

Having attended the London & South East Regional meeting in Eastbourne on Friday 27th June I found myself chatting with Christian Burt regarding the Forensic Conference which was due to take place the following day in London. He made this crazy suggestion that perhaps I could write a report about the Conference, giving information as to what it was like and hopefully what people had missed who had not attended. After thinking about it quickly I thought to myself that it couldn't be that hard and agreed. It wasn't until I was thinking about it on my way home from Eastbourne that I thought I may have bitten off more than I could chew! Having got to the City & Islington College Centre for Applied Science early on Saturday 28th June I thought I would embrace my moment of madness and give this report a shot.



CITY AND ISLINGTON
COLLEGE

The City & Islington College Centre for Applied Science is a large college which is situated less than 10 minutes walk away from Angel Underground station so was extremely easy to find. Gareth Dineen, the Course Manager for Forensics was there to meet us, introduced himself and gave us directions to where we had to sign in. After signing in we were shown to a separate room nearby which would become the tea break room with plenty of hot & cold drinks available with plenty of biscuits for dunking!!

We were called into the Conference room around 10am to make a start, Gareth stepped up & introduced himself with a background as to what his current role is and how the Forensic Conference came about. Having a background as an APT has given him an idea as to how our minds function and what we may find interesting! He introduced the first speaker which was David Bellamy, a Senior Crime Scene Investigator & Crime Scene Trainer from Kent Police College. David has a vast amount of experience in his field and his talk was centred around Operation Mallard, the investigation into 58 deaths of Chinese nationals that were found in the back of a truck at the Port of Dover on 18th June 2000. I personally was looking forward to this as being based in East Kent and regularly work with a few of the guys that were involved directly in this case, I had a personal curiosity to find out more. I found David's lecture extremely good with lots of information, it flowed really well and gave everything from the time he received the call the night before his birthday right up to how the team of forensics worked tirelessly to convict the people involved. It was a mammoth task as nothing had ever been done on this scale before & many things that were learnt during this investigation were put into normal practice thereafter. There was no real DVI in place at the time of this case so things were learnt which we are involved in today regarding mass fatalities. It was a truly incredible story as to how human traffickers only have one thought on their mind & their pure disregard to human life, it also showed the dedication & expertise of our Forensic teams with what was involved in convicting the traffickers. I spoke with David during a coffee break & he was disappointed that he had not given us the details of the convictions, but I said I would be happy to provide this information in this report as it will be added to the website. The lorry driver was found guilty of being directly involved with the trafficking and was sentenced to 14 years in prison. He would only serve half of this sentence and was released in 2008. The woman who was the facilitator that some of the Chinese nationals in their possession had her phone number, was sentenced to 6 years. Another thing that you may be interested in knowing is the deal the 2 Pathologists struck to carry out the post mortems. They carried out the post mortems over 2 days, their reduced fee.....£27,000 between them!!!



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Next up was a talk from Gary Howard who is the Director of Complete Forensics. His background is mainly a military background consisting of infantry, where he served in the first Iraq war, & then a career

in the Royal Military Police progressing through into CSI & Crime Scene Management. He then went to work as a CSI based in Trinidad & Tobago, at which time this country was seeing around 600 murders a year. A large workload in any country but with only 3 CSI's employed throughout the country this was a tough job! Gary's case study was the loss of an RAF Nimrod XV230 of which 14 military personnel lost their lives whilst the plane was refuelling in midair over Helmand province in Afghanistan, this at the time (& I think still is) being the biggest single loss of life since the Falklands war in 1982.



He explained the logistics of setting up & bringing the soldiers home & also setting up the John Radcliffe Hospital Mortuary to carry out the 14 post mortems. He also explained that they were required to x-ray each soldier as they were unaware as to what was to be found. During these x-rays they found grenades, ammunition and various other things that would have been dangerous, so as you can imagine, parts of the hospital were evacuated more than once during this time with the Bomb Disposal Unit making a few appearances also! Again this was another huge task to coordinate for many reasons, including safety to the staff & military present and was a fascinating insight into the workings of post mortems for the military. Gary has a wealth of experience, is a comical guy & his talk was interesting from start to finish.

After a quick break we was back in the Conference room with Iain Peck, Director of Prometheus Forensic Services which is dedicated to & specialises in Fire Investigation. Again, Iain is another guy who has vast experience in his field & it was a real pleasure to be present during his talk. Iain's talk was split into 2 parts, the first part giving background & knowledge into the behaviour of fire then a case study on Operation Killick, which was a house fire in East Sussex that originally started out as to what Police described as accidental but then on further investigations at the scene (from Iain himself) decided that something more sinister was at play. Iain's talk was very well constructed allowing a good understanding of the principles of fire, its devastating effect and how a fire scene is investigated. During the first part of his talk he used a combination of Powerpoint, photos & videos in an informative way that made understanding easy. It was very well explained, informative & descriptive. Because of this, when looking at the crime scene photos during the case study it made things easier to understand what a fire investigator is looking at & how they come to their conclusions regarding origins of fire etc.



Lunch was great & catered with a fantastic spread of sandwiches from Pret A Manger & various flavours of Doritos which set me up just nice for the afternoon session!



The afternoon session started with a talk from Ray Fysh, a Specialist Forensic Advisor from the University of Reading. Ray has been involved in Forensics before some of us were even born so you won't meet many other people with more experience than him! He has received no less than 6

commendations during his career. He has been involved in some very high profile cases over the years including his case study which was about “Adam”, the torso found in The Thames in 2001. His talk gave a good background of Forensics including some information in chemistry. This was a little hard going if your not a fan of chemistry but it was interesting & relevant to his case study, even if you could only grasp the basics it pieced things together when Ray talked about the Forensic techniques they used during the investigation into “Adam”. The story behind “Adam” is that on Friday, 21st September 2001 a call was made of a body floating in the Thames which turned out to be a child’s torso. Upon investigation it was believed to be that of a child aged between 4 & 7 and was centred around the idea of a ritual killing. It was a difficult investigation as it was very difficult to find leads to follow up but the team worked hard to identify “Adam”. After much frustration during the investigation they decided to use a technique where the bones are analysed. These are analysed to see if it could determine his geographical origins. As everything a person eats bears the trace of the soil of where it was grown or reared, soil samples were compared to places around the world. They managed to discover through this technique that “Adam” was from originally from Nigeria. As of yet they have still to prosecute anyone although they do have an idea, but due to various reasons they are unable to proceed with any prosecution. This seems a fitting end considering how difficult this investigation has been from the start! A fascinating insight into a fascinating case. Again Ray is another guy who has a wealth of information available and it was an honour to have been in the room during his talk.

Lastly we come to Adam McCarthy, a guy who has worked in science right through his career which started out as a Medical Laboratory Assistant to finally end up as an expert witness in the areas of DNA profiling and Firearms. His talk centred around the IPCC & their investigations into fatal shootings by Police Firearms Officers. He structured his talk with plenty of information about firearms then linked this into case studies of shootings. Another specialist Forensic subject which makes you appreciate how good these guys are at their jobs!



My conclusion to this Conference was that it was great! And amazingly it was free! I found each & every one of the speakers fantastic, each one of them being able to confidently speak & pass over their knowledge with ease. I can safely say that I would recommend any one of these speakers to a future AAPT Conference, I’m sure other people will agree that they all had the ability to not only provide great information but keep the room interested in the subject. As I have stated previously, I felt privileged to be involved in a day with these Forensic experts & they all deserve the credit that has been associated with them. A fantastic event that was accredited to the AAPT!

Steve Burr FAAPT, MRSPH