

## Lakanal Coroner recommends sprinkler retrofits

The potential role of sprinklers in improving the safety of high rise residential buildings has been highlighted by the Lakanal House inquest into the six deaths which resulted from this tragic fire on 3 July 2009.

In the 'Rule 43' letters sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and London Borough of Southwark on 28 March, Her Honour Frances Kirkham CBE noted that evidence from the inquests had 'indicated that retro-fitting of sprinkler systems in high rise residential buildings might now be possible at lower cost than had previously been thought to be the case, and with modest disruption to residents.'

The 50-day inquest highlighted a number of areas for improvement in managing fire safety in such premises and questioned the enforcement of fire regulations. It also examined how fire and rescue services should respond to such incidents.

The Coroner issued three 'Rule 43' letters to Southwark, London Fire Brigade and DCLG. An additional letter was sent to the Fire Sector Federation asking it to look at clarifying the scope of fire risk assessments and offering further guidance on training fire risk assessors.

Ms Kirkham also called for a review of the Building Regulations and Approved Document B, which she described as 'a most difficult document to use in order to find an answer to relatively straightforward questions concerning the fire protection properties of materials to be incorporated into the fabric of the building.'



She suggested that ADB be reviewed to ensure it is 'intelligible to the wide range of people and bodies engaged in construction, maintenance and refurbishment of buildings, and not just to professionals who may already have a depth of knowledge of building regulations and building control matters.'

She also recommended that ADB should provide guidance of assistance to those involved in the maintenance or refurbishment of older housing stock, and not just those engaged in design and construction of new buildings.

The verdicts and the full texts of the Rule 43 letters can be downloaded from: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/CouncilDemocracy/LakanalHouseVerdicts.htm](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/CouncilDemocracy/LakanalHouseVerdicts.htm). ❖

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# Shirley Towers inquest

A similar call for the retrofitting of sprinklers in high rise buildings was made following the inquest into the deaths of two Southampton firefighters during a fire at Shirley Towers in 6 April 2010.

Firefighters Jim Shears, of Poole, and Alan Bannon, of Southampton died while dealing with a fire in a flat on the 9th floor of the high-rise tower block. The inquest found that obvious precautions to prevent the fire occurring had not been taken and that operating conditions for all firefighters involved were extremely difficult and dangerous.

A Rule 43 letter addressed to Sir Ken Knight, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit, Eric Pickles MP, the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government; Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Fire & Rescue Service and Mark Prisk MP, the Minister of State for Housing (and Local Government) made nine recommendations for dissemination to every FRS and social housing provider in the UK.

A copy of the Coroner's Letter can be viewed at <http://www.bafsa.org.uk/pdfs/snews/00001256.pdf>. ❖

## Welsh Government plans compulsory sprinklers in all new homes

The Welsh Government is planning to make sprinkler systems compulsory in all new and converted domestic properties in the Principality, in order to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from fire.

The move will require changes to the Building Regulations and implementation of the Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Department for Housing and Regeneration has issued a consultation on the proposals.

Views are invited before Monday 17 June 2013, and if the new regulations are made by Welsh Ministers in September 2013, they are likely to come into force in Spring 2014.

The consultation contains proposals for:

- ❖ commencing Section 1 of the Measure, which requires that each residence to which the Measure applies must be provided with an automatic fire suppression system, and that the system is operating effectively
- ❖ changes to the Building Regulations, introducing a new regulation to meet the requirement of the Measure
- ❖ changes to volumes 1 and 2 of the Approved Documents Part B

Announcing its policy objective in May 2012, the Welsh Government said that available data from the last 10

years showed that on average 17 deaths and 503 injuries per year were caused by fires in residential properties.

It said that while there had been a reduction in the number of deaths from fires in the home during this period, the number of deaths was still too high.

As regulatory proposals were developed, Ministers took advice from the Domestic Fire Safety Measure Working Group, which contains representatives of key stakeholders who have an interest in domestic fire safety and the regulatory framework governing building control in Wales.

Members of the Group include the Welsh Government, water companies, house building companies, Local Authority Building Control Services, BAFSA, the Fire Protection Association, Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Industry Association and the Fire Brigades Union.

While some property developers have objected to the proposals on the grounds of cost, the Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Carl Sargeant, said: 'I acknowledge that these proposals, whilst being very welcome by some, will cause additional costs to fall on others at a time when many are still feeling the effects of the tough economic conditions we are experiencing. I recognise that the current economic circumstances will make the introduction of the new regulations challenging for some.'



'I have balanced this with the recognition that the number of deaths and injuries from fire in homes still remains too high. Appropriately designed and maintained fire suppression systems undoubtedly save lives and prevent injuries to householders and firefighters, as well as reducing damage from fires.'

Consultation events on the proposals will take place on 2 May 2013 in Llandudno, and on 7 May 2013 in Cardiff. Comments must be submitted by Monday 17 June 2013, via the online Consultation Response form; by email to [enquiries.brconstruction@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.brconstruction@wales.gsi.gov.uk); or by post to Building Regulations Consultation, Construction Unit, Welsh Government, Rhyd y Car Offices, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UZ.

Full details of the proposals, including a Consultation Response form, can be found at: <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/planning/implementing-domestic-fire-safety-measure/?lang=en>. ❖

# CDM Regulations overhaul expected

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has presented the likely content of revisions to the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations, due to go out to public consultation later this year.

According to the Association for Project Safety (APS), the HSE announced at a North West CDM Support Group meeting in February, that the changes would not be the fine-tuning the HSE CDM Review indicated last year. While the exact detail of the new regulatory package would not be known until May 2013 at the earliest, the APS suggests that the government's policy on revising regulations demands a complete overhaul based on a copy-out of the Directive, irrespective of the quality of the existing CDM Regulations.

Headline changes are reported to include the removal of both Regulation 4 relating to Competence, and the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP); the introduction of CDM duties for all projects where more than one contractor is working on a project, and the design phase duties of the current CDM Co-ordinator being replaced with a new 'Project Preparation Manager'. Designer, Principal Contractor and Contractor duties appear to be remaining more or less unchanged.

It is also expected that the project notification threshold will remain the same as under CDM2007, even though these differ from those in the European Union's Temporary & Mobile Construction Sites (TMCS) Directive. One of the most contentious changes is likely to be

the introduction of CDM duties for all projects, commercial or domestic, where more than one contractor is working on a project. On these projects, one of the contractors will have to take on the equivalent duties of the CDM Co-ordinator for the construction phase.

The HSE said they would be concentrating on improving the construction industry's understanding of the TMCS Directive, the reduction of pre-qualification bureaucracy, and replacing the Approved Code of Practice with a series of guidance notes.

While there is still quite a way to go with finalising the revised regulations, an industry consultation period still has to be undertaken, and a likely implementation date is not until October 2014. ❖



## A Tall Storey

A 22-storey block of flats in Cwmbran, South Wales, is set to become what is thought to be the tallest building in the UK to be retrofitted with an automatic fire sprinkler system.

Named 'The Tower', the building is a local landmark, and work began in March 2013 to install sprinklers in each of its 80 flats, together with all common areas. The project is due for completion in May 2013.

The Tower is owned by Bron Afon Community Housing, whose chief executive, Duncan Forbes, said: 'We decided to fit sprinkler systems in some of our existing properties after looking at lessons learned from fires in high rise flats, and working closely with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.'

Bron Afon, its architects, the fire service and fire strategy consultants were involved in the planning of the project, and all flats were occupied during the work. Disruption to the tenants in each flat was no longer than an average 3 hours.

The Tower installation is the latest retrofit project undertaken by Bron Afon. Its first involved the 12-storey Fairview Court, and sprinklers have also been installed at Pleasant Court, one of Bron Afon's retirement housing schemes. Within the next year, Bron Afon plans to fit another installation at Monmouth House, a three-storey, 60 flat complex in Cwmbran town centre. ❖

# The French Connection

A high level delegation of dignitaries from the French fire protection world visited London in February to attend a House of Commons seminar organised by the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety & Rescue Group.

Before the meeting, they were invited to visit and inspect the Somerville Sheltered Housing Scheme in Lewisham, South East London, where a residential sprinkler system has been successfully retrofitted.

Lewisham Homes' Fire Safety Officer, Malcolm McBride, and Head of Health and Safety, Dominic Johnson, accompanied the visitors, together with representatives from the Housing Association and London Fire Brigade. The French contingent included the French regulator, a senior member of the Paris Fire Brigade, a member of the French Fire Brigade Federation, a representative of the French construction federation, and a senior French architect.

The extra care sheltered housing scheme, built circa 1970, is a two storey block with a pitched roof. It accommodates 22 studio and four one-bedroom flats, as well as a communal lounge, dining and laundry rooms.

The visit, arranged by the European Fire Sprinkler Network (EFSN), aimed to demonstrate how a successful



retrofit of residential sprinklers can be used to enhance safety and provide a high level of fire protection to both residents and the building.

Alan Brinson of the EFSN said: 'It was a very successful visit and has led to doors in France being opened to us that were previously closed. The visit has led to an appreciation among those who matter in France that sprinklers can be retrofitted easily and at modest cost in these buildings.' ❖

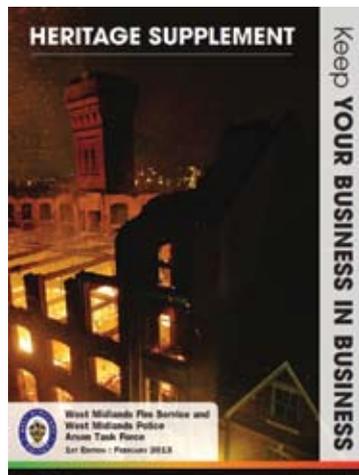
## Heritage protection supplement launched

A new document providing advice on fire prevention and protection for heritage properties and artefacts has been launched by West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Police.

The Heritage Supplement is the result of a three year joint collaboration between the two bodies, and contains practical advice for property owners or guardians, in order to minimise the risk and impact of any unforeseen incidents, including criminal acts.

Sections of the full-colour, 24-page Heritage Supplement include Prevention and Protection Advice; Emergency Planning including Salvage; Tips on Preventing Metal Theft; Notable Organisations; and Useful References and Contacts.

To request a copy, contact Nick Hunt at West Midlands Fire Service on 0121 380 6722 or email [nick.hunt@wmfs.net](mailto:nick.hunt@wmfs.net). ❖



## New Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser

Peter Holland CBE, former Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority, was appointed as Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser on 28 January 2013, succeeding Sir Ken Knight who had held the post since 2007.



Commenting on

the appointment Fire Minister Brandon Lewis said:

"Fire and rescue authorities deliver incredibly important local services and play a vital role in national resilience. Peter's appointment is crucial to helping them do this as well as supporting key policies such as the decentralisation of power from Whitehall, promoting local accountability and transparency and helping fire and rescue authorities be as efficient as possible."

Mr Holland is well known to the sprinkler industry and was a founder member of the National Fire Sprinkler Network. ❖

# Sheffield City Council to tender for £1m retrofit project



**S**heffield City Council is seeking BAFSA sub-contractors to install sprinklers in 23 low rise blocks in four locations across the city.

The £1 million project will see sprinklers installed in 540 individual dwellings, arranged in block sizes varying from 15 to 40 dwellings. Located in Gleadless Valley, Westfield, Stannington and Netherthorpe, the blocks are made up of two distinct building configurations, determined by the topography of the location.

It is anticipated that the contract, which will take a year to complete, will be awarded to a principal contractor who will be required to engage with specialist BAFSA sub-contractors to undertake the design and installation of the fire sprinklers.

Sheffield City Council is holding an open forum meeting to discuss the tender opportunity at its office in Manor Lane, Sheffield on 8 May 2013

This forum will also be used to discuss how the Council might amend or alter the procurement process to better suit this specialist market sector. This information will be used in the preparation of tenders for future projects. Where appropriate, any suitable proposals shall also be incorporated within the tender documentation for this scheme to address any issues highlighted by the BAFSA members in attendance.

For further information contact Andrew Darch e-mail: [Andrew.Darch@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Darch@sheffield.gov.uk); tel: (0114) 273 6228 . ❖

## New video dispels sprinkler myths

Jersey Fire Service has produced a new video to demonstrate the importance of sprinklers, and dispel the myths that stop them being installed in buildings.

The video 'Sprinklers – Dispelling the Myths' includes footage of a live fire demonstration which compares the effects of fire in two identical living rooms – one with sprinkler protection, and one without.

This excellent video can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv2cRK0pcRA>. ❖

## £1/3 million for domestic sprinklers in Derbyshire

More than £1/3 million is to be injected into a project to retrofit sprinklers in domestic properties in Derbyshire.

The investment comes following an agreement between Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DFRA), Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, and nine of the 10 local authorities in the county, to fund sprinkler installations in new developments identified for vulnerable persons at risk of fire. The fund can also be used when necessary to provide portable misting systems until a more permanent provision can be delivered.

DFRA supported Derbyshire F&RS Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Sean Frayne's proposal to provide safer homes for residents of communities within the county, by providing £200,000 towards the retrofitting of sprinklers.

£20,000 will be offered to each council, borough council (or housing association/arm's length management organisation where the council did not own their own property), on the basis that this would be match-funded by them up to the same amount.

Due to the success of the initiative, DFRA has set aside £200,000 for the project in 2013/14.

On 15 March 2013, Derbyshire F&RS held a networking event at their headquarters in Littleover, Derby, for those authorities involved in match funding. This provided an opportunity to share experiences and celebrate the many successes achieved. Several authorities have now completed successful retrofits of domestic sprinklers into properties, ensuring houses and their occupants are safer from the impacts of fire.

Derbyshire F&RS said: 'This is a fantastic working partnership which ensures that together, we continue to reduce the impact of fire on our communities and reduce the costs associated with death, injuries and refurbishment within the county by installing domestic sprinklers and portable misting systems into homes.'

Derbyshire F&RS are hosting the BAFSA Spring Members' meeting on 16 May 2014 which will be addressed by CFO Frayne. For bookings:

<http://www.firesprinklerevents.com/regional-seminars/16th-may---littleover-derby.html>. ❖

# New BAFSA Information Files

Four new or revised and updated BAFSA Information Files were published in May 2013: 'Automatic Fire Suppression Systems and Heritage Protection', 'Retrofitting Sprinkler Systems', 'Frequently Asked Questions about Sprinklers', and 'Fire Sprinklers in Student Accommodation'.

Like previous Information Files, these are full colour, technical documents specific to a subject which are available in hard copy or as a free download from the BAFSA website. ❖

## Automatic Fire Suppression Systems and Heritage Protection (BIF3)



The second issue of this BIF addresses the important subject of the protection of historic and heritage buildings, where measurable fire loss can soar to millions of pounds, and where the loss of important artefacts, cultural resources and national heritage mean such fires are among the most feared.

The Information File examines the extent of

the problem; considers triggers for the installation of sprinkler systems; and looks at standards for installation, types of systems, and system design and installation.

It also includes case studies, statistics, and a list of some UK heritage buildings protected by automatic fire suppression systems.

## Retrofitting Sprinkler Systems (BIF10)



This new Information File recognises that an increasing number of automatic fire suppression systems are being installed into a wide range of buildings for a number of reasons.

The document addresses the benefits of retrofitting sprinklers, and references the issues to be considered. It also provides evidence in the form of case studies, and includes sections

on: considerations when undertaking retrofit of automatic fire suppression; standards for installation; types of systems; system design; water supplies; and enhancement of fire protection in existing buildings.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Sprinklers (BIF6)



BAFSA provides a free enquiry service for both its members and the general public, and each year deals with around 1,800 enquiries. Many of the same questions crop up regularly, and this BIF (the 4th revision) is intended to provide a ready reference to some of the most Frequently Asked Questions.

It addresses the most commonly asked questions relating to the

myths which have grown up around sprinklers, and provides a comprehensive 'all you need to know' description of the subject in a clear Question and Answer format.

## Fire Sprinklers in Student Accommodation (BIF23)



This document is the latest in the BIF Series. It begins with an assessment of Growing Fire Risks: 'Starting a course of study at a university or college of further education is generally a young person's first time away from family and home. For many, leaving home is liberating and fun. Unfortunately it is not without its hazards; and partying, smoking,

alcohol consumption and careless cooking are all factors that contribute to unwanted fires in student accommodation.'

It looks at types of accommodation and the particular risks of high rise blocks; the role of sprinklers for property protection and life safety; laws requiring sprinklers; and alternative approaches and flexible design.

To read, print or download these BAFSA Information Files, visit <http://www.bafsa.org.uk/publications/bafsa-information-files.php>. ❖

# Netherlands statistics highlight sprinkler benefits

**C**IBV, a fire protection certification body in the Netherlands, has published *Sprinkler Statistics 2010*, which highlights the loss-minimising effect of installing certified automatic sprinkler systems.

The report, which has been translated into English, shows that the average known loss from 13 fires in sprinklered properties in The Netherlands in 2010 is below 1% of the average loss in non-sprinklered buildings.

The organisation says the statistics highlight the benefits of installing a certified sprinkler system, and underline that certification is a guarantee that a system will operate as expected.

The CIBV statistics includes an overview of fire losses; fires in sprinklered premises, the effectiveness of sprinklers in 2010, and a breakdown of sprinkler systems installed in 2010 by type of sprinkler.

The figures are taken from inventory of large fires with a loss of €1 million compiled by Verbond van Verzekeraars (Association of Insurers) in their quarterly publication 'Brandbrief'. However, according to CIBV, the overview of the major fires in 2010 is not complete, and damage caused by at least 10 major fires is missing.

Despite this incomplete picture, CIBV declares: 'The direct loss from the 88 fires in 2010 still amounts to €285 million. That is an average loss of more than €3.2 million. The average loss from fires in sprinklered properties in 2010 is less than €8,000.'

A summary of fires that occurred in 2010 in properties with a certified sprinkler system is also presented in the report, which is available at <http://cibv.nl/en/cibv-a-confident-choice/sprinkler-statistics/>. ❖

## Prepare for BIM

**S**prinkler installers and manufacturers need to be aware of UK Government plans to implement the Building Information Modelling (BIM) system for all building procurement and construction.

The largest private projects already use BIM, and from 2016 all Government projects must use it, which may have significant implications for the sprinkler industry.

The announcement was made in May 2011, when the Government Construction Strategy declared that collaborative 3D BIM (with all project and asset information, documentation and data being electronic) would be required on its projects by 2016.

The Government has set up the BIM Task Group <http://www.bimtaskgroup.org/> as part of a four year programme for sector modernisation, with the key objective of reducing capital cost and the carbon burden from the construction and operation of the built environment by 20%. It says that 'central to these ambitions is the adoption of information-rich Building Information Modelling (BIM) technologies, process and collaborative behaviours that will unlock new more efficient ways of working at all stages of the project life-cycle'.

It is important that sprinkler installers and manufacturers consider whether they are geared up to work with this technology, and what steps they need to take in order to be ready for the wider application of this concept. ❖



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## Fire research conference invitation

The Institution of Fire Engineers and the Fire Service College are inviting proposals from anyone who wants to present Papers at the Annual Conference: Fire Related Research and Developments (RE13), which will be held at the college in Moreton-in-Marsh on Thursday 14 November 2013.

They want to hear from individuals, Fire and Rescue Authorities, and any other organisations who want to showcase 'best practice, initiative and cutting edge research'.

Proposals must be made via proforma and emailed by Friday 3 May 2013 to the Programme Co-ordinator, Dr Anne Eyre.

Email:

[anne.eyre@traumatraining.com](mailto:anne.eyre@traumatraining.com).

Tel: +44(0)2476-505262.

**Note that BAFSA regrets that once again, the organisers have chosen the same date as the BAFSA AGM and dinner. ❖**

## Mr Douglas Smith

**At its January meeting BAFSA Council paid tribute to the late Douglas Smith, former Hon. Administrative Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group, Douglas, who retired in 2011, died on 19 December 2012 while on holiday. A supporter of fire suppression systems and a good friend to BAFSA, Douglas will be sorely missed. ❖**

# SPRINKLER STOPS

**B**AFSA's F&RS Co-ordinator, Steve Mills, has undertaken a provisional analysis of sprinkler stops reported during 2012.

The analysis makes it clear that sprinklers continue to successfully protect a wide range of buildings, from individual rooms in HMOs to large supermarkets, and from factories to chemical works.

If you have any information, please complete the form which is available in the Members' Resources area of the BAFSA website, or on the National Fire Sprinkler Network website,

[www.nfsn.co.uk/downloads.php](http://www.nfsn.co.uk/downloads.php).

## **Textile Manufacturer, Ashton Under Lyme**

A minor fire broke out in the early hours of Monday 11 March 2013 at the premises of a textile manufacturer in Ashton-Under-Lyme, near Manchester.

The incident occurred in a radio frequency drier, which overheated and caught fire.

One sprinkler head directly over the drier activated, confining the fire to the machine. This ensured that no damage was caused to the building, and that production was able to continue as normal.

The sprinkler head was replaced and the system reinstated, becoming operational again within 4 hours of the fire.

## **Leather Works, Northants**

Northamptonshire F&RS reported a successful sprinkler activation at a Rushden leather treatments works at about 11:15hr on Friday 15 February 2013.

One head on the predominately tank-fed system operated when a fire occurred in filters in a part of the factory which treats leather materials. The fire was controlled within 5 minutes. Eleven fire service personnel attended to

carry out final extinguishment of the filters and to check for fire spread in the area. None of the 35 staff at the factory was injured.

## **Paper Mill, Kent**

Kent F&RS reported that at about 01:15hr on Tuesday 12 February 2013, a fire occurred in a paper making machine at a 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>, steel framed, paper mill building in Sittingbourne.

A mixture of dust and oil at the machine had ignited and two heads on the drencher system operated. This helped to control the fire while the in-house fire-fighting team went into action, assisted by one pumping appliance with an incident commander from Kent F&RS.

The fire was extinguished within 1 hour, and business interruption was put at 6.5 hours. Damage was limited to the machine, and none of the 17 workers was injured.

## **Sheltered housing complex, Kirklees**

A fire occurred just after 07:45hr on Saturday 12 January 2013 at a sheltered housing complex in Elmley, West Yorkshire. At the time of the fire there were about 40

residents in the 1500m<sup>2</sup> complex, in which a full sprinkler system had been fitted by the provider, Kirklees Council.

The fire was caused by a cigarette in a bin in the bathroom of a flat. The fire actuated one head and extinguished the fire prior to the arrival of West Yorkshire F&RS.

No-one needed to be re-housed following the fire.

## **Packaging Plant, Cheshire**

Cheshire F&RS is reminding businesses of the importance of having sprinklers, after a potentially serious fire was averted at a Winsford business because it was effectively controlled and extinguished by a sprinkler system.

Firefighters from Winsford were called to the incident just before 03:00hr on Friday 18 January 2013, following an automatic fire alarm alert at Jiffy Packaging on the Winsford Industrial Estate.

## **Factory, Trentham, Staffs**

Sprinklers saved a large factory from a potentially devastating fire on 1 January 2013.

A security guard at Autoneum on Stanley Matthews Way,

Trentham, Staffs, spotted smoke on CCTV cameras at around 10:48hr and went to investigate. Shortly afterwards the fire alarm and sprinkler systems operated and the security guard called 999.

Five F&RS crews from Longton, Hanley and Newcastle attended the incident and on arrival were met with a heavily smoke logged factory.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the building with a hose reel jet and extinguished the remains of a small fire involving a fibreglass mould unit. The fire had been contained by the sprinklers.

Group Manager, Stuart Cloughton said: 'The factory had been closed down for New Year's Day so there was no one inside at the time of the fire. However, thanks to the sprinklers, business will be able to continue as usual today.'

### **Residential Care Home, Jersey**

Jersey F&RS responded to a fire in a residential care home on 28 December 2012.

They were alerted shortly after 01:00hr by a fire alarm, and staff at the home were quick to establish that there was a fire in one of the resident's rooms.

One part-time fire crew from Western Fire Station and 2 crews from St Helier were immediately dispatched. Three fire engines and 14 personnel were quickly on scene.

Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus entered the room and quickly confirmed that

the home's sprinkler system had activated, extinguished the fire and prevented any fire spread to the rest of the building.

### **'Pound' Store, Liverpool**

Sprinkler systems successfully thwarted a deliberate attempt to set fire to a 'pound' retail store in St John's Precinct, Liverpool. The alarm was raised at 08:51hr on 27 December 2012, but when fire crews arrived at 08:55hr it was established that the sprinklers had not only prevented significant fire spread but had also quenched the fire. The only actions required of the attending fire crews were to ventilate a small amount of accumulated smoke in the precinct and to isolate the water supply to the sprinklers in the store.

Due to suspicious circumstances noted at the scene of the fire, Merseyside F&RS undertook a detailed investigation which concluded that the fire in store had been deliberately set. However, the sprinkler system limited the fire to approximately 2m<sup>2</sup> of displayed stock.

Despite the incident, the remaining retailers in St John's precinct were only affected for a very short time, and the precinct was fully re-opened at around 10:30hr. The pound store was able to continue trading the next day, and capitalise on their post-Christmas retail period.

### **Supermarket, East Kilbride**

A successful sprinkler activation in the baby changing room at a large supermarket in East Kilbride,

Scotland, occurred at 19:45hr on 14 December 2012.

The fire had begun when a towelling roll was set alight in the baby changing room. The sprinkler system activated and confined the fire to the room.

Disruption to the store was minimal, and the sprinkler system was back in operation within 2.5 hours of the initial call.

BAFSA comments: 'This is a good example of why locations such as toilets, washrooms and the like should be sprinkler protected.'

### **Shopping Mall Loading Bay, Sutton Coldfield**

At 02:14hr on Wednesday 12 December 2012, West Midlands F&RS received a call to a lorry fire in the vicinity of a shopping mall in Sutton Coldfield. The lorry was making a delivery to the Mall at the time the fire occurred and was parked at one of the loading bays at the centre. It was reported that the fire triggered the sprinkler system covering the centre's loading bay and that a number of heads were activated. These helped to effectively control the fire, which was extinguished by the F&RS.

Peter Jones, Operations Manager at The Mall, confirmed that: '...there is no doubt that the sprinkler system helped to control the situation and did exactly what it was designed to do'.

### **Warehouse, Hampshire**

Hampshire F&RS reported that a sprinkler system prevented a

# SPRINKLER STOPS

devastating fire in a warehouse in Andover on 26 November 2012.

Fire crews were called to the warehouse in Walworth Industrial Estate at 08:21hr, where the sprinkler system had activated and immediately started to control the fire. The building was 1% damaged by fire but this would have been much worse without a sprinkler system.

Group Manager Stewart Adamson said: 'The effect of fire on businesses can be catastrophic and 80% fail within one year following a fire. This business is still operating and the fire did not affect surrounding businesses due to the sprinkler system. All businesses should have plans in place to prevent fire, respond to fire and importantly recover after a fire.'

## **Shopping Mall, Tyne and Wear**

Tyne and Wear F&RS received a call to a fire in an electrical substation in Eldon Square Shopping Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, at 02:09hr on 14 November 2012.

The fire, which began in the lower levels of the mall, was caused by water dripping from the floor above onto live electrical equipment in a switchroom. This led to a catastrophic failure of the equipment, resulting in an explosion within the substation and the release of large quantities of oil, and immediate flashover.

One sprinkler head operated, and fire damage was confined to the room of origin. Fire crews

used carbon dioxide extinguishers to fully extinguish the fire following isolation of the electricity supply.

BAFSA comments: 'Another good example of why sprinkler systems should cover switchrooms and substations where there is oil-filled equipment.'

## **Retail Distribution Depot, Kilsby, Northampton**

At 05:00hr on 31 October 2012, the sprinkler system at the Tesco grocery distribution depot at Kilsby, Northampton activated when a fire occurred in an aerosol compound.

This compound, situated in the 158,000m<sup>2</sup>, 15m high facility, contains highly volatile products and is a lower tier COMAH site.

Two heads activated on the fast response 'in-line' sprinkler system covering the compound, and controlled the fire within seconds with minimal damage. The system is fed by a pump from a stored water facility.

None of the 300 occupants of the building was injured, and stock in the distribution centre, believed to be valued at several millions of pounds, was unaffected by the fire.

## **Warehouse, Leicestershire**

Leicestershire F&RS reported that at 23:47hr on Thursday 8 November 2012 a call was received to a fire at a large distribution warehouse of a 'catalogue' retail company, situated in Magna Park, Lutterworth.

Three appliances were mobilised, and two breathing apparatus wearers with one hose-reel were committed. The seat of the fire was in some first floor racking, but the sprinkler system had operated and the fire was 'Out on Arrival'. The 'Stop' message was sent about one hour later.

BAFSA members may recall that Magna Park was the location of a major warehouse fire in 2005 when the centrally-supplied sprinkler main was isolated.

## **Residential Children's Centre, Airdrie, Lanarkshire**

Strathclyde F&RS reported that on Sunday 4 November 2012, a small fire occurred in a ground floor bedroom of a two storey children's accommodation unit in Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

A single sprinkler head activated in the room where the fire occurred, and reports say that it extinguished the fire almost immediately. The fire alarm sounded and all occupants evacuated the building safely.

Fire damage was limited to a very small area and little disruption was caused to the running of the premises. ❖

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# BAFSA MEMBER NEWS

## Fire Sprinkler International 2014

**B**AFSA and the European Fire Sprinkler Network (EFSN) will jointly host Fire Sprinkler International, an international conference and exhibition, in London, on 20-21 May 2014.

The conference will hear presentations from leading experts, and we want Fire Sprinkler International to showcase best practice, initiative and leading-edge research. So if you or your colleagues are engaged in an innovative project, research and/or development, we would like to hear from you.

The core themes of the event are:

- Business sustainability with sprinklers - in which we will explore how sprinklers support the long term financial viability of businesses, protecting them from destruction and saving money
- New sprinkler technology - in which researchers will present their results and introduce their new products, systems and applications
- Developments in sprinkler standards - where we will hear about developments with CEN, NFPA and other standards from people on the relevant committees

If you have something that all of us should hear, in the first instance please email [enquiries@firesprinklerevents.com](mailto:enquiries@firesprinklerevents.com) to register your interest in presenting a paper, for consideration. ❖

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## BAFSA Members' Meetings

**T**he first of the BAFSA Members' meetings for 2013 will be held on the morning of 16 May 2013, at Littleover in Derbyshire. It will be hosted by Derbyshire F&RS.

In the afternoon, BAFSA will hold a seminar to which representatives from Local Government, Housing Associations, the Fire & Rescue Services, Building Engineers & Surveyors, and anyone whose professional role encompasses the protection of life and property from fire, is welcome to attend. For a full programme and online registration for both sessions, visit [www.firesprinklerevents.com](http://www.firesprinklerevents.com). ❖

## BAFSA Gets LinkedIn

**B**AFSA has formed a LinkedIn group: British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association [http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4828137&trk=hb\\_side\\_g](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4828137&trk=hb_side_g).

You can join this rapidly growing community of fire safety professionals exchanging knowledge, opinions and information.

Members take part in lively discussions, each of which has fire safety at its core. From current surveys, government consultations and myth-dispelling videos - you can access them all by linking in to BAFSA.

Use the BAFSA LinkedIn group to network with BAFSA members and the wider fire community; explore all aspects of automatic fire suppression; learn about fire safety legislation; listen to the sprinkler industry...join the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association LinkedIn Group and begin a long and rewarding engagement! ❖

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## Welcome to new members

**B**AFSA is very pleased to be able to welcome the following new members since the last issue of Focus:

- Neath Port Talbot College
- Aquablaze Fire Sprinklers Ltd
- Fire Protection Services Ltd
- Fire Prevention Works Ltd
- Indigo Fire Systems Ltd
- Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service

We are also sorry to report that a number of associate installers who have not obtained the necessary third party certification – as required by BAFSA's rules – have had to be deleted from our membership rolls.

The importance to BAFSA as an organisation in promoting certification cannot be overestimated, and any associate member which has not obtained this within two years of joining BAFSA will not be permitted to continue in membership. ❖

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**BAFSA is happy to receive suggestions for topics to be covered in future issues. Please make contact via [info@bafsa.org.uk](mailto:info@bafsa.org.uk).**

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## BAFSA Events 2013/2014

Date	Event	Venue
<b>2013</b>		
15 May (0930 hrs)	Marketing	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue HQ
15 May (1330 hrs)	Council	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue HQ
16 May (0900 hrs)	Spring Members' Meeting and LA Seminar	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue HQ
29 May (TBC)	Service & Maintenance	TBA
13 June	Golf Day	Mottram Hall, Cheshire
19 June	Technical	Hall Fire, Awinton, Greater Manchester
10 July	Marketing	Rapidrop, Peterborough
12 July	Training	TBA
17 July	Council	SPP, Coleford Glos.
7 August	R&D	Viking Supplynet, Tipton
28 August	Service & Maintenance	Tyco, West Bromwich
11 September (0930 hrs)	Marketing	FIA Hampton, Sunbury
4 September	Technical	SPP, Reading
11 September (1330 hrs)	Council	FIA Hampton, Sunbury
12 September (0900 hrs)	Autumn Member's Meeting and LA seminar	FIA Hampton, Sunbury
11 October	Training	TBA
6 November	Marketing	TATA, Corby
6 November	R&D	Tyco, West Bromwich
14 November	Council	Marriott Worsley Park
14 November	1400 hrs 2013 AGM	Marriott Worsley Park
14 November	1930 hrs Annual Dinner	Marriott Worsley Park
27 November	Service & Maintenance	TBA
4 December	Technical	Rapidrop, Peterborough

2014	Provisional Meeting Dates	Venues
8 January	Marketing	
15 January	Council	
5 March	Marketing	
12 March	Council	
30 April	Marketing	
7 May	Council	
20-21 May	Fire Sprinkler International 2014	Grange Tower Bridge Hotel, London
June (TBC)	Golf Day	Mottram Hall, Cheshire
9 July	Marketing	
16 July	Council	
10 September	Marketing	
17 September	Council	
18 September	Members' Meeting/LA Seminar	
5 November	Marketing	
13 November	Council	Bristol Royal Marriott
13 November	1400 hrs 2014 AGM	Bristol Royal Marriott
13 November	1930 hrs 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner	Bristol Royal Marriott

To receive Sprinkler Focus by email please contact BAFSA at [info@bafsa.org.uk](mailto:info@bafsa.org.uk) and ask to be added to the subscriber list.

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