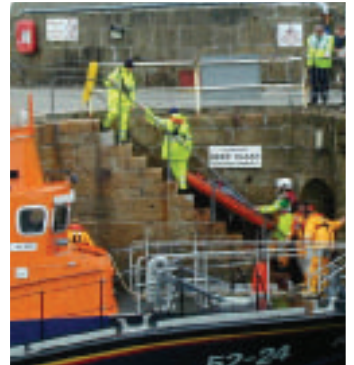




**Media
Emergency
Forum
& RMEFs
ANNUAL REPORT
2003-2004**



Foreword

By Lucian Hudson

Acting Chair, MEF (January - July 2004) & former
Director of Communications, Defra.
Currently Director of Communications, Department
for Constitutional Affairs



SINCE 1996, the national Media Emergency Forum (MEF) has regularly brought together, on a voluntary basis, senior editorial figures from the media, and representatives of central and local government and the emergency services and utilities. Discussion has ranged frankly and openly over the communications issues arising from specific emergencies and what improvements could be made in future.

The Forum provides a solid framework for developing trust and confidence between the media and the authorities through a growing awareness of each other's responsibilities and in identifying ways to improve communications. It has shown that real progress can be achieved in this difficult relationship.

Such is the success of the MEF concept that it has been extended. Regional MEFs have now been successfully established in all the English regions. A Welsh MEF has been established and has met once.

Since 9/11, much has been done to improve UK resilience. MEF, through its discussions and working parties, has played a significant role in encouraging greater understanding of the implications of the shared government/media responsibility for keeping the public informed in an emergency.

This report covers the activities of the national MEF during the period July 2003 – July 2004, a review of progress on the recommendations from previous MEF reports and individual reports from each of the Regional MEFs. I believe this represents a considerable body of work of which we can all be justly proud.

It has been my privilege to chair the national MEF since Mike Granatt left at the end of last year. I am delighted that Howell James has now agreed to take on the chairmanship of MEF, following his appointment as the new Permanent Secretary, Government Communications. This will help ensure there is continuing awareness, at senior levels of government, of the media's critical role in delivering public information in an emergency.

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**Media Emergency Forum & RMEFs Annual
Report: July 2003 - July 2004**

Introduction

THE first part of this report reviews the achievements of the national MEF this year, progress on implementing previous recommendations and future work plans on exercises, media accreditation and recommendations arising from the post Madrid table-top exercise.

The second half contains individual reports from each of the Regional MEFs.



Media Emergency Forum Achievements



Above: London Resilience has agreed a comprehensive protocol for co-ordinating communications arrangements across London in a major emergency.

THERE have been three national meetings in July and November 2003 and July 2004. Members of MEF also visited all the Government Offices in the regions of England during summer 2003 to promote the establishment of Regional MEFs. A Welsh MEF has been established and has met once, and the idea is also under consideration in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Significant progress has been achieved in a number of areas identified in the first MEF report: *'9/11: Implications for Communications'* published in July 2002. For example, a **Protocol** has been agreed between the key national broadcasters, the Press Association and central government concerning the broadcasting of urgent public safety advice and information following a catastrophic incident. London Resilience has agreed a comprehensive protocol for co-ordinating communications arrangements across London in a major emergency and a number of protocols are also under development in the English Regions and in Wales.

A considerable amount of work has also been done in London to identify suitable sites for **emergency media centres**. However much still remains to be done and MEF has encouraged the Regional MEFs to identify suitable sites in their respective areas and to consider the facilities required at them.

A technical working party was established early in 2003 to look at **telecommunications issues** and a report: *'Information Exchange Review- Post Exercise Report'* and recommendations was published in October last year. (Both the *'9/11'* and this report are available via the MEF link on the www.ukresilience.info website,)

The one area where progress has been slower than hoped is the development of effective **media accreditation systems**.

Efforts have been made to encourage take up of the UK Press Card by all media organisations and recognition of the card at all levels of the emergency services. However, a more sustained push is required. A UK Press Authority is in the process of being established.

Once this is done a proper marketing campaign will be undertaken to raise awareness of the card among all stakeholders. No decisions have yet been taken on the issue of **event specific accreditation** for media representatives, particularly those coming from abroad, who do not have a UK Press Card. This remains an area of concern and will be considered a priority in the coming year.

As an aid to improving mutual understanding between the media and the authorities, MEF has also approved a joint **glossary** of official and media terms which is available via the MEF link on the ukresilience website.

Work has also progressed on raising awareness of the MEF concept and generally developing the role of MEF and the Regional MEFs. Following the establishment of the Regional MEFs, in the second half of last year, a working party was set up, early in 2004, to consider various regional issues.

The aim of this group was to consider how the Regional MEFs and the developing regional resilience structures could work most effectively together. The working party has also considered how the media can be invited to contribute most effectively to exercises and how the Regional MEFs can best facilitate this. These ideas will be pursued in the revised exercise guidance being developed centrally.

MEF members have also undertaken a number of speaking engagements designed to raise awareness, among the wider stake-

holder community, of the ideas contained in the first MEF report: *'9/11 Implications for Communications.'*

Audiences have included editors from around the country, a conference for overseas government PRs, another for Commonwealth Press Union fellows, an Infolog conference for police and local government, a couple of university journalism courses and a training course for the NCTJ.

Following the bomb attacks in Madrid earlier this year, media members of MEF questioned how a similar event might be handled here. How would government/media relations work? Would the existing protocols relating to catastrophic situations be sufficient? Could they be adapted or were further agreements required for organising communications in situations which, though serious events in themselves, fell short of catastrophe?

This led directly to a joint table-top exercise involving senior representatives of the media, central government and the emergency services, to tease out some of these issues.

Hosted by the BBC in May, with the assistance of a professional facilitation company, the exercise resulted in a number of important recommendations which are now being followed through.

Government and the media have a shared responsibility for ensuring the public are provided with urgent advice and information in an emergency and regularly updated about what is happening.

The combined activities of MEF and the Regional MEFs are an important step forward in achieving that goal. The following reports from the individual Regional MEFs show what can be achieved through goodwill and common purpose.

“ I believe this represents a considerable body of work of which we can all be justly proud. ”

Lucian Hudson
Acting Chair, MEF
(January - July 2004)

The RMEFs

By Peter Whitbread

Government News Network
Director for Emergency Planning



I HAVE pleasure in presenting the first annual report from the Regional Media Emergency Forums. Much hard work has gone into the establishment of an RMEF in each of the eight England regions and London.

The initial remit of the RMEF initiative was:

"A voluntary arrangement bringing together media, local responders and planners to deliver the best public information and news practice in an emergency"

The Regional Emergency Forums were launched in June 2003, with subsequent meetings held on a regular basis throughout the year. In most regions the chair of the RMEF has a place on the Regional Resilience Forum, which meets quarterly.

Membership of the RMEF varies widely but in all cases comprises representatives of:

- UK media at a local and regional level
- central government at regional level
- local authorities
- police, fire and ambulance services
- other key agencies and utilities.

The RMEFs have been very successful in raising the civil protection debate at the centre of government by including the media in discussions on key issues such as the Civil Contingencies Bill. The media are now better represented at a local level and there is an increasing knowledge within the emergency planning community about what the media requires and how it works. There is a greater understanding about the role that the media can play in warning and informing the public both at a regional and a national level.

Because of this awareness there have been a number of significant successes throughout the country. Included in this is the Morecambe Bay 'Cockle Pickers' tragedy where the RMEF in the North West was instrumental in an important debrief on the handling of the media issues with the main authorities.

In addition nearly every RMEF has worked towards adopting regional versions of the protocol first developed in London, but tailored to meet their individual regional demands. In little over a year the RMEFs are already making their mark.

It is now up to each individual RMEF to decide how they want to move forward – through GNN – and what they want to tackle. The national MEF body will support them in this by providing the secretariat and also the forum for discussion at a national level.

But there is so much more to do. In their second year the RMEFs will get more involved in emergency exercise play, contributing to exercises both on a regional and national level. We hope that RMEF advice will be sought on all matters relating to working with the media. This will make it easier for all to understand what the media needs, and how authorities can cooperate in getting the best quality emergency information to the public in a timely and consistent fashion.

‘ I think the RMEF has proved its worth in recent months – the cockling disaster session was extremely useful and proved the Forum had real purpose. I was surprised by the frankness of all involved and hopefully we all took away something of value. At first I feared the Forum was to be used as a method for attempting to keep the press in line. I am relieved to admit I have been so far proved wrong. ’

Michelle Mayman,
Newsgathering Editor,
BBC regional television
Manchester



By Philip Welsh
Chair, North West
RMEF & Managing
Director, *Blackpool*
Evening Gazette

North West

THE MEDIA and the responding agencies in the North West like to think they get along well enough most of the time – and by and large they do. Inevitably, there are times when they do not see eye to eye and need an exchange of views so everyone knows where they stand. In times of emergency, perhaps catastrophic emergency, the media and agencies need to trust each other and be prepared to talk frankly but privately for the good of the communities they all serve.

With that in mind the North West Regional Media Emergency Forum has agreed two protocols, one on how the media and agencies deal with each other and a second on a format for post-incident debriefs.

The first debrief sponsored by an RMEF was in this region and followed the Morecambe Bay cockle pickers tragedy. It soon became clear that there were issues that needed addressing and I congratulate Lancashire Constabulary on being prepared to put their heads above the parapet and host the debrief.

One thing everyone appreciates is that all the good intentions in the world will come to nothing if media and agencies cannot contact each other. With that in mind we have a protocol which essentially says that it is up to everyone to make sure they know how to contact each other.

If there are problems the RMEF will act as honest broker. However, to reinforce this we are working on producing some definitive contact lists. The BBC makes its contacts available through its initiative *Connecting in a Crisis*, our local commercial stations have produced a contacts list and the North West Branch of the Society of Editors is pulling together the newspaper contacts.

Work will also be carried out to ensure the media knows who it should contact in responding agencies.

The RMEF is adding its support to local initiatives that it hopes will contribute to the

wider good.

On Merseyside, an Assistant Chief Constable level group is looking at the needs of the media following a catastrophic event. Through the RMEF representatives have visited the Cabinet Office to get an understanding of how Government would operate in these circumstances. Senior journalists are being drawn into the work to ensure a media-friendly outcome.

In Manchester the Senior Co-ordinating Group, another ACC level group, is planning to get together with senior local journalists to talk through key issues.

In Cumbria, the county emergency planning officer has set up a local media/agency group to look at issues including involving the media in exercises.

Cheshire Constabulary meanwhile has taken the lead in explaining how a police force manages a major incident through the Gold, Silver and Bronze Command system.

I am pleased that there has been considerable enthusiasm for the RMEF. More than 100 people from all sections of the emergency planning community and the media attended an initial meeting in May 2003 called by the then Head of the Government Information and Communications Service and chair of the MEF, Mike Granatt. The first meeting of the North West RMEF was attended by more than 50 people who helped shaped the membership. Members opted for an all-inclusive approach which gives the RMEF comprehensive coverage of the region, drawing on the expertise of many disciplines in the media and agencies.

While I am pleased with the start, there is no time to rest on our laurels. There is much practical work that can be done but perhaps the most essential is creating the trust which enables the media and agencies to talk openly to each other in the most trying of circumstances.



Morecambe Bay debrief was 'invaluable'

THE RMEF's invitation to a debrief on the cockle pickers tragedy in Morecambe Bay was well received, attracting representatives from television, radio, the print media, fire, police and coastguard plus Lancashire County Council, GNN and Government Office North West.

There was plenty of straight talking under the Chatham House rule but the atmosphere was constructive as it was always intended. The media were able to understand the problems faced by the emergency services – a scene the size of Morecambe Bay and the time it took before they could gauge the full extent of the tragedy, not to mention the sheer volume of calls that almost overwhelmed at least one agency.

Agencies learnt of everything from the media's urgent need for an official presence on site as opposed to a police station some distance away to the problems of trying to cable a press conference on a second floor at short notice.

But perhaps the key point is that within a year of starting out a key objective of the North West RMEF – bringing the media and agencies together after a major incident – has been met.

Peter Lovett-Horn, Lancashire Constabulary's Chief Press Officer, said: "The tragedy in Morecambe Bay in which more than 20 Chinese people drowned whilst cockling resulted in one of Lancashire Constabulary's biggest enquiries. It also provided a major challenge for the Force's Press Office, faced as it was with hundreds of calls from the media all over the world.

"Overall the media reaction to the Lancashire response has been favourable, but in the first 12 hours or so there were a number of problems that caused concern to both the police press officers and those reporters and camera crews at the scene. These problems were given an airing at the first ever debrief organised by a RMEF with the result that many lessons were learned, and the police have already moved to improve some of the communications methods.

"The de-brief was invaluable. We recognised there were problems early on, but we would not have been aware of them all without meeting with our colleagues from the newspapers, radio and television. I shall certainly be pressing for more such de-briefs in the future."

Media inquiries about the cockle pickers tragedy in Morecambe Bay put an almost unbearable strain on our people in Liverpool. The chance of a debrief with the media sponsored by the RMEF was invaluable. It gave us a chance to explain our position to them while at the same time learning how we can help them better in future.

Mark Clark

Public Relations Manager,
Maritime and Coastguard
Agency

NORTH WEST

CHAIR: **Philip Welsh**

Managing Director, *Blackpool Evening Gazette*

DEPUTY CHAIR: **Derek Barnett**

Chief Supt, Cheshire Constabulary

Cumbria EP Representatives

Mike Head, Press Officer, Cumbria Constabulary

Brian Hough, Media Manager, Cumbria County Council

Donald Norrie, County Emergency Planning Officer,
Cumbria County Council

Lancashire EP Representatives

Clare Ianson, Media Co-ordinator,
Lancashire County Council

Peter Lovett-Horn,
Chief Press Officer, Lancashire Constabulary

Bernard Kershaw, County Emergency Planning Officer,
Lancashire County Council

Greater Manchester EP Representatives

Sarah Dean Forrester,
Head of Press Office, Greater Manchester Police,

Ian Spence, Emergency Planning Officer,
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Janine Watson, Head of News, Manchester City Council

Merseyside EP Representatives

Mike Barker, Head of Communications,
Merseyside Regional Ambulance Service

George Gee, Emergency Planning Officer,
Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority (Sefton)

Melissa Hackney, Press Office Supervisor,
Merseyside Police

Cheshire EP Representatives

Derek Barnett,
Chief Superintendent, Cheshire Constabulary

Brenda Cowling,
Head of Press Office, Cheshire Constabulary

Chris Samuel,
Civil Protection Manager, Cheshire County Council

Other EP Representatives

John Carberry, Communications Manager, United Utilities

Tim Fernandez, Communications Manager,
Environment Agency

Nigel Ellis, GNN North West (Secretariat)

Michele Guinness, Head of Communications, Cumbria &
Lancashire Strategic Health Authority

Jeanette Jackson, Communications Adviser, Transco

Eileen Jones, Director, GNN North West

George Kowalczyk, Deputy Health Emergency Planning
Advisor, Health Protection Agency

Hugh Lamont, North West Communications Manager,
Health Protection Agency

Nigel Monckton, Press Officer,
BNFL – Sellafield

Ian Rhodes, Head of Communications,
Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority

Greg Stringer, MoD Regional Press Officer

Jo Stringer, Communications Manager, Cheshire and
Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Robin Tudor, Commercial Manager,
Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Jennifer Whalley, Senior Communications Manager,
Manchester International Airport

Media Representatives

Richard Catlow, Editor in Chief, Greater Manchester Weekly
Newspapers (on behalf also of the Society of Editors)

Jan Lever, Group Editor, *Warrington Guardian* series

Michelle Mayman, Newsgathering Editor, BBC North West

John Pickford, News Editor, Key 103 (on behalf also of IRN)

Keith Sutton, Director of Publishing, Cumbrian Newspapers

Andrew Rigby, News Editor, ITV (Granada region – also on
behalf of Border region)

Chris Walker, Regional Managing Editor, *Liverpool Daily
Post and Echo*

Jim Williams, Editor, *Oldham Evening Chronicle*

Ian Wood, News Editor, *Manchester Evening News*

The North East RMEF



By Andrew Smith
Chair, North East
RMEF & Editor,
*Northumberland
Gazette*

North East

THE NORTH East RMEF had a busy first year, with six meetings, debated a number of important issues and has made important progress on several fronts.

Its first achievement was to engage and hold the interest of senior figures from the media, emergency services, emergency planning community and a range of other important players involved in handling major incidents. The appointment of a media representative as chair of the RMEF and an emergency planner as vice-chair was, I believe, an important first step in gaining the confidence of all those involved.

The RMEF has established a good working relationship with the Regional Resilience Team at Government Office for the North East and with the Regional Resilience Forum (RRF). The RMEF has a member on the RRF and vice-versa.

The RMEF spent considerable time drawing up and debating a document to be used by all concerned as a guide for working effectively together in the event of a major incident on or approaching the scale of the event of 9/11 in New York. It quickly became apparent that it would not be appropriate to regard the document as a protocol governing the actions of those involved, as most agencies already have their own protocols and the RMEF is a voluntary group with no authority over its members.

It was agreed instead to draw up "Advisory Notes for a Major Incident in the North East". This document has two purposes. The first is to enable all those likely to be involved in handling a major incident, including the media, to understand in general terms each others' plans and procedures, their priorities and the constraints under which they operate, so that all agencies involved know what to

expect. The second purpose is to spread good practice.

Extensive consultations took place on the "Advisory Notes", including with the RRF and the regional Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Group. The feedback was considered by a working group before the "Advisory Notes" were approved at the RMEF meeting on 13 May 2004.

A second important achievement has been to draw up a contacts database, so that every organisation involved on the RMEF can contact any other of the member organisations on a 24-hour basis. It is understood by all concerned that these contact details are to be used only in case of a real emergency.

RMEF members have also been able to discuss the lessons learned from the tragic Morecambe Bay cockle pickers' incident in early 2004 and from "Blue Moon", an emergency exercise carried out at Newcastle International Airport in March 2004.

On a smaller scale, the RMEF has been able to act as a useful facilitator in contacts between a local radio station and a police expert over the issue of Hazmat warning notices on lorries; and between a local authority and local radio stations over public information messages during out-of-hours periods (in this case late on New Year's Eve).

A thorny issue throughout the year has been that of accreditation of media representatives attending major incidents. In view of the lack of a means of identification that is universally carried by *bona fide* UK journalists, the RMEF has adopted a policy that accreditation should be by way of company photo-ID cards.

Using radio in a crisis

RMEF members from **BBC Radio Newcastle** and **Metro Radio** gave a joint presentation on *The Role of Radio in Informing the Public in a Crisis*.

This was particularly helpful in explaining to emergency services and others how best to help radio to help them in getting essential messages and advice to the public. The presentation has been circulated electronically to RMEF members.

I believe the people on the RMEF have generated a good working relationship with trust. The Advisory Notes are obviously useful for all parties. In my organisation I shall also add the notes to our induction and training tools so that in the event of an incident staff would have realistic expectations about working with the agencies to obtain information.

Sarah Drummond
Managing Editor,
BBC Radio Newcastle

NORTH EAST

CHAIR: **Andrew Smith**,
Editor, *Northumberland Gazette*

DEPUTY CHAIR: **Phil Hudson**,
Senior Emergency Planning Officer, Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit

Phil Bain
Emergency Planning Officer, North East Ambulance
Service NHS Trust

Alistair Baker
Communications Manager, Northumbrian Water Group.

Iain Bathgate
Assistant Chief Officer, Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire
Brigade

Barbara Brewis
Public Relations Officer and Deputy Head of Media
Services, Northumbria Police

Chris Child
Regional Director,
Government News Network North East

Wendy Dawley
Public Relations Officer,
Newcastle International Airport

Sarah Drummond
Managing Editor, BBC Radio Newcastle.

Kate Flint
Media Relations Manager, Arriva plc

Lynda Fothergill
Head of Communications and Marketing,
Newcastle City Council.

John Gelson
Media Relations Manager,
GNER

Chris Gillies
Principal Inspector,
Health and Safety Executive

Denis Hampson
Chief Emergency Planning Officer, Cleveland
Emergency Planning Unit

Karen Hindhaugh
Communications Manager, National Grid Transco.

Helen Hinds
Support Officer, Regional Resilience Team, GONE

Andy Lee
Head of Media and Public Relations,
Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive (Nexus)

Karen Lloyd
Regional Communications Manager,
Health Protection Agency

Tina McCrindle
Public Relations and Press Officer, North East Ambulance
Service NHS Trust

Bill McFadyen
Regional Operations Manager SAR (Prevention and
Response), Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Graham Marples
Managing Editor, Tyne Tees Television

Simon Mills
Communications Manager,
Public Health Group North East

Peter Morris
Senior Press Officer,
Government News Network North East (Secretariat)

Kirsten Potter
Marketing Services Executive, PD Ports Logistics and
Shipping, Teesport

Alastair Rae
Public Relations Officer,
Hartlepool Borough Council

Louise Railton
Press Officer, Environment Agency

Mark Selling
Head of News, Sun FM

Penny Veale
Information Officer, Media Operations,
15 (North East) Brigade

John Waiting
Business Service Manager, Teesside International Airport

Kerrey Ward
Marketing Services Manager, Port of Tyne Authority



Media handling during floods was a key issue in Yorkshire & the Humber



By Will Venters
Chair, Yorks and the
Humber RMEF &
Editor, Yorkshire ITV

Yorkshire & the Humber

A YEAR after its inception, the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Media Emergency Forum is gaining in cohesion, consistency and co-operation.

A test-bed meeting in Leeds organised by GNN Yorkshire & Humber attracted a cross-section of senior media executives, emergency planners, and officers and communications professionals from the blue-light services and local authorities.

The concept explained, the potential benefits highlighted and the ideas duly planted, GNN was tasked with taking it forward, ensuring an inclusive and informal representative core group was established.

The inaugural meeting of the Yorkshire & Humber RMEF was chaired by GNN Regional Director Wendy Miller and supported by Regional Resilience Director Nick Best.

Key issues determined by the RMEF arising from their first meeting were:

- Build up of trust
- Existing protocols on contingency planning for future incidents
- Accreditation
- Resources
- What added value the RMEF would bring
- Inter-region assistance
- Best practice sharing and evaluation of plans

The first 12 months have not passed without the odd teething problem. Agreement that members of the core RMEF would cascade relevant informa-

tion to members within their field, be it media, local authority, fire, police or emergency planning, was reached. In January, I agreed to take on the role of Chair with Iain Lovell, from the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly, becoming Vice-Chair.

We have established a media sub-group to establish common ground on what the various branches of the media ideally want to see emerge from the RMEF.

There is a genuine commitment to the RMEF from television, radio and newspaper representatives across the region. We are keen to build on our links with all organisations involved to ensure we play an active role in a variety of important issues.

Highlights of meetings include presentations to members in a variety of specialist areas. Held, as ever, under the Chatham House rule, they have included communication issues in the event of a smallpox outbreak; regional resilience capabilities; media handling during a flooding crisis; and the DTI fuel distribution strategy and planning in the event of petrol protests.

Useful discussions initiated and issues tabled by members have centred on, for example; media access to CCTV and the role of the BBC as public service broadcaster; potential for media participation in emergency planning exercises; the national protocol for warning and informing the public; London's power failure, its communication problems and media coverage and accreditation.

“ The RMEF has proved to be a useful sounding board for discussion of relevant resilience issues including the items identified in the report. In addition, the close involvement of the media in training exercises has also been discussed resulting in agreement to include them in the region-wide exercise being planned for Autumn this year.

Nick Best

Director of Regional Resilience, Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

CHAIR: **Will Venters**
Editor, Yorkshire ITV

DEPUTY CHAIR: **Iain Lovell**
Yorkshire & Humber Assembly

Helen Atha
Information Officer,
Government News Network, Yorkshire and the Humber

Jayne Beecham
Director of Public Relations and Communications,
West Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Nick Best
Director of Regional Resilience,
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

Martin Driver
Public Relations Manager,
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

Martin Green
Senior Press Officer,
Government News Network, Yorkshire and the Humber

Jo Gillespie
Deputy Director, Regional Resilience,
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

Julie Haddon
Senior Communications Manager,
West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority

Peter Hall
Emergency Planning Officer,
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

John Harding
Group Programme Director,
Radio Investments/Minster Group

Nigel Lowther
Deputy Editor,
Grimsby Telegraph

Jane Manning
Deputy Editor,
Scunthorpe Telegraph

Lisa Mansell
Communications Co-ordinator,
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire
Strategic Health Authority

Nicola Megson
Deputy Editor, *Yorkshire Evening Post*

Wendy Miller
Director,
Government News Network, Yorkshire and the Humber

Annette Monks
External Relations Manager,
Yorkshire Electricity Distribution Ltd

Beryl Muscroft
Press and Public Relations Manager,
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Catherine O'Connor
Deputy Editor,
Telegraph & Argus, Bradford

Simon Pattern
Managing Editor,
BBC Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Heather Pinches
Principal Emergency Planning Officer,
Leeds City Council

Louise Railton
Press Officer,
Environment Agency North East

Paul Roberts
Regional Resilience Manager,
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

John Salisbury-Baker
Senior Information Officer,
Ministry of Defence, North of England Office

John Spencer
Group Managing Editor, Press Association

Nigel Swift
Media and Public Relations Manager,
West Yorkshire Police

Penny Veale
Information Officer,
Headquarters, 15 Brigade (North East), York

GNN contact: **Wendy Miller – 0113 283 6590**



By Liz Cave
Chair, West Midlands
RMEF & Head of
News Gathering, BBC
Midlands

**Increasing media interest
in emergency planning: the
media at Exercise Horizon**

West Midlands

AS BEFITS the region that instigated the idea of Regional Media Emergency Forums, the West Midlands RMEF has had a notably active first year.

In its first four meetings the Forum attracted support and participation from many of the region's key media, as well as the emergency services, military, local and health authorities, utilities and transport.

The agreement of myself as Chair and Chief Inspector Steve Glover of West Midlands Police as Vice-Chair demonstrated the commitment to joint working, and a step away from what in the past was sometimes an adversarial relationship.

Communications were the first key issue to address. Each Forum member has contributed a 'mini-biog' outlining the experiences and the skills they can offer during a crisis to those organisations in need of help and advice.

An 'out of hours' directory giving contact numbers for all key media and press officers for the whole region has been compiled. When signed off by all parties, it will be circulated to all press officers and media alike.

Two sub groups have been formed:

- A **Media Centre** sub-group to look at the setting up of ad-hoc media centres during major emergencies. The group has surveyed local Emergency Plans for potential sites to provide a comprehensive list of what is available in the region, and is looking at setting minimum standards. The RMEF will then share best practice and offer media representatives to give their professional opinions on the facilities offered by each organisation.

- A **regional protocol** sub-group, looking to draw up a regional version of the London protocol on communicating during a crisis. One of its first decisions was that, rather than produce a complex document alone, the aim is to produce simple 'hot task' cards outlining who does what,

key contact numbers and where more detailed information is held, that both journalists and emergency services staff can carry.

The RMEF has also facilitated getting the media more involved in exercises, convincing agencies that journalists can be trusted with privileged information while their participation will provide realism and informative feedback.

Agricultural correspondents from the *Stoke Evening Sentinel*, BBC Stoke and the *Hereford Times* have already taken part in Foot and Mouth exercises run by Defra, while the RMEF will make a significant contribution to the forthcoming Exercise Horizon, a major regional CBRN exercise planned for Birmingham.

Already the RMEF has made two important contributions to localised major incidents. It produced a critique of media relations and media coverage during Birmingham's 'Big Freeze Gridlock', when extreme January weather brought the city to a standstill. These were fed into the Regional Resilience Team, who in turn contributed to the inquiry into what went wrong. The RMEF also acted as broker between the media and the authorities during a Legionnaires Disease outbreak in Hereford.

During the year the group has heard presentations on key topics such as Exercise Osiris in London, and police tactics on cordons. Other issues being pursued by the RMEF include:

- Using the media to distribute information among their own organisations to ease pressures on press officers during crises
- Warning and informing the public
- Accreditation
- Technical requirements for the broadcast media
- Data protection

'Broker' role for RMEF

THE RMEF took on the role of 'broker' during a Legionnaires Disease outbreak in Hereford. The main publication in the city, the *Hereford Times*, approached the RMEF after they learnt that the authorities were to announce the source of the outbreak the day after the paper went to press.

There had been much speculation that the source was in the city centre, which – in the run up to Christmas – was affecting trade as people stayed away. The actual source was in fact outside of the main shopping area. If this could be released to the city's main publication, they could lead with it the next morning, reassuring the public and bringing relief to Hereford's business community.

Through its contacts, the RMEF talked to the environmental and health authorities and arrangements were made to brief the *Hereford Times*, who splashed it on the front page, putting many local minds at rest.

“ The sheer size and scope of the media operation in New York on 9/11 shows it is imperative to plan properly in advance for such a catastrophic event. The RMEFs are the key vehicle to achieve this.

”
Lt Col Mark Norbury
143 Bde & Civil
Contingencies Reaction
Force, West Midlands

WEST MIDLANDS

CHAIR: **Liz Cave**
Newsgathering Editor, BBC Midlands

DEPUTY CHAIR: **Chief Inspector Surjeet Manku**
Head of Press & PR, West Midlands Police

Helen Braithwaite
Deputy Director, Regional Resilience Team,
GOWM

Phil Brown,
Deputy Editor
Birmingham Evening Mail

Brian Conway
Head of External Relations,
Birmingham International Airport

Steve Evans
Head of Press and Communications,
West Midlands Ambulance Service

Stewart Gilbert
Editor, *Worcester Evening News*

Charlie Hickman
Emergency Planning Manager,
Wolverhampton City Council

Brent Garner
Director, GNN West Midlands

Liz Griffin
Editor, *Hereford Times*

Paul McCafferey
Press Officer, Staffordshire Fire Service

Colin Palmer
Head of News, Saga FM

Pat Sever
Press Officer, MOD

Frazer Shepperd
Editor, Central ITV

Belinda Steele
Press Officer, 143 Bde & CCRF

Jenny Stratton
Communications Manager,
Environment Agency

Jane Taylor
Communications Adviser,
National Grid Transco

Claudine Weeks
Press Officer, West Midlands Fire Service

Bob Wade
GNN West Midlands (Secretariat)

Justin Woolley
Head of Communications
Shrops & Staffs StrHA

GNN contact: **Bob Wade - 0121 626 2022**



The New Dimensions launch in Leicester

**By Peter Smith**

Chair, East Midlands RMEF
& Regional Director, GNN
East Midlands

East Midlands

MEMBERSHIP of the East Midlands RMEF has grown steadily over the year and whilst some sectors remain to be permanently represented, the demographic, professional and geographic spread reflects the make-up of the region.

Nick Carter, editor of the *Leicester Mercury*, is deputy chair of the MEF and has been a key player in establishing the links between local media and the emergency planning communities.

During 2003/4, the East Midlands RMEF has:

- Agreed terms of reference and working protocols, based on the London model but tailored to the region's needs.
- Drafted a 'Media Protocol on Public Warnings During a Catastrophe or Major National Emergency', again based on the national model. RMEFs had been asked to consider this and to look at possible application in their regions. EM RMEF felt that the principles behind the protocol were sound and reflected the aims and intentions of the region but that some of the measures were too prescriptive for dealing with an emergency that was contained within the East Midlands. The use of verbal code words, for instance, was felt to be unnecessarily bureaucratic and complicated.
- Debated topics including capability mapping; media accreditation and the relevance of the UK Press Card system; the range and purpose of emergency exercises; and lessons learned from real incidents and from exercises such as Osiris.

There have been various spin offs and sub groups formed:

Northamptonshire's Mini-MEF

An important initiative in Northamptonshire, led by the emergency planner for the county, Harish Pankhania, to set up a 'mini-MEF'. The group - which mirrors the RMEF in having representatives from the media, EP professionals and PROs from local authorities and the 'blue light' services - has met twice and has established firm links including the development of a separate and discreet contacts network for use in the event of an emergency in which mutual aid and support might be needed.

Leicester

A similar group is planned for Leicester, being driven by Nick Carter and by Leicester City Council CEPOs. The *Leicester Mercury* will become much more closely involved in the drawing up, revising and testing of emergency plans in relation to media handling matters and this closer relationship will develop as the 'mini-MEF' is established.

Media Centres

A cross-party working group was agreed at the March meeting of the East Midlands MEF to look at the issues, requirements and likely venues for Media Centres that might need to be established in the event of a major incident. Representatives of the media, utilities, local authorities, EP planners and GNN/Government Office for the East Midlands will meet to determine the East Midlands needs and offer some practical solutions.

Helping with New Dimensions launch

THE CLOSE relationships engendered by the EM RMEF were important in supporting positive and balanced coverage for the roll out in the region of the New Dimensions Incident Response Units (IRUs) to Fire Brigades across the East Midlands.

The enthusiasm of the media representatives on the MEF for this roll-out as a positive and good news story for the region enabled GNN to argue persuasively for a proactive media event. These state-of-the-art vehicles will allow firefighters to deal with the results of chemical or biological incidents more effectively. A media facility and demonstration was set up in Leicester, resulting in balanced and factual reporting.

“ The opportunity to get involved in the RMEF and to build up relationships within our own EP community and wider across the East Midlands has been very welcome. I look forward to further progress.

”

Nick Carter

Editor, *Leicester Mercury* & deputy chair East Midlands RMEF

EAST MIDLANDS

CHAIR: **Peter Smith**
Director, GNN East Midlands

DEPUTY CHAIR: **Nick Carter**
Editor, *Leicester Mercury*

Marc Astley
Deputy Editor, *Nottingham Evening Post*

Oliver Blackburn
Communications Officer, Environment Agency

Jane Carter
Media Services Manager, Leicestershire Constabulary

Alison Cobb
Information Officer, Army (HQ49)

Rod Cook
Head of Public Relations, Derbyshire County Council

Iain Fletcher
Press Officer, Government News Network (Secretariat)

Alison Ford
Head of Regional and Local Programmes, BBC

Lucy Garvey
Emergency Planning Officer
Nottinghamshire County Council

Alan Goodwin
Deputy Chief Constable, Derbyshire Constabulary

Jonathan Harris
Deputy Regional Director, Dept of Health

Lyn Heath-Harvey
Deputy Director, Public Affairs
Nottingham University

Peter Heaton
Head of Communications, Northamptonshire County Council

Paul Hickling
County Emergency Management Officer
Leicestershire County Council

Paul Kilgallen
Acting Chief Executive,
East Midlands Ambulance Service

Margaret Kirk
Head of Communications, Nottinghamshire Police

Ryan Martinez
News Editor, Century 106 FM

Rebecca Middleton
Press Officer, East Midlands Electricity

Harish Pankhania
Acting Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Northamptonshire County Council

John Perkins
Regional Resilience Director, GOEM

Caroline Plant
General Manager, Sales and Marketing
Nottingham East Midlands Airport

David Purdy
Emergency Planning Officer, Leicester City Council

Richard Scott
Communications Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

Pat Sever
Press Officer, MoD

Mark Smitherman
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue

Lisa Teanby
News Editor, Saga FM

Lisa Tolfts
Press Officer, Severn Trent Water

Lynsey Turton
Communications Manager, Health Protection Agency

Stephanie Van-Rosse
Communications Adviser, Transco

Gayle Wells
Public Relations Officer,
Leicestershire County Council

Fae Wesley
Communications Manager,
Dept of Health

Snow havoc in East Anglia



By Mark Baker
Chair, East RMEF &
Head of Civil
Protection, Cambridge
County Council

East

THE FORUM has met three times since its inception, and considered a range of issues.

There have been some 'quick wins'; for example, it has been identified that local media do not always have correct contact details for obtaining information in an emergency. The BBC agreed to share their contacts list and this is being reviewed by all the emergency agencies to produce a definitive list that can be circulated to all media representatives.

A key issue in the region has been a review of adverse weather communication issues, learning from the lessons of 'White Friday'. As a result of the snow in 2003 the importance of using local radio to keep motorists informed has been highlighted.

Within Cambridgeshire signs have been erected on non-trunk roads to advise motorists of local radio station frequencies. This is being encouraged elsewhere in the region and has been raised at local and national level with the Highways Agency.

Lines of communication have also

been reviewed following 'White Friday' and arrangements worked much better when the snow returned in January 2004.

The Forum held a 'Hot-Debrief' the day after the 28 January snow incident and produced a 'lessons learnt' document which has been publicised by the media.

The Forum is currently working on developing a regional Media Protocol, after studying the London Protocol, as well as preparing a checklist of requirements for a Media Briefing Centre to be used for large scale incidents in the region. The checklist will draw upon the experience of incidents such as the Soham Murders.

The Forum will shortly consider the lessons for media co-ordination which have come out of Exercise Cumberland – a large CBRN two day training event held in Cambridgeshire with over 500 participants from 26 organisations and involving 40 Fire Appliances drawn from four counties.

Preparing for future snow chaos

WHILST the snow in January 2004 caused travelling difficulties, the underlying problems were related to the congestion of traffic that was exacerbated by the weather conditions. Even in mid August the volume of traffic which hit the roads around 15.30 on the 28 Jan would have caused serious delays on the network.

The hot debrief called by the RMEF identified important lessons that could help avoid future reoccurrence. This included advising employers to :

- Consider arrangements for employees to work from home, where this is possible, on days when snow is forecast
- Actively encourage staff to share transport when snow is forecast. There is a safety benefit with this when driving conditions are poor.
- Stagger times when employees leave. A number of large employers had released staff en bloc, generating significant local traffic congestion.
- Prioritise the early release of employees who have caring responsibilities.
- Consider provision of facilities for employees to stay overnight rather than risk very dangerous journeys home.
- A large number of lorries were also involved in accidents which caused major obstructions to the roads and in some cases these prevented the gritting, which in turn led to other accidents. The advice for road hauliers was that they should be encouraged to instruct their drivers to park up to avoid rush hour then resume journeys when traffic has subsided and gritting has taken place.

The RMEF is promoting this guidance widely.

“ It was really useful to meet so soon after the January snow. It was good to hear other people's views and discuss how our revised plans had worked. ”

Alison Dawes

Assistant Editor, Radio Cambridgeshire

EASTCHAIR: **Mark Baker**

Head of Civil Protection, Cambridgeshire County Council

Lawrence Abbott
EP Officer, Luton Borough Council

Mary Basham
Director, GNN East

Mike Beer
EP Manager, Cambridgeshire Water Co.

Rosanna Briggs
Principal EPO, Essex County Council

Stuart Clarkson
Q103/ Hereward Group

Vlad Cirin
Risk Manager, Bedfordshire County Council

Mervyn Dadd
Press Officer, Norfolk Police

Ken Fairbairn,
EP Officer, Peterborough City Council

Catherine Feast,
Press Officer, Cambridgeshire Police

David Jennings
Head of East Anglia TV

Paul Durrant
Public Affairs, *Eastern Daily Press*

Chris Elliot
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Roy Elflett
Head of EP, Norfolk County Council EP Unit,
Norfolk County Council

Lawrence Gary
Head of Communications, Thurrock Council

Lt Col Stuart Green, Regional Press officer
Ministry of Defence

Steve Henry
Corp Comms MSP, Suffolk Police

Julia Houghton
EP Officer, Hertfordshire County Council

Rachel Hyde
Media Relations Manager, Herts Police

Samantha Jones
Press Officer, Herts Fire & Rescue Service

Des Lawless
Press Officer, Bedfordshire Police

David Martin
Editor, BBC TV/ Radio

Gren Morgan
Media Relations, East Anglian Ambulance Service

Chris Mortley
CBC Manager, EDF Energy

Marjorie McFarlane
Press Officer, EDF Energy

David Moses
Head of EP Hertfordshire County Council

Bob Pearson
Chief Press Officer, Cambridge County Council

Patrick Nealon
Press Officer, MOD Police

Steve Seaber
County Fire Officer, Herts Fire & Rescue Service

Jeff Stacey
Resilience Dept Director, GO East

June Thompson
Deputy EP, Essex County Council

Neil Thompson
Press Officer, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue

Richard Woollard
Communications Manager,
Environment Agency

GNN contact: **Mary Basham – 01223 372799**

Exercise Osiris



By Hannah Walker
Chair, London RMEF
& editor-in-chief,
South London Press

London

THE LONDON MEF held four meetings in its first year, with the inaugural meeting falling on 22 May 2003 with Bob Satchwell for the Newspaper Society and Zyg Kowalczyk of the London Resilience team on the top table.

Broadcasters were there in strength including Capital Radio, Magic FM, BBC London, the London News Network and Virgin Radio, as well as some key ethnic titles. Local authority attendance included representatives from 12 of London's 33 Boroughs and other stakeholders including the GLA, the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade.

The meeting agreed that such a group could break down barriers between the media and practitioners by acting as an active, two-way communications and debating forum. GNN London was charged with taking on a secretariat and organisational role.

I agreed to take on the role of Chair, supported by Claire Grant, Head of Communications with the SW London Strategic Health Authority and Steve Rawlins, deputy Emergency Planning Officer with the London Borough of Newham as joint deputy Chairs.

In a relatively short space of time a new kind of relationship has been established between representatives from media organisations, planners and local responders around London.

Representatives from these key organisations are now sitting round the table to look at emergency planning. How these key organisations would work in a crisis is largely down to good planning. And the London group has looked at strategies for coping with a crisis and relevant exercises which has been useful. We have covered a lot of ground in a short space of time.

The meetings have helped develop a new trust between these organisations and for the representatives who have come on board it has been a learning experience.

Highlights at the subsequent July, October and February meetings have included:

- A Cabinet Office presentation about media accreditation in a major incident backed by the document, *Handling a Catastrophic Incident in London - a media protocol*.
- A presentation about the Civil Contingencies Bill
- Debriefs on:
 - The relationship with London Resilience
 - Exercise Osiris
 - The London power outage on 28 August 2003
 - The London Alert system
 - Protocols on Warning and Informing the Public
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Clarification on the role of the Mayor in the event of a catastrophic incident
 - Exercise Capital Twilight on 3 December 2003

In addition the Forum agreed Terms of Reference and a London Protocol, and contributed to the consultation phase of the Civil Contingencies Bill. Members were also copied in on the Morecambe Bay cockle pickers debrief.

I am looking forward to seeing the London Media Emergency Forum strengthen and play a full role in emergency planning.

Learning the lessons

FOLLOWING feedback from LBC and BBC London about difficulties in obtaining information during and after the London power outage, reporters from both stations attended Exercise Capital Twilight to raise awareness of newsdesk requirements for rolling updates.

Michael Traboulsi of LBC said:

"The exercise was a great chance to see at first hand how London's different agencies would come together in the event of a major emergency.

"It was also a rare opportunity to meet face to face with people you usually talk to over the phone. I left the day with a greater understanding of how the LMEF would function if there was an emergency in our city."

I have found it particularly useful to receive feedback about events such as the failure of the power supply in parts of London in August 2003. The MEF gives us the opportunity to discuss with media representatives the opportunities for getting out messages to the public and our staff during such incidents

Claire Grant

Head of Communications,
SW London Strategic
Health Authority

LONDON

CHAIR: **Hannah Walker**
Editor-in-Chief, South London Press

JOINT DEPUTY CHAIRS:

Claire Grant
Head of Communications, SW London StrHA

Steve Rawlins
Deputy Emergency Planning Officer, Newham
Borough Council Emergency Planning

Andrew Bailey
Head of News,
Virgin Radio

Kike Biye
Government News Network London (Secretariat)

Neetinder Boparai
Head of Media Relations & Public Affairs,
Association of London Government (ALG)

Virginia Burdon
Director, Government News Network London

Greg Clifford
Producer,
Magic 105.4

Artun Goskan
Editor in Chief,
Turkish Gazette

Sarah Graham
News Editor,
Ealing Gazette

Charlie Harris
Editor,
Harrow Times & Observer

Joy Johnson
Head of Media Relations,
Greater London Authority

David Landau
News Editor,
Sunrise Radio

Carol McCall
Head of GICS Operations Unit,
Cabinet Office

Colin O'Toole
Deputy Group Editor,
Hendon Times

Frank Parker
Senior Information Officer,
Metropolitan Police Authority

Andrew Raine
News Editor,
Hounslow Guardian

Christine Riches
Communications Manager,
Transco

Matthew Schofield
London News Editor,
Capital Radio

Adrian Seal
Group Editor,
Uxbridge Gazette

Fergus Sheppard
News Editor,
BBC London

Tom Bateman/Michael Traboulsi
News Editor/News Reporter,
LBC

Simon Watts
Head of Communications,
London Resilience Team

Suzanna White
News Manager,
Westminster City Council

GNN contact: **Virginia Burdon - 020 7217 3156 & Marcus Chrysostomou - 020 7217 3779**



By Andy Bocking
Chair, South East RMEF
& BBC TV South East

South East

THE RMEF for the South East was established in July 2003 at an inaugural meeting of over 60 representatives from the emergency services, coastguard, local authorities, the military and government departments and agencies.

The terrible events of 9/11 clearly highlighted the importance of community and the part that we all have to play during times of crisis. The RMEF in the South East is committed to establishing a robust communications structure and to developing a high level of understanding and trust between the media, civic planners and emergency services. It is imperative that we are able to respond to and communicate effectively with the communities in which we all live and work during times of extreme emergency.

The South East, as defined by the boundaries of the Government Office is a huge and diverse region. It has few large media groups to rival those in the Midlands and North and tends to split into two sections – above and below the M4 motorway. For this reason, it was important to achieve representation across as many geographical parts of the region as it was to ensure that all the relevant organisations and media were represented.

The group has now established a diverse membership from across the region and has set itself a programme of key issues and tasks to address during 2004, and all are enthusiastic about the role the RMEF can play in developing cooperation between the media, public sector and emergency services.

Our key objectives are:

- To build trust and confidence between the media and the emergency planning community/Regional Resilience Forum and across other public and private sectors that might be involved in a major emergency.
- To identify and share best practice
- To develop regional protocols
- To work with the national MEF for a consistent approach to emergency communications.

We have set ourselves key tasks in:

- Communications - telecoms/satellite
- Media: establish protocol on public information services across all media groups
- Accreditation: press cards/contact lists (including out of hours numbers) etc.
- Accommodation: media centres and media requirements
- Regional Exercises involving the media, and post event debriefs

- Work with MEF and RMEFs for London and East on Operation Sassoon planning

Members are currently considering how to develop a regional media protocol that can be agreed by all media groups across the South East and will provide a public information service across all channels in the event of a major incident. This is a key priority for the year ahead. Meetings are being arranged with various media groups to achieve this.

Members are aware of the massive implications for the region of any major national emergency occurring in the London area. There has been concern about the lack of information and planning from central Government relating to Operation Sassoon, including rest centres, escape routes etc. Therefore the RMEF's other key priority this year will be to work closely with the RMEFs in London and East on this issue and to establish robust plans.

Representatives on the RMEF have continually stressed the need for more information to be made available to the public and local bodies from the government. This continues to be a concern among RMEF members.

Lengthy and useful discussions have taken place on the RMEF regarding the dual media roles of providing information and reporting news. There is an understanding that these need to be separated – and the RMEF is seen as the most effective way to build cooperation and trust to do this across the South East.

The BBC has an established 'Connecting in a Crisis' system and its competitors are sensitive to any suggestion that they are being left out and that recognition is being given to the suggestion that most listeners and viewers turn to the BBC in a crisis.

A lot of debate has taken place regarding the membership of the RMEF. Concern was expressed at the suggestion of one person being nominated as a multi-agency representative from a geographical area. It was decided that a mix of such representatives and representatives of specific disciplines would be appropriate.

Some of the media representatives on RMEFSE have already taken part in emergency exercises and all have expressed their willingness to take part in future activities. It remains the case though that media feel that they could still become more involved and that local authorities and emergency services should involve them more regularly.

“ A considerable amount of progress can be achieved in the planning of media management if common understanding of the issues can be established in “peacetime” rather than in the throes of an incident. Undoubtedly, the media have a significant part to play, not only in the reporting of an incident, but also in the provision of public advice and information, and the development of structures and procedures to ensure both needs are satisfied is a key role for the RMEF

Ted Vary

Director of Regional Resilience Unit for the South East

RMEF representatives

SOUTH EAST

CHAIR: **Andy Bocking**,
Resources Operations Manager, BBC TV South East

DEPUTY CHAIR: **John Humphreys**,
Kent Messenger Group

Caroline Alderson
Head of Communications, BAA Gatwick Airport

David Bennett
PR Manager, Southampton City Council

Kevin Briscoe
Media Dept, Hants Constabulary HQ

Mary Burden
Emergency Planning Officer,
Surrey County Council

Louise Cadle
Emergency Planning Officer,
Bracknell Forest District Council

Susi Coulthard
PR Manager, Ministry of Defence

John Dyer
Hampshire Ambulance

Rob Field
Communications Manager, Mid Kent Water

Richard Hards
Chief Fire Officer,
Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service

Spike Hughes
District Operations Manager,
Maritime & Coastguard Agency

Claire Martin
Group News Editor,
InvictaFM and Capital Radio Group

Anthony Master
Head of News, KMFM

Ian Mitchell
GNN South East (secretariat)

Nick Myers
Regional Editor, Meridian TV

Kevin McNamara
Communications Manager, Thames Valley StrHA

James Peacock
Director, GNN South East

Martin Pearce
Station Director, British Energy

Nigel Robinson
New Dimensions Co-ordinator,
Buckinghamshire Fire Service

Alex Ross
Senior Press Officer, GNN South East

Jenny Sacre
Media Relations Manager, Network Rail

Steve Taschini
News Editor, BBC Oxford

Ted Vary
Head of Regional Resilience, GOSE

Dave Williams
Regional Resilience Team, GOSE

Amelia Yeodal
Senior Press Officer,
Highways Agency

GNN contact: **Ian Mitchell – 01483 882344**

Increasing role for media to give feedback on exercises



Using the media for exercises

MEMBERS of the RMEF give feedback on exercises in their area as they arise. They were able to use a chemical exercise in Bristol as an example of how to deal with media issues in a real emergency. Two editors who are part of the RMEF took part in the exercise – both 'playing' and reporting on it as a story – and had valuable feedback that was relevant to all members of the group. This will help inform the media plans of those planning for emergencies.

The RMEF has, for the first time, brought together the agencies that will be involved in dealing with any major catastrophic event and the media on a regional basis. Effective communication within a peninsula the size of the South West region will always be challenging. The issues examined during this first year around protocols, accreditation and the location of media centres has already encouraged better informed working relationships.

John Wood

Media Services Manager,
Devon & Cornwall Police & Joint
Chair, South West RMEF



By Steve Egginton
Joint Chair, South
West RMEF & Head
of News, ITV West

South West

THE SOUTH West Media Emergency Forum met four times during the year, in accordance with its target to meet on a quarterly basis.

A milestone was reached early in the year when it was agreed that there would be only one RMEF for the region. When the RMEFs were set up, it was initially decided that there should be one for Devon and Cornwall and one for the rest of the South West. Later, in the interests of regional unity, it was agreed that the two groups should be unified and this was taken forward from September 2003.

We ensured even representation by having joint chairs: myself, Steve Egginton from ITV West in Bristol, and John Wood from Devon and Cornwall Police. Members of the group are now happy that the region is fully joined-up and ready to respond as one.

In addition, the chairs of the South West MEF have been invited to attend the South West Regional Resilience Forum. This helps to foster good communication between the two groups.

Progress has been made in four key areas, including exercises (see panel):

Media reps sub group: This has been set up to look at media issues. This includes GWR FM, BBC Radio Bristol, ITV West, *Western Daily Press*, *Bournemouth Echo*, *Western Morning News*, BBC Radio Cornwall, ITV Westcountry and GNN.

This group has written to all editors of the South West media to ask if they wish their staff to be listed in an out-of-hours media contact directory, which would be circulated amongst the RMEF group for use in an emergency. The directory is currently in draft form and is in the

process of being completed. Through this, we also asked editors what form of accreditation they used and preferred, so that we could gauge the popularity of the UK Press Card. We will also be able to identify if there are a lot of media personnel who have no official ID other than their own in-house, which could present a problem at the police cordons of an incident.

The media group has signed off a South West version of the two-page media protocol on public warnings, using the national version as a template.

South West protocol on handling a catastrophic incident: A working group consisting of Steve Egginton (ITV West), Tony Thompson (GOSW) and Terri Gough (GNN) was set up to put together a regional version of the protocol. It is heavily based on the national version. Pending any final comments, it is due to be signed off by the RMEF group and circulated to all members. It is also proposed that it be sent to media editors so that they are aware of the function of the RMEF.

Media centres: This has been discussed generally. It was agreed that 'green sites' are preferable over static sites which may be needed for other uses. They have the benefit of being able to be moved at relatively short notice, and infrastructure can be brought to them. This is better than experiencing difficulties at an established but ill-equipped site.

One of the pitfalls to any media centre is telecommunications, which are vital to ensure the centre's success. BT has now joined the RMEF to give input on this

RMEF representatives

SOUTH WEST

JOINT CHAIRS:

Steve Egginton

Editor - Head of News, HTV

John Wood

Media Manager, Devon and Cornwall Police

Joanne Brandon
Head of Corporate Comms, Avon & Somerset
Constabulary

Paul Breakwell
Head of Media and Corporate Comms, Dorset Police

Vicky Breakwell, News Editor, GWR FM

Phil Bowern, Executive Editor, Western Morning News

Phil Carrodus
Controller - News, Carlton Westcountry TV

Pauline Causey
Managing Editor, BBC Radio Cornwall

Lorraine Coulton, Senior Press Officer, MoD

Caroline Davidson
Communications Adviser, National Grid Transco

Lawrence Davies , Regional Health Emergency Planning
Adviser, Health Protection Agency

Peter Doyle, PRO, Devon County Council

David Fletcher, Head of EP, Plymouth City Council

Terri Gough
Government News Network (Secretariat)

Davinia Grist
PR Officer, Cornwall County Fire Brigade

Kelvin Hattersley
City Emergency Manager, Bristol City Council

Gordon Hector
Emergency Planning Manager,
Bath and North East Somerset

Tim Jones
Press Officer, BNFL Magnox

Jenny Lacey
Managing Editor, BBC Bristol and Somerset

Peter Leggatt, PRO, South West Peninsula Health
Authority

Adrian Mantle
Media Liaison Officer, Avon Fire Brigade

Elizabeth Marginson, PR Manager, Wiltshire Police

Andy Martin
News Editor, *Bournemouth Daily Echo*

Karen Moseley
Senior Information Officer, MoD - 43 Brigade

John McNeilly, Managing Editor, *Western Daily Press*

Kate Nelmes
Senior Press Officer, Gloucestershire Constabulary

Mark Nicholson, PRO, Cornwall County Council

Bridget Norris
Principal Officer - Comms, Environment Agency

Nigel Parsons
Emergency Planning Officer, British Telecom

Tracey Quinn
Regional Resilience Manager, Government Office for the
South West

Paul Slaven
Public Relations Officer, Devon Fire and Rescue Service

Helen Shrimpton
Media Officer, Avon Fire Brigade

Kate Smith
PR Manager, Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Colin Sturman, Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Caroline Thomas
Communications Manager, Avon, Gloucestershire &
Wiltshire Health Authority

Mike Thomasson
County Emergency Planning Officer, Devon County Council

Tony Thompson
Deputy Regional Resilience Director,
Government Office for the South West

Andrew Wilson
Head of Regional and Local Programming, BBC West

Steve Winston
EP officer, Cornwall County Council

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Publication date: September 2004

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