

**Report on the Emergency Planning Society Annual  
Conference at Harrogate on 28/29 June 2005 by Counsellors  
E. Evans and D. Prothero.**

The Conference opened with Bruce Mann, the Head of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, outlining the main aspects of the Civil Contingencies Act, which received Royal Assent on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004. The Act places several new duties on a range of Category 1 and Category 2 responders, of which the Fire Authority is one of the former. He outlined Category 1 responders' new statutory duties for risk assessment; emergency planning; training and exercising; business continuity management; warning and informing the public; sharing information and co-operation.

He spent some time on the risk assessment process and its documentation in a Community Risk Register. Whether the risk assessment is performed individually or collectively, should be determined by the individual responders and the Local Resilience Forum. He also stressed the need for responders to ensure that Business Continuity Management is regarded as an integral part of their normal management process.

There followed a session on threats to transport led by First Group and Fraser Incident Management. The afternoon was devoted to workshops, including a presentation by BT on their new GeoTalk product, which can provide a contact information system to members of the public in areas affected by an emergency. Phil Young from the Environment Agency gave a presentation on the findings and outcomes from Exercise Triton. This was a national tabletop exercise based on large-scale coastal flooding around the UK, and involved over 35 areas including Gwent and North Wales.

Day 2 started with Bill Durodié from Cranfield University, outlining his thoughts and research on the social, rather than technical, related aspects of emergency planning. Lucy Payne from the University of Hertfordshire presented on the problems associated with dealing with personal effects after an emergency.

A four-pronged presentation on the Carlisle flooding in January was given by representatives from the Environment Agency, Police, Fire and Emergency Planning Officer. Another set of workshops followed involving obtaining resources for resilience work and future challenges for EPO's.

The Conference ended with a presentation by Kenyon International on the Tsunami disaster.

In summary, it is disappointing to have to report that the overall content of the Conference provided little of direct relevance for members of the Fire Authority.

The large proportion of the Conference related to technical aspects of emergency planning rather than to strategy or policy. Whilst future Emergency Planning Conferences may offer limited benefit to warrant attendance by an Officer of the Service, it is recommended that the Authority consider removing it from the list of standing conferences currently attended by members.