

Safety experts gather for FSOA’s

Autumn Conference & Exhibition

Experts in stadium safety showcased their services at a conference and exhibition hosted by The Football Safety Officers Association - before being entertained with insights into life as a footballing legend from World Cup winner, Sir Geoff Hurst MBE.

Dozens of high-profile industry experts - including main event sponsor, Showsec, and associated sponsor, Dallmeier - exhibited at the event, which was organised for safety officers and stadium managers from football clubs across the country.

Organisers said the conference, held at The Stratford Manor Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon, had been a huge success as experts came together to present their services, share expertise, learn about best health & safety practices and network with other professionals.

The event included a packed programme of talks and activities focusing on a range of relevant issues, such as national terrorism threats, real-life insights into football stadium safety and Q&As with high-profile speakers, including a presentation from Gary Simpson of Manchester United FC. Bob Eastwood, from the English Football League, was among the speakers who talked to guests about operational issues and the importance of information sharing between organisations. Ronnie Hawthorne, Stadium Manager of Celtic FC, and John Paul Taylor, Supporter Liaison at Celtic FC, talked about the newly-installed rail seating at Celtic Park.

Sir Geoff Hurst then entertained guests with tales about his incredible achievements as a footballer, including scoring a hat-trick in the 1966 World Cup final, as the special guest speaker during an evening dinner.

FSOA Honorary President, Jim Chalmers, thanked members of the Board for their efforts in staging such a successful event.

He added: “These events do not just happen and I know just how much time, effort and dedication everyone put into planning, organising and managing the event on the day. I thought the venue and related facilities were excellent. The conference content was current, relevant, informative and stimulating.

“I am sure all the delegates benefitted from all the contributors and left the conference more aware and informed of current and future trends in stadium and spectator safety management. The exhibition was also of value in showing the latest technical support aids in the design and management of Stadia and our safety personnel.

“The conference dinner was very enjoyable and enabled the main benefit of member networking to be continued from the conference day.

“My grateful thanks to everyone involved in organising the event for staging such a professionally and personally rewarding conference. Work will soon start on organising the FSOA’s next conference and exhibition to take place in the spring, which we hope will be just as successful.”

Among the exhibitors at the event was Evac-Chair International, Arena Seating, CEIA, Baldwin Boxall, Locards , Guaranteed Events, Accolade Measure, Stadia and Venue Safety Surfaces Ltd, (who sponsored the delegates pack), DCRS, DTS, Mitre Group, Tensor, Aware Manager, OCS, OS,Comms, Jon Darc’s Rail Seating, Digital Barriers and T.G. Bakers.

Organisations that attended the conference have heaped praise on the FSOA for organising a hugely successful conference.

Alan Wallace, Regional Manager of award-winning crowd management and event security specialist, Showsec, said: “It was a fantastic event. The conference brings together like-minded people to share experience and knowledge, learn best practice and help to cement long-term relationships.

“It is an important event that broadens safety officers’ knowledge and allows them to take that away to help them grow their own operations.”

Ravi Sharma, Head of Health, Safety & Security at Stoke City FC, said: “It was a really good conference and the topics of speakers were excellent and very relevant to us all. I appreciate the time and efforts put in by the FSOA to achieve such a successful conference.”

Steve Hodges, from event sponsor, Dallmeier, said: “It was a great conference. I felt it was one of the best yet, and there was a real buzz in the evening.”

He saved special praise for the presentations made by Manchester United and Celtic Park, revealing he had heard lots of positive feedback about the conference from organisations in attendance.

The FSOA was formed in 1992 by a group of football safety officers with the aim of developing and improving all aspects of stadium safety to ensure events are safely managed. Its biannual conferences have become popular fixtures on the health & safety calendar, providing organisations with a chance to share knowledge, expertise and best practices.

John Newsham, FSOA Business Development Manager, said the biannual conferences were getting better and better each time, with increasing numbers of exhibitors and more football and other sports clubs now attending.

Preparations are now being made for the next conference and exhibition, which will take place on March 28th & 29th,2017. Bookings are already being taken and companies are being urged to book early to secure their place.

**For more information about the FSOA and how to become a member, visit www.fsoa.org.uk, call 01254 841771 or email** **info@fsoa.org.uk**



