



The Institution of Occupational
Safety and Health

East Anglia Branch



Newsletter

Issue 46 – March 2010

Welcome

The next full Branch meeting is on Friday May 7th and this will be our AGM. We have sourced speakers who should make the whole experience exciting. The paperwork for the event should arrive with this newsletter, and there is also information on the back page and on the website.

At our last Executive Committee meeting in March we welcomed Sarah-Louise Cook, our new Networks Officer.

Sarah-Louise has recently joined IOSH to take up the position of Networks Officer for the East Anglia Branch. She has come to us with a wealth of experience in the Education and Voluntary Sector. Sarah-Louise requested that she attend the March meeting so she could fully introduce herself and the services that she and IOSH could offer the Branch.

We all felt quite sorry for her as the Committee went through a long list of things that we felt could be improved upon but she remained in good spirits, took away all our queries, and is currently working her way through each and every one of them. As a Committee we took the opportunity to raise matters that affect our Membership and Branch activities.

During the last year throughout the IOSH restructuring Branch support has been somewhat sporadic however we are welcoming in the new age of IOSH and we were delighted to meet Sarah-Louise and make her part of our team. We have invited Sarah-Louise to our Seminar in June so she will be available if any Member wishes to meet with her and discuss any personal issues regarding their Membership.

We wish Sarah - Louise all the best in her new role supporting branches and the work we do.

Branch Meeting February 5th

Contributed by Jane Blunt



Terry Broughton receiving his gift

We were lucky to secure a very inspirational speaker for this event – **Terry Broughton** of Gas Safe. His talk was punctuated with challenges for the audience, and what follows is a mere narrative of some of his key points, and cannot do it justice.

People continue to have accidents with compressed gases, due to a lack of appreciation of the hazards of the gas itself, the pressure, and the sheer weight of the gas container.

Due to the fact that a gas cylinder can be propelled for up to ¼ mile in a fire, the Fire Services want to know where they are, and what gases they contain. While all fuel gases are potentially dangerous, there are moves to revise their approach to fuel gases in fires.

Branch Meeting February 5th, continued

People need to be made aware of the hazards, how they should light a fuel gas, what sort of nozzle they need for cutting, etc.

Most fuels are explosive at around 2% in air, so where they are stored the ventilation must be good, and leaks must be avoided by testing.

Oxygen is associated with further hazards – at 26% in air you get flash combustion, and at 30% steel burns like paper. Look on the floor and around the gas store – are there signs of people smoking in the area? Equipment for oxygen needs to be clean. Never use oxygen instead of nitrogen!

People who do risk assessments for gases are found often to have insufficient knowledge. BCGA documents are very useful – not the law – but key guidance.

Liquid nitrogen can soak into clothing – if water can get through then so can nitrogen. Make sure the clothing is impervious.

Different gas bottles need different regulators – don't try to use a side entry regulator on a bottle that needs a bottom entry regulator. Don't use soapy water for leak testing – use the right liquid. If you can't get a seal, change the regulator. Never use plumber's tape – it is heavily impregnated with oils. The tape the gas suppliers use is not the same.

If the cylinder needs a key to open it, it should be fitted all the time the cylinder is in use.

Regulators should be subject to a full inspection at least annually, and records kept – you need to give them individual identities. They only have a five year nominal lifetime, and there are 17 things to check.

If you have fixed piping, you should have diagrams.

Flashover Training, 26th February

Contributed by Ray Hurst, Branch Media Relations Officer



Intrepid participants getting togged-up, photo courtesy Ray Hurst



Ready for action, photo courtesy Ray Hurst

Members will already be aware that a limited number of branch members were fortunate to be able to take part in a day of flashover training at the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's dedicated training centre at RAF Wethersfield on 26th February.

The day was full of information and action packed, we were even fortunate to have the

presence of a press photographer and the local paper (Braintree and Witham Times) ran a small feature. This was to help push the message that professional occupational health and safety advisers are not "nay sayers" and incapable of undertaking even the remotest of risky activities.

East Anglia Branch Committee member Ray Hurst who helped organise the event said "this

was a unique opportunity for safety professionals to understand flashover its causes and effect. It was also an ideal way for branch members to help dispel some of the "flaming" myths about 'elf and safety that crop up from time to time which seem to suggest that we stop anything even remotely considered risky and which get me hot under the collar."

The day started as one of those typical February ones (cold and windy) the fact that it was taking

place on an old airfield didn't help much because wherever you are the wind hits you in the face. After an initial safety brief (well you wouldn't expect otherwise would you?) we looked at various demonstrations of upper and lower explosion levels, what flashover and backdraught are, how they can start and develop and then cause unseen problems, death, injury and damage. There were some truly impressive "live" examples demonstrated by the ECFRS instructors.



The mock-up that will be set fire to, photo courtesy Nigel Wolstenholme



'A bit warm in there!' photo courtesy Andy Owens



'Watch your eyebrows!' photo courtesy Teresa Harrold



'Whoah!' photo courtesy Wes Pryke

After lunch the braver souls among the membership donned full fire gear and took the unique opportunity (for non fire fighting professionals) to "get stuck in" and attack a blaze while watching for the signs of flashover and backdraught (probably the only opportunity that day to keep warm outside of the classroom).

As this was laid on free of charge to the branch by ECFRS, as a mark of appreciation a donation

has been made by the committee to the fire fighters charity.

In view of the success of the event it is hoped that it will be possible to lay on another opportunity later in the year. It is understood that an article with photos will appear in the April edition of SHP.



Branch Meeting March 5th

Reported by Jane Blunt

Colin Hinton of Cowan Associates gave us a presentation on racking. Employers need to nominate a person to look after racking safety.

They need hierarchical inspection procedures, documented evidence of inspection by a competent person and a maintenance procedure.

Inspections broadly fall into three types:

1. immediate reporting, which is where employees who have been trained in safe operation make immediate reports of damage
2. visual inspection, which is recommended weekly. It requires a risk assessment and written procedure, and needs to be documented. Damage that requires

action is noted and there is no real need to work at height, and

3. expert inspection at annual intervals.

This also requires risk assessment and written procedure, and must be done by a technically competent person.

Structural elements that are bowed beyond documented limits are in imminent danger of collapse and must be taken out of service.

Colin showed us a series of videos of collapses of racking, some spontaneous and others caused by collisions by vehicles of a range of types. Clearly the potential for fatal injury or serious harm was present. They were food for thought!

Plea for help

The Canal Boat Project, based on the River Stort at Harlow, <http://www.canalboat.org.uk/>, needs help. They need someone who would be a very special, unpaid, volunteer, to advise their board of trustees and Project manager. Write to Roger Nisbet, The Canal Boat Project, Burnt Mill Lane, Harlow, Essex. CM20 2QS if you can help out.

Forthcoming Events

Branch Meetings

The next Branch Meeting will be on Friday **May 7th** at The Shropshire Group, Barway, Ely, Cambridge, CB7 5TZ. This is just to the west of the A142 that goes from Newmarket to Ely.

The President John Holden is invited to make an address, and we have Denios to give us 'DSEAR with a bang'. You may have noticed that this presentation has been sweeping the Branches. We hear that it is very good!

The Branch meeting starts with light refreshments, based on anticipated attendance, on a first-come-first-served basis at approx. 12.30. The AGM starts at 13.00. All are welcome – both members and non-members. If you need

assistance with access, please contact the meeting organiser.

Workshops

Workshops are often organised at fairly short notice – please keep an eye on the Branch website for details. You don't want to miss out!

http://www.iosh.co.uk/branches/east_anglia_-_home_page.aspx

As soon as a new event is finalised, it will appear in date order in the right-hand side bar, and if you click on the title it will take you to a page that gives you further details.

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