



Update from the Chief

2007 is set to be another positive year for Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service. We will be opening new stations in Beauly, Valtos, Dunvegan and Fort William. We will be replacing at least 10 Light Fire Appliances with full size Water Tenders and we will be upgrading road rescue equipment. We are employing six community safety advocates to underpin our community safety efforts and we aim to introduce sprinklers to premises in each of our four local authority areas.

These exciting developments are examples of the improvements that are happening and give an indication of our hopes for the future. To this end we are continuing to work with the Scottish Executive to secure more funding for the continued development of the Service but this is always challenging as the other seven Scottish Services are also competing for the same limited funds. I will keep you informed of progress as it happens. Internally, we are embarking upon a restructure and whilst I believe our plans enhance the Service I value your views, so please take the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

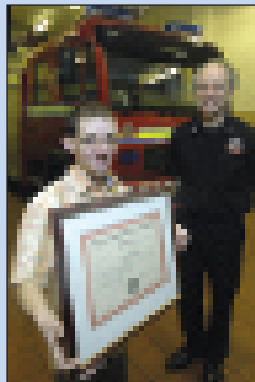
In closing, I would like to pass on my thanks to the Fire Board members who have worked so hard on behalf of the Service for the last four years. They have shown political leadership in difficult circumstances and helped bring about significant improvements in our Service. Prior to the local elections, the last meeting of the current Board takes place on 30th March and I wish the members all the very best for the future.

CFO Brian A Murray

Certificate for Preservation of Life awarded to Fort William resident

The Chief Fire Officer visited Fort William on Tuesday 16th January to present a certificate from The Royal Society for the Preservation of Life from Fire, to Graeme MacEachan, who played a vital role at a house fire in Coal in September 2005. Whilst on his way home Graeme heard a loud bang and realised there was a house well alight. He made a 999 call and went to the house where he noticed there was somebody in the living room. Graeme managed to make contact with the person before the windows exploded. He then alerted neighbours as the fire started melting the gutters of adjacent houses. When the appliances arrived Graeme was able to give the OIC all the information required for a quick rescue.

Chris Findlay, from Fort William attended the incident as a firefighter in charge and presented Graeme with a plaque from the Service. Also in attendance at the presentation were Chief Inspector Ian Bryce and the Area Manager for Lochaber, John Hutchison.



Cerro Aconcagua Expedition

In January 2007 Baltasound Retained Crew Manager Fraser Paul joined an expedition organised by the Fire and Ice Team based at County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service.



A jubilant Fraser Paul on the summit proudly displaying his Shetland flag.

John Robson, a former Shetland District Officer, invited Fraser to join the team which raises support and awareness for seven charities including the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

The expedition involved travelling to Argentina and scaling Cerro Aconcagua - at 6,962m the tallest peak in South America. Despite strong winds that destroyed eight tents and being stuck above 20,000 ft at High Camp II for three nights, squeezing four people into two man tents, nine out of the eleven team members made it to the summit on the 24th & 25th January 2007.

Audit Scotland Report

The Service has received a very positive report from Audit Scotland following the Performance Audit of the Board and the Service. The full report is available on the web site but two of the many positive findings are:

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Authority (the FRA) has a clear strategic direction which reflects the requirements of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and accompanying National Framework, and is designed to meet the needs of the local communities it serves. The predominately rural area in which the FRA operates and the high proportion of Retained fire fighters creates challenges. However the FRA has been proactive in tailoring the modernisation agenda to meet the needs of the area.

The FRA manages its business through a robust service planning process and performance management framework. The FRA has strengthened its capacity to deliver its strategic objectives by working in partnership with other organisations and collaborating with other Fire and Rescue authorities. Partnership working is well developed and effectively managed at a strategic and local level.

The Chief Fire Officer and Executive Command would like to thank all personnel for contributing to and assisting with the creation of a successful audit. The level of professionalism reflects well on the Service as a whole. What is now important is that we maintain the first class service we provide to all in the communities we serve. Audit Scotland will return in August 2007 for a follow-up inspection.

NEWS

Icing on the Cake for Lerwick Fire Station

It was the icing on the cake of a great year for Lerwick Fire Station personnel when they heard that their boss (Jim Moar) was to receive the MBE. The news broke as they were in the final stages of preparation to be Honoured the Freedom of Lerwick as this year's Viking Jarl Squad at Up-Helly-A, held on the 30th January 2007. The Guizer Jarl (Chief Viking) is Graham Nicolson (pictured next to Jim), he has been on the Up-Helly-A committee preparing for this for 15 years and the Fire Service Squad have been designing and building their suits along with the other members of



Above and below, members of the Lerwick Fire Station, standing from left: Graham Mouat, Stephen Sutherland, Jim Moar, Guizer Jarl Graham Nicolson, Colin Nicolson, Jonny Wiseman, and Malcolm Younger, kneeling from left are: John Waterhouse, Danny Scott, Lynden Nicolson, Robert Geddes, Karl Thomason and Peter Stevenson.

Graham's squad (72 in total including musicians). The squad included other FRS personnel, George Morrison, Watch Manager from Bixter and retired DO Iain Cameron as well as Michael Sinclair, from Dingwall. The CFO Brian Murray and Fire Board Convener, Drew McFarlane Slack MBE were also at Up-Helly-A to observe the festivities.

Jim Moar, 53, is just waiting for the shout to be presented to the Queen

after being awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List. It will be "daunting" he said, and he has barely recovered from the shock of being nominated. "I didn't know what to think when I got the letter at the end of October" he said. "I was unsure whether to accept because I wondered whether I deserved it." But he decided to go for it: "This just comes along once."

Jim, a retained firefighter for 35 years, said the nomination came as a complete surprise. He thought it was partly in recognition for his long service at Lerwick Fire Station. "There's not many that does 35 years," he said. Jim joined the service at 18, he had always been interested in the station where some of his relatives worked, and went along on Tuesday nights to fire practice. When he was old enough, he "just spoke to somebody" and got in – there was no formal interview in those days. "I was the youngest by a long way" he said. "The other firemen in their late 20s and early 30s seemed like old men, but I'm the oldest now."

During his time as a firefighter he has seen it all. "The worst is when there are fatalities. I've had a few in road accidents in 35 years. Fortunately fires are rare up here, but it is not always possible to rescue everybody." But in spite of his years of service, he maintains he has done "nothing outstanding" and throughout it all has worked at his day job as an assistant manager at builders' merchants Hay & Co. A great deal has changed in Jim's time in the Fire Service. However, one thing that has stayed the same is the camaraderie, but he has seen big changes in other ways.

Jim said: "The emphasis is more on fire prevention now, about being proactive rather than reactive. We give advice and it's good if it helps prevent fires, but there will always be the odd mistake and there will always be accidents." In the past, he said, many of their call-outs were to chimney fires. But there are very few of those now as people move away from traditional fires – and firefighters now find themselves responding to false alarms when fire alarms have gone off.

The biggest change in his time as a firefighter has been the move from the old fire station at Grantfield to the new station in Sea Road. "It is probably one of the best Retained Fire Stations in Britain" he said. "It is state-of-the-art." All the staff are, like him, Retained firefighters with other jobs. Whatever the day brings, Jim, who has nine children and 16 grandchildren, is determined the honour will not change him. He is a Rangers football supporter and enjoys a game of darts. And no special celebrations are planned for getting the gong – just a quiet night with family and friends.

Alice Arthur – Sub Officer – Out Skerries, Shetland – MBE

Retained Sub Officer Alice Arthur has become an MBE for services to the community of Outer Skerries.

Alice joined the Fire Service as a Firefighter in June 1986 and was later promoted to take charge of the fire unit and the rank of Sub Officer in August 1988 on an island which has a population of 75.

This role, involves the duties of responding to emergencies, the training development of the crew, station routines and community fire safety work.

Alice also has the responsibility for the effective management of the unit and availability of the personnel, working extremely hard to make sure there is a feel-good factor among the staff.

Alice played a major part in the joint initiative between HIFRS and Shetland Islands Council. This resulted in the building of a dual purpose fire appliance to meet the needs of the Airport Fire Service and the Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service, as well as the new Fire Station which opened in November 1997.

Within the community, Alice runs a guesthouse, works in the school teaching art, some of the work is sold to visitors and the money is put back into the community. She also works in the community scallop factory, compiles reports for scheduled air flights, is the relief manager for the water plant and community shop and is also a member of the Airport Fire Service. Previously she carried out the work of relief Post Officer and Community Development Officer.



Photo L-R Alister Arthur (Son) Ryan Arthur (Son) John Arthur (Husband) Alice Arthur, Valerie Arthur (Daughter)

Community Warden Partnership

During January a team of firefighters comprising of Invergordon Station personnel and Easter Ross & Cromarty District staff met up with the local Community Wardens to identify ways to work together to reduce incidents of fires in the area.

It was agreed that the Wardens would work closely with the local Firefighters to assist in engaging more effectively with the local community. Visits were carried out in the Milnafua area of Alness and approximately 230 houses were visited, home fire safety checks (HFSC) were arranged and general fire safety advice was given. Due to the large number of Polish residents in the area, leaflets were also provided in Polish to ensure the fire safety message was communicated to everyone.

Since then, a number of joint fire service/community warden HFSCs have been completed successfully and in excess of 70 have been arranged. Area, District and Station staff also attended the Milnafua Residents Association meeting as well as the Alness Community Council meeting to ensure that members of the local community were fully informed about the ongoing initiative. On completion of the Milnafua area the project will move on to the other four Council Estate areas in Alness.



INCIDENTS OF NOTE

Passenger train in collision with car



At 0816hrs on Friday 2nd February 2007 Fire Service Control were informed by the police of a collision between a passenger train and a car at the level crossing between Barbaraville and Delny near Invergordon.

Fire Appliances from Invergordon and Tain, as well as the

Emergency Tender from Inverness proceeded to the incident. On arrival at the incident the Incident Commander carried out a risk assessment and confirmed with Fire Service Control that a passenger train had been in collision with a car and that there were three people trapped in the vehicle, one of whom was very seriously injured.

The fire crews removed the roof and the doors of the vehicle and worked closely with the paramedics to release the casualties from the car. By this time the Air Ambulance was also in attendance and two of the casualties were conveyed by air to Raigmore hospital, Inverness.

A doctor was also present and unfortunately confirmed that one person had died at the incident. The scene was cordoned off and fire crews took all practical measures to ensure that the scene was preserved prior to a Police accident investigation.

The stop message was sent by Group Manager Gardner at 0858hrs. Following the incident all crews then proceeded to Invergordon fire station for an operational debrief.

IT UPDATE

The deployment of IT equipment to the Service by Fujitsu is now almost half way complete. The pilot project, which took place at Lochcarron, Fortrose, Kirkwall and Inverness (Retained) threw up a number of challenges for our staff and Fujitsu and we are grateful for all of the effort which local managers put in to help make the pilot a success. There is no doubt that there will be teething problems associated with the technology. We are made aware of these problems at weekly project team meetings and are working hard to resolve them.

Faults

All faults should be reported to the Fujitsu Service Desk in accordance with the instructions which came along with your IT equipment. The contact details of the helpdesk are; email service.desk@highland.gov.uk Telephone : 01463 702702. You should follow the procedures detailed in the leaflet to resolve any problems you have. In the event that you cannot get any of your problems resolved, having been through the process, then you should contact our helpdesk, email helpdesk@hifrs.org. This triggers a review of any problem and HIFRS staff will then work with Fujitsu to find a resolution.

Intranet

We have received a lot of enquiries about the use of the Intranet. It is clear that we are at the start of the process as far as use of the Intranet is concerned. We realise that there are infinite possibilities for the use of this facility. The next phase (phase 4) of the project is to look at how best we can use the capabilities to benefit everyone in the Service and cut down on some of the routine paperwork, for example. However, everyone has to be aware that there are limitations to what can be done in the short term, given the amount of work that is currently being done and the staff who are available to carry out development work. Consequently, we have asked Fujitsu to assist in that development by providing a plan to deliver phase 4.

TRAINING

Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

Headquarters and District staff undertook training on the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 at Service Headquarters in January. This important training was due to the new audit process which has been required since the introduction of the Fire (Scotland) Act. The training days also included further input on Community Fire Safety and the new Care Premises Guide. Further training with the new guides will be undertaken when each new guide is issued.

External Agency Training

With the need to constantly find ways to deliver the fire safety message to the most vulnerable residents in our communities, the necessity for close working partnerships with statutory and non statutory agencies is an ongoing process for us all. Training has already taken place for "Highland Home Carers" and some home helps, in identifying persons at risk, and sessions for District nurses, home care teams and physiotherapists is planned before Spring.

Further development of partnerships across the Service area is being investigated to assist with the roll out of this initiative which will complement any training that has already been given.

Equality and Diversity

The Service is determined to provide fair and equal treatment for all and has commenced a programme of Equality and Diversity training to all personnel. Mr Robin Iffla, sub contracted from Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service, is delivering the training and is working with the Service to ensure that all Station and Departmental personnel receive this positive training.



Highland welcome pack for inward migrants

The Service is working closely with the Highlands and Islands Equality Forum on work relating to welcoming newcomers to the area. As part of this work, an online welcome pack has been developed in a number of languages. The pack covers important information on rights and services offered by various organisations, including the Fire and Rescue Service. This can be found on http://highlandlife.net/welcome_pack. To date the pack has been translated in English, Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian. It is hoped that other languages will be made available in the near future.

The Service has included information on fire safety which encourages the reader to contact us for a FREE Home Fire Safety Check. Staff within the Service who may be the first point of contact for this information should note that our advice is available in these languages under the 'Help and Advice Section' of the pack on-line.

The Welcome Pack was created by The Forum with support from the Highland Wellbeing Alliance and the European Social Fund.

Support from families

Recent research carried out at Nottingham Trent University suggests that informal relatives' networks play a vital role for family members of FRS staff. Following on from this the researchers would like to talk to relatives about more formal support; with a view to developing this within Highlands and Islands FRS. Would your family be willing to take part in a group discussion aimed at exploring relatives' needs? Or would they be willing to answer a short questionnaire? If the answer is yes then, please could they contact the researchers, Viv Brunsdon or Rowena Hill, on vivienne.brunsdon@ntu.ac.uk (0115 848 6824) or rowena.hill@ntu.ac.uk (0115 848 5532). We look forward to hearing from you.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service Extrication Challenge 2007



On the 24th March 2007 Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service are to hold a car rescue extrication challenge at the Services Training School at Invergordon. The event will commence at 10 am when the Chief Fire Officer will deliver his opening address following which

eleven teams from the Service will be taking part.

This event is open to members of the public, so feel free to come along and see this exciting event, there will also be static displays and other events throughout the day.

Teams from the following Stations will be taking part in the challenge:

Fort William, Aultbea, Broadford, Kyle, Benbecula, Ness, Invergordon, Lochcarron, Spean Bridge, Acharacle and Achiltibuie.

Each team will be expected to safely remove a simulated casualty from a crashed car using their rescue tools, and will have a time allocation of twenty minutes each. The teams will be marked by qualified assessors and will be judged against UK Rescue Origination procedures for several categories. There will be one overall winning team selected!

Following the event, the top two placed teams will represent Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service at the Scottish Extrication Challenge which will be held in May.

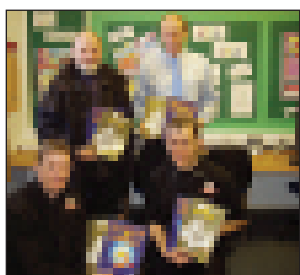
Community Partnership TV

Following the successful introduction of Community Partnership TV to Inverness & Tain areas, which enables the Service to effectively engage with the community and raise awareness of initiatives being carried out, another filming session has recently taken place. With the initial infomercial in place trying to promote Home Fire Safety Checks for the most vulnerable, it has become apparent that there is only a small number of persons who have requested visits for themselves, and are usually not members of the public that are classed as high risk and vulnerable. To ensure that we target the correct groups in the community, the next advert concentrates on working in close partnership with external agencies who are currently caring for the most vulnerable residents, and in this example utilises the NHS Intermediate Care Team who are referring people in their care. This will hopefully lead to many individuals who may know of someone requiring assistance giving names for Home Fire Safety Checks.

Additional information covering the consultation process for the IRMP 3 and the work carried out through the Chimney Fire Strategy will also be portrayed on the screens.

Alness & Invergordon schools initiative

Fire Service personnel visited all five primary schools in Invergordon & Alness to meet with the head teachers and discuss how to improve on ways of getting the community safety message across to their pupils. The meetings were highly successful and all the schools agreed to promote the CFS message by including the reading of 'Frances the Firefly' and 'Willie Broone' as part of their essential classroom reading syllabus.



This initiative was also carried out in partnership with the local community wardens who are proving invaluable in creating closer links with the residents of Alness and Invergordon. The photograph shows fire service personnel with the Community Warden (top left) and the head teacher of Bridgend School in Alness (top right) receiving copies of the CFS magazines.

FIRELINK

Work continues on the project both to ensure the continued operation of the existing radio system and preparation for the installation of Firelink.

Operational Continuity

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, HMI conducted an audit of our operational continuity arrangements in November 2006. This report has been published and is available on the G: Drive.

HMI was complimentary of the approach taken by the Service to operational continuity and has stated that "good progress has been made against the recommendations of the Operational Continuity Report of August 2005". The HMI further stated that the Service has addressed the issue in a "positive manner". The Service is working to ensure that the current system will remain operational until the Firelink "ready for Service" date in 2009.

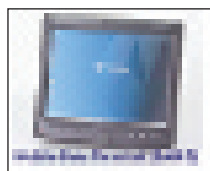
As part of these arrangements, all appliances will be provided with mobile phones. Further details of these arrangements will be available shortly.

Learn to Speak Firelink

We started to identify some of the terms associated with Firelink in the last issue. Continuing this, we will focus on Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). An MDT, is a SAN type E or SAN type F terminal. It consists of a "touch-Screen" display monitor which will be mounted on the dash of an appliance crew cab, a central processing unit and printer.

In its basic form it will enable Automatic Vehicle Location, Status Messaging and Text Messaging. Status and text messages will be sent by touching the appropriate buttons on the touch screen. The service is examining the additional functionality of the MDT's as an operational information database to assist crews at incidents etc. Some images of the MDT are shown below.

If you have any queries regarding Firelink, you can contact Group Manager Billy Wilson on Direct Dial: 01463 227108 or email billy.wilson@hifrs.org



On the Run

Hopefully this feature will become a quarterly addition to the newsletter where operational hints can be discussed in much the same way as the tv programme 'Tricks of the Trade'. Some you may agree with and some you may not! Either way, contact Mike White(michael.white@hifrs.org) with your views or any ideas you have yourself which aren't to be found in any manuals.

One hint you won't find in the books involves washers that you find typically in hard suction hose. If you're pumping from open water and can't get a prime, and after doing the periodic test, you suspect that the hose is at fault, try taking the most worn looking washer out of the female end and turning it through 180° before putting it back in. Invariably, you will find a good, clean surface which will make an airtight connection. Don't forget to order spares on return to Station! Here are three pictures which show a washer being taken out of a female blank cap, turned over before being put back into place.



IRMP PLAN

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2007 /08

At the last meeting of the Fire Board on 19th January, the Service's 2007/08 draft IRMP was approved. This is now the subject of an extensive consultation and all members of staff, key stakeholders and the community are encouraged to take this opportunity to contribute to the process. All written responses should be directed to the Community Risk Management Department at Service Headquarters Inverness.

A significant feature of the draft IRMP is that of the proposed restructure. This represents an evolution to provide additional capacity in specific areas and overall improvements to the current service we all deliver. The restructure is wide ranging and presents some exciting proposals for consideration. Key features of the restructure include:

- Development of the Retained duty system to provide an enhanced structure and career path.
- Introduction of specialist staff in key areas.
- Sustained overall improvements in the delivery of service.

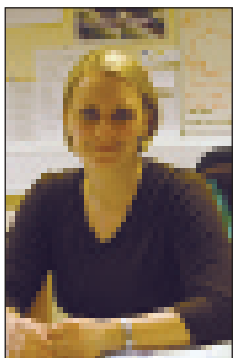
The proposed restructure will ensure that the Service continues to develop, is able to respond to current and future demands and remains fit for purpose. It forms an integral element of the consolidation process which is a key strategic aim of the Service. A full copy of the restructure document can be obtained by visiting the Service web site at www.hifrs.org clicking on Community Safety, then IRMP and then "Proposed restructure". Alternatively hard copies of the document are currently being distributed to all locations in the Service.

Open evening presentations based on the IRMP have also been scheduled across the Service area, the purpose of these is to give everybody with an interest in shaping the future the greatest opportunity to fully take part in this extensive consultation process, clarify details within any of the publications and contribute to the overall debate. The presentations will be given by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and members of the community risk management team. They will feature the recent achievements of the Service, the IRMP process and the significant proposals within the Draft for 2007/08.

Where and When will these events be held:-

IRMP VISITS 2007	Date	Time
Inverness and Nairn (+wholetime /watches)	7.03.07	(19:00)
Badenoch and Strathspey	8.03.07	(19:00)
Skye and Lochalsh	13.03.07	(19:00)
Easter Ross	14.03.07	(19:00)
Shetland	20.03.07	(19:00)
Sutherland	29.03.07	(19:00)
Caithness	17.04.07	(19:00)
Wester Ross	19.04.07	(19:00)
Western Isles - Benbecula	23.04.07	(19:00)
Western Isles	24.04.07	(19:00)
Lochaber	25.04.07	(19:00)
Orkney	02.05.07	(19:00)

Fiona Cossar - IRMP Data Analyst



Fiona Cossar started with the CRM Department on the 4th of January and joins us as the new IRMP Data Analyst, replacing Harry Stagg. Fiona previously worked in the Highland Council Roads & Transport Department and The Scottish Executive.

She is settling in well and finding her feet with FSEC and MapInfo having just returned from a GIS training course in Windsor, and already planning her next course in Oxfordshire.

Fiona said she really appreciated all the help and support she's been given and is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT / IRMP

Road Safety

Work at a national level

CFOA(S) has recently formed a new Road Safety Sub Group to develop and implement a Strategic Road Safety Policy for Scotland with an associated action plan. This will be focused on the recommendations to work closely in partnership with Council Road Safety Units and Police Forces at a local level in order to make best use of joint resources. The Service is represented on this strategic forum and will use this work to formulate our local Service Road Safety Plan for the future.

Local Initiatives

Driving Ambition

Driving Ambition is a new initiative due to be piloted in Golspie High School and Invergordon Academy. The project is based around the needs of S5/S6 pupils and is aimed at highlighting the importance of being a responsible driver.

Each event will give the young people the opportunity to learn about:

- Becoming a driver – delivered by DSA
- What happens under the bonnet—Fire Service Workshop staff
- Road Hazards – Highland Council Road Safety Unit
- The Scene of the Accident – Fire Service/Ambulance Service

This multi agency approach has been recognised as the best practice in delivery of initiatives, making use of the expertise and availability of local resources.

Some of the staff from the local units will be on hand to help out and raise awareness of the Fire Service impact on road traffic collision in the Highlands.

This project will be fully evaluated and results will be passed to other areas to consider for future involvement.

Management of Occupational Road Risk

The Service is taking a leading role in hosting a national seminar to highlight the responsibilities in Management of Occupational Road Risk at Coylumbridge Hotel in Aviemore on 27th April 2007.

This high profile event is being held during UN Global Road Safety Week and aims to address the legal issues surrounding 'driving for work'. The seminar will offer delegates the chance to focus on practical issues such as:

- Risk Management
- Working with Insurers
- Alcohol and Drug Policies
- Employers and Employee Duties
- Company Policies
- The Police Role

Road Safety Day

In future newsletters, it is hoped that we can give you advance notice of Road Safety events for the coming few months. The next round of initiatives are listed below. If you wish to be involved in any road safety initiatives in your area, please contact Cathie Way on 01463 227177 for further support and information.

DATE(S)	EVENT/INITIATIVE
21/22 February 2007	Driving Ambition Pilot in Golspie and Invergordon
24 March 2007	Service Extrication Challenge at Invergordon
23 – 29 April 2007	UN Global Road Safety Week (theme is Young Road Users)
11 – 13 May 2007	Rural Road Weekend (awaiting further details)
22 June 2007	Seatbelt / Speeding Day of Action

PEOPLE / EVENTS

Station Officer Peter Robertson and Firefighter Raymond Peterson



Station Officer Peter Robertson and Firefighter Raymond Peterson recently celebrated 32 and 27 years of exemplary service with the Brae Retained Unit.

The retirement function was held on 1st December 2006 at the Delting Boating Club and was attended by Service colleagues along with family and friends.

DCFO Tony Wood was welcomed to Shetland for the first time by SM Mark Loynd and made the presentations on behalf of HIFRS.

Pictured from left to right are: T/W/M Leslie Johnson, Stn O Peter Robertson, SM Mark Loynd, FF Raymond Peterson, DCFO Tony Wood and CM Willie Doull.

Retirement of Pearl Blount

After more than 13 years as Admin Support at the Sutherland District Office, Pearl retired from the Fire Service on 11th December 2006.

Pearl joined the Service on 9th February 1993, in conjunction with the District Office opening. Pearl had seen many District Officers pass through Sutherland District Office, some of whom were present at her informal lunch which was held at The Dornoch Castle Hotel.

Pearl is currently in the process of moving to Nairn and hopes to fulfil many of her interests now that she is retired. We wish Pearl all the best for the future.

Andy Coghill 5-a-side Football Tournament (Invergordon)

The Annual 5-a-side tournament at Invergordon (renamed The Andy Coghill Tournament) will take place on Sunday 27th May. All Districts and Offices are welcome to put forward a team for this event. For more details and to enter your team please contact Ian Mackay (Jim) on 07732765311.



Turkey Trot 2006

The 29th of December saw the running of the 8th Annual Turkey Trot. Freezing temperatures and a howling gale failed to deter the ten participants covering the seven mile course and 950 foot climb in record time. This years group consisted of six members of HIFRS plus friends and family.



Special mention to Alan Clark for providing the picnic and refreshments at the top of the hill. It is hoped to organise further runs during the year culminating in next years Turkey Trot.

Opportunity to Help The Prince's Trust

Want to run the Loch Ness Marathon on the 7th October? Want to raise money for charity and keep fit? Well, the Prince's Trust has secured a number of places in this very popular and over subscribed marathon. The Trust is currently looking for runners to run in order to raise funds for the Trust's work with disadvantaged young people here in the Highlands and Islands. If you are interested, then please call Bill Anderson on 01463 729 364 or Cailean Macleod 01463 238 088. For more information on the marathon please visit www.lochnessmarathon.com

EVENTS

Skye and Lochalsh Dance

Members of Staffin Unit, Skye and Lochalsh, held a Dance on 1st January 2007. They raised £1,300 in total, with £650 donated to the Benevolent Fund and £650 to the local football team, Staffin FC.



24 hour charity run



On Saturday 10th February starting at 10am Inverness Firefighter Mike Bond began a 24 hour Treadmill Challenge at Tesco Extra Inverness. Mike only stopped for toilet breaks, food and drink was passed to him by his fantastic support team.

After 3 hours the first blister started to appear and after 9 hours Mike was starting to think the challenge was not such a good idea after all. In the early hours of Sunday morning people started to enter the store following their nights out and Mike was amazed by how generous these people were.

By now there were only 5 1/2 hours to go but with Mike suffering with sore feet and legs, the pace slowed.

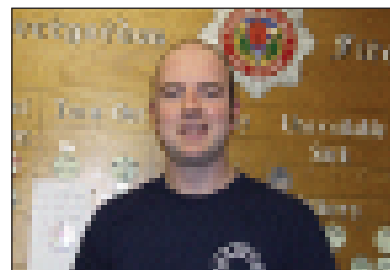
As daylight appeared through the front door so returned the customers and supporters and with his right leg and feet swollen it was down to a walking pace. With 45 minutes to go, White Watch appeared giving their encouragement as they had the previous day and night and as the time counted down the support was amazing. At 10am Mike had completed 141.29km in the 24 hours and with a wheelchair waiting, it was over.

Despite the pain **£3000** was raised for **Macmillan Cancer Support** and **The Neurofibromatosis Association**. The winner of the £500 mountain Bike donated by Anderson Clark Motors for nearest the distance covered, was Leona Dunbar who guessed 141.56km.

Mike expresses his thanks to Tesco, Fitness First, Anderson Clark Motors, Bikes of Inverness, Asics, Macbride Signs and all his friends, family and support crew, without whom it would have been impossible.

Firefighter to run New York Marathon

Firefighter Ian Mackay (Jim), the Ben Fund Rep for Invergordon Station, will be running the New York Marathon this year in aid of the Fire Service National Benevolent Fund. In 2004 he was part of the first group from the Service to do a skydive in St Andrews also for the Ben Fund. You can support this event by logging onto the Invergordon Station website at www.invergordonfirestation.co.uk.



We hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter but if you have any comments or wish any items to be included in the next issue please contact Denise Sutherland on telephone number 01463-227009 or denise.sutherland@hifrs.org