

**Report on the Institute's Annual Conference held at South Yorkshire  
Fire and Rescue Service's Training Centre, Beaver Hill Road,  
Handsworth, Sheffield on 8 August 2007.  
By Secretary General Bob Docherty**

The IFSM conference was initially scheduled for 2 July 2007 with speakers including Mark Smitherman, Chief Fire Officer of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Mike Clapham, local MP and a healthy Conference delegate list of over 90. Unfortunately, and no one could have predicted this, the conference had to be cancelled because of the severe flooding and the total commitment of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to that dreadful emergency. However, we were able to recover and reschedule the event for 8 August 2007. The times and venue remained the same and the programme was in essence the same with very few changes to the speakers programme. Fortunately, we were able to have a speaker who gave the Conference a first in a presentation on the flooding and the impact it had on the community and the operations of the Fire and Rescue Service.

As luck would have it, Conference still attracted 60 delegates despite the reschedule and the Chair for the day was John Williamson. Displays were provided by Siemens and Flamerisk Safety Solutions Ltd and Siemens and Tyco provided sponsorship for the day. The programme was opened by the President of the IFSM Gary Whitworth who welcomed everyone to the event and then handed over to the Chair who outlined the programme for the day and gave a special welcome to the invited guests, T Trevis and Martin Russell-Croucher from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Lloyd Morgan from Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

The programme was wide and varied and it caught the flavour of the current moment in fire and fire safety management. The first speaker was Paul Roberts from the Department of Health who outlined the changes to FIRECODE HTM 05 series (both published and pending) and included the 'read across' from these codes to Approved Document B, the relevant British Standards and the EU Construction Products Directive. Following on from Paul, Don Scott from Siemens gave a fascinating paper of fire detection technology (no doubt bringing a lot of the audience up to date!) and how this new technology is combating unwanted fire calls. The final speaker for the morning session was Andy Cloke from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service who presented a Fire and Rescue 'view' on the new Approved Document B as well as posing the question to the conference delegates on how Regulation 16B, a new introduction into the Building Regulations, should be enforced in practice.

Following lunch Conference reconvened to listen to John Harthman, Divisional Emergency Planning Officer, who gave what must be the first paper on the subject relating to the floods in South Yorkshire including the causes, actions and consequences of the floods and its impact on the whole community and also the aftermath. The final speaker for the day was Andrew Shiner from Tyco who presented a paper on the 'new technology' of micro drop high pressure water misting systems and the intelligent use of water. Andrew not only covered the technology and benefits of such systems but also

commented on how quickly the fire community is starting to think seriously about the advantages on the installation and use of water mist.

After each speaker's presentation, the Chair gave Conference a chance to ask questions. The number and type of questions from the floor is always the measure of a 'hooked up audience' and conference did not disappoint! The Chair had to restrict the amount of questions to each speaker because of time constraints otherwise I fear we would still be there now! Chair then presented each speaker with a small gift in appreciation of their contribution to the day.

Just prior to finishing Chair invited the secretary General to remind delegates to register for CPD which attracted 4 hours for the Conference as well make mention of both applications for membership and the fire risk assessors register which can be accessed via the website at [www.ifsm.org.uk](http://www.ifsm.org.uk) . Conference finished on schedule and the Chair presented the fire risk assessors register certificate to Nick Coneybear and then thanked all the speakers again and also the delegates for their contribution and attendance. Chair also thanked on behalf of the Institute and Conference, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service for their hospitality and help in organizing Conference and in particular Derek Houseley. Chair also thanked the sponsors for the day, Tyco and Siemens.