

Guernsey Occupational Safety & Health Association – www.gosha.org.gg

December 2014

**GOSHA News**

**10th Anniversary Celebration**

We had a great evening in November at the St Pierre Park hotel to celebrate our first 10 years.

Ros Seal of Aggregate Industries spoke very well about her involvement with the safety and health team which achieved so much success at the London Olympics. It was an eye opener, so much for us to learn and reflect on and so many useful lessons for good practices in our own workplaces.

The Guernsey Press covered Ros’ talk and it was nice to see us in the paper a few days later.

Around 50 people attended our celebration including all winners of our Lifetime Achievement award.

Thank you everyone for making it such a special night.

**Forthcoming Events**

We are currently preparing for our annual awards – it is so nice to see so many deserving entries again this year – and safety & health week in the third week of January 2015.

We are very grateful to our sponsors – for these event Insurance Corporation for the annual awards and



Rossborough Insurance for the breakfast talks in Guernsey’s Workplaces Safety & Health Week.



Here are some dates for your diary:

* 20th Jan - Robin Gonard, Guernsey HSE – Asbestos at La Villette Hotel 8am
* 21st Jan – Gareth Corbett, MSG – Keeping fit at work - at La Villette Hotel 8am
* 22nd Jan – Annul Safety & Health Awards at OGH
* 23rd Jan - Fire & Rescue – Fire Safety in the Workplace - at La Villette Hotel 8am

**GOSHA at 10!**

It’s hard to believe that GOSHA was 10 years old last month.

In the past 10 years, the number of injuries reported to the Guernsey HSE has fallen annually from 534 in 2004 to 336 by the end of 2013. It’s great to note the reduction but 336 serious incidents still represents 1% of the working population and still seems too high.

GOSHA was formed to help educate and improve awareness of our safety & health laws and provide guidance on good practices. It is also a forum for people to share information and ideas and to be a conduit for those with little knowledge to benefit from contact with those with lots of experience and professional qualifications in safety and health.

We have been privileged to hear excellent presentations over the years – over 40 in all – from Terry Nash recalling his experiences in the UK HSE before the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act became law to Hannah Beacom MD of Island Coachways talking about bus safety and the benefits of proactive health & safety actions, including the use of CCTV.

We have had presentations on safety in the use of cranes used in building The Shard in the City of London, how a large asbestos removal company manages risk (and the challenges of staff who smoke) and a wide range of HSE Inspectors who generously shared their knowledge and experiences. We heard from St John Ambulance in Guernsey, the Guernsey Fire Service and have been lucky to hear from other experts in our beautiful island.

As well as talks, the site visits we have arranged have shown good practices in place in the workplace. Visits have included Guernsey Water, RG Falla, Ronez and Guernsey Electricity. We had an excellent visit to the Jersey Energy from Waste plant last summer. The visits really do hit home how straightforward, good health and safety management can be, how otherwise dangerous activities can be effectively controlled and how cost effective actions can be.

The cost of an injury can be very great. Guernsey’s largest reported injury compensation exceeded £14m. It was not a workplace injury, it was a car accident but it showed how tragic negligent acts can be, that consequences can last a lifetime and that the cost of care, a large element of this award, could be substantial. It is not inconceivable that such an incident could occur in a Guernsey workplace.

And whilst the focus is often on financial compensation, other consequences can be even more damaging to a business. Loss of production and consequent lost orders, the loss of a skilled, committed employee and the reputational damage can be costs which outweigh financial compensation paid to a victim. It is easily envisaged, for example, that the loss of a good reputation could put a business out of business – it’s happened!

Sadly, health & safety management still has many detractors. Often not high enough on a company’s agenda, accidents occur needlessly because someone didn’t care, wasn’t trained, wasn’t supervised or thought someone else should do something.

Guernsey law is pretty robust in giving responsibilities to employers and employees. It sets out consequences for those who do not fulfil their obligations. It has to be there because as we heard in the talk Terry gave, before it was there, an (unacceptable) acceptance that work was dangerous and injuries would happen was part of the work culture.

There are so many people and organisations to thank for their support over the past 10 years. Without the generous support of members, GOSHA could not have functioned. We list members on our website and I’d like on behalf of the management committee, to thank each on of you for your generous support.

I’d also like to thank Insurance Corporation for sponsoring our annual awards since they began. Without their support, those who deserve to be awarded would not receive the accolade they deserve.

Health and Safety Week in the third week of January is firmly established in our calendar and we attracted over 120 people to the three breakfast talks in 2014 plus over 100 attended our annual dinner. Many were not members and it was thanks to the generosity of Green Consulting, Copollo & Coyde and Normandie H&S that we were able to offer interesting workplace relevant talks. Can you attend in January 2015 (and claim your free bacon buttie)?

The Guernsey HSE have been terrific supporters of GOSHA. Richard Brown and Robin Gonard have supported meetings, given meeting rooms for committee get-togethers and attended committee meetings – their wise guidance helps us to formulate ideas and initiatives. Thank you very much.

So, here’s to GOSHA’s next 10 years. We hope we have made a positive difference to Guernsey workplaces and we will continue to advocate sensible, cost-effective and worthwhile workplace health and safety practices.

Our current Committee is

Nathan Silk – Vice-Chairman

Jon Coyde – Secretary

Gordon Snell – Treasurer

Seamus Gillespie

Mhairi MacGregor

Gareth Le Page

Joey Naidoo

Sincere thanks to all the Committee members – you do a great job and make sure that GOSHA functions effectively.

Rather than being a reason to avoid doing worthwhile things, good health and safety management makes things happen…safely, healthily, well!

**From the HSE:**

# Myth: Workers are banned from putting up Christmas decorations in the office



**The reality**

Bah Humbug!  Each year we hear of companies banning their workers from putting up Christmas decorations in their offices for 'health and safety' reasons, or requiring the work to be done by a 'qualified' person.

Most organisations including HSE and local councils manage to put up their decorations, celebrating the spirit of Christmas without a fuss. They just sensibly provide their staff with suitable step ladders to put up decorations rather than expecting staff to balance on wheelie chairs

**Happy Christmas and Happy New Year**