

Disaster Action Newsletter

Spring 2010

A Review of the Decade

So much has happened since publication of our last newsletter, but there is only one place to begin. We felt greatly the loss of Maurice de Rohan, who died in October 2006. The bedrock of DA, without whom the organisation would not exist, Maurice is very much missed. He would, we believe, remain proud of DA and what we continue to achieve.

Sadly, we reflect also on the deaths of Peter Spooner and Eileen Dallaglio, two other founder members of DA, who were champions of the rights of the bereaved

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act, fought for so long by DA, finally received Royal Assent and became law in April 2008. While the Act may not be all that we set out to achieve, it is an important deterrent for companies that might otherwise take the safety of employees and the public too lightly.

Following Maurice's death, we felt that DA would benefit from a trustee brought in from outside the organisation and were delighted at Moya Wood Heath's acceptance of the role. Moya has been associated with DA from our launch, playing an integral part in our development and a consistent supporter of our activities. With her

assistance remarkable advances have been achieved in post-disaster response and care. Currently the Emergency Planning Advisor to the Red Cross, Moya divides her time between Brussels and the UK

Throughout the past decade, DA has been going through a period of consolidation, receiving core funding from our long-term supporters The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in 2003, and more recently from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This has enabled DA to maintain our position as independent advocacy service that can function without statutory funding, or funding from any vested interest source.

At the same time, there has been a quantum leap in the world of emergency planning and response, in which the human aspects are now squarely at the centre. DA has played no small part in bringing about this significant change.

Terrorist attacks in New York, Bali, London, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Mumbai have meant that our membership has grown. DA is one of those charities that is saddened by an expanding membership. These new members have, however, brought their painful

...continued overleaf

Founding Chairman Maurice de Rohan AO OBE

In October 2006, a bitter blow came for DA with the death of our founder, trustee and former chairman, Maurice, who had been suffering from cancer.

Maurice's guiding hand had been at the helm of DA since its inception - without him the organisation would never have come into being. On many occasions over the years, Maurice gently brought us back to the principles that underpin our work, and was unswerving in his commitment to serving the interests of those directly affected by disaster. We owe him

a great debt.

That the same applies to the whole country was evident in the words of tribute from then Home Secretary John Reid MP, when introducing the second reading of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill in the House of Commons just a few days after Maurice died.

Pamela Dix's obituary of Maurice, which first appeared in the *Guardian* on 16 November 2006, reminds us of his many areas of interest and expertise and is reproduced on page 3.



Iain Philpott and Sophie Tarassenko have taken on the role of Co Chairs of Disaster Action. Here they look back at the first decade of the millennium for Disaster Action

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A Review of the Decade (cont.)

experiences to inform and assist in developing the work of DA.

Members provide the continuity of experience and collective memory that other - professional and governmental - agencies lack, as inevitably their personnel changes. While each experience is unique to each individual, our collective experience of more than 20 disasters of different origin provides a powerful series of messages about identifying and meeting the needs of those affected by emergencies. Reiterating fundamental truths rooted in our experience of many disasters is

very much the essence of what we still have to offer. The key question for our contribution to any consultation we are asked to contribute to is always: do we have experience of this type of situation in our group? If yes, then we can contribute the fruit of that experience. If no, then it is not likely that we can comment in any meaningful way.

At every AGM we revisit the question: should DA continue to exist? The answer is still a resounding 'yes'.

"Members provide experience and collective memory that other agencies lack."

Our Work—Now and for the Future

Facilitating the development of self-determining family and survivor support groups is a central part of what DA can do. The attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 gave DA a sad and unwelcome opportunity to assist those affected in the UK by bringing them together to form their own group.

Our website - for which we are grateful to Steve Bradley of Chambers Technology Support for his time and expertise - gives DA an increasingly important platform for our work. On it can be found our leaflet series 'When Disaster Strikes', which offers support and guidance to others affected as we have been. The website is no substitute, though, for the personal contact through telephone calls and email that those who find themselves on the receiving end need. Many such calls come from people affected by a single trauma - the need for information and support is no different for them, and DA plays a role in meeting their needs too.

The website also contains a section with guidance for responders on issues such as disaster victim identification, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and longer-term support needs.

Winning the Society Guardian Charity Award in 2004 for excellence in our field brought a sense of real achievement. 2004 was to end, however, with the South East Asian tsunami, a devastating international tragedy that was to have an impact on so many. The police, the

British Red Cross and others called upon DA's experience. In time, those affected in the UK formed their own group, Tsunami Support UK.

Acting as independent advisers to the police, central and local government and voluntary agencies, DA offered guidance on the setting up of the first Humanitarian Assistance Centre in the UK following the 7 July 2005 London bombings. The bombings brought into sharp relief the need for an organisation such as DA, which could advise on the means to deal with the appalling consequences of such actions.

After the North Sea Super Puma helicopter crash off Aberdeen on 1 April 2009, we were invited to the city to advise on the setting up of the Incident Support Centre.

This work brings us into contact with many committed individuals who have done a great deal to help DA spread the message: putting, and keeping, the needs of people at the heart of emergency response.

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) humanitarian assistance unit recently awarded DA a grant for a discrete project on disaster trust funds management and dissemination, a subject close to the hearts of our members. Recognition from government minister Tessa Jowell and her team, and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), for whom we have become a trusted stakeholder, are much appreciated. Such recognition has been hard won.

We have taken part in a number of European Union Red Cross- and French speaking Belgian Red Cross- funded initiatives, including the 2009 'Informed Prepared Together' project on individual, community and national resilience and a handbook for those assisting people affected by terrorist attack. Visits to Brussels, meeting those from across the whole European Union and elsewhere, were a privilege.

Current work includes our ongoing contribution to the Cabinet Office Community Resilience Steering Group on the development of a community resilience programme; the ACPO Disaster Victim Identification Manual consultation; and the DCMS Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies guidance consultation.

Capturing the corporate memory of DA is something that vice chairman Anne Eyre decided could no longer be put off. Anne has put together a first draft of a book, tentatively entitled *Decades of Disaster* that we hope to publish for DA's 20th anniversary in 2011.

Last, but by no means least, none of this could be done without the commitment, time and effort of Judy Cooper, our Secretary/Director.

Pamela Dix



The Judges said that DA was "topical, focused and clear".

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act

Sunday 6 April 2008 saw the enactment of The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act, the culmination of a committed campaign that began after the sinking of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* in March 1987. The work of the Herald Families Association went on to embrace all those who had been similarly let down by the criminal justice system following disaster. This was to become a central focus for DA over a period of 16 years.

In November 1991, DA presented a submission to the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, calling for radical changes in the criminal justice system in the treatment of possible corporate crimes of violence. Following publication of the Law Commission's consultation paper on manslaughter, we recommended further changes as set out in *The Case for Corporate Responsibility*, written and researched for DA by David Bergman. In March 1996, the Law Commission acknowledged DA's input and that of other victim support groups, publishing a draft Bill creating a new offence of corporate killing. This Bill was not enacted.

In June 2005, we made a written submission on the draft Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill and gave oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee in November of the same year. The Bill then went back through committee, with the final version put before parliament in October 2006, with some of DA's suggested amendments included. Our work on corporate responsibility was encouraged and funded by The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

The central purpose of this law is to ensure that other companies should not replicate the sloppy corporate behaviour that led to the 'unlawful killing' of so many people in the *Herald of Free Enterprise* sinking. The law should act as an important deterrent, offering the protection denied to those killed on the *Herald* and in numerous disasters that have followed.

This law is a testament to the commitment of so many individuals, family and survivor groups who worked for a common purpose: to influence business and political structures to change attitudes to what is acceptable practice.

Maurice de Rohan AO OBE Obituary

The agent-general for South Australia in London, Maurice de Rohan, was presented with the Order of Australia in hospital by the high commissioner only hours before he died of cancer, aged 70.

Born in Adelaide, he studied civil engineering at Adelaide University, and, aged 23, co-founded Kinnaird Hill de Rohan & Young at the beginning of a highly successful civil engineering and architecture career that brought him to the UK in 1976. In 1982, he was elected a fellow of the British Institute of Management and, craving the company of like-minded Australians, established Australian Business in Europe. A freeman of the City of London and a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Engineers, he was the driving force behind the establishment of the Australia Day Foundation in 2003, and made sure that it was proudly celebrated in the UK.

Appointed agent-general in 1998, de Rohan entertained the

great and the good with seemingly effortless charm and attention, often aboard his narrow boat at Little Venice. Last May, ill-health forced him to turn down the offer of the governorship of South Australia.

As a member of the MCC from 1986, he oversaw the construction of the new media centre at Lord's, the largest aluminium structure in the world not built to float. He won a seat on the executive committee - an unprecedented feat for one of "the old enemy" - and also helped to conserve the Cutty Sark.

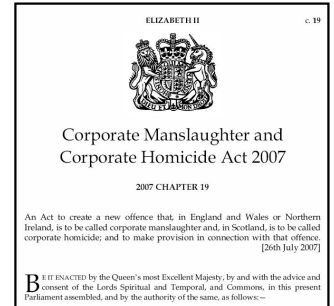
De Rohan's daughter Alison, and son-in-law Francis, died in the 1987 Zeebrugge ferry disaster, and he helped to found the Herald Families Association to secure higher standards of ferry safety and the governance of corporate bodies. He was awarded an OBE in 1992 for services to maritime safety.

In 1991 his personal skills helped in the founding of Disas-

ter Action, an advocacy and advisory service that gives a voice to survivors and the bereaved from more than 20 disasters. As chairman of the charity until last year (and a trustee until his death), he was immensely proud of its achievement in 2004 in winning the Society Guardian award.

De Rohan worked at a relentless pace, but managed to draw the best out of those around him. His calm authority and warmth enriched the lives of those who knew him. A keen Australian Rules footballer in his youth, he remained a fervent supporter of Port Adelaide throughout his life. In 1958 he married Margaret, who survives him, as do his children, Jonathan and Julie, and his four beloved grandchildren.

Sophie Tarassenko



A milestone in the life of Disaster Action, when the Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007 was passed in July 2007

Pamela Dix

"His calm authority and warmth enriched the lives of those who knew him."

Disaster Action Influencing Decision Makers

Disaster Action members continue to contribute to emergency planning and response seminars and conferences around the UK and in Europe. These presentations are highly valued, offering a completely different perspective that would otherwise be missing. Feedback is consistently good. For some years we have been speaking at training events run by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) for senior identification managers. Pam Dix's presentation at the annual Interpol standing committee event on disaster victim identification in Lyon in May 2008

is just one example of many of those increasingly common occasions when DA has the opportunity to influence the thinking of planners and responders dealing with the most difficult aspects of the aftermath of disaster.

During 2009 we began to have a presence on the multi-agency major incident gold command courses as well as the Department of Health training for the ambulance service Hazardous Area Response Teams. One member writes below about his contribution to a training day.

Pamela Dix

Making a Difference

Mary Campion and I both were invited to present at an education seminar in the south east of England. The organisers thought that we should open and close the event, as our presentations were personal accounts. Following the customary introductions I began by telling the attendees - planners, responders, head teachers - that I was a rescuer in a school incident, as well as a parent of two children who were within the school.

I relayed my experience to the keen listeners in chronological order, from the normality of my work and life in the town, to how I was alerted to the incident, my role upon arrival until departure, to the devastating effect in the aftermath, from a personal, local, national and international perspective. This included positive and less positive experiences, from compassion on the one hand and ill directed blame on the other. My one-hour talk was aided by several PowerPoint slides, which, rather than being a distraction, assisted me to illustrate the gravity of this epi-

sode. I concluded with an overview of what DA is and what we aim to do.

Towards the end I asked if there were any questions. Out of the silence came questions from a head teacher, a head of education and several planners. It was not until we broke for refreshments that I realised the impact on the audience, at many levels. One said that they never thought a disaster could happen in their school, but they now realised it could; another, with tears in her eyes, wanted to hug me. Perhaps best of all, another said, 'Sometimes we come to these things and we watch the clock - you have made a difference, a real difference.'

Mary's presentation was received equally well, the audience listening attentively to all that she had to say about the enormous impact on her teenage charges of the sinking of the *Jupiter* on that fateful day in 1988.

"Sometimes we come to these things and we watch the clock - you have made a difference, a real difference."

Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum (VSCPF)

The Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum is a grouping for voluntary organisations that have a civil protection role. The strategic aim of the Forum is to identify and maximise the voluntary sector contribution to UK civil protection arrangements. The Forum comprises representatives from the voluntary sector, central government, statutory authorities and professional associations.

Anyone visiting the Cabinet Office at 22 Whitehall for the first time could not fail to be impressed with the level of security. Wearing our visitor's passes we were escorted to the meeting room, with various Cabinet Office representatives lining the way.

Moya Wood Heath, Chair of the VSCPF (and Trustee of Disaster Action) welcomed us, and the presentations began. Informative and interesting, these kicked off with Rob Doran of the Cabinet Office Civil contingencies Secretariat speaking about individual and community resilience. Rob discussed new guidelines for individuals, households and coordinators and guidance for supporters, professionals and the voluntary sector.

Moya then spoke about the European Union Red Cross Informed, Prepared Together project. The importance of putting into practice the four principles of being informed, being prepared, working together to build resilience are key messages from the project, which has a very informative website.

Frances Macleod of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) Humanitarian Assistance Unit outlined their work, including its involvement in the 7 July London bombings memorial. The be-reaved were involved in the design of the memorial,

visiting the Sheffield steelworks where the columns were made. Frances also spoke about new guidance on humanitarian assistance, now being consulted on. 2010 will mark the unveiling of the Tsunami memorial at the Natural History Museum and work will continue on efforts to provide financial assistance to those affected by overseas terrorism. She paid tribute to DA.

Charlie Edwards from the office for Security and Counter Terrorism referred to the necessity to rethink resilience, referring to the 'four Es: - education, engagement, empowerment and encouragement'.

Pre-prepared groups then considered issues including how to draw more individuals into the voluntary sector, developing community resilience and sharing good practice.

Other speakers included Kathy Settle of the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, who also spoke warmly about DA's contribution.

I was inspired by the passion and commitment of so many individuals from so many different organisations and found the meeting very worthwhile.

Maureen Kavanagh describes attending the most recent VSCPF meeting

Twenty Years On

In the past three years, the 20th anniversaries of most of the disasters that brought Disaster Action into being have taken place - Zeebrugge, King's Cross, Piper Alpha, Clapham, Jupiter, Lockerbie, Kegworth, Hillsborough, Marchioness, UT772. These terrible events, and others such as Aberfan and the 1985 Manchester air crash, resulted in the formation of Disaster Action. Some of those affected, survivors and bereaved, write their reflections on their experience of disaster, the passage of the years, the 20th anniversary and what it meant for them.

Zeebrugge

For me, the HFA began with a date: 7 September 1987. That date would have been the second wedding anniversary of my daughter, Alison, and her husband, Francis Gaillard. Both of them died when the *Herald of Free Enterprise* sank within sight of Zeebrugge harbour, on the evening of 6 March 1987, with the loss of 193 lives.

When I read in a newspaper that the twice-delayed inquest was to be held in Dover on 7 September 1987, I knew that I had to be there. This was no coincidence, this was a 'sign': the heart knows what the heart wants.

When I told Maurice that I would go to the inquest he replied, 'Well, I'm not going', and I said that was fine but that I would go. However, something strange happened in the intervening months. At some point we both knew that he would go, although this was never discussed.

King's Cross

The 20th anniversary of the King's Cross fire, on 18 November 2007, was marked as always by the laying of wreaths and flowers at the memorial in the station. It was a time both to reflect on what has happened in the past 20 years, and, for my family, to think about marking the day in a different way.

Sir Desmond's Fennell's report into the tragedy, published in November 1988, had made more than 150 recommendations. Soon after the fire, smoking was banned across the entire tube network. Gradually, the old wooden escalators were replaced and heat and smoke detectors fitted in rooms housing escalator machinery.

Legislation was passed to cover tube stations, enforcing minimum safe staffing levels, means of detecting and warning of fires, means of escape and standards of fire-resistant construction. Improvements were made to personal protective equipment for firefighters and plans of the station placed outside every stop in the network to help fire crews in emergencies.

Twenty years on, however, emergency services still lacked radios for use underground. This issue had been brought to the fore in 2005 when the London bombings took place and the report into

Piper Alpha

On 6 July 2008 the families, survivors, friends and colleagues of the 167 men killed in the world's worst off-shore disaster gathered to remember, as always, and to pay tribute to those whose lives were cruelly taken on that summer night 20 years before. The 20th anniversary was

And so we went. At Dover, we met Pamela and Peter Spooner, and Joan and Alan Reynolds; all of us had lost beloved, adult children. They told us of a meeting arranged for Birmingham on the following Sunday, or Sunday week, and we said we would go. We arrived late, but that didn't seem to matter.

There was an incredible outpouring of raw emotion at that meeting: grief, anger, frustration, and overwhelming love. Maurice sat there, silent and astonished, for he heard the same words that I had been saying for months. Eventually he found his voice and stood to say - in his inimitable fashion - a few, succinct words. By the end of that meeting an ad hoc committee had been set up of which Maurice was the chairman. And the rest, as the cliché goes, is history.

that tragedy stated that because police, fire and ambulance staff all used different radio systems, rescuers at ground level could not talk to their colleagues underground. It was unacceptable that those important recommendations made after the King's Cross fire had still not been implemented. London Underground stated that radios would be working underground by the end of 2008.

In January 2004 the final victim of the fire was, at last, identified and his family was able to join us at the remembrance service on the following anniversaries.

The anniversary mass held every year at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament not far from the station ensured for nearly 20 years that we had somewhere to go on the day, and could meet up with other families and friends of those who died. The last one has now taken place, and we are hugely thankful to Father Kennedy and the parish for their warmth and care during those years. In the years ahead my family will be remembering my brother Ivan in a more private way. It seems that it has become more important to us, at this point, to share how much we still miss him, than to focus on the way he died. Nonetheless we will continue to lay flowers at the station memorial on the anniversary of the fire.

also marked offshore on all the installations in the British sector of the North Sea.

In the Kirk of St. Nicholas Uniting in Aberdeen, we gathered for the remembrance service, led by the Reverend Andrew Jolly, chaplain to the

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Margaret de Rohan recalls the beginning of the Herald Family Association

"There was an incredible outpouring of raw emotion at that meeting: grief, anger, frustration, and overwhelming love."

Sophie Tarassenko reflects on the changes made to Underground safety and the change in focus for future anniversaries

"It seems that it has become more important to us, at this point, to share how much we still miss him, than to focus on the way he died."

Ann Gillanders reflects on the remembrance service and the importance of remembering each individual

Piper Alpha (cont.)

Oil and Gas Industry. While a very emotional service, it was one of the most comforting in the years since the disaster happened. We all greatly appreciated the support of the many people who attended the service.

In the silence of the church the names of all the men were read out. As the Reverend Jolly pointed out, these were real people who had lost their lives in the inferno, and they should be remembered individually. These were real people with real aims, hopes, fears and beliefs, with families - people who loved, were loved and are still loved, and will always be loved. He went on to say that there must always be names with faces, stories to tell, so that what has gone before does not become just another

statistic. His words echoed our feelings.

After the service we laid floral tributes at the Piper Alpha Memorial in Hazlehead Park. The First Minister for Scotland, Alex Salmond, and the Duke of Gloucester (representing the Queen), both present at the service, laid wreaths at the memorial. At the same time offshore, from the Piper Bravo platform, a wreath was placed in the sea near to where the Piper Alpha platform had stood. Alex Salmond said that he hoped the commemoration would also provide a reminder that safety should be paramount. After refreshments, the families, survivors and friends, who had supported and comforted each other throughout the day, once again went their separate ways.

"...there must always be names with faces, stories to tell, so that what has gone before does not become just another statistic."

Jupiter

On 21 October 1988 the *Jupiter* left Piraeus harbour. On board, 391 children, 84 adults and 110 crew prepared to cruise the Eastern Mediterranean. After only 15 minutes at sea *Jupiter* and an Italian freighter collided. Within 40 minutes the *Jupiter* listed at 80 degrees, then sank vertically in 270 feet of water with many passengers still on board. Two crew members died. One third of all passengers had to swim to safety. A teacher and a child were never found.

I was leading a group from Cator Park School, Beckenham. We returned home to face post traumatic stress disorder plus the legal complexities of insurance and compensation. One Cator Park girl pleaded her case for compensation in the High Court. We are told she set a precedent.

The disaster affected many lives forever - health, careers and the confidence to travel abroad. Unforeseen consequences, however, have affected those in the wider community. Now all cruise ships are required to hold an emergency drill for all passengers before a ship leaves port. Prior to 1988 the family of a woman teacher dying in service received no financial support, while a family of a male

teacher did. The *Jupiter* disaster helped to change this inequality.

Research into the long-term effects of disaster on children has improved understanding and treatment for all suffering from PTSD.

In 1998 Liverpool University Press published the accounts of the Cator Park cruise group in a book called *Jupiter's Children*, which I had the privilege of compiling. The book acted as a catalyst for family discussion, sometimes for the first time, about what happened. Sales have raised over £1600 for charity.

During the last 20 years the Cator Park group has kept in contact throughout to mark the 10th, 15th and 20th anniversaries. Some have visited Piraeus and met their rescuers. Unfortunately no schools were in contact with each other after the disaster, so the opportunity to support and learn from the experience was lost. On 15 February 2009, a new group was added to Facebook, 'Jupiter disaster survivors'. Sadly, most subscribers are adversely affected 20 years on.

Mary Campion reflects on the changes that have taken place as a result of the disaster, but highlights the continuing impact on survivors

"On 15 February 2009, a new group was added to Facebook, 'Jupiter disaster survivors'. Sadly, most subscribers are adversely affected 20 years on."

Clapham

12 December 1988 changed my life. I was involved in the Clapham train crash, followed by the painful realization of permanent physical damage and severe post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), rendering me uninsurable, and un-mortgageable, unless I 'acted' a 'normal' life. I would only ever be the 'cousin' of my former self, a new and isolated life. I was on a 'lily pad' floating alone trying to get to the edge of the lake but constantly being propelled by circumstances back into the middle.

Ten years on, survivors still suffered family breakdown, illness, and survivor guilt; the bereaved still resented our survival. How much compensation, not how are you, was still uppermost. I was still running on empty. Twenty years on, my life has changed. Trained as a counsellor, struggling financially, my understanding of people involved in major traumatic incidents has grown; however, the challenges and survivor isolation remain. Cognitive behaviour therapy does work. Physical exercise is a constant

requirement.

What has changed for the better in 2010? Other victims, who are involved in disasters, will inevitably have better communications provision. The care and understanding of those involved in rescue services and the published information is all very much enhanced and accessible. Each disaster brings more learning. We still do not 'cost' the ripple effect of a disaster, just number the dead and injured in news bulletins.

PTSD is recognized as a potentially serious condition needing specific treatment, although employers and others do not like to see its mention on job applications. (It's mental you see...) Doctors have learned that mobilization for spinal injuries is vital; that muscles need to be built up. Provision within the law ensures corporations take more responsibility for their incompetence. We have Disaster Action. I can make a difference. It is a privilege to be part of it. I am a survivor.

Marilyn Robinson highlights the long-term impact of both PTSD and physical injuries and how - despite this - she feels she has made a difference

"We have Disaster Action. I can make a difference. It is a privilege to be part of it. I am a survivor."

Lockerbie

When the UK Lockerbie Families Flight 103 group welcomed the inspired suggestion of an umbrella organisation to be called Disaster Action, we little imagined that all these years later we should still be searching for the truth about the Lockerbie crash in which our loved ones lost their lives in December 1988.

At the time of our own 20th anniversary, we were awaiting with some optimism the upcoming appeal hearings. The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission had considered the matter for over three years before concluding that there were six grounds for appeal and we anticipated learning more from the examination of these issues. These hopes were dashed when Megrahi, the prisoner, abandoned his appeal (unnecessarily in the case of compassionate release) in his determination to get back to Libya.

UKFF103 has been asking the UK Government for

Kegworth

On 8 January 1989, British Midland Flight 92 was en route from Heathrow Airport to Belfast when it crashed into the embankment off the M1 motorway near Kegworth. Forty-seven people died and many more were seriously injured.

Some of the survivors and bereaved went on to form the Air Safety Action Group (ASAG), getting valuable support and assistance from SCI-SAFE, which had come into being following the Manchester air disaster of 1985. Members of both groups were founder members of Disaster Action and made a vital contribution to the work of the organisation in its early years, particularly on corporate responsibility.

Early activities that ASAG focused on included meeting and talking to each other, visiting the aircraft and gathering for the dedication of a memorial park at Kegworth on the first anniversary of the crash.

The AAIB (Air Accident Investigation Branch) report into the disaster made 31 recommendations on aircraft safety, which galvanised ASAG

Hillsborough

On 15 April 2009, over 25,000 people gathered at Anfield to mark the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster. Thousands more stopped to observe a two-minute silence in the city centres of Liverpool, Sheffield and Nottingham. Such testimony to the enduring depth and breadth of the impact of the disaster was both strangely comforting and at the same time overwhelming for me. I don't know what I expected, but the extensive news coverage of the anniversary surprised me all the same. For me as a survivor it feels as if the 20th anniversary is just as significant as the 10th, but in different ways.

Despite the conclusion - some years ago now - of the inquest, public inquiry, scrutiny of evidence and private prosecution, the 'unfinished busi-

ness' was thrown into sharp relief by this anniversary. Amid continuing calls for justice, truth and accountability, the Government announced the decision to release hundreds of thousands of documents relating to the tragedy, with the Bishop of Liverpool recently appointed to chair the panel overseeing this complex and sensitive ongoing process. In the build up to the anniversary I had the chance to revisit Hillsborough stadium for the first time since just after the disaster. Seeing the physical changes to places, communities and people after 20 years puts the disaster experience in a different perspective, but for me aspects of personal reconciliation with the events of that day and its management are just as hard as ever.

a full, independent inquiry into the bombing since 1989 and we still believe that, after the various limited inquiries and the Zeist trial, there remain many crucial unanswered questions. The release of Megrahi stirred unwonted media interest in Lockerbie and we have recently had more opportunity to air some of our many concerns. At the trial the evidence was seen by many as thin and unconvincing and we still do not know, for example, the motivation for the bombing or who else was involved. There were also a number of warnings, some very explicit, and we have had no explanation of why the intelligence and security services failed.

The Prime Minister recently rejected our latest well reasoned request for a full independent inquiry, but we intend to persist and we are now working with a distinguished human rights lawyer who feels that we have a strong case, which she can help us to make.

members to enter the safety campaigning arena. ASAG's specific objectives focused on aircraft regulatory systems, air safety in general as well as getting information about the Kegworth air crash. They had a strong conviction that had commonsense safety features been incorporated in the aircraft, then more people would have survived and the severity of injury amongst the survivors would have been reduced.

Like many other disaster groups they were angry not only that the 'unthinkable' had happened to them, but that when it did, they had little practical protection to minimise the consequences. People's anger was channelled into campaigning for changes that would make every passenger and crew member who fly today safer. We owe much to the tenacity, fortitude and commitment of survivors and bereaved from Flight 92.

The laying of flowers at the memorial, and the memories of survivors, bereaved and villagers from Kegworth on the 20th anniversary of the crash continue to demonstrate the lasting impact of such a disaster on so many.

Jean Berkley, Co-ordinator of UK Families Flight 103 explains how the anniversary marked just another year in the long search for the truth about the bombing of Pan Am flight 103

"We little imagined that all these years later we should still be searching for the truth about the Lockerbie crash."

Charles Norrie writes about how those affected by Kegworth went on to form the Air Safety Action Group and became part of Disaster Action

"People's anger was channelled into campaigning for changes that would make every passenger and crew member who fly today safer."

Anne Eyre explains how she was overwhelmed by the public response to the anniversary

"For me as a survivor it feels as if the 20th anniversary is just as significant as the 10th, but in different ways."

Marchioness

As I watched the crew on board the RNLI lifeboat lay 51 red roses for those killed that fateful night, I reflected on the roller coaster of emotions that individually we have experienced over the past 20 years on this journey of loss, on the different ways we have dealt with it, and on the fact that this would be the last anniversary the bereaved relatives and survivors would gather to share together.

The 20th anniversary service at Southwark Cathedral was noteworthy in a number of ways. The survivors had not gathered together in such numbers since the first anniversary memorial service in 1990, and some were now the ages many of the bereaved parents would have been in 1989. It was a day of sharing varied memories of times gone and listening to what survivors and parents have done and are doing with their lives now. Not just remembering the 51 killed, but also the parents and survivors that have died since the disaster, some prematurely.

These survivors, their parents and the parents of those killed paid a great price in grief, torment and interruption of life. The pain of loss, suffer-

ing and anger gave the Marchioness Action Group the impetus to campaign for change in attitudes, procedures and the law. The fight was long and difficult, taking many years of hard work to achieve some of the goals through political and legal avenues. (The RNLI River Thames Lifeboats saving three hundred lives plus a year. This combined with new maritime Drinks/Drug Law is a befitting living legacy for the 51 killed.)

Over the many years we had caring support from other groups and individuals, which was always appreciated.

‘When we have reasoned as best we can how tragedies happen, how precarious life may be, how the innocent suffer, we are still not satisfied. Reason alone cannot answer our cries when those we love have been torn from us’ - the words of Archbishop Dr Robert Runcie at the September 1989 memorial service arranged by the government, which Princess Diana attended.

As the years pass others forget or have never heard of the *Bowbell/Marchioness* River Thames disaster, but we that are left will always remember.

UT772

UT-772 of the 19 September 1989 was a scheduled flight from Brazzaville in the Congo to Paris via N'djamena in Chad.

Having left the capital the aircraft blew up over the Ténéré desert. It was destroyed by a bomb inadvertently carried on board by a Congolese national at Brazzaville.

Immediately compared with the Lockerbie bombing some nine months earlier, there were important differences. A trial *in absentia* was held in Paris in 1999, and six Libyans sentenced to life imprisonment, for which none has served a day in prison. The investigation was led by the examining magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguière (a terrorism specialist), and the first charges were brought against four Libyans in just over two years and two more in 1996.

The evidence against the six was massively greater than that against the Lockerbie two (by about a factor of 10), and few have doubted, and none put forward a convincing alternative

explanation.

To the French the rationale was quite straightforward. Libya had invaded the northern third of Chad, and the French as the former colonial power supported Chadean steps to throw out the invader. That done, and a peace patched up, the Libyans sought revenge against France. In fact, UT-772 was the worst single *attentat* against the country since WWII.

Though widely regarded as an attack on France, at no time did that government seek reprisal attacks on Libya, and the relatives of the deceased never called for such. At the same time the French Government has a different idea of its duties towards its citizenry, and the emotional climate of the formal national response was far more inclusive and far less divisive than it has been over Lockerbie, for example.

Relatives' organisations, and the equivalent of DA are well supported by the French Government, in a way we would consider rather intrusive.

Common purpose - a strong sense of injustice, motivation for change and the desire to assist others similarly affected - drove us to create this unique charity, which continues to play a vital role so many years after the anniversaries described here.

Disaster Action's focus on the general principles common to all disasters of whatever origin complements the campaigns run by the family and survivor support groups that make up our membership.

Margaret Lockwood Croft describes how the anniversary was a time to look back at what has been achieved over the last 20 years, but reminds us that these achievements came at great cost

“These survivors, their parents and the parents of those killed paid a great price in grief, torment and interruption of life.”

Charles Norrie compares the French approach to UT772 with that of Pan Am 103

“...the formal national response was far more inclusive and far less divisive than it has been over Lockerbie.”

Personal Experience of Disaster Action

We made contact with Disaster Action more or less two months to the day after the Bali terrorist bombings of 2002 robbed us of the life of our beloved only daughter, Lucy, aged 30. Lucy was on a 10-day holiday to Singapore and Bali with her dear friend, Emma. The girls had been in Bali for less than a day when terror struck. Emma also lost her young life.

As of 12 October 2002 our lives changed forever. In our delicate, grief-stricken state we were immediately manoeuvred through a maze of officialdom, some gentle, some stark reality. Sometimes we had to fight to be heard yet other times help and support came from unexpected sources. When we look back, more than seven years on, the main players that supported us in those early months were family, good friends, the brilliant police family liaison service and the humble, the dedicated and the necessary Disaster Action.

Our family liaison officer pointed us in the direction of this remarkable organisation and it was on 10 December 2002 that we first became acquainted. With incredible listening skills Pam Dix heard us out. She responded with comfort and wisdom, borne out by the fact that she was not only one of the main contacts for DA but had also lost her brother in the Pan Am Lockerbie disaster. To hear soft, caring tones from someone who had experienced a similar tragedy was instantly cathartic and our rapport with this organisation was sealed. We asked so many questions as to our way forward and she provided us with the vital information we needed. When we look back to our diary entry on that day we cannot believe that all the advice she gave us at that time has turned out to be 100% correct. We have no hesitation therefore in saying that DA's advisory service for those victims of disasters is second to none. Pam also directed us to the DA website which we now know to be an invaluable source of help, support and constant referral.

DA, the Metropolitan Police Service and the British Red Cross were all instrumental in organising an initial meeting for victims' families and individuals affected by the Bali Bombings. It was structured to bring people together to give them access to information and support, not just in the immediate aftermath of the disaster but also in the months and years ahead. The meeting took

place in London in early January 2003 and was a much needed and uplifting experience, giving us a moment's pause in our suffering and confusion. Those present had the opportunity to listen to the expertise of others. The Chairman and founder of DA, Maurice de Rohan, was one such person. He told us that he formed DA as a result of losing his own daughter and son-in-law in the Zeebrugge disaster. His talk was inspiring, delivered with such warmth and strength that we treasure it to this day. So powerful was his speech that we entered the meeting fragile and alone and left it with a sense of friendship and belonging, the result of which a group was formed, namely the UK Bali Bombings Victims Group. Our group is now firmly established as belonging to the family sitting under the umbrella organisation that is DA.

To this day our hearts will forever belong to DA, being an impartial organisation that seeks only to help and support victims of disasters. They were there for us during our complex years of trauma, issues and bureaucracy and still are to this day. They have never let us down. In turn we will forever be there for them. We trust that to date we have been able to contribute in some small way to this wonderful organisation in return for all the care they have given us.



We dedicate these words to the memory of our dearly loved and exceptional daughter, whom we still sorely miss every waking moment of our lives.

Sandra and Bob Empson, both Executive Committee members of Disaster Action reflect on how they came into contact with DA, and what the organisation means to them

“We entered the meeting fragile and alone and left it with a sense of friendship and belonging, the result of which a group was formed, namely the UK Bali Bombings Victims Group.”

Compensation for Victims of Terrorism Abroad

Financial support for those affected by overseas terrorism, whether through compensation or disaster trust funds, remains a significant issue for a number of DA members.

When an act of terrorism abroad affects British citizens who reside in Britain the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has specific procedures it can implement to assist the victims but the British Government does not provide any form of financial compensation. Many travel insurers also have terrorism exclusion clauses in their policies.

We lobbied hard for some financial assistance and in 2006 an Immediate Crisis Fund was created. This fund was originally launched with a £1m grant from the Government but they have since stated that they do not anticipate contributing to it again.

If a person is killed or hospitalised for at least 24 hours the British Red Cross will pay an immediate crisis payment of £3000 to the victim or their close relative. This is enhanced with a further £12000 paid to the deceased next of kin or to the survivor providing that additional hospitalisation is required. Again the British Red Cross pays this from the Immediate Crisis Fund. Where the £3000 is paid immediately the additional £12000 is subject to form filling. If a person is affected by a terrorist act abroad but is not hospitalised for at least 24 hours there is no financial help.

Actual compensation, similar to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, is being lobbied for from the Government. In fact the Government recognise that something should be done but, as yet, do not know how to provide it.

Since writing the above, on Monday 18 January 2010 Home secretary Alan Johnson announced an amendment to the Crime and Security Bill as follows:

I wish also to announce a new provision that we intend to introduce in Committee. The House will be aware of the long-standing arrangements under the criminal injuries compensation scheme to compensate victims of violent crime, including terrorism. However, that scheme offers compensation only to victims of crimes committed in Great Britain. Although a number of other countries have their own compensation schemes, there are many parts of the world where, should a British citizen become a victim of terrorism, they would have no access to compensation. Sadly, many recent British victims of terrorist attacks abroad have been injured or killed because they are westerners, and there has been a particular increase in such attacks since 9/11. Whether those attacks are targeted at individuals or are more indiscriminate, terrorism is intended as a political statement and an attack on society as a whole and, as such, it has ramifications far beyond those who are directly affected.

We will therefore introduce a new victims of overseas terrorism compensation scheme, which will broadly mirror the domestic criminal injuries compensation scheme. In accordance with the long-standing general principle that the Government and Parliament do not legislate retrospectively, the new scheme will apply only to designated terrorist incidents that take place from today. However, we recognise that victims of overseas attacks in recent years continue to face hardship because of disabilities arising from the injuries they sustained. In accordance with the long-standing general principle, we will not apply the measure retrospectively, but we recognise that we need something for past victims of terrorism. Subject to the passage of the Bill, we will provide assistance to eligible victims of overseas terrorist attacks since 2002 and will announce further details in due course.

Trevor Lakin, father of Jeremy Lakin, killed in Sharm El Sheikh, 23 July 2005

*"It has been a long and at times a difficult road but the announcement in the House makes it all worth while. Our loved ones have not died in vain."
Trevor Lakin*

When Disaster Strikes Leaflet Series

When Disaster Action was founded, there were many gaps in information and support for survivors and the relatives and friends of those killed or seriously injured, and little understanding of their potential needs and how these might be met.

One such gap was in the provision of written information. We have filled that gap through our leaflet series, written by us for people who find themselves in a similar position. We began with just three titles, and over the course of the past decade we have updated and expanded the series to include a range of topics important to those on the receiving end of disaster. The experience of new members, and that of people affected by a single trauma who get in touch with DA, has helped to ensure that the leaflets remain topical.

Our aim is to offer the benefit of our past experience to others and to enable those

affected to understand what might happen in the hours and days after the disaster. Although each disaster is unique, they all have common features.

The leaflets are a vital means of getting our messages across in a timely manner to those who need to hear them. They also act to raise awareness amongst emergency planners and responders of issues of key importance to survivors and the bereaved. The leaflets have proved an invaluable source of information and support. They were the most accessed pages of the 7 July Assistance Centre website. They have also been the stimulus for contact from professionals asking us directly for guidance and information.

The series is accessed through our website and can be downloaded and printed free of charge.

Pamela Dix

Leaflet Series

The Immediate Aftermath for Relatives and Friends ([link](#))

A Survivor in the Aftermath ([link](#))

A Physically Injured Survivor in the Aftermath ([link](#))

Overseas Disasters: the Immediate Aftermath ([link](#))

Injury or death overseas ([link](#))

Legal Representation after a Disaster ([link](#))

Setting Up Family and/or Survivor Support Groups ([link](#))

Setting up and Running an E-forum Discussion Group ([link](#))

The Return of Personal Property ([link](#))

Beyond the First Anniversary ([link](#))

Reflections on Personal Experience of Disaster ([link](#))

Interviews about Disaster Experience: Personal Reflections and Guidelines for Interviewers ([link](#))

Inquests after Disaster (to be published April 2010)

Any comments on the contents of these leaflets or suggestions for new titles are welcome.



Disaster Action

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Our membership consists of those who have direct personal experience of many forms of disaster, as survivors, bereaved people or both. Members have been affected by disasters in the UK and abroad and live in many different parts of the UK. Many of our members remain involved in their own family/survivor support group (if one has been established), while, as part of Disaster Action, considering the general issues that may be relevant to any disaster whatever its origin. Survivors and bereaved people are welcome to join as individuals, or as part of a group.

As of spring 2010, members have been affected by the following disasters:

Mumbai
terrorist attack, 2008

Dahab
terrorist attack, 2006

Sharm El Sheikh
terrorist attack, 2005

London
7 July terrorist attack, 2005

Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia
terrorist attack 2004

Tsunami
South East Asian Tsunami, 2004

Ufton Nervet
rail crash, 2004

Bali
terrorist attack, 2002

11th September
terrorist attacks in the US, 2001

Ladbroke Grove
rail crash, 1999

Southall
rail crash, 1997

Dunblane
school shootings, 1996

Hillsborough
football stadium crush, 1989

Marchioness
riverboat sinking, 1989

UT-772 - Niger, Africa
aircraft bombing, 1989

Piper Alpha
oil platform fire, 1988

Clapham
rail crash, 1988

Jupiter, Greece
cruise ship sinking, 1988

Lockerbie
aircraft bombing, 1988

Zeebrugge
sinking of *Herald of Free Enterprise*, 1987

Enniskillen
terrorist attack, 1987

King's Cross
underground fire, 1987

Lockington
rail crash, 1986

MV Derbyshire Family Association
cargo vessel sinking, 1980

Aberfan
coal tip slide on school, 1966

Trustees

Iain Philpott
 Sophie Tarassenko
 Moya Wood Heath

Co-Chairs

Iain Philpott
 Sophie Tarassenko

Executive Officers

Executive Director:
 Pamela Dix

Secretary/Director:
 Judy Cooper