



Minutes of the Safety Group Fife Meeting

Held on Monday 20^h April 2009 at

**Dunfermline Building Society, Caledonia House,
Carnegie Avenue, Dunfermline.**

Present

Peter Ager	Fife Council
Ian Norton	North British Distillery
William Miller	Strath Safety
David Jones	Velux
Andy Martin	Fife H&S Consultants
Mark Russell	Dunfermline BS
John Johnston	FMC
Colin Hailing	Fujitsu
Stephen Kerr	Marks and Spencer
David Cant	Carnegie College
Errol Parrish	Mines Rescue
Gary Gibson	Nu-Phalt
David McGinival	Colorado Group

Chairman's Opening Remarks

DC opened the meeting by welcoming four new members to the group, these being;

- David McGinival – Colorado Group
- Gary Gibson – Nu-Phalt
- Colin Hailing – Fujitsu Telecommunications
- Stephen Kerr – Marks & Spencer

Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cathy Welsh, Sally Eddington, Alan Harwood John Greenhalgh and Martin Brown.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 9th of March 2009 were approved.

Presentation

DC introduced Errol Parrish, Operations Manager with Mines Rescue (Scotland). DC handed the floor to EP.

EP started his presentation by giving potted history of mining and mines rescue, Coal mining dates back to 200BC in China, mining in Scotland dates back to 12th Century where Monks at various locations (including Culross Abbey, Dunfermline) mined coal from “Bell Pits”.

During 19th century, as the population in the UK increased, the need for fuel supplies also increased. Mines became deeper and coal was mined much further away from the mine entrance, subsequently the frequency and extent of accidents in mines also increased.

Particularly in the second half of the 19th century and in the early years of 20th century when the largest number of accidents occurred.

Mine explosions reached their peak 1870 to 1880 – 2,700 men and boys killed in explosions alone.

In these early years rescue relied on bravery of fellow miners to try and assist comrades in distress. There was no special training or equipment for rescue workers, many rescuers would also become victims.

In 1886 a Royal Commission recommended the establishment of Rescue Stations. The first built Rescue Station was opened in 1902 in Tankersley, Yorkshire.

However they did not become compulsory until the 1911 Coal Mines Act. In 1970 there were 25 rescue stations in the UK covering a total of 246 Collieries.

Today there are 4 rescue stations covering 6 collieries. The last deep mine in Scotland (Longannet) closed in March 2002.

There have been a number of disasters over the years in Scottish Collieries;

- Nov 1931 – Bowhill Colliery explosion (10 lives lost)
- Oct 1939 – Valleyfield Colliery explosion (35 lives lost)
- Sep 1950 – Knockshinnoch Colliery inrush (13 lives lost)
- Dec 1957 – Linsay Colliery explosion (9 lives lost)
- Sep 1959 – Auchengeich Fire (47 lives lost)
- Sep 1967 – Michael Colliery Fire (9 lives lost)
- May 1973 – Seafield Colliery roof fall (5 lives lost)

The most successful mines rescue operation ever was at Knockshinnoch Colliery in Ayrshire in 1950. 13 men were killed by an inrush and 116 entombed. All the trapped men were rescued by a connection being made through old workings from a neighbouring mine.

The men were escorted through an 800m long roadway in an irrespirable atmosphere. A human chain of rescue men wearing breathing apparatus (Salvus) brought out the trapped men in an eight hour operation, after being trapped underground for 2 days.

EP discussed the various breathing apparatus units that had been used over the years, starting with the “Fleuss” which was the forerunner to the “Proto”.

EP stated that the Mines Rescue Service at Crossgates was involved in the rescue operation at the Stockline Plastics Factory. The Fire Brigade called them in due to their experience in working in confined spaces and tunnelling.

Following this incident it was recognised by the Fire Brigade that they required additional skills to deal with these types of incident. Mines Rescue have been actively training the fire crews since then.

With privatisation of the collieries, mines rescue became part of the responsibility of the new mine owners.

The Escape and Rescue from Mines Regulations 1995 places statutory duties upon mine owners to secure suitable and sufficient provision for escape and rescue. No mine may operate unless the owner has made arrangements for rescue.

The mines rescue scheme was approved by the secretary of state for industry. The industry must;

- Retain a national capability to maintain 24hr operations.
- Small and remote mines must have access to a mines rescue service.
- Arrangements must not impose disproportionate costs on small mines.

Funding for the service is by a levy placed on the mine owners based on tonnage produced. Mines Rescue also generate income from commercial activities. They provide a wide range of safety services to all industry.

Since the early 90's Mines Rescue has undergone a comprehensive diversification programme. The knowledge and skills that mines rescue have gained over the last 100years by operating in the most hostile of environments is now used to deliver a wide range of health and safety related to people from all kinds of industry.

Mines Rescue Services include.

- Provision of rescue teams for high risk activities
- Surface hazard emergency response
- Consultancy
- H&S related training courses
- Supply, service and maintenance of safety equipment
- Supply and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers
- Fire risk assessments
- Face fit testing

EP expanded on the surface hazard emergency response, mines rescue are the appointed response body for dealing with unexpected mine working collapses. Their main role is to check for the presence of gas and to provide a secure perimeter until the hole can be refilled.

EP closed his presentation and asked for questions from the floor, a general discussion followed.

DC thanked EP for his presentation.

AOB

DC raised the issue of the safety banner, he is keen to get something produced. It was agreed that DC, Ian Norton and Peter Ager would get together and produce a few ideas for the banner.

MR mentioned that SCOS had called an EGM for next week as they had not been able to conclude the official business of the AGM due to there being insufficient numbers to form a corium.

MR asked for suggestions for speakers for the next session as he was starting to pull the 2009/2010 programme together.

DC closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **11th May 2009**, this will be the AGM.

Mark Russell
Secretary
Safety Group Fife.