



Chairman's Report 2018

GOSHA is a good organisation to belong to. It has great aims: to help employers, employees and voluntary organisations in Guernsey to protect people from death and serious injury while at work or if affected by workplace activities, to be sensible and practical in approach and to foster a spirit of co-operation to get jobs done well.

We do not advocate a kid-gloves approach. Life is risky and accidents will happen. But often, they need not happen if a bit of thought, care and training had been employed.

When we began in 2004, there were around 500 serious workplace accidents every year in Guernsey which were so serious they had to be reported to Guernsey's HSE. When the last count was made, that number had fallen to around 300 every year. That's a big improvement but, when you consider that is on average one serious workplace accident or illness caused by work activities in Guernsey every working day, you may wonder if that figure is still too high - it is! And it is offices as well as industrial sites and building sites that generate these statistics.

Most of the serious accidents and illnesses which occur are still easily avoidable. Ignorance and a lack of care for self and others remain the main causes of workplace malpractice - you only need to consider the consequences of a husband and father, a wife and mother not being able to work or not being able to live and the gravity of workplace poor practices comes into significant focus.

This year we worked with the States of Guernsey and Garenne Group (which includes well-known companies such as R G Falla and Geomarine) to bring Jason Anker to Guernsey. Jason was seriously and permanently disabled as a result of a workplace accident which occurred because a job had to be finished and corners were cut to save time and effort - it cost Jason a lot more than the job was worth. It was a rare presentation from a chap prepared to speak frankly about his accident and the adverse consequences for his life. It was such a shame that only 30 people heard Jason speak at our presentation (which unfortunately clashed with the World Cup semi-final match involving England - 90 had originally booked).

We have also received excellent talks on a wide range of topics: including the use of drones, fire service update and Guernsey MIND. Our speakers have been very good and all of the topics helpful and relevant. My main disappointment has been that attendances have been around 20-25 for meetings when we used to average 40 plus. I am not sure if mailings are not reaching people or if we are not sufficiently inspiring people to attend.

Conversely, Safety & Health Week in January, kindly sponsored by Rossborough, generated 50 to 70 people at each morning talk with radio coverage too from Radio Guernsey. Huge thanks to all involved - they are worthwhile events and we see people we rarely if ever see at our evening talks.

And we achieved a full house for our annual dinner and awards, which took place at the end of June. It was a good celebration of all the individuals and organisations in Guernsey which do such a great job in implementing first-rate safety and health practices and those who do their best to do the right thing. I'd like to thank all the people who made the evening possible. So much more work and time is given by individuals to make an evening such as this a success - well done to Mike Williams and several GOSHA colleagues for bringing everything together, sincere thanks to our judges Richard Brown and Colin Myers (who led the Guernsey and Jersey HSE operations until they both recently retired), to Deputy Michelle Le Clerc for supporting the evening and presenting the prizes and to our sponsors, without whom the evening would not have been possible: Guernsey Water, Guernsey Electricity, Trant and Ronez. And well done to our Best of the Best winner - AFM. You can see more about the awards and winners plus photos at our website.

We had a site visit to the new recycling facility to see a building site in action and the many challenges faced daily in managing safety in a high risk environment. Thank you to Geomarine and congratulations to their team for such good work on an essential facility for Guernsey.

And Chris Minta has kindly run some introductory one hour talks on the value of good health and safety management to the need for business continuity planning - free for small businesses and kindly sponsored by the Aviva Community Fund.

Robin Gonard and his team at HSE have again remained most supportive of GOSHA and we'd like to thank him for his input, wise counsel and meeting facilities - so much appreciated.

The GOSHA Committee is

Andrew Mills - Chairman
Jon Coyde – Secretary
Seamus Gillespie – Treasurer
Darren Bishop
Joey Naidoo
Mick Cooper
Angus McLellan
Paul Freeman
Chris Minta

I'd like to sincerely thank each of them for their commitment and input and for the time they give to protect and inform others in Guernsey. Paul Freeman is stepping down this year but will continue to run our website which is an important tool for communicating with our members and for booking events – thank you Paul for all you have done for GOSHA and for continuing to support GOSHA's activities.

GOSHA remains committed to helping people to avoid serious injury and ill-health in the workplace in Guernsey. Our objectives are set-out in the website www.gosha.org.gg.

The recent heart-wrenching reports on Channel Islands' news of asbestos sufferers in Jersey, leading to an unpleasant death and difficult financial consequences for loved-ones, highlights the need for the public to be better informed of the dangers of not taking care in our workplaces. And with the widespread use of asbestos in buildings in Guernsey up to its ban in 1999, we should take care in our homes as well as workplaces - know where asbestos is located, don't disturb it, remove it if practical using properly trained, licensed professional removers, but avoid disturbing it and breathing in fibres, too small to see and for a household vacuum cleaner to remove. And keep the register in your workplace, required by Guernsey law, so you can properly inform those who may disturb it - employees, visitors, contractors and so on.

Our safety & health laws are there for good reason. Follow their provisions, including the helpful codes of practice and let's reduce the number of unnecessary deaths and serious injuries in Guernsey.

Thank you to our members for your support and generosity - we remain inclusive to all.

Andrew Mills
Chairman
November 2018