Visit to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

On 10th September 2015, South West Riders Members visited the Devon Fire and Rescue centre at their regional headquarters at Clyst St George, Devon.

First was a comprehensive tour of site, viewing the various vehicles and equipment. Fire and Rescue officer Terry Hutchings had arranged a fantastic demonstration of a horse rescue using their dummy horse. This was totally captivating watching the officers' work especially keeping the 'horse' as stress free as they are able to. We were all mightily impressed with the care and professionalism that they carry out this work together with their detailed knowledge of how to do so with the minimum risk of injury to the horse to the owners and, of course, themselves.

We never appreciated what a huge range of emergencies both large and small that this specialised team are fully trained to deal with from rescuing individual animals and people to the collapse of huge buildings in a major disaster. We hope we will never need them but it's nice to know they are there.

The photographs below, taken by Claire Webber, show how a rescue would take place.

Some of the Equipment used for the rescues.

Our friendly "Dobbin"!! The horse was specially constructed for the Fire Service to use.

The start of Dobbins Rescue.

The strops are hooked up and pulled gently underneath Dobbin.

Both strops to support Dobbin are gently prepared for the lift.

Once the strops have been secure to the lifting gear the vehicle being used is positioned ready to lift.

Lift off!

Nearly back to a safe area.

Dobbin is now safe! At this point, the demonstration changed to rescuing a "cast" horse.

They cover Dobbins' head to keep him calm as possible.

Strops are passed underneath Dobbin.

Two strops are placed around the top of the legs nearest the ground.

They then pull Dobbin manually to safe ground.