the final total raised is over £52,000.

time of going to print the finished report was still not available from the external providers); and to develop an action plan to capture Racist Incident Monitoring reporting.

- A revised equal opportunities policy (draft) was made available to members for comment.

Minutes of the meeting are available on the G-Drive which will be transposed to the Service's Intranet in due course.

If anyone has any suggestions or points they wish to be raised at subsequent meetings please contact Leonie Govan on leonie.govan@hifrs.org or alternatively by contacting their line manager.

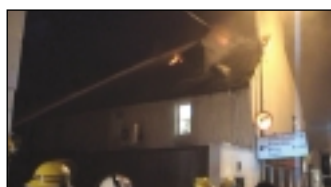
INCIDENTS OF NOTE

Forest Fire, Rothiemurchus Estate, Aviemore

On 10 July 2006 at 1610 hours, Service Control received repeat calls reporting a fire in heath land at Rothiemurchus Lodge, Coylumbridge, Aviemore. Retained and Community Response Units were mobilised from Aviemore, Grantown, Nethybridge, Carrbridge and Boat of Garten. Firefighters were assisted by 20 forestry and estate workers and 15 army personnel. In addition, to assist in extinguishing the fire a helicopter was requested by the estate. Due to very dry conditions and high winds the fire spread quickly towards a mature forestry plantation.

This particular stretch of forest had no fire breaks, which hampered fire crews in extinguishing the blaze. The fire was eventually extinguished through the combined efforts of Fire & Rescue personnel, helicopter water bombing and the digging of a fire break by forestry and estate workers. Damage was contained to approximately 25 acres of heath land and forestry.

Tandoori Cottage, Academy Street, Inverness



On 24 July at 0319 hours, Fire Control received a call via the 999 network stating that a two storey, town centre building was on fire. The pre determined attendance of two appliances and the hydraulic platform were mobilised.

Offensive firefighting was undertaken by personnel wearing breathing apparatus. The fire was brought under control by 0542 hours. After the fire had been extinguished, officers were involved in a joint fire investigation with Northern Constabulary to establish the cause.

The last appliance returned to its home station at 0938 hours.

Road Traffic Collision - A9

On 29 August 2006 at 1430 hours the Service was called to an incident involving an overturned cattle lorry on the A9 at the Cambusavie bends near Golspie. Two appliances from Golspie and Dornoch were mobilised along with the Emergency Tender from Inverness. On arrival the crews found that the vehicle had left the road and had come to rest on an embankment consisting of a six foot drop. The cab and front section of the lorry were being supported by roadside trees whilst the remainder of the truck was precariously balanced on the edge of the embankment. The driver had escaped uninjured; however there were a number of injured cows trapped within the wreckage.



Initial stabilisation was carried out utilising a system of light tirsors carried on the front line appliances and heavy rescue equipment was requested. On arrival of the heavier equipment, the lorry was stabilised and work commenced on releasing the trapped cows using cutting equipment.

The crews were successful in releasing 20 cows, unfortunately a number of cows were so badly injured they had to be destroyed by an attending vet.

The A9 was closed for 6 hours during the rescue operation.

TRAINING

Learning & Development (IPDS) Department Update

It's been a long and winding road, but dates have now been agreed with Fujitsu for the delivery and installation of computers, commencing with the pilot stations Inverness Retained, Fortrose, Kirkwall and Lochcarron and then rolling out across the service. It has been decided to then go on to the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland before the stormy weather sets in.

IT Pilot Rollout Schedule

In the week commencing 28 August 2006, Mich Curtis will be visiting all four IT pilot stations, Inverness Retained, Fortrose, Kirkwall and Lochcarron. These stations will receive an evening of basic training split into 3 hourly sessions: Hour 1 beginners, hour 2 refresher and hour 3 Intranet training. If there is a station of whiz kids then the first 2 hours can be shortened to focus more on the Intranet Training.

Key Commercial Services of Bonar Bridge have been awarded the training contract and will be delivering the IT training to the remaining stations from October onwards, rollout schedule to be confirmed shortly.

Retained Learning & Development (IPDS) Pilot Project

With the computers being installed at the end of August for the three IPDS retained pilot stations Lochcarron, Fortrose and Kirkwall, the pilot project is now back on track. Week two of the training will be repeated in the first two weeks of September to give everyone refresher training. This will be followed by three more weekly visits then six monthly visits with the last taking place at the end of the financial year. If any station feels they need further assistance, these will be arranged and there will also be a point of contact at the end of the phone on training evenings. (A mobile number will be provided.)

MIRG Sea Survival Training

Alan Clark facilitated the last fire fighting & rescue at sea training course for this financial year, which took place on 12 & 13 August at Nutech, Aberdeen.

Water Awareness Training

Still on a water theme – Ricky Dibble commenced water awareness training the first week in August to the training department. By having more "trained" trainers, this will enable a much speedier rollout to the whole of the fire & rescue service.

EVENTS

Invergordon 5 Aside Tournament



The annual Invergordon Fire Station 5 aside tournament was held on 28 May, with two teams from the Fire Service entering, Invergordon Station (pictured right) and some HQ Officers. Unfortunately none of them made it through to

the final! Despite this it was a good day/night and the barbecue and refreshments proved to be very popular again.

Keep your eyes open for next year's tournament which will be renamed as a mark of respect to our former colleague, Andy Coghill.

Thank you to all who attended to help out or take part, hope to see you next year.

EVENTS

Well Done Charlie!



Charlie Anderson (centre), a firefighter at Fort William Fire Station, has been busy raising money for charity. On Friday, 4 August at 6pm, Charlie started climbing Ben Nevis with the intention of breaking his record five ascents which he made last year. By 5pm on Saturday he had achieved his aim in making six ascents in under 24 hours, the equivalent of climbing to within 2,000ft of the summit of Everest, despite being ill after the third climb.

Assisting in this feat were members of the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and fellow firefighter and veteran runner, Dave Rodgers.

In the process Charlie has raised £3,000 for two families in Fort William who have children who suffer from cystic fibrosis. He has been raising money for these families for the last three years.

If anybody would like to contribute to Charlie's efforts the district office in Lochaber can be contacted for further information (01397-702222).

National Extrication Challenge 2006 28/29 July - Brighton, East Sussex



Following a very credible 10th place in the Scottish Extrication Challenge at Cowcaddens in May this year, the team, made up of personnel from Ness, Kinlochleven and Fort William, had good reason to feel confident to carry the Service's hopes at Brighton in the National Championships. The team dealt with the scenario in a very positive way but unfortunately time was not on their side. The team came 38th out of 50, which, for the team, was slightly disappointing following the amount of training and commitment undertaken prior to the competition.

The event was very well run and a huge success for both the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service who hosted the event.

NESS TEAM FOR BRIGHTON 06:

Team Leader - Watch Manager Murdo Morrison, Ness / Tool Operator - Crew Manager Donald Gillies, Ness / Stabilisation & Second Medic - Firefighter Ian Hector Morrison, Ness / Tool Operator & Stabilisation - Firefighter Roddy Murray, Kinlochleven / Medic - T/Crew Manager, David Rodgers, Fort William

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORT 2005/2006

The Service has a statutory duty to report on our performance. The Chief Fire Officer's Public Performance Report (PPR) is published annually and is the mechanism by which we report our performance for the previous financial year. The PPR is also designed to provide stakeholders with an understanding and insight into the vital work of the Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service. This is also available on our website.



COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT / IRMP

HI-FiReS Youth Training Course

The Scottish Executive is actively encouraging Local Authorities and key partners to develop diversionary activities for young people. In response to this, the Service has developed HI-FiReS – a course aimed at young people aged 12 – 17 to help to change attitudes and



perceptions of young people by developing their life skills and responsibilities. The course has been developed from pilot courses run by Wick Fire Station over the past 2 years. On completion of the course, young people will be able to demonstrate that they have developed new skills, including:

- A more positive self image and enhanced self esteem
- Effective teamwork and co-operation
- Improved communication and listening skills
- Ability to set and achieve goals
- Creative problem solving
- Feeling of accomplishment and success

The course provides a work experience programme including the essential elements of first aid; use of operational equipment such as hose and ladders and simulated fire incidents – all within a disciplined and controlled environment.

Whilst on the course, the young people are responsible for their own Personal Protective clothing, maintaining the centre and equipment whilst adopting the role of team leader as well as team member.

At the end of the course, young people attend a presentation evening where they are awarded with certificates. Parents, carers and friends are invited to watch this event.

The Scheme also provides valuable training and development opportunities for staff within the Service. Trainers on the course will deliver modules such as: Communication Skills; Health and Safety; Practical skills, including improvisation exercises, fire hydrant/appliance drills and Fire Safety Awareness.

Initially, the course is to be offered in Wick, Invergordon and Fort William in the Highland area and Stornoway in Western Isles. Through financial assistance from The Big Lottery, we will be able to extend this course to other areas over the next 4 years.

For further information on the course, please contact Graham Clark or Cathie Way.

PEOPLE

Long Service & Good Conduct Medal



After the official opening of the Mid Yell Fire Station, Watch Manager Peter Johnson was presented with his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Group Manager Duncan MacDougall gave a brief resume of Watch Manager Johnson's Fire Service career, and then thanked him for his years of dedication and commitment to the Service. After the reading of the official citation, Watch Manager Johnson was presented his medal by Chief Fire Officer Murray.

Retirement of Temporary Station Officer Duncan Gillies

A well attended function was held on 23 June at the Railway Club Fort William to mark the retirement of Temporary Station Officer Gillies after completing almost 30 years service at Fort William Fire Station. Duncan has been a committed and central figure in the operation of the station over the years and respected by all that served with him.



Chief Fire Officer Brian Murray attended the function to present Duncan with his Axe and mark 30 years of service to the station and community.

Retirement of Firefighter Dennis MacDonald

A retirement function was held at Kirkwall Fire Station on Saturday, 10 June 2006 to mark the retirement of Firefighter Dennis M MacDonald after 28 years service. A good night was had by all at which Dennis was presented with a bronze figurine depicting two firefighters by Station Officer D Norquay on behalf of his fellow firefighters from Kirkwall Station, and a presentation axe from Assistant Divisional Officer D Clark on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer.



Iain Longbotham 25 Mile Time Trial



Sunday, 13 August 2006 saw the 2nd staging of the Iain Longbotham Memorial 25 mile Time Trial. Iain was a Firefighter on Inverness Station who tragically died at the age of 35 after a long and brave battle against cancer. Iain was an excellent club cyclist and had competed nationally and internationally for the Fire Service. An annual time trial is held in honour of Iain by the Cromarty Firth Cycling Club. This year 39 cyclist completed the 25 mile time trial staged between Kildary and the Cromarty Bridge. Ross Nixon of White Watch (left) and Harry Stagg of IRMP (right) competed creditably in the event with Harry winning the handicap section in a time of 1 hour 8 mins 50 sec.

Holyrood Palace Garden Party

Station Manager Alison Cameron attended a garden party at Holyrood Palace on 6 July.

Alison was nominated to represent the service by the Chief Fire Officer. She was accompanied by her mother, Ena who was celebrating her 76th birthday that day, it's not everyone who has the Queen at their birthday celebration. Ena and Alison both enjoyed their day.

As well as Her Majesty, Alison and Ena were also in the company of several ex fire service colleagues who included John Cheadle, (ex DO) and Garry Shone, (ex ADO).

Claire Fraser

Learning & Development Assistant



Claire Fraser started with the Learning & Development department on 3 July.

Whilst still finding her feet and also her way around the service jargon!! – she has settled in well.

Claire will be office based and will support the Learning & Development team as they roll out the IPDS project. She will be first point of contact for any questions and queries that should arise.

Claire said she really appreciated all the help and support she has received during her initial induction period and is looking forward to the challenges of the future.

Retirement Function of Firefighter Vyataus Baltrunas & Long Service & Good Conduct Medal Presentation of Firefighter Colin MacAndrew

A well attended function by family, friends & colleagues took place at the Railway Club Fort William on 18 August 2006 to mark the retirement after 22 years service of Firefighter V Baltrunas and also the recognition of over 20 years service with the presentation of the Long Service & Good Conduct Medal to Firefighter C MacAndrew, both of Fort William Station.



Deputy Chief Officer Tony Wood made both presentations and made recognition to their combined 42 years of dedication and service to the community.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter but if you have any comments or wish any items to be included in the December issue please contact Group Manager Scott Hay on telephone number 01463-227006 or scott.hay@hifrs.org

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT / IRMP

Working in Partnership

Partnership working is one of the key themes of our Service Plan for 2006/2007. The Service has been working closely with a number of agencies to develop a shared vision of a safer community throughout our 4 Local Authority constituencies. We are currently examining our approach to managing our existing partnerships and considering the development of new ones to ensure that we achieve our goals. We have produced a draft policy for partnership working and, through this, we have developed a Partnership Register to record the current arrangements.



Looking at the risks of participating (or not) in these partnerships is key to effectively managing our collaborative work with others. The Service has teamed up with Northern Constabulary to develop a Partnership Risk Matrix to ascertain our priorities and to consider any remedial measures required to make partnerships more effective in their approach. This includes issues such as ensuring that partnerships have: terms of reference; links to Strategic Objectives; representation at the right level together with the legal implications of being involved in the partnership.

In addition, we will ask other agencies to tell us how effective we are as partners. This will allow us to reflect and take any necessary remedial measures to make our contribution a more meaningful one.

Working in partnership to deliver local priorities will grow in importance. It is our aim, through this partnership review work, to ensure that we make best use of our resources to deliver meaningful outcomes that meet the needs of the community. By doing so, we will help to improve the quality of life and safety of the people throughout Highlands and the Islands.

Community Fire Safety - Risk Reduction Analysis

In our efforts to reduce risk in our communities we have been actively promoting Community Fire Safety. Crews have been targeting those most at risk through the use of predictive risk heat maps of their Station area which highlight those most vulnerable e.g. older people living alone or those with young families.

To date, we have not been able to measure how effective this work has been. However, using specialist mapping software, the IRMP Team have devised a methodology of monitoring our performance and quantifying the effectiveness of different types of Community Fire Safety activities based upon the outcome measurement of fires occurring.

Whilst it may not be possible to measure the degree to which an individual or group acts upon the safety advice given, we have introduced a scheme to numerically score our activities.

Using the score for any census output area, a comparator of effectiveness against fire frequency change can be established and our Community Fire Safety resources can be redirected to those most at risk.

In addition to CFS advice given, the effect of providing safety equipment can also be mapped to show its value. i.e. smoke detectors, deep fat fryers and fire guards.



By using this information, we will be able to show that resources are being targeted to those who are most at risk. This will make a positive contribution to securing partnership funding for future safety initiatives.

Road Safety Plan

We have been working closely with the Road Safety Sub Group of the Highland Wellbeing Alliance and have taken the lead in producing a partnership document to explain how we will work together to reduce Road Traffic Collisions in our area. The Road Safety Plan will be published by the end of this year and will focus on how we aim to meet the national reduction targets of 40% for all casualties and 50% of child casualties by the year 2010.

We are aware that a number of our personnel are keen to help reduce Road Traffic Collisions in their communities. We aim, through this newsletter and the Road Safety Action Plan under development, to highlight opportunities for our Service to work with others in terms of Prevention, Protection and Intervention.

Prevention

We are currently joint partners in local and national media campaigns aimed at drinks/drug driving, speeding and the appropriate use of seatbelts. We are involved locally in initiatives such as Safe Highlander which focus on young pedestrians/cyclists and are developing a new initiative 'Driving Ambition' aimed at young drivers in Secondary Schools. Initially, this will be piloted in the Golspie and Invergordon areas. The Service is also a leading partner in the national Risk Watch educational pilot in Scotland. We aim to extend this valuable safety initiative to more Schools during the new term. The service has supported the partnership purchase of speed reduction equipment in Orkney and is a partner in the Northern Safety Camera Partnership.

Protection

New laws covering child car seats and seatbelts are due to be introduced this month. We will keep staff informed of this new legislation and offer advice on best practice. More information on this can be downloaded from the Department for Transport website on:-

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_611257.hcsp.

Intervention

Members of the Service are only too aware of the consequences of being involved in a Road Traffic Collision. Within the new Road Safety Action Plan, we aim to promote best practice and develop joint working with partner organisations. As the latest enhancement of the operational capacity of the Service we intend to provide additional specialist RTC equipment at eight strategic locations throughout the Service area.

Community Fire Safety

Following a slow start it is pleasing to note that due to the concerted efforts of some stations, the final total for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC's) completed during 2005/2006 was a notable 3038.

In addition, personnel presented home fire safety talks to a total audience of 2750 people and safety information was delivered to 2245 homes as part of 'Hot Strike' initiatives targeting households in the surrounding area immediately after a fire. These activities must be commended as they have made a very positive contribution to enhancing the safety of people throughout the Service area.

As you will be aware for 2006/2007 each station has been allocated targets defining the number of HFSC's to be completed in their areas. To ensure the budget which has been set aside for CFS is fully utilised all units are encouraged to plan well ahead to deliver the number of HFSC's allocated.