



**The Institution of Occupational
Safety and Health**

East Anglia Branch



Newsletter

Issue 39 – July 2008

Welcome

In May, the Branch held its AGM, and your committee now consists of the following:

Chair	Malcolm Fryer	Secretary	Paul Stolworthy
Vice-Chair	Andy Bagworth	Treasurer	Malcolm Earl
Procedures Coordinator	Denis Hands	Venues Coordinator	Teresa Harrold
Seminar Sub-group	Jacqui Welham	Web/newsletter	Jane Blunt
	Rob Higgins	Membership Secretary	Colin Anglin
Branch Education	Andy Bagworth	Committee	Barbara Back
Development Advice	Gordon Eagle		David Rigden
Workshops	Nigel Davy		Tudor Smith
	Neil Catton		Margaret Glendenning

With this Newsletter you should receive two things – the Branch calendar for the year 2008-9, and a questionnaire. The latter is focused on the means of delivery of this Newsletter – we seek your preferences and would welcome your response. Because we do not currently have direct access to our mailing list we may not be able to instantly respond to your views, but those views will give us a basis on which to work.

Workshop 13th March ‘Managing Electrical Risk’

FISHnet, in association with MESH and IOSH, ran a workshop at Bury St Edmunds. The event was hosted by British Sugar, who very kindly kept us supplied with bacon rolls on arrival, teas and coffees and lunch. The presentations and speakers were provided by the HSE, British Sugar and EDF Energy.

We were welcomed by the factory manager Steve Williams, who outlined the scale of the production of sugar by British Sugar. We were then given a talk by Bill Bates, HM Principal Specialist Inspector Electrical Engineering, who gave us an insight into the range of electrical accidents he sees – often fatal, and the way in which he expects to see the risk managed. He also looked at the progression of competence in electrical work.



A simulation of a fallen high voltage line

We were then divided into three groups, and each group was given a practical demonstration. These covered switchgear, underground services and overground services.

Martin Westram, who is responsible for electrical safety management in British Sugar described how the company policy document was completely re-vamped to reflect changes in the company size and the ways in which work is now done. The old document was written for the 'team' and was interpreted at each individual factory. Competence was only loosely defined, and there were aspects of electrical safety that had not been addressed. In the process they have drastically reduced the amount of live working.



Ian Harper (standing in for a presenter unable to attend at the last minute) demonstrating a C.A.T. scanner

Finally, John Haddon of EDF Energy gave us the supply company perspective. If a line is damaged they want to know about it, so that it can be made safe and repaired as soon as possible. They operate a 'no-blame' culture.

The HSE presentation, by kind permission of Bill Bates, is on our website - <http://www.iosheastanglia.co.uk/speakers.htm>

The AGM, 9th May 2008

9/11; Speaker Mike Welham

Mike Welham described several aspects of the 9/11 disaster at the twin towers which resulted in around 2800 civilian casualties, and many firefighters and other rescue workers. The cause of the collapse has been questioned by some, as aspects of it resemble a controlled demolition.

The towers were 110 storeys high and built with asbestos cladding. Some asbestos had been removed. The structures were designed to take the impact of an aircraft, raising questions as to why they ultimately collapsed. A neighbouring building, WTC7, which housed the IRS, CIA and FBI, also collapsed.

OSHA estimate that 82 t of asbestos and 164 t lead were released in the disaster, and an uncalculated quantity of mercury.



Martin Keightley, outgoing chair, hands over the badge of office to Malcolm Fryer

President's address

In line with tradition, we had invited the President to visit the Branch and gave a talk. This year, of course, the President is Ray Hurst, who is no stranger to the East Anglia Branch.

He gave an entertaining and informative talk on the ways in which we can tackle the media (mis)understanding of H&S.

The HSE 'Myth of the Month' is a good start, and IOSH is also becoming more proactive. In the past 99% of press activity from IOSH was producing news releases with 1% journalists calling for comment and commissioned features. Now the balance is 80/20. IOSH seeks to deal both proactively and reactively with the media, challenging the misconceptions and putting forward the sensible reasoned view. But there is no quick fix – this will take years of consistent effort.

What are we doing? Rapid rebuttals, lobbying, campaigning and giving a consistent message – we are enablers and not preventers. So far in 2008 our media coverage has increased by 40%.

We have a six point plan being promoted to MPs:

- Define competence
- Promote national standards
- Regulate the H&S profession
- Specific duties for directors
- Report on economic, environmental and H&S performance
- Get H&S into the curriculum, e.g. for MBA.

Our activities include

- Putting young workers first
- Chartered status
- Directors' duties
- Health & rehabilitation/ welfare reform
- Vulnerable workers
- H&S as a benefit to business
- Challenging the 'bonkers conkers'

Chartership has been highly successful. For young people there have been the

'Wiseup2work', 'Speak up' competition and WHAC course.

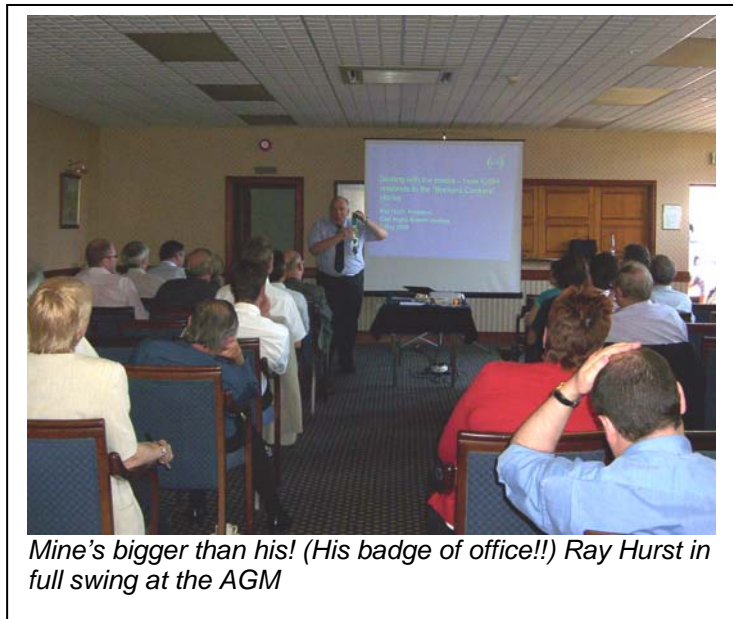
We have promoted the concept of getting the best H&S advice. We advertise in key magazines and attend key conferences. We have a 'Count me in' site on the IOSH webpages.

It has been shown that where managers are well trained in H&S workplaces are 8 times less likely to have accidents. We have developed template job descriptions to assist recruitment. We have participated in written and oral questions in Parliament.

IOSH is monitoring the press – who will win the 'bonkers conkers' and 'bonzer conkers' awards? Please send the media team at IOSH any good press cuttings.

IOSH supported the Conkers Championships and this resulted in widespread media attention and lots of publicity. Neil Budworth and Ray Hurst went on the 'Today' programme. Ray played many interviews to us, illustrating the impact that they have had so far.

The Branch gave Ray a camera as its gift.



Mine's bigger than his! (His badge of office!!) Ray Hurst in full swing at the AGM

Musculo-Skeletal Disorders

Branch Meeting 4th July 2008

Speaker: Barbara Back

The newly elected Branch Committee held its first meeting in July to thrash out the details of the forthcoming year's events. We usually hold a Workshop during the afternoon for the membership. This year we were unable to do this, but Barbara Back, at short notice, delivered an excellent talk on Musculo-Skeletal Disorders.

What are they? Manual handling injuries include a range of disorders caused by awkward or static posture, repetition, use of excessive force or vibration. The underlying problems include poor assessment and reduction of risk and poor technique. Manual handling training tends to stop short at teaching people to lift a box – this is unrealistic and ineffective. Damage is cumulative and often manifests itself at around 50 years of age and over. Around 34% of reported accidents are associated with manual handling and of these 46% affect the back. The CBI identified back pain as the greatest health concern for employers across all sectors. See L23 for a risk assessment worksheet.

Upper limb disorders also tend to be poorly assessed and again, effects are cumulative. If caught early some disorders are reversible. See HSG60, L26, L140 and L141. It is estimated that these account for 4.2 million working days lost, and the average time absent is 13 days.

Is this a new problem? No; physicians have been identifying such disorders for more than 300 years.

We can help to prevent them by identifying the risk, funding control measures, giving suitable and sufficient training and information, opening lines of communication that result in identifiable actions. Some people may not be suited to a particular job, and if there are real medical reasons this is a fair discrimination.

Occupational health providers need to be familiar with the work environment. Health surveillance is advised pre-employment and then routinely – perhaps using questionnaires to screen for those who should see OH.

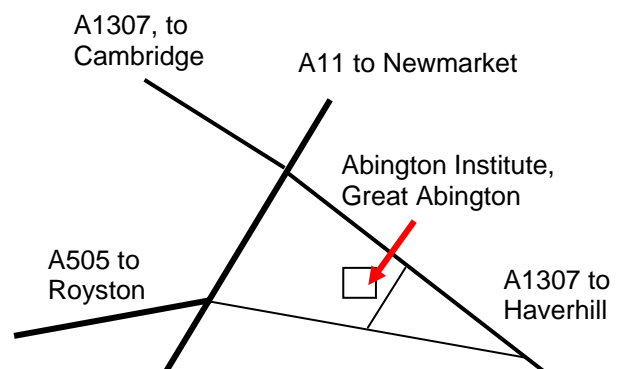
A sickness absence policy determines how you manage people who are off sick, treats everyone equally and determines the actions to be taken. Positive intervention can be cheaper than waiting for NHS treatment. Return to work rates are 50% if intervention is within 6 months, but tail off to only 10% at 24 months.

The presentation will be on our website shortly at <http://www.iosheastanglia.co.uk/speakers.htm>

Forthcoming Branch Events

The next meeting is 26th September 2008 at Abington Institute, High Street, Great Abington CB21 6AB. Please note that this venue does not have a car park, but there is AMPLE parking on the nearby streets and it's OK to park there, especially on the High Street alongside the playing fields.

The speaker will be Kathryn Gilbertson of Greenwoods Solicitors. She successfully defended Gillian Beckingham, architect, who was charged with 7 counts of manslaughter following the UK's largest outbreak of legionnaire's disease.



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