



In this issue

Forty-five truck Armageddon	3
New era begins	6
Cruising with the chairman	6
Adrenalin junkies among the best	8
Bbqs will not keep ambulances flying	11
We've only just begun ...	12
Beware falling glass	13
Four hat double act	14
Whitianga RCR champion	19
Firefighters get sweet and sticky	20
The new look...	22
Kiwis assist with out-of-control Canadian wildfires	23
International news	24

K1

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Cover photo

Guy Fawkes night 1985 saw a landmark hotel in Greymouth razed to the ground.

Greymouth Volunteer Fire Brigade crews found a fire well involved in the Commercial Hotel on arrival, which ultimately severely damaged the neighbouring grain business in Boundary St.

Like every event on the West Coast, minor or major, there's always an urban myth born, and of course a fire this big is no exception. "Apparently" while undertaking salvage and turnover operations, one of the firefighters noticed that he could still get beer to flow from the tap behind the bar; and, well, firefighting is a very thirsty business!

Photo: *Greymouth Evening Star*

Forty-five truck Armageddon

"A 40-pump fire!. You must be kidding!" exclaimed a London firefighter as he climbed aboard his truck.

But London fire despatchers were not joking. As the full horror of the Grenfell Tower evolved, hundreds of firefighters, other first responders and a final tally of 45 fire appliances crowded around Grenfell Tower accommodation block that was glowing like a gargantuan firework candle in west London's early morning. It is a sight few will forget.

Nor will they forget the smell, the horrific speed of the fire, the mounting casualty list as firefighters and police later picked their way through the little that was left of the interior. The confirmed death toll by late July was 80 with 120 missing.

As the details emerged, firefighters talked of running into Armageddon, doing 20 floors on one cylinder into increasingly dangerous conditions, making life and death decisions without adequate information, screaming children, fighting their way upward against a stream of hysterical occupants trying to get down to the one exit. For those inside the building it was a nightmare come true; for those outside – they could only wait... and hope.

One report said the first responders on the fireground got to the original call – a fridge on fire – they dealt with that and were stunned when they emerged outside to see part of the outside of the building on fire. How the blaze made the transition will be key in the enquiry.

Firefighters said the scale of the fire was unbelievable and they were having to make life and death decisions based on how much air they had. It was often a case of save the people you have already found – that meant leaving whoever might still be on higher floors being either left

to die or already dead. It was a brutal introduction for a young firefighter only five days into her career.

And in the immediate aftermath stories began to circulate about the recently-applied new cladding which the fire raced up, having been outlawed previously, of design faults etc, etc, and the accusations flew. No matter what the truth will eventually prove to be, it seems inevitable that someone will pay the price with charges of manslaughter.

No doubt the building's adherence to building policy will be picked apart and demands will be made insisting all buildings have sprinkler systems regardless of age, the number of fire exits and so on. About 600 buildings in England are thought to have the cladding and local authorities rushed to inspect their own. Before long people were being evacuated from some while closer inspections were made on 600 building and a growing name have been declared unsafe.

Police admitted a few days later as the search went on that the fire was so intense (up to 1000°C), some victims would never be found. But the search continued regardless with intense scrutiny of one room at a time – there were 120 apartments in the building and everything above the fourth floor needed to be searched. Specialist USAR dogs were used in areas where structural integrity was in question.

Three weeks after the blaze police said they had found all visible human remains – there were 87 'discoveries' but that did not mean 87 individuals. Police cautioned that there was still



much work to be done. The next step is sifting through 1.5 tonnes of debris in search of more casualties. Eighty persons are reported missing and only 21 have been formally identified

In the chaos of fireground, responders were not necessarily safe outside the building:

- one firefighter was struck a glancing blow by someone falling or jumping from a high window – he could do nothing for the victim and stayed at his post;
- another firefighter had been running into the building when a falling resident struck the riot shield he was holding above his head – when he looked back, he could see body parts;
- London Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton missed being hit by a falling chunk of burning debris as she was using a police riot shield for protection.

Many firefighters talked of their exhaustion and horror of what they experienced, and bitterness has brought to the surface anger over fire service cuts. A statement too long to publish here can be read on:

<http://www.news.com.au/world/europe/grenfell-tower-hero-firefighter-shares-powerful-personal-account-of-london-tragedy/news-story/4b1176229024a2bc79e1e7d73de4953d>

The political fallout will be huge. e.g one just one issue: the FBU says there are 125 aerial ladder/platform vehicles in England, but only 33 of them are available around the clock because of a lack of fire crews.

Meanwhile, in New Zealand ...

The Minister for Building and Construction has requested that MBIE write to metropolitan councils to request their assistance to determine the extent of use of combustible aluminium composite panels in high-rise buildings across New Zealand. He told *K1* that some councils which have a prevalence of high-rise buildings such as Auckland, have proactively begun to gather this information and have identified two buildings with cladding panels similar to that used on the Grenfell Tower. Those two properties are undergoing cladding replacement as a consequence of weather tightness repairs.

The New Zealand situation for building fire safety is different to the UK that relies heavily on passive-fire (e.g. solid construction) to limit rapid spread of fire and smoke.

To provide a local context, MBIE said a 24 floor apartment building in New Zealand would typically have an automatic fire sprinkler system and building-wide alarm system, two stairwells and a fire riser main in the stairwell for fire service use.

In NZ there are typically many systems that work together to provide the life safety to occupants (e.g. sprinkler plus early warning

Firefighters check for survivors, room by room. Photo: PA





Devastation inside the building was total. Photo: Metropolitan Police.

smoke detectors and building-wide alarms) within a building and the failure of one system does not necessarily mean a catastrophic failure of the whole system.

MBIE has asked the metropolitan councils to report on the use of combustible aluminium composite panel to assess the extent of its use in NZ. The process of dealing with any specific high-rise buildings identified with cladding comprising of a combustible aluminium composite panel product will be handled by the local council.

Where a council is concerned that identified high-rise buildings may have extensive use of combustible aluminium composite panels, MBIE recommends it contact the building owner. The owner should consult with a fire safety professional to review the risk profile for the building. The Institution of Professional Engineers NZ has a register of Chartered Professional Engineers that practice in the area of fire safety.

Councils have been advised that in the instance of identifying a dangerous building, they use their existing powers to make appropriate and timely decisions in respect of individual buildings (this also applies to building owners – where they have concerns they should contact a fire safety professional).

Long investigation ahead

At the end of June, the Metropolitan Police announced that it could be the end of 2017 before a comprehensive death toll from the Grenfell fire will be available. Eighty fatalities had been confirmed by the end of June, and Police do not expect that to alter.

Police said they had spoken to survivors from 106 of the apartments, but there was no evidence of survivors from the 23 others. A possible death toll is also complicated by the fact that some residents close to the outbreak of the fire apparently fled upstairs to escape the blaze and may have taken refuge in an upper flat.

In the meantime, officials have identified 600 buildings to be investigated and by the end of June, 120 had 'fallen short' of safety standards, some had been evacuated and cladding is in the process of being stripped from others.

Detail addicts should go to: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40301289> and <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-40272168>

Just another day...

**National Park
firefighters dig
out, and check
out, that the
hydrants still
work after the
first big freeze
this year.**





New era begins

The crowds gathered, the trucks paraded, high rankers mingled with local frontline staff, speeches were made, light rain fell in Ashburton, the bbqs spat and sizzled and FENZ was born.

Photos courtesy of Fire and Emergency New Zealand



Cruising with the chairman

by FENZ Chairman Paul Swain

During the recent school holidays, and following the successful 1 July launch of Fire and Emergency New Zealand, my family and I toured the central South Island in a well-heated and well-insulated campervan.

The trip made me appreciate a couple of things. Firstly, how lucky we are to live in a country that has no rubbish strewn along the highway and has scenery so breath-taking that it looks like it's been photoshopped from an international travel magazine. Secondly, as we played 'spot the fire station' along the way, how lucky we are to be served by the men and women of Fire and Emergency New Zealand who are ready 24/7 to come to the aid of local communities in their time of need.

Virtually every small town had a local brigade or rural fire force, reinforcing the point that the local brigade/fire force is the local community and vice versa. This is why we are so determined to improve the support for our people on the frontline over the next few years. We have a proud history of service, and we want to build on that to strengthen the services we are delivering to our communities, now and into the future.



During the often long stretches of our journey from campground to campground, I had time to reflect on the journey we had been on in the lead up to 1 July. We were determined to bring urban and rural fire services together successfully, given it has been something that has been talked about for decades. The challenges were many and varied, and some of them we only discovered along the way. But we made it, thanks mainly to the input and goodwill of our people.

One of the biggest challenges we faced was making sure

June 2017

that our people were able to transfer to Fire and Emergency New Zealand without a hitch. Easier said than done. While transferring our urban career firefighters to the new organisation was pretty straightforward, it was important that the payroll system continued to work. Transferring staff from rural fire authorities and local councils to our new organisation was more tricky, given we weren't the employer and they came from 39 different organisations. And transferring volunteers, both urban and rural, was complicated because of the different arrangements and reimbursement systems across the country. But we got there, knowing there are a small number of inconsistencies we are going to have to sort out over the next year or two.

Then there was the importance of having access from 1 July to local fire and emergency assets – trucks, pumps, equipment, and buildings, etc. This was mainly an issue in rural fire areas, where ownership of assets is mixed – some are owned by councils, some by forestry companies and others by trusts. While we were not concerned about the ownership of these assets from 1 July, we needed an agreement from everyone that Fire and Emergency New Zealand could use them from Day One. After a large number of meetings throughout New Zealand, we managed to get 100% agreement on the use of assets, thanks largely to the hard work of our transition team and the goodwill from all parties.

We needed to consult with the community on our new interim levy, so we can fund the changes ahead. After a great deal of work from our levy team, government agencies and Ministers, we secured an increase in the levy, the first such increase in eight years. We also needed to make sure we had an effective leadership team in place ready to take charge on 1 July.

But the biggest priority for Day One was making sure that the 111 system would continue to work, that trucks would continue to roll out the door, that people in need would still be able to get the help they needed and that there would be no confusion as to who was doing what and when, and that our people could do this safely. This was not negotiable. And it worked. All reports to date show that Day One came and went without a hitch, thanks largely to the support of the sector and the decision to have as little change as possible for our frontline on Day One.

As our family headed back over a snowy Arthurs Pass towards

Christchurch, I thought about the challenges ahead of us over the next three years – the Integration Phase. We will need a new way of operating and organising ourselves, given that we will be one, integrated fire and emergency service. We will need to decide on how we can have greater flexibility for local brigades and volunteer rural fire forces while maintaining the standards of a national, unified organisation. We will need to work out new fire and emergency boundaries, and develop the associated command and control procedures.

We will need to make sure our people continue to come home safely after every incident, and ensure they have the support to deal with the psychological stresses of traumatic incidents.

We need to continue working with local communities and our partners, through our Local Advisory Committees and other means, to prepare us all for the emergencies and weather-related events that are going to increase in the coming years.

We will need to ramp up our approach to risk reduction. We need to make it easier for our volunteers to serve their local communities. And we need to provide support for our leaders while playing a greater leadership role across the emergency sector in New Zealand.

In the meantime, we are working on a plan to roll out our new branding around the country. While this will take time, it is important that our uniforms, stations and vehicles reflect who we are and our new organisation. We have a lot to do over the next three years. We want to be the world's best integrated fire and emergency service. My reflection from the campervan was that we have made a really good start towards this.



At Cromwell – Emily, Maddie and Daniel.

Adrenalin junkies among the best

Every so often along comes a family that causes lesser beings to shake their heads and wonder why ...

The Maw family of Southbridge is one such ... several of the family have become total adrenalin junkies and proved they can hold its own against the best in the world when it comes to Combat Challenge.

Over the past few years, members of the family have shone in the local, national and international arenas ... to the point that international franchise holders Lion Apparel and Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge recognised the family with a one-off award presented at the 2017 New Zealand nationals in Wellington. The family is the first to meet the criteria for inclusion in the elite Lion's Den for a father and two sons (Lion's Den membership is reserved for those who achieve certain times for their bracket: i.e. open male division is completing the course in 100 seconds or less).

It is not just the Maw-family who are competition-addicts – it appears the condition is infectious and now the entire Canterbury rural town brigade over-indulges in adrenalin.

The fascination with Combat Challenge began when son Steve saw a video on his recruit course in 2009. A Kaiser Force machine was at that station, he had a go and within a few weeks was at his first competition. Another son, Hamish, joined Southbridge at age 16 so Steve suggested they run a tandem. The next great idea was to get father Wayne involved and run a relay! The family first ran together at the Canterbury champs and came second. They followed that up with a third placing at the South Island championship.

Southbridge has also got involved in the Skytower climb. The land around them is flat for kilometres in any direction and high-rise buildings just don't exist. So they all truck off to Lincoln College's stairwells or

Christchurch Airport, now that Steve works there as a firefighter. "The two events are so different to train for, especially when they are run close together," said Wayne. "The combat is like a sprint and the Skytower climb like middle-distance running. Training starts with individual work then course work comes together closer to the event." Southbridge has purchased a Rescue Randy and a Kaiser was donated to it.

Steve has made his mark at Christchurch airport with several firefighters now running Combat.

The 2017 Nationals marked the end of an era – almost certainly the last time the Maws will run there as a family. "To celebrate our time running together as a family, we donated the Maw Family Trophy to the UFBA, to be contested for at the Nationals relay event." Fittingly, the first recipient was Christchurch Airport team, of which Steve was a member.

The competitive streak in the brigade doesn't stop with Combat – it has

Steve Maw on the charge at the 2017 nationals. Photo: 111Emergency



participated in the Chillfactor at Coronet Peak, which involves teams of four skiing or snowboards in full firefighting gear joined by a length of hose – the most laps in two hours wins. This is followed by an individual race up the hill. The Southbridge Brigade also had a proud history in waterways events in the 1970s/80s.

“In 2012 a team travelled to Auckland for the Skytower Stair Challenge, and has raised over \$85000 for Blood and Leukemia NZ, winning the top fundraising Trophy in 2015,” said Wayne. “At one stage over three-quarters of the brigade had competed in Combat events.” Other events Southbridge is involved in are Rapaki Memorial, Rendevous Stair Climb, small-bore rifle shooting and also competing at Police and Emergency Services Games.

Steve went to the World Challenge in Las Vegas in 2013 to try and make

Lions Den. Although he didn’t achieve the required time, he gained invaluable experience on how the event is run and what is required to achieve the goal. When the decision was made to return in 2014 World Challenge in Phoenix, Wayne and Karen decided to travel over and support Steven.

“I thought if I was going I may as well compete. Up to that point I had only run the front half of the tandem with Hamish and the middle of the relay, but had never done the hose or dummy drag.” Wayne ran his first ever (and only) individual run against Steve on day two at Phoenix and astonishingly made Lions Den. Steven had achieved it two weeks prior at the US Nationals at Tyler, Texas so they became the first father/son in New Zealand to both be inducted into the Lions Den.

When Hamish joined them for the trip to Montgomery, Alabama for the

Enshrined in history

The Maw name is forever enshrined in world Combat history.

In recognising the contribution and commitment of the Maw family as second to none, the international body Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge and its key partner Lion Apparel made a special one-off award (pictured at right) to the family to recognise its accomplishments

– the first family in its history to meet the criteria for membership in the Lion’s Den as Father/ Two Sons in their respective categories. It was presented to the family through the UFBA at this year’s nationals.

Last year the international body endorsed the UFBA event as an official challenge where the prestigious Lion’s Den medal could be presented. New Zealand is the only country to hold this position outside the USA.

Pictured are Steve, Wayne and Hamish in their elite Lions Den jackets.



2015 World Challenge, he placed a lot of pressure on himself to also make Lions Den – although the week didn't start the way he would have liked, he pulled out the run of his life in the World Finals to go under the required time.

Training for Combat is no small commitment. Wayne said for the Worlds, ideally there would be a six-month lead in for doing Individuals, starting with gym work–strength building etc, then building endurance. "A month out, lots of course-based training, building speed, fine-tuning technique and then tapering off the weight with emphasis on speed, especially through the transistions."

Wayne said the atmosphere and competition at the Worlds, in particular, gives competitors a tremendous lift. "Running family tandems and relays are very special moments, and you make life-long friends from all around the world at these events."

"We have Combat in our blood," said Wayne. "I will now limit running in events and hopefully transfer to be an official. Steven won the Co-ed Tandem at this year's Nationals with his fiance Simone Mackie (Christchurch Airport firefighter) so the hope is to travel to another World Challenge in the near future and with Hamish, run a 4 Maw relay and a tandem involving all 4 four. We'll also be supporting as many local events as possible."

Firefighting has been a Maw family commitment for four generations – Wayne's great grandfather was Captain at Southbrook in the early 1900s for about 16 years, his grandfather served at Southbridge for about 10 years (before the Second World War and when it reformed in 1948), Wayne has done 36 years, Steven nine and Hamish six years.

... the track record

The family's Combat Challenge achievements are:

- 2011 – three Maws finish third in the South Island and national relays
- part of a winning 5-man Southbridge team in the 2014 and 2016 nationals
- Hamish and Steve win the National Tandem in 2014 and 2016

- Steve has won five South Island individual titles - winning the national title in 2014 and runner-up in 2015 and 2016
- 2014 – Steve attended the US Nationals in Tyler, Texas finishing 14th out of 91 and achieving Lion's Den.
- Wayne achieved Lion's Den at the World Challenge 23, Phoenix, Arizona in 2014. He and Steve became the first father/son from New Zealand to achieve this feat. They also ran a tandem.
- 2015 World Challenge 24 in Montgomery, Alabama – Hamish achieved Lion's Den and in doing so created history as the first father/two sons in the 24-year history of the Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge to all achieve Lion's Den times.
- Steve was the first New Zealander to break the magic Sub 90 with 1:28
- the family ran a 3-Maw relay at Montgomery, which is believed to be a first at a World Challenge
- 2017 UFBA National Firefighter Combat Challenge –Steve was part of the Christchurch Airport Fire Brigade relay team that won the inaugural Maw Family Trophy
- Steve and his partner Simone Mackie (also a firefighter at Christchurch Airport) got engaged a couple of weeks before the 2017 Nationals and won the Co-ed Tandem.

Butzbach new UFBA CEO

Former Region 3 manager Bill Butzbach, who retired from NZFS and later became Martinborough CFO, will replace George Verry as UFBA CEO when George steps down in the near future.

Bill will continue in the Martinborough position. He joined the UFBA board in 2013 and has been working with the FENZ project team, specifically on volunteer issues.



Bbqs will not keep ambulances flying

Barbecues outside The Warehouse are not going to keep New Zealand's air ambulance services running, so a future national service is being investigated by the various trusts.

A major problem for the near future is that most of the 17 helicopters operating nationally are 25 years and older. The National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO) hosted the first joint meeting to consider a national New Zealand service recently and that was quickly followed by news that overseas emergency contractors are interested.

While pleased with the overall format and discussion around improvements needed to for a more unified service, Auckland's Rescue Helicopter Trust's Greg Barrow says the interest from Babcock, CHC and other large international helicopter operators introduces a whole new dimension.

Babcock operates more than 400 aircraft around the world including in Africa, South America, Australia, UK, Europe and the Middle East, and has had a long association with the New Zealand Defence Force, while CHC is a Canadian company with 250 aircraft operating in 30 countries around the world. Along with helicopter support to the offshore oil and gas industry, CHC also operates marine search and rescue operations, including for coastguard in parts of the UK, operates fire and emergency services, and works with police in some state in Australia and the Ambulance Service of New South Wales.

While a shake-up for the air

ambulance service has some positive aspects, said Mr Barrow, a fundamental change to funding needs to be part of that. The helicopter service is the only emergency service provider in the country that has to fully supply its own vehicles and equipment, while receiving overall less than half its operating costs. Funding for newer aircraft comes from local communities, sponsorship and fundraising.

"If we were funded at 75% of all costs, including capital (aircraft and equipment) as the ambulance service is, our trusts could give the type of service being talked about." Current funding of around \$50 million to the service would need up to \$70 million more to bring the service and its aircraft up to the same standard as that of the St John's ambulance service, he said.

He finds it disingenuous of the Government to now set up a commercial tender process setting the trusts against overseas operators, instead of simply funding the current operators properly.

"The type of helicopters used and who operates them is only a small part of the problem facing emergency helicopter services in New Zealand. There are issues with who despatches helicopters and how they are despatched, and what medical capability they offer including medical equipment and qualification level of the clinical crew. These issues won't necessarily be addressed by tendering the helicopter service itself," he said.

Ministry of Health's Clare Perry pointed out that all those at the meeting were invited after showing interest when the tender went online in September 2016. This is a co-design process. "Nothing has been decided about what a new service model might look like."

Mr Barrow remains hopeful the international players will lose interest.



Greg Barrow





We've only just begun ...

Now the significant milestone of Fire and Emergency New Zealand's official beginning on 1 July is past, it's time to get down to the task of making it work.

Internal Affairs Minister Peter Dunne told *K1* there is a lot to do over the next three years, known as the integration phase.

It is not a straight-forward business to put policy changes into practice. For example, the policy is to have one unified organisation that works in a well co-ordinated way across the country.

Introducing the new legislation meant repealing the Fire Service Act 1975 and the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, which defined the boundaries between urban and rural fire districts by gazette notice. Now, Fire and Emergency NZ has the flexibility to set boundaries as a policy decision instead.

The organisation has retained the existing boundaries and is running parallel urban and rural operational structures in the interim, while it works through how best to design one unified way of working.

"This means that under the operational leadership of the National Commander Urban Paul McGill and National Manager Rural Kevin O'Connor we can have confidence that operational response will continue while the new operating model is designed and implemented.

"Fire and Emergency NZ will continue to recognise the different

risks and needs of urban and rural areas, as was the case before 1 July," said the Minister.

There is now formal recognition of fire as a land management tool in the new Act. This recognises that, for example, Canterbury's arable farmers are in the habit of burning of stubble as it is a major pest-control tool and it helps prepare the ground for the sowing of next season's crop. While acknowledging they treated burning as a privilege rather than a right, farmers say they are currently working under a code of practice and question why that needs to be changed.

FENZ will be working with Federated Farmers and local bodies as it develops guidance on the safe use of fire as a land management tool. "In the meantime it is status quo, with the previous rural fire plans carried over," said the Minister.

"Fire permits are still required for rural fires during restricted and prohibited fire seasons."

One difference for rural fire under the new legislation is that cost recovery has been removed. Instead there is a range of compliance and enforcement tools to address unsafe behaviour.

Work is underway on planning how best to use these tools to reduce the risk of unwanted fires, and personnel and the sector will be involved in developing a compliance and enforcement strategy.

"This is one of many vital pieces of work that will contribute to strengthening and future-proofing this country's fire and emergency services. There is a lot to do and the sailing may not always be smooth, but we have established a good way of working in consultation to get the best results," he said

Note: To find out about fire seasons and apply for permits, visit the website <http://www.checkitsalright.nz/>



Beware falling glass!

OMG... what would our grandfathers have thought?

London's major emergency services are ALL headed by WOMEN!

Dany Cotton

Commissioner of the London
Fire Brigade



Cressida Dick

Commissioner of the
Metropolitan Police



Dr Fiona Moore

CEO of the London
Ambulance Service



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Four-hat double act

Roger Bright and Kylie Robbins didn't start out to be Great Barrier Island's 24/7 superhero duo – it just turned out that way. They are the island's two-man police force, firefighters in the local RFF, volunteer ambulance drivers, and skippers for the local coastguard.

Eighteen years ago Roger got a transfer from the Ruatoria police station to Great Barrier to give his daughters a better life and quickly learned that the East Coast didn't have exclusive use of the word 'isolated'. The island is totally off-grid, but his daughters can hunt, surf, fish and dive...

He tried to avoid joining the rural fire force in the beginning because he was sole charge and had to attend fires, accidents and other police activities, but after 18 months on the island he relented. Both Roger and Kylie trained to the point of Level 4 Certificate in Fire and Rescue Services – Vegetation, and Kylie has recently completed the New Zealand Safety Advisors Course for Fire, which will take her away from the humping hoses side of the job into more of the management role. Neither of them has sought rank in the RFF system. "I believe it is important to be able to work both at the coal face as well as in a position of decision-making," said Roger.

"It also allows other volunteers in our community to step up and take charge, thus not limiting the 'rank' levels to a very small group of people. We all get on really well together and I am more than happy taking orders, as I am distributing them."

The Barrier RFF has five stations at strategic points on the island – Tryphena, Kaitoke (nearest for Roger and Kylie), Okupu, Awana and Okiwi. Each has an appliance and a division of gear and a 50-strong pool of firefighters spread around.

"All volunteers carry a pager and most have radios (but not all). Once the pager goes off, one of 3-4 people on the island ring FireComms and ascertain that problem, location etc. Based on this info, the DPRFO (or whoever is the most senior on the island) directs resources as required... all stations turnout versus perhaps only one or two station depending on the situation," said Roger.

Due to their ability to deploy quickly (the island's police vehicles always carry all the gear for the different roles the couple play), Roger and Kylie quite often are the first to respond and usually one of the first on the scene and providing sit-reps etc back to whoever is running the incident ... "It works well," he said.

Kylie grew up on the Barrier in a one-room hut with no running water, but left as a teenager and worked in the Auckland courts before becoming a police officer 23 years ago. When Roger made the case or a second officer,



she successfully applied for it, and arrived in 2003. They were married in 2012.

She joined the Police in 1993 and was stationed at Lower Hutt. "It didn't take long for me to realise that I was not a 'city' cop and I started rural policing as soon as I could get out of 'Dodge' – working in Orewa, then Wellsford, with a six-month stint skippering a Police RHIB (Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boat) for the 2003 Americas Cup." Then she arrived back home on the island to take up the second constable's job.

Kylie joined the brigade in 2003. "When I first started I was made a part of the Kaitoke crew which consisted of my now husband Roger, and our neighbour and best friend Wayne Sanderson. Our PRFO Lance Dixon decided to schedule a Wajax competition which both Roger and Wayne were determined to win – they are both extremely competitive so we ended up drilling most afternoons after work for a while and I wondered what I had got myself into. But it was the best foundation I could have asked for to establish those basic firefighting pump skills, and that has stood me in good stead ever since."

It's a tight-knit community – so much so any reliever for the two senior constables usually ends up taking messages for them to follow up when they return.

Every so often they have to hand out traffic tickets to mates, but that it is part and parcel of island life. The constables can't escape who they are, or that they are in a de facto 24/7/365 job, so everyone has to learn the difference of talking to the policemen in the course of their duty, and when they are down at the club (usually drinking ginger ale). It is a rare occasion when they can get through a dinner party without leaving their guests to look after themselves.

"That is just way the job is," said Kylie. "Being one of the few government representatives on the island, we get phone calls or personal visits or visits to the station, with people asking all manner of things."



Waiting on Haratonga beach to pick up an injured crew member from a yacht, with the police truck rigged as an ambulance.

Roger and Kylie aren't actually part of St John Ambulance – it was only established in recent years. "Prior to that the Police trucks were considered the island's ambulances – both are kitted out to carry a stretcher and it is only just recently that we have removed the actual stretchers from where they were tied behind the driver's seat in the trucks," said Kylie. "I remember the first time I heard a siren going past the Police station and it was not myself or Roger driving. It was a really weird feeling to see the new ambulance heading off to an emergency/medical situation that we were not part of!"

"Obviously in our job we are first on the scene on many occasions – but we just do the basics till one of the medical team arrives. We are blessed with an incredible local medical team who turn out at a moment's notice and I have helped the doctor and nurses in all sorts of places from the middle of the bush, to the stream under a stone road bridge."

However, the constables are still the off-road ambulance drivers using the 4x4 vehicle to get to places the normal ambulance can't. "We have extra holding points fitted for holding up the likes of saline bags etc, where/when they are required," said Roger, "as well as lots of extra lighting in the rear of the vehicle for when we have a doctor or a nurse tending to a patient while we are driving, usually to either the local medical centre or somewhere where the rescue helicopter can land."

As part of their policing role, the couple are required to qualify and then

refresh their 4x4 driving skills for not only policing, but obviously the ambulance, search and rescue, fire and all the other roles they fill on the island.

When Roger arrived on the island, the Police had no means of getting to the outer islands or attending any sort of marine search and rescue. A successful business case resulted in a new surf rescue inflatable – but that required Roger obtaining his Local Launch Operators ticket.

“A couple of years later I was roped into assisting with a local Rescue Trust that raised money and obtained a craft for the island – an 8.5m Protector RHIB. Later we joined the Coastguard proper and all our assets were given over to the organisation.” They now have a 12.5m Rayglass Protector and Roger has his Coastguard Senior Masters ticket.

“We have to continue doing various training to this day to retain the qualification. I am also the ‘Master’ of the vessel for which it is my responsibility to keep the vessel up to a safe ‘survey’ standard for all our crew to use.”



Being a yachting Kylie has been involved with Coastguard in one way or another since the mid 1990s when she was living in Öpötiki, and was the secretary/treasurer and a crew member.

“When I came back to the Island in 2003 I became a crew member for the local Great Barrier Rescue and took on the Coastguard training officer’s role – a role

Work and life is varied for Kylie and Roger: they get to jump out of helicopters during water rescues, and have the bomb squad over to dispose of washed-up unused or misfired flares – a relatively common occurrence.

which I have held with a couple of breaks since then and am forever trying to get rid of.”

Kylie has her Maritime NZ qualifications – Boat Masters and NZ Coastal Skippers tickets 1997 and commercial LLO - Local Launch Operators certificate. She also holds particular Coastguard tickets – Coastguard Senior Master. “I also have a Marine Search and Rescue Controllers qualification which I qualified for in 2003.”

Callouts vary widely. “Sometimes you will go weeks without one, sometimes you will get two in a night,” said Kylie. A very rough estimate would be 18-20 police calls, half a dozen fires, a couple of ambulance calls and at least 15 to 20 coastguard callouts per year.

The couple wear two hats all the time. “When I go to a fire I am also, and predominately, the cop, so the policing role regarding evacuation or traffic control has to come first,” said Kylie. That seems to work on the island. “Since we are always on call in our normal day-to-day life and we take the police truck to the fire, we are often there first. We can give the sit. rep, then help whichever fire appliance arrives first to set up and get sorted before one of us peels off into the cop role if that is needed,” said Kylie.

As regards Coastguard, a rescue is a rescue. A body recovery is a Coastguard and Police job and both roles work together, she said. The Police oath “To Protect Life and Property” fits well with all the other roles, as it is first and foremost always, so it just seems to happen without being something I think about a lot, she said.

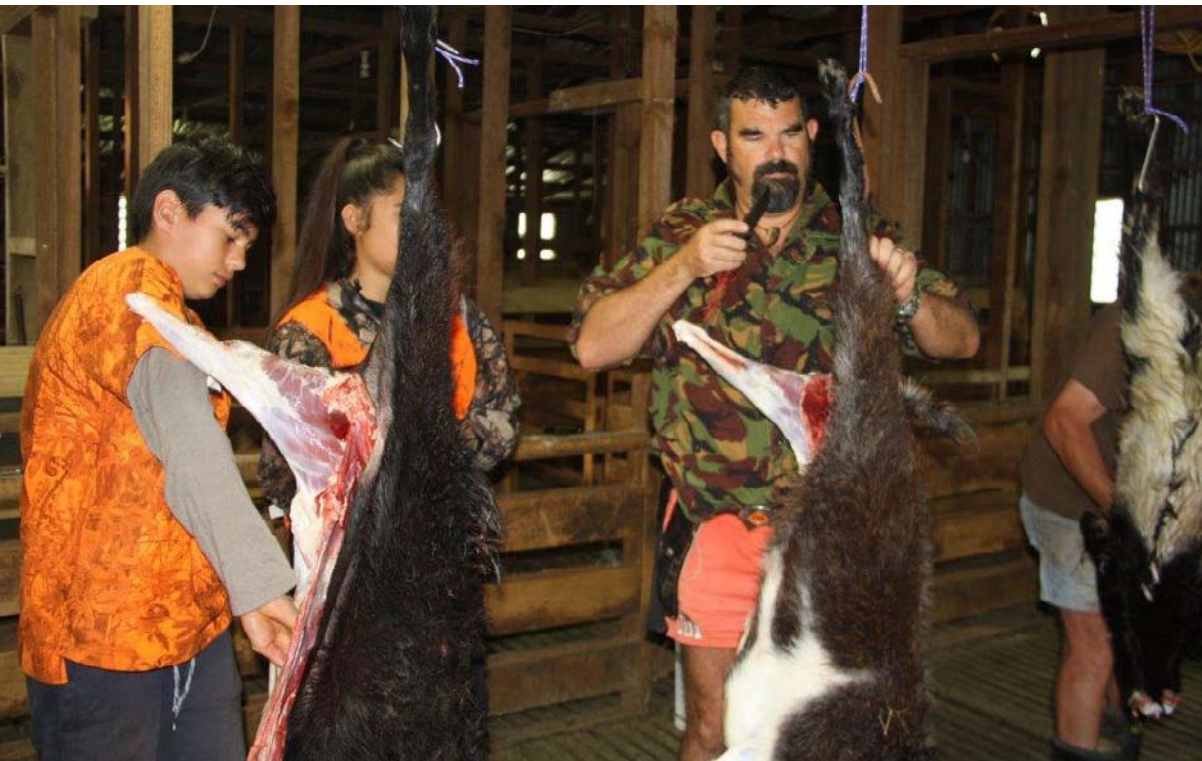
Roger said wearing multiple hats requires prioritising. “Sometimes what might start off as a fire job turns into a police job; same with Coastguard and ambulance. Sometimes you have to be wearing more than one hat and then it all gets sorted out later in the paperwork! It’s about prioritising the immediate response/work type, which depends on the individual incident and we all know no two are ever the same, requiring that constant re-evaluation and apportioning of the (in our case) appropriate ‘hat.’”

The Police Toyota Landcruiser troop carrier gets used as a police vehicle, a fire appliance, an ambulance, a tow truck and has even been a hearse.

The down side

Being tight knit can have its down side. When Kylie arrived as the new constable, Roger took her on the rounds. Much tea was drunk and residents pulled out the photo albums (to her distress) to show him the younger Kylie. Now that Roger has been there for a few years, they both have the emotional problem of knowing almost any victim.

"Wearing so many different hats means that generally, we are going to attend them all," said Roger. "Fires, drownings, death (by whatever cause), MVAs, serious domestic incidents, search and rescues, and even some of the serious out-and-out plain old accidents. The flip side is that having been here for so long and know most people, having the local knowledge and contacts is invaluable."



Recreation, self-sufficiency and conservation rolled into one – Roger gives a lesson in the finer points of trimming out of wild pig to a couple of local youngsters.

What do they do with that rarest of commodities – time off? They both enjoy hunting which has the additional benefit of filling the freezer. They also dive and fish. Kylie gardens, sews and watches *The Walking Dead* on tv. She was doing a 'back to bare hull' renovation of a 38ft yacht until it fell off its cradle and was destroyed. Now she is working on a couple of sailing dinghies.

Every so often they manage to get off the island for a break, which serves to remind them how much they like the island life ...

What Roger forgot to mention in the interview is that he is a holder of the New Zealand Bravery Medal awarded for using an axe to break down a door, and without BA, rescue a resident from a gas-filled building on Great Barrier. Also omitted were the Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals awarded to the couple for the off-duty rescue of youngsters from a rip off Kaitoke Beach on the island.

continued next page

Off with its head!

Ohio firefighters rescued a woman after a boa constrictor wrapped itself around her neck and began biting her face. Firefighters found the woman lying in the driveway of her home with the snake wrapped around her. A firefighter used a pocketknife to cut off the snake's head. The boa constrictor was one of two snakes she'd rescued the day before.

Cote d'Azur on fire

French authorities ordered the evacuation of up to 12,000 people around a hilltop town in the southern Cote d'Azur region as fires hopscotched around the Mediterranean coast. About 600 firefighters were fighting various fires. Being holiday time, many campers took refuge on the beach.

The big fire ...



Kylie and Roger have war stories covering most subjects including plane crashes next door and braving bee swarms. But the big one for both of them is the big scrubbie of 2013 that took out about 115 hectares.

All the worst stuff seems to happen when Roger leaves Great Barrier Island, and it has become a standing island joke.

In 2013 Roger and Kylie were off-Island putting their son Ben into school (his first year at Tauranga Boys). Kylie said they got a phone call from her mother (who was living on the island next door to them) to say they were being evacuated as the fire was heading towards the police station and houses and asking what we wanted taken from the house?

"I wanted her to go to the station, open the window and throw all my overdue files out to burn, but apparently she wasn't too keen on that. Poor Ben got dumped in Tauranga and Roger and I headed for home as fast as we could.

"Meantime, the relieving police officer, Constable Yi Fong – known to us as Ed – had managed to get some of the boys from Auckland over to the Barrier to help him out with evacuations etc. They took one of the trucks out and left the second truck loaded with the radios, firearms and everything else they could get out of the station, parked up ready to go at a moment's notice – as by this time the fire was sweeping over the swamp across the road from the police station.

"Three local men who shall remain nameless, arrived at the station

somewhat worse for wear and used the station ladder to climb up onto the roof of the police station where they proceeded to continue to have a few drinks and enjoy the show. As the fire got closer, they decided it was their community duty to look after Roger and Kylie's stuff, so they rushed off to the police house, threw the gate off its hinges and hooked Roger's boat onto the back of the police truck. They took off in the truck with dive tanks and fishing rods flying off everywhere and drove through the paddocks to the neighbours where they dumped the boat off and proceeded down to the airport where they ran into the actual police who were less than pleased that they had appropriated the truck, and removed them from it promptly.

"At this point the men jumped back onto their truck (complete with gas tanks on the back) and drove across the airfield to get a closer look at the fire front. Somehow they survived and got unceremoniously packed off home," said Kylie.

Roger and Kylie got the first flight home and arrived back on the island the next morning. "As I got off the plane, Ed was waiting to meet us. I said: "Ed, what are you doing – we leave you to look after our island for a couple of days and look what you do to it!" He looked me up and down and called back: "Typical – blame the Asian", a comment the locals thought was hilarious and managed to make him one of the most well-loved police relievers the Island has had."

The fire was still going strong and Roger and Kylie proceeded to spend the next week working their police job for eight hours a day followed by a night shift on the fire line.

Whitianga RCR champion

New Zealand firefighters stamped their mark on the 2017 Australasian RCR by taking out first and second – Whitianga is the new champion with Geraldine the runner-up.

This means Whitianga and Geraldine will be invited to the 2018 world championship in South Africa.

Twenty teams from New Zealand, Australia and Hong Kong contested the title over over three days at Claudelands Arena in Hamilton. Since joining the challenge in 2003, Whitianga's previous best placing had been third. They got together just prior to the North Island champs in February and it was Nick Paillandi's first time in the arena.

Eight New Zealand brigades participated in the challenge.

With results spread throughout the field, every point proved precious.

Results of various challenges:

Trauma – QFES Brisbane 1, NT Fire & Rescue 2, Milton 3.

Time Critical – Rangiora 1, Linton Military 2, NT Fire and Rescue 3.

Entrapped – Wollongong 1, Milton 2, Whitianga 3.

Controlled – Hawera 1, Whitianga 2, Wollongong 3.

Spirit of the Challenge – Linton Military.

Best Technical – Wollongong.

Best Medical – NT Fire and Rescue.

Best Team Leader – Whitianga

SBS Directors' Shield – Victoria SES.

The 2018 Australasian championship will be held in Warragul in Victoria.



Whitianga in action.

Photo: UFBA/ARRO

Gold Stars

Fifty Year Medals and Gold Stars for June and July 2017 were:

50 Year Medal

William Edwards

Selwyn Allred

John Collings

Victor Carter

James Ritchie

Manutuke

Methven

Taihape

Opotiki

Whakatane

Gold Stars

Kris Holland

Darren Griffin

Trevor Chapman

Warwick le Quesne, Brent Marshall,

Hamish Nicol

Mark Kinzett

Murray Anderson, Martin Kane

Blair Eade, Richard Cook

Ian Reade

Iain Speirs

Gary Clarkson

Hokitika

Raetihi

Timaru

Napier

Taradale

Birkenhead

Wallacetown

Mapua

Palmerston North

Whangamata

Firefighters get sweet and sticky

Singularly absent from the FENZ training regime is: *Flood, molasses, dilution of same.*

Granted, it is not something a New Zealand brigade would expect to find itself dealing with. Likewise, it did not occur to the Boston fire brigade that it would have to deal with an 8m-high tidal wave of the sweet, sticky substance back in 1919. In vain the brigade tried to wash away the residue by opening the hydrants. By accident they discovered that only seawater 'cut' the mess, after seeing it 'dissolve' in the nearby inner harbour.

It was described as a tragedy like no other, killing 25, injuring over 150 and resulting in massive insurance claims. The molasses' viscosity meant it was like liquid mud, moved at 56 kph and carried a punch of 25 tonnes. The giant tank alongside Boston's inner harbour was 50 foot tall and 282 feet in girth and was full to the brim with 2,320,000 gallons (14,000 tonnes) of molasses landed from the West Indies. After the flood passed, it lay in pools up to thigh-deep in places.

At noon that day, the distillery superintendent took a cursory look at the 'frowning' tank, ignored the molasses sweating ominously through the riveted seams, and left for lunch downtown - thus undoubtedly saving his life. But the busy market district was thronged with people destined to be less fortunate. Along Commercial Street, trucks and horse team drays clattered on the cobblestones beneath the elevated railway. In the doorways of shops and brick dwellings across the street from the tank, residents were taking advantage of the warm weather to sun themselves.



The Boston Firehouse near the harbour, home of the Engine 31 fireboat, was pushed from its foundation by the molasses wave and nearly swept into the water. The second floor of the building pancaked onto the first, trapping for hours stonecutter John Barry and several firefighters, including George Layhe, who was pinned beneath debris. Layhe tried desperately to keep his head above the rising molasses, but his stamina gave out as rescue crews attempted to reach him, and he dropped his head back into the molasses and drowned.

Photo: Boston Library

In stables of nearby dray companies, dozens of work horses were placidly munching hay. Teamsters chatted over their lunch boxes on the freight-loading platforms. The time was 12.41pm. At this moment a local patrolman was making a routine duty call at a police-signal box down the street – suddenly he heard a grinding, rumbling noise. Looking up, he saw a dark sea of liquid gush from the bottom of the tank. He saw the big tank open out and fall apart, and a towering wall of molasses roll over the ground with a seething, hissing sound. He yelled down the phone for every ambulance and firefighter and policeman available.

The firehouse was shoved off its foundations and stood with its tower canted at a crazy angle. Several firefighters were trapped inside and it took nearly four hours before their comrades freed the last of them;



Plain water was ineffective in washing away the mess. Photo: Boston Fire Department Archives

including one lying dead at the foot of the sliding pole, with the firehouse piano and pool table piled on top of him.

Even in the shallow places the molasses was dangerous, being worse than quicksand. It held your feet – well-meaning bystanders waded in to help floundering victims and couldn't get out. Fire lines were strung around the area, but the crowd pressed so hard against the ropes that some people slipped into the goo.

Ambulances manned by molasses-stained interns were continually carrying away victims. One ambulance outfit of Red Cross girls arrived in neat black and white uniforms and earnestly plunged into the flood. When firefighters dragged them out, swollen and tottering with the weight of molasses, they looked like creatures of the primordial slime. Sailors, firemen and policemen wallowing thigh deep in the wreckage were coated from head to foot with molasses, giving them a weird copper colour.

By mid-afternoon the flood had settled. Hundreds of residents and curious spectators went slipping and slopping through the mess and tracked it all over the metropolitan district. The next day if you sat down

in a public place or conveyance in the city of Boston, you stuck to the seat. Riders in buses in Worcester, 44 miles away, found themselves smeared. There wasn't a telephone booth in Boston where the instrument didn't stick to your fingers.

When firefighters discovered salt water managed somehow to 'cut' the molasses, fireboats and pumping equipment were called in, while police used huge hydraulic siphons to pump molasses out of flooded cellars. However, it was nearly a week before all of the bodies were recovered, and months before signs of the disaster disappeared.

Knee-deep in molasses, firefighters search for survivors. Note the molasses dripping off the ladder. Photo: Boston Library





Coming to your station sometime in the next couple of years ... a brand new look. Naturally, given the size of the FENZ fleet, this is not going to happen overnight.

There is no layout for the aerals as yet.

Photos: FENZ Project

The new look ...



Kiwis assist with out-of-control Canadian wildfires

Eighty firefighters from Fire and Emergency NZ, the Department of Conservation and forestry contractors will be in Canada for a five-week mission to provide relief to Canadian firefighters stretched to capacity.

In a tumultuous start to the wildfire fire season, more than 1.2 million hectares have so far been destroyed. The worst affected region is British Columbia where more than 474,000 hectares have gone up in flames and 135 fires continue to burn out of control. More than 1000 firefighters plus armed forces personnel have been battling out-of-control wildfires that drove about 40,000 residents from their homes in British Columbia's central interior. Another 600 personnel were backing them up, plus some 200 contractors, and an additional 260 firefighters were recruited from other parts of Canada.

A province-wide state of emergency was declared after more than 173 fires ignited on Friday, 7 July. The next day, nearly 100 new fires sprang up and crews were battling many that remained uncontained. The three biggest fires ranged in size from approximately 14 to 20 sq km and forced thousands of people from their homes. One blaze destroyed

**Full moon
over the
fire line.**



Photo:
Getty
Images

dozens of buildings, including at least five houses, 30 trailer park homes and two hangars. Mining operations were shut down in some areas and about 30,000 head of cattle were threatened.

By the end of July British Columbia was still battling over 160 fires and about 188,000 ha burned-over hectares had cost the province around \$90 million.

Hot start in California

Meanwhile, the Californian wildfire season got off to a hot start with triple the acreage burned compared to last year, and Cal Fire says the number of fires is up 20%. Temperatures have exceeded 100° F, following one of the wettest winters on record, which means more growth and fire fuel – on top of a lot of dead brush left by six previous years of drought in some areas.

Firefighters across 10 states have also been busy with 45 uncontained large fires burning and over 914,000 acres burnt.



**Little left
of Boston
Flats,
British
Columbia.**

Photo:
Toronto Star

150 dead in Pakistan explosion

At least 150 people died and 100 more were seriously injured when a petrol tanker exploded after a crash in Pakistan. Passersby rushed to collect the 5500 litres of free fuel from pools that collected around the crash site, despite police efforts to clear them away from the danger zone. The fireball also engulfed at least 73 motorcycles and several cars.

Worst tragedy in living memory

Wildfires in Portugal during June and July claimed 64 lives, including one firefighter as they rampaged through 30,000 ha of forest and farmland. Prime Minister Antonio Costa called it the biggest human tragedy in Portugal in living memory.

13 killed in boiler blast

Bangladeshi firefighters had to pick through the remains of a six-storey garment factory looking for survivors after a boiler exploded, demolishing several walls and allowing the roof to fall in. At least 13 were killed and 50 injured.

Seven die in Johannesburg fire

Seven occupants died when Johannesburg's Cape Yorke building, caught fire. One of the dead jumped from the high-rise building. A crane was used to rescue 50 people.

Yacht explodes

Firefighters were dealing with a fire on a motor yacht in Minden, Germany, when the boat exploded, lifting it several meters into the air. Fifteen firefighters were injured. Three people, who were severely injured, have had surgery and are in stable condition. Two other boats nearby and a car on the pier were also badly damaged.

Another big fire at Camden

About 70 firefighters fought a major blaze at London's iconic Camden Lock Market. The north London market was also hit by a serious blaze in February 2008, when the nearby Camden Canal Market was destroyed. The waterside market was closed for 15 months. About 28 million people visit the market each year, with crowds drawn by shopping, entertainment and nightlife.

Nuclear reactor fire

A battery short-circuit caused a fire aboard an experimental floating nuclear reactor, being built in the heart of St Petersburg. Fortunately, the blaze was quickly brought under control without injuries.

Two years for arson

A Canadian volunteer firefighter who admitted to setting a series of fires in Alberta, including a spectacular blaze that destroyed a landmark Canadian National Railway trestle, has been sentenced to 24 months in gaol. The trestle cost several million dollars to replace.

London's pride paraded

Shaking off the terror attacks and the Grenfell Tower aftermath for a few hours, London's emergency services were at the centre of the London Pride parade this year. The London Fire Brigade, in particular, has been 'out there' for a number of years and it is central to its diversification attitude. Tens of thousands of people paraded through central London for the annual Pride festivities, marking 50 years since homosexuality was decriminalised.

Apartment complex razed

Several hundred Oakland, California residents had to be evacuated as an apartment complex under construction was razed in a spectacular blaze. Additional to normal concerns was a high-rise construction crane swinging around in the flames and liable to collapse. The seven-storey building, known as Alta Waverly, was to have 196 apartments plus a large retail area.

18 missing after bus crash

Over 200 emergency workers responded to a truck v bus in Bavaria but could not save 18 people who are missing. The fire was so intense firefighters could not initially get close to it and all that was left of the bus and its contents was the frame. Thirty people were injured, some seriously.

Hot concert

A huge fire at a Spanish music festival forced the evacuation of over 20,000 concertgoers and incinerated the large outdoor stage. Twelve firefighting units needed around an hour to extinguish the flames. Firefighters said they were investigating the cause.