



Update from the Chief

Attendance at fires and road traffic collisions can give rise to a whole range of emotions, from excitement to fear, happiness to sadness. One that I attended in the 1980s, and have never forgotten, is the death of a very elderly lady at Christmas time. The fire was fairly straightforward with no great amount of damage, as only the horsehair settee had smouldered, filling the house with smoke which subsequently killed the lady in her upstairs bedroom. Apart from her death, there was nothing especially traumatic about the incident. What upset me, and will always remain with me, was seeing Christmas presents ready and tagged with messages of love from her grandchildren.

I have certainly been to far worse incidents, so why did this cause me so much upset? Perhaps it was the fact that I was made to confront the full extent of the incident and the pain it would cause friends, family and children. How lucky I was to be looking forward to Christmas with my own family.

At this time of year it is good to remember our friends, family and others around us. I am all too well aware that, without the support of family members, many of our staff would not be able to give the commitment to helping our communities. I therefore wish to say a huge thank you to everyone and their families for their commitment in 2008 and I wish everyone a very happy, healthy and safe 2009

CFO Brian A Murray

Service Restructure

The Service is pleased to announce that the restructure has been progressed at senior level. The Executive Command Team, which was formerly the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy and Assistant, and the Corporate Leadership Team have merged to form the Service Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).

Areas of responsibility across all functions of the Service have been realigned to improve communications, processes and areas of operation. The Structure is now truly functionalised.

The following senior members of staff now have responsibility for the respective service functions.

Alex MacAllister:	Head of Corporate Services
Margaret Fisk:	Head of People Services
Trevor Johnson:	Head of Community Risk Management
David Gill:	Head of Operations Support
John Donaldson:	Head of Operations

These changes have been effective since 24th October 2008.

Kirkwall Postie Short Listed for Prestigious Award



Kirkwall Postie Caroline Delday has received a commendation from Chief Fire Officer Brian Murray for the bravery shown in saving a local man from a fire at his home.

Caroline had just finished delivering mail when she saw thick smoke billowing out from the top of the house door.

She knocked and shouted but received no response and made her way into the hallway.

She continued shouting and eventually heard a voice. Despite the poor visibility, she found Jim Crisp, who had apparently fallen asleep after putting on a chip pan. Caroline pulled him out of the house to safety.

Whilst awaiting the emergency services the kitchen windows smashed due to the intense heat.

She received her commendation at the September Fire Board meeting in Kirkwall and was also short listed in the Royal Mail's First Class People awards 2008, which celebrates postmen and postwomen who are unsung heroes in their communities.

"I was absolutely delighted to have been nominated for the award and to receive a commendation from the Chief Fire Officer," said Caroline. "I feel very humble as I just did what anybody else would have done in those circumstances."

She added that since the incident in October 2007 she and Jim had become very good friends and regularly meet for lunch.

Extrication & Trauma Challenge 2009

The planning process for next year's Challenge started in mid November, with the event scheduled to take place in Fort William on 4 April 2009.

The concept of the Challenge is about learning from each other and improving our skills and all Units/Watches/Departments are more than welcome to attend. (There has even been a rumour that for the first time there will be an officer's team competing.)

The format will be similar to last year's event where both an Extrication and Trauma Challenge were run simultaneously.

A memo has been circulated recently to all stations with an RTC capability asking for notification of interest to compete and it would be appreciated if these can be returned to GM Martin Haigh in Fort William (martin.haigh@hifrs.org) by the closing date of 19 December 2008.

OBITUARIES

Laurence Henderson, Outer Skerries



The Service was saddened by the sudden death of Laurence Henderson, on 16 September, who suffered a massive stroke at the age of only 44.

Laurence joined the service in 1988 and was a well known face in the fire appliance for passengers and pilots coming and going between Skerries and the mainland of Shetland. Laurence also served in the Coastguard for 20 years but sadly died 5 weeks before he could be given his Long Service Medal which was posthumously given to his partner Ann.

His sudden death shocked the entire community and his loss will be felt for years to come. Donations in his memory, amounting to over £2000, have poured in since the funeral and will be divided between the RNMDSF and the Stroke Foundation.

Bob Law

The Service was also saddened by the sudden death of Bob Law on 17 September 2008.

Bob worked with the Service for over 6 years and in that time delivered First Aid Training across the whole Service area. His unique style and quality of training delivery was always very professional and earned him much respect and many friends. He will be sadly missed.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Annual Football Match

Inverness Green Watch versus Orkney

The annual football match between Green Watch from Inverness Fire Station and Firefighters from Orkney took place in Stromness on 27 September.

The match was very closely fought, with Green Watch eventually running out winners by 4 goals to 3. Green Watch's goals were scored by Gordon Mackenzie (2), Scotty MacDougall and guest player Davey Harold. Orkney replied with an excellent hat-trick from Damien Stout.

A good time was had by all, and Green watch would like to thank the Orkney firefighters for their superb hospitality.



Duke Of Edinburgh Award – Fort William

The crews at Fort William have completed another 6 week Duke of Edinburgh Award within the Lochaber area.

The course was run and supported by Crew Manager Peter Lees, and Firefighters Colin Ross and Raymond King. The presentation ceremony was attended by family, friends, station personnel and the press. Group Manager Pat McElhinney presented the certificates to all the recipients.

PEOPLE

Cherie Pumphrey - the "Chris Hoy" of the World Firefighter Games

This year's World Firefighter Games (WFFG) was hosted by Merseyside Fire & Rescue and consisted of 67 events which ran from 24 August to 2 September. The event saw 3500 athletes from all over the world who came to compete.

Four members from HIFRS took part in the games, but the athlete of the week had to be Cherie Pumphrey from Inverness Station who competed in Climbing, Mountain Biking and 2 Kayak events and came away with an amazing 3 Golds and a Silver.

Ali Chisholm, Inverness Retained, got a Gold in the Boxing.

Dominic McAdam, Inverness, competed in the Badminton, and got a Silver in the Mountain Biking, as well as 4th place in the Assault Course.

Mike Bond, also Inverness, came 4th in the Triathlon.

The WFFG is held every two years and in 2010 is being hosted by South Korea, so start saving if you fancy the trip.

For more information visit: <http://wfg2010.daegu.go.kr/wfg/>

Alec Kidd



On the 30 September T/Area Manager Alec Kidd retired from the Service having completed 30 years and 7 months service.

Through his career Alec developed a very broad knowledge base having served in many departments within the Service. He was heavily involved in offshore firefighting, fire investigation and latterly in his position as Deputy in the CRM Department he played a very important part in implementing CFS and helping the Service adapt to the introduction of the Fire (Scotland) Act.

Whilst moving around the Service a lot, Alec maintained a strong affinity with Shetland, returning on three occasions and serving almost 12 years of his career on the Islands. In 2003 he considered it an honour to be invited to become a Yarl squad member.



At a very well attended ceremony, Alec was presented with a commemorative axe by CFO Brian Murray, who thanked Alec for the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm he had displayed throughout his career.

George MacArthur



Firefighter George MacArthur, Shawbost, was presented with his Long Service and Good Conduct medal by Group Manager Tony Walker.

The occasion was marked with a Station barbecue, where tales of jovial George's contribution to the Unit's success over twenty plus years were retold with relish. Many former colleagues came to the event and showed the affection in which George is held.

INCIDENTS OF NOTE

Chemical Incident - Janetstown Industrial Estate

At 1109hrs on 9 October 2008, 2 Thurso appliances were mobilised to an incident at a building within the Janetstown Industrial Estate, Thurso. The Incident Commander was informed that a quantity of sodium and sodium hydride had reacted within a vessel causing a fire and that the argon gas fixed installation had been activated.

All persons were accounted for although it was reported that a number of staff may have been exposed to the chemicals resulting in contamination. Therefore, a full HazMat response was mobilised including the MD4 (Firefighter Decontamination) capability and support pump from Inverness. Following liaison with the Police, a 400 metre exclusion was established with surrounding residents being advised to remain indoors with windows closed.

Firefighters wearing chemical protective clothing were committed to the building to retrieve site specific safety equipment and specialist extinguishing medium and to support specialist site staff in ensuring the fire was extinguished and replacing the lid on the reactor vessel containing the sodium.

The plant was successfully made safe and all personnel were withdrawn with no decontamination required. The Stop message was passed at 1907hrs and the incident scaled down with the last appliance returning to its home station at 2258hrs.

This incident was a good example of successful multi agency working where attending services and agencies worked closely together to control and minimise risks to personnel, the public and the environment whilst at the same time ensuring a safe conclusion to the incident.



Photo courtesy of Robert MacDonald, Northern Studios, Wick

School Fire - Inverness High School

At 2152hrs on 8 October 2008, the Service received a 999 call reporting smoke and flames within the games hall area of the school.

Two appliances were initially mobilised and throughout the incident further assistance was requested from the Incident Commander resulting in 6 pumps attending with the Aerial Ladder Platform.

Crews wearing breathing apparatus (BA) were committed to the building to commence firefighting and search operations as there was an unconfirmed report of persons being within the building. All persons were quickly accounted for and crews continued fighting the fire located within the main school building.

The fire was extinguished and contained to a basement area within the school with considerable smoke damage to the recently renovated games hall. The location of the seat of fire and difficult conditions required commitment and determination from the firefighting crews and a considerable supply of BA cylinders in order to extinguish the fire.

The prompt and appropriate requests for assistance for this incident allowed the Incident Commander to bring this potentially very large incident under control in a short timescale and keep the damage to a minimum. Operations were scaled down to one appliance at 0230hrs and HIFRS personnel maintained a watching brief overnight. The incident was finally closed and handed over to the property owners at 2007hrs on 10 October 2008.

Lochaline Station - Interview with Crew Members

Lochaline Fire Station is a unique Station within the HIFRS—60% of the crew are female.

Pat McElhinney, GM for the Lochaber area, considers Lochaline a one-off in the British Fire Service, if not beyond, in relation to the female representation on the station.

This obviously is a good reason to visit them and to find out why women in Lochaline are more likely to join the Fire Service there than in any other area within the Highlands and Islands.



Top row from left: FF Robert Capell, FF David Mealand
Middle row from left: FF Trainee Heather Jappy, FF Heather Brown, FF Bonny Mealand
Bottom row from left: CM Sarah Jones, WM Lesley Jones, FF Annabel Lawrence
Not in picture: FF John Cameron, FF John Forster

Why did you join the Fire and Rescue Service?

The aspect of being challenged was a good reason to join for some of them. All agree that it has also been a necessity because in the area they serve the population is very low and when the Station was in danger of closing down more women joined to make sure the Station remained in Lochaline. It is also about being a part of the community and taking responsibility.

What do you think is the most positive part of being a Firefighter?

All agree that group dynamics, working together as a team, is a very positive part of being a Firefighter, and also that you learn a lot about yourself and your abilities. And last, but not least, it is a social thing.

Have you experienced members of the public who have preconceptions (positive or negative) about your ability to do your job well because you are women?

There have been negative preconceptions, but once they see us "in action" and know that we can do the job well, they accept us for what we are doing. We get very positive feedback from our Home Fire Safety Visits.

Would you recommend the career to other women?

Absolutely! There are many possibilities for a career, not only operational.

They all agree that there is no difference between female and male Firefighters. They all go through the same training and strengths of one crew member may cover weaknesses of another one, no matter whether they are male or female. They are a team.

Would you like your Station to be featured in a future Newsletter? Do you have any interesting facts about your Station you would like to share? Contact Denise Sutherland on 01463 227009 or e-mail denise.sutherland@hifrs.org.

PEOPLE

Chris Findlay and Allan MacKinnon



On the 26 September 2008, Watch Manager Chris Findlay and Crew Manager Allan MacKinnon were presented with their 20 Year Long Service and Good Conduct medals by T/ACFO John Donaldson. The presentation took place at the Railway

Club, Fort William. Family, friends and work colleagues attended the presentation enjoying a buffet and disco afterwards.

Chris and Allan have seen many changes throughout their careers, the most recent being the move from the old fire station at Claggan Road to a new fire station at An Aird, Fort William. They were both involved in arranging and organising the Official Opening along with colleagues.

During their careers, Chris and Allan have attended many and varied incidents. They received a letter of appreciation from the CFO, as did many of the personnel from the Fort William Retained unit, for the part they played in rescuing diners who were trapped by the flood water in the Crannog Restaurant during the severe floods which hit Fort William in January 2005.

Eric Ibbertson

Crew Manager Eric Ibbertson was presented with his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal at the Nethybridge Hotel, by Deputy Chief Fire Officer Tony Wood.



Eric, who works with the Post Office, joined the Service in 1988 as a young Firefighter with the Nethybridge Unit. He was promoted to his current position in 2005.

The picture shows members of Nethybridge CRU, GM Billy Sanderson, and DCFO Tony Wood who enjoyed a short presentation, followed by some soup, sandwiches and a blether.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter. If you have any comments or wish any items to be included in the next issue, or would like a copy of the Newsletter in a different format, please contact: Denise Sutherland on telephone number 01463-227009 or denise.sutherland@hifrs.org

Richy Kane & Ian Nicolson

Station Manager Richy Kane (Assistant District Officer for Skye and Lochalsh) and Watch Manager Ian Nicolson (Portree Station) received their 20 Year Long Service and Good Conduct Medals at Portree Fire Station.

Richy Kane started his career in Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Service and served with Central Fire and Rescue Service before joining HIFRS in 2003. He presently serves as Assistant District Officer for Skye & Lochalsh District.

Ian Nicolson commenced his service with HIFRS in May 1987 and was promoted to the position of Leading Firefighter after 5 years service. Ian was promoted to his current position of Watch Manager at Portree Fire Station in September 2005.



The medals were presented by Group Manager Ross Notman at a meal and function held at Portree Fire Station earlier this month, which was attended by the present crew.

Ross Notman

Group Manager Ross Notman was presented with gifts by Jenny Millington on behalf of Skye and Lochalsh Stations, on the occasion of his retirement after 30 years of service.

Ross commenced his service with Lothian and Borders Fire & Rescue Service in October 1978 and moved to HIFRS in September 1994 with White Watch.

Ross received his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in January 1999 and thereafter transferred to Blue Watch in January 2000. He served in Training Department from October 2003 and transferred to Skye and Lochalsh District in October 2005. Ross also served in Caithness, Inverness & Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Districts as a temporary District Officer during his 30 year service before retiring on 15 October 2008.



Ross's retirement was marked by a small function in Portree Fire Station.

News from the Archives - 29 Years Ago

Inverness - 23 November 1979

The occupant of this house left an electric hair dryer between the covers of a bed in an attempt to dry out the bed which had become wet as a result of a hot water bottle bursting. The hair dryer eventually ignited the bedding. Firemen had to use breathing apparatus to penetrate the completely smoke logged building in order to extinguish the fire.

Extract from Northern Fire Brigade, Annual Report for the year 1st January 1979 to 31st December 1979.

EVENTS

Exercise Foxtrot

In August, Exercise Foxtrot, a joint exercise by HIFRS and Dounreay Fire, Ambulance & Rescue Service (DFARS), was held at Dounreay.



The exercise was centered in the D6411 complex which does not contain any of the site risks that would have increased the complexity of the incident.

A total of five pumps attended the exercise: 3 from HIFRS and 2 from

DFARS. Observers and safety officers were also provided from HIFRS and UKAEA Emergency Planning Department. Crews from HIFRS were pre-positioned on the Dounreay access roads to reduce response times and the overall length of the exercise.

The objectives of the exercise were to test:

- The HIFRS Incident Plan for Dounreay
- Operation of the National Incident Command System
- Interaction between the two Services involved
- Communication links and procedures

Everyone involved gave the commitment to ensure the exercise objectives were achieved and operations were seamless. Overall, the exercise produced a significant amount of positive feedback.



This type of exercise helps build up the confidence of responding crews and allows procedures and equipment to be tested, which is extremely important when working in the type of environment that may be encountered at Dounreay.

As any areas for improvement identified during the previous exercise had been addressed, it was agreed that re-training HIFRS personnel on the specialist risks that may be encountered at Dounreay should be the

priority and this would form the basis of next year's training programme and exercise in 2009.



News from the Archives - 32 Years Ago

Aldourie, Inverness - 6 May 1976

A residential caravan provided an unusual cause of fire. A boat flare was left lying in direct sunlight on a table inside the caravan. The heat of the sunlight was sufficient to melt the wax firing mechanism and activate the flare. Although the fire was immediately reported by the occupier and appliances despatched from Inverness, it was found on their arrival that the caravan was completely destroyed.

Extract from Northern Fire Brigade, Annual Report for the year 1st January 1976 to 31st December 1976.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Operational Audit and Incident Debrief

On 1 October 2008, the Operational Incident Audit and Operational Incident Debrief procedures went live within the Service. Both elements are designed to provide an opportunity to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The debrief process provides attending crews with the opportunity to reflectively assess performance whilst the Operational Audit process enables the Service to independently and dynamically monitor incidents.

To date the Operational Audit Team members have been mobilised to a number of incidents where they have been able to record the necessary information by observing events and by talking to attending personnel. It must be stressed that this process is designed to identify how effectively and efficiently the Service is delivering a Fire and Rescue Service to the public of the Highlands and Islands and not to expose individual personnel.

All information and detail collected from the audits will be logged on the central Operational Audit database, which will then be interrogated by the Operational Audit Steering Group to identify trends, areas of possible improvement, and, equally important, areas of best and/or innovative practice.

The Operational Audit Steering Group is formed from middle and senior managers from the operations, operations support and people services who have the authority to make changes and amendments, where appropriate, to current procedures and equipment to ensure continual improvement in the delivery of service.

At present a very small number of personnel are conducting the operational audits to ensure that communication lines are kept as short as possible whilst the new procedure is introduced. This will enable easier and quicker identification of any areas where the process may require amendment to ensure that it is as efficient as possible. Once the initial pilot period has passed, additional Operational Audit Team Members will be introduced throughout the service with at least one being available per district.

Full details of the Operational Audit and Incident Debrief processes can be found on the Service Intranet under the HIFRS Operational Information Section, 'Operational Audit & Incident Debrief'. Personnel that do not have access to Service IT can request a copy of this information via their respective district offices.

PEOPLE

Uisdean MacLennan



Area Manager Uisdean MacLennan retired from the Service on the 28 September 2008, having completed 30 years service.

Uisdean will be well known to a large number of Service personnel, having worked in a number of departments throughout his career.

After first being promoted to Leading Firefighter in 1986, Uisdean worked his way up through the ranks, and ultimately ended his career as Head of Operations. Uisdean always had a sound common sense approach to management and used these skills to good effect on numerous occasions.

His retiral function on 3 October was well attended by friends and colleagues who gave him a fitting send off, and included the presentation of his axe by Chief Fire Officer Brian Murray.

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT

Road Safety - Driving Ambition

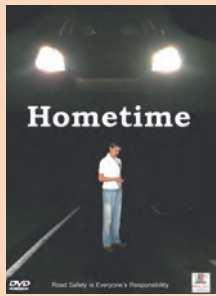
More than 200 fifth and sixth year pupils attended the latest sessions of the Driving Ambition programme, which tells young people how to become safe drivers, promotes the benefits of additional training through the Pass Plus scheme and warns what to expect if they are involved in a collision.

The CRM team held sessions at Grantown Grammar and Kilchuimen Academy, and was also invited to the Highland Youth Voice annual conference at Badaguish, which took transport as its theme.

A list of priority schools has been drawn up based on the number of RTCs involving pupils.

Orkney Road Safety Forum

'Hometime' DVD Highlights Importance Of Staying Alert



School pupils are the focus of a new film produced by the Orkney Road Safety Forum.

'Hometime' aims to raise youngsters' awareness of road safety, particularly after getting off the school bus, and highlights the need to avoid distractions when crossing country roads. Drivers are also reminded to be alert as they pass school buses.

The DVD was filmed in a similar way to the film 'Sliding Doors', with one storyline showing the safe way to leave the bus and the other demonstrating the possible outcome of an accident.

It will be shown to upper primary and secondary age pupils in Orkney and be distributed to all road safety units across Scotland.

Forum Chair, Fire Board Vice Convenor Andrew Drever said: "I firmly believe that this DVD is a very positive move forward in highlighting the dangers faced by children using school transport."

Over half of Orkney's school pupils travel daily on the school bus. The equivalent of a class of young people is killed on Scotland's roads in an average year.

The film was produced by the Orkney Movie Group with funding from Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service, Northern Constabulary, NHS Orkney, Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Coaches, British Red Cross and Sacro.

Community Safety Advocate Staff

We now have the full complement of Community Safety Advocate staff within the CRM Department. They are:

- Gordon Cook, who will cover Caithness and is also CSA supervisor offering support throughout the Service area
- Andrew MacKay, Sutherland (based in Dornoch)
- Jason Bell, Easter Ross, Wester Ross and Cromarty (based in Invergordon)
- Colin Henderson, Wholtime and Inverness area (based in Seafield Road, Inverness)
- Janet Pringle, Skye and Lochalsh, Applecross and Lochcarron (based in Kyle)
- Sally Curran, Lochaber (based in Fort William)
- Linsey McDowell, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (based in Seafield Road, Inverness)
- Peter Stevenson, Shetland
- Mark MacIver, Western Isles, and
- Ian Croy, Orkney.

They will promote and support CFS activities with the emphasis on completing Home Fire Safety Checks. Should you require their assistance, please do not hesitate to contact them or ring the CRM office on 01463 227176.

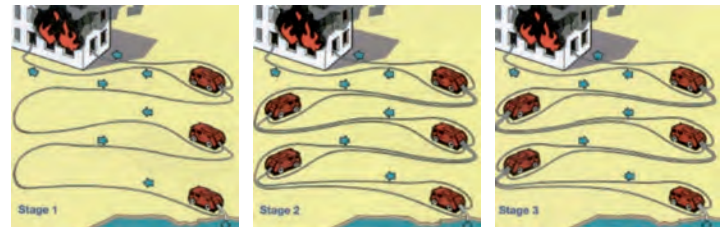
ON THE RUN

In this article, we will be having a look at ways of transporting water to the fire ground when supplies are either poor or non-existent. There are two ways of achieving this, namely: Water carrying; and Water relaying.

The most effective way is the closed relay and the method described below is the recommended way of putting a closed relay to work. When the decision is made to use a closed relay, a base-pump sets into the water supply. If this is an open water supply, it is important to choose the largest capacity or most effective pump, as this will be working the hardest of all.

(Stage 1) From the base-pump, a line of hose is run out from number one delivery to the next pump. The number of lengths of hose is normally limited by the terrain and the capacity of the pump. Ideally, all hose used in relays should be 70mm diameter. The last length of this line is connected to the collecting head of the next pump, charged, and then the water is run up number one delivery to the collecting head of the next pump and so on. This continues until a water supply is established at the fire ground pump. Once this has been achieved, the next task is to establish a second line from the base-pump to the fire-ground pump, as this delivers the maximum amount of water possible. (Stage 2)

For the sake of argument, if the first line consisted of ten lengths between pumps, the second line would consist of five lengths from the base-pump to an intermediate pump placed in the relay and then another five lengths would be used to connect number two delivery to the first pump in the relay. An intermediate pump would be placed between all the initial pumps so that we would have two lines of water from the base pump to the fire ground pump.



You will have noticed that number one line is 10 hose lengths between pumps and number two line is only 5 lengths between pumps and although this is efficient, we can improve it. The next stage (Stage 3) can be achieved by good communications.

On the order, the pump operator of the base-pump will shut off the supply to number one delivery, and this is the signal to the intermediate pump operators to disconnect the coupling closest to them on number one delivery, connect the female coupling to the collecting head and the male to number one delivery. Once this has been done by all intermediate pump operators, the order 'water on' is given.

This should result in twin lines from the base-pump to the fire-ground pump, each of five lengths between pumps which is hydraulically very efficient.

In the next issue, we'll go through the stages of using the anti-viral pack.

As usual, if you have any comments to make, please e-mail michael.white@hifrs.org.