

EXPOSURE

The official magazine of

BOHS The Chartered Society for
Worker Health Protection

FAAM Launch Event Report

The Role of Occupational Hygienists
in Emergency Responses

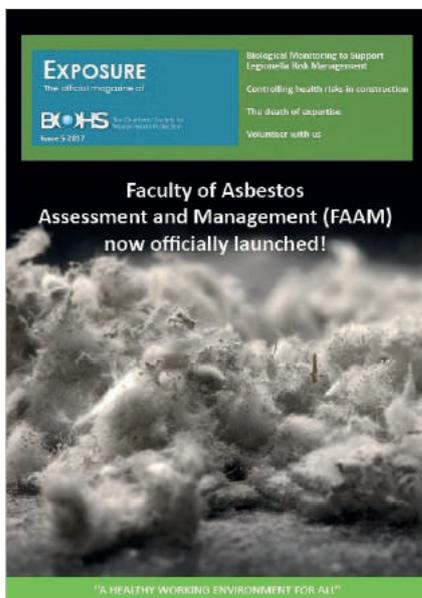
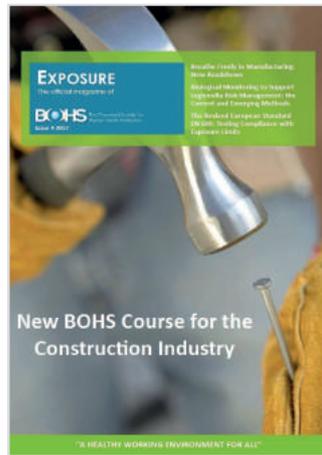
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Asbestos: The Truth



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Cover Story:
FAAM has now launched!
Read more on page 6

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Dear Readers,

And just like that, we've come to the end of the year! It's been a very eventful 2017: we've seen the launch of our Breathe Freely in Manufacturing campaign as well as our series of related roadshows, our construction course taking off and also the creation of our new asbestos Faculty! We bid farewell to the following former members of staff: Steve Perkins (former CEO and Head of External Affairs), Thelma Thompson (Professional Qualifications Administrator) and Sue King (Office Manager) - we will miss them and wish them all the best for the future. As a result, we warmly welcome in some new faces into the fold including Joe Mott (Membership Communications Officer), Val Stanley (Professional Qualifications Administrator), Lisa Williams (Head of Commercial Operations) and Simon Festing (CEO).

In this issue, we cover the role of occupational hygienists in emergency responses (p10), a book review on the death of expertise (p14), Faculty Board elections (p18) and also Asbestos: The Truth (p13). Look out for our 2018 BOHS events dotted throughout the issue: LEV, OH2018 and X2018.

We are always on the lookout for articles from members so if you have a topic relating to the profession which you feel would be useful for the occupational hygiene community to be aware of, get in touch at our email address above!

We wish you all a safe and prosperous new year and we are looking forward to seeing you all in 2018.

The Exposure Team:
Caroline Smith, Claire Creed,
Evi Karmou and Michelle Chan



Read the latest from our scientific journal, *Annals of Work Exposures and Health* at: academic.oup.com/annweh/issue

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From the President | Karen Bufton, President



Hospital Doctor and also attained a MSc in Environmental Technology.

In addition, Steve Perkins, who stepped down as CEO in June 2017 and continued to support us part-time as Head of External Affairs, decided to leave BOHS to concentrate on his new business. He, of course, was key to transforming BOHS over recent years, including gaining Chartered status and we wish him all the best for the future.

During this period of change, many of the BOHS office staff and the Council stepped up significantly and took on additional responsibilities. They all have shown tremendous energy, commitment and resilience. I am very grateful to all of them for their support and, together with them, excited about starting a new chapter at BOHS under Simon's leadership.

On wider society activities, I attended the British Safety Council Annual Conference 'Health and Safety: Preparing for the Future' and the Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland's (OHSI) Autumn Conference 'Working Together to Tackle Occupational Carcinogens'. Both events had a range of fascinating speakers.

I particularly enjoyed listening to Elke Schneider at the OHSI conference in which she described various EU-OSHA initiatives on preventing occupational cancer. Their new 2018-19 'Healthy Workplace Campaign' will focus on dangerous substances, with the aim of

raising awareness and promoting a prevention culture in workplaces across the EU, as well as targeting specific groups of workers including those who work in the 'gig-economy'. The campaign materials such as practical tools, case studies and good practice information, once published, will be found at www.healthy-workplaces.eu.

Another presentation at the OHSI conference, given by Dr Barbara McGrogan of the National Cancer Control Programme in Ireland, was on 'UV Radiation and the Risk of Skin Cancer in Outdoor Workers'. She explained that research, published earlier this year by Imperial College London, estimated that on average one person dies every week from skin cancer due to UV exposure from the sun at work, and the figure was similar in Ireland. I didn't know the number was so high and was surprised, particularly since the UK and Ireland are not known for hot sunny weather. Those affected include construction and agricultural workers as well as public administration and defence workers, including the police and the armed forces.

In the next edition, I'll be reporting back from the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygiene's annual conference in Canberra. In the meantime and with Dr McGrogan's presentation in mind, I'm off to pack my long sleeved clothes, sun lotion and hat.

It has been a year of change at the BOHS head office and I was delighted, after an extensive recruitment process, that Simon Festing accepted the position as the new CEO and joined us on 27th November 2017.

Simon has held senior positions in a number of third sector organisations, including: the Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the British Heart Foundation and Chief Executive at both the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management and the Society for General Microbiology. Additionally, he has held non-executive roles and is currently a member on the Board of Trustees of The Science Council. In his earlier career, Simon qualified as a Doctor of Medicine, practiced as a

VOLUNTEER WITH US



Volunteering is a great way to develop new skills, raise your professional profile and widen your network of contacts whilst at the same time, adding real value by giving something back to the profession. Another benefit of volunteering is that these activities can qualify for CPD points.

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BOHS representation at events | Council/Faculty members

Email us for more details at membership@bohs.org

BOHS External Affairs | Steve Perkins , Head of External Affairs



Over the past eight years, we have moved from primarily relating to HSE at the technical level to, in addition to that, relating to them at organisation leadership level, embracing policy, practice and research. We meet regularly with Karen Clayton, Director of Chemicals Regulation, and have recently begun a similar practice with Prof Andrew Curran, Director of Research and Chief Scientific Adviser. These are key senior relationships which our new CEO will be taking on.

Such relationships have facilitated close working with HSE on key initiatives such as our two Breathe Freely campaigns and our new Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management. HSE recognises that our efforts to stimulate the demand side for occupational hygiene in the UK are starting to work. Going forwards we will both need to address the supply side issue regarding the training of more occupational hygienists.

As you know, the Health and Safety field contains numerous organisations with varying, but overlapping memberships, agendas and histories. Generally, initiatives involving all parties tend to be weak and relatively ineffective due to the lowest common denominator effect.

BOHS has focussed on building bi/tri-lateral partnerships on specific topics or issues e.g. the BOHS-HSE-IOSH work on

Silica as part of IOSH's 'No Time To Lose' campaign on occupational carcinogens. BOHS is now seen as a strong and credible partner for such initiatives by all the key players in the sector and we hope to see more such cooperation as we move into 2018.

BOHS ends 2017 in strong position in construction through our on-going efforts with Breathe Freely. We have worked closely over the last few years with senior industry leaders on the Health in Construction Leadership Group, helping formulate their vision and mission, supporting their events and providing regular Breathe Freely progress updates. The HCLG has now settled on two main foci; dust and mental health. We are perfectly positioned to deliver on the former and can strongly support the latter. Having represented us on the HCLG since its inception, I have now passed that relationship on into the capable hands of Evi Karmou, our Head of Communications and Marketing.

In the last couple of years, the large players in the industry have for the first time ever begun to recruit occupational hygienists into their in-house H&S teams. This has been a significant step, which I believe, if pressed further, could eventually lead to the cultural change in H&S leadership the industry needs to address its appalling ill-health performance.

So, FAAM has launched with much fanfare and excitement! There is a huge amount of interest across the sector that for the first time ever there is now a true home for professionals operating in the asbestos field. For me personally, it's very satisfying to see this first stage of the 'umbrella strategy', which we developed with Council over the past four years, move from concept to reality. There are huge benefits all round to be had by creating new professional homes for specialist areas of practice under the BOHS umbrella of 'The Chartered Society for Worker Health Protection'.

That's what everyone in H&S is saying now. It certainly wasn't the case eight

years ago! BOHS can be proud of the key part it has played, along with others, in raising the profile of work related ill-health issues. The next task is to ensure that these issues are tackled in the right way so that words about health are turned into real exposure control measures that work and work over the long term.

In order for that to happen, when people say they are now 'doing health' we need to keep asking them 'what sort of health do you mean?' Our graphic of the Workplace Health Triangle emphasises the three main spheres of workplace health and their important overlap and interaction. All are needed, but it's only occupational hygiene which actually ensures the controls are in place to reduce exposures, prevent disease and protect worker's health from the risks the workplace itself creates. We need to keep shouting that from the rooftops!

As we continue to seek to influence key leaders in industry, regulation and government we will need to maximise our reach and impact by working with others who hold positions of influence. Just because we have the data and expertise to prove our case, doesn't mean we necessarily get the hearing that deserves. The external 'world' certainly isn't 'fair' in that sense! We have to fight to get our voice heard and enlisting the support of significant, credible and influential individuals has a key part to play in that.

In the last issue, I explained our approach to tackling this need through the forthcoming new BOHS Honorary Fellowship Scheme. I'm pleased to say this scheme has now been given Council approval and we are just processing the detail on our first appointment, which our new CEO will make public, probably in the New Year.

So I wish all of you at BOHS every success in the future as you continue to work tirelessly for a "healthy working environment for everyone". It's a brilliant cause and one I will always support.

FAAM: BOHS' New Faculty - Launch Event Report | Caroline Smith, Marketing Executive

The significant amount of time and work that was involved in bringing BOHS' new Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management to launch, finally concluded – with the official launch event taking place on 11 October in Westminster, London.

Karen Bufton opened the event, stating: "I'm delighted at the level of interest shown so far in this important new faculty, and to be involved in its launch today. There is wide acceptance that there remains a compelling need to improve standards of professional competence in many areas of the asbestos industry, which is why FAAM's vision is so critical. BOHS is ideally positioned to champion this area – the Society has been providing international leadership on protection against asbestos since the 1960s, and continues to pioneer excellence in standards' setting in the field of asbestos."

The launch was well attended. The invited audience was able to learn more about this new association for professionals in the asbestos industry, and also hear from a panel of prestigious speakers which included:

- Craig Barker: Asbestos Manager for Marks & Spencer Property
- David Fishwick: Consultant NHS Respiratory Physician, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals; Chief Medical Advisor, HSE
- Mavis Nye: President of the Mavis Nye Foundation (and sufferer of Mesothelioma)
- Martin Stear: Chartered Occupational Hygienist, and Registrar of FAAM

In his presentation, Martin Stear, Registrar of FAAM, explained more about the new Faculty: "FAAM will herald a fresh phase of focusing on raising standards and competency in the asbestos industry. FAAM's vision is to establish, develop and maintain standards of competence in asbestos assessment and management practice for its members, and act as the guardian of professional standards and ethics in the profession of asbestos assessment and management."

Outlining further about why FAAM is needed, Martin said: "The industry should be able to define what we call somebody



who is an asbestos professional or an asbestos consultant. And with the thousands of people out there who offer asbestos advice, we don't have a home, a place that they can say 'this defines me as a professional'."

Colette Willoughby, BOHS' Asbestos Qualifications Technical Advisor, gave her view on FAAM, saying: "FAAM, in simple terms, is the home of professional asbestos individuals", then talked further about the need to show a way of being able to establish a level of professionalism in the industry.

Karen Bufton paid tribute to the "inspirational speakers" who presented at the event, and expressed her delight about the success of the launch: "I've heard so many people talking at this evening's event about what an exciting time this is for the asbestos profession, now that there is a unique new association for the industry - and how they're looking forward to seeing a focus on raising standards of competency. It's brilliant to hear such positive endorsements and feedback."

Summarising the current situation in the industry, and BOHS' commitment to improvement, Karen concluded: "There is a wide realisation by both the public and professionals in the asbestos industry of the ongoing health issues caused by asbestos, and the continuing need to raise

awareness and take action. It's a concerning fact to understand that asbestos still kills around 5000 workers each year. So, if you're interested in raising standards and reducing risks in the asbestos profession, I would urge you to become part of the FAAM community."

Following the launch, membership of FAAM officially opened – and we're delighted to report that we're already busy processing applications. You can find out more about how to join FAAM on this link: <http://bit.ly/2hKDbTH>.

You can see more about the presentations from the launch event, and hear further comments from the speakers and delegates here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLlgwq5sEL8

"The industry should be able to define what we call somebody who is an asbestos professional or consultant."

Martin Stear,
Registrar of FAAM



1. BOHS' Asbestos Qualifications Technical Advisor, Colette Willoughby, chats to delegates
2. Karen Buffon, BOHS President, opened the presentations
3. BOHS Council members supporting the launch included (left to right) Neil Grace and Alex Wilson
4. Speaker: Martin Stear, Registrar of FAAM
5. Speaker: Craig Barker, Asbestos Manager for Marks & Spencer Property
6. Professor David Fishwick detailed the health hazards of asbestos

Whither the Role of Occupational Hygiene in Emergency Responses (Part 1) |

Dr Alex Bianchi, BOHS Past-President

There's an old but pretty well-known saying that paraphrases as "cometh the hour, cometh the man". It's a statement which has been attributed to multiple sources over time, but basically it can be interpreted as meaning that when the hour of need has arrived, the right person will somehow come forward to lead the way or at least, play a big part of efforts to do the right thing in times of difficulty, duress or emergency. If you live or work in the UK today, you might well be forgiven for occasionally feeling that this reassuring statement from olden times isn't holding too much water right now.

Now, as occupational hygienists (or as people who work in similar professions), we generally get to know about scenarios which we'd reasonably call 'emergencies', and where the skills of our profession would be useful if not invaluable. Indeed, many of those reading this article will have first-hand experience of such emergencies and will have been key role-players in the field response efforts to help manage the risks. For example, in dealing with major chemical or strong acid/alkali spills, uncontrolled releases of asbestos fibres or toxic gases or fumes into the workplace or community. The role is even more relevant when incidents result in severely exposed workers or members of the public, especially the vulnerable in society.

In fact, when you stand back and assess it, occupational hygienists have a huge potential role to play in almost any workplace or public emergency you can think of that involves release of physical, chemical, biological or in some cases, radioactive agents. The specialist skill sets we can routinely fast track to the incident site range from air quality and exposure monitoring through to hazard assessment, risk analysis, control

techniques and guidance, right through to post-event analysis and improvement recommendations (e.g. incident investigation, forensic support, development of new risk controls). Even wearing a pretty modest cap, the breadth of skills, guidance and advice the occupational hygienist can offer frontline incident controllers, onsite emergency responders (e.g. fire crews, police, local authorities, clean-up contractors) and co-responsible government officers is often far more extensive and valuable than is generally appreciated.

When you stand back and assess it, occupational hygienists have a huge potential role to play in almost any workplace or public emergency you can think of that involves release of physical, chemical, biological or in some cases, radioactive agents

So, why is occupational hygiene so often absent from emergency response events? Why aren't we being regularly brought into field response teams, being asked questions by the eager waiting media or offered the high seats at response team headquarters? In my view, something isn't quite right. I can't really claim to know the whole answer to this (rhetorical) question, but it's something that in my opinion we need to be talking about.

There are many reasons why we need to think about it, but a prime reason is because those same responders, workers and members of the public might not be being protected from both actual and sometimes hidden health consequences

during emergencies. Actions taken might not always be the correct ones from the perspective of reducing real exposure risk, and flawed emergency procedures which unintentionally result in avoidable exposure are left to be repeated time after time. Like the gift that keeps on giving. Undoubtedly, you could add your own list onto mine.

Is there a case for action?

It could be argued that there are multiple cases for action. In many examples, we know or can generally surmise that many significant emergency events aren't being routinely supported by extensive monitoring, accurate profiling of toxics, exposure management or a post-event risk review worth its salt. Whether or not emergency responders actually receive practical and situation relevant scenario-based specialist advice can be difficult to assess. Although the emergency services can in principle source Safety Data Sheets and get telephone advice from specialist bodies set to help respond (e.g. National Chemical Emergency Centre), the 'heat of the moment' response is often more urgent and focused on dealing with immediate safety and environmental considerations.

Following major fires, the standard police and fire service advice often begins and ends with "close all windows and doors and stay inside". It hasn't changed in decades, and although it's broadly useful advice, it's not necessarily 'suitable and sufficient' in a leading 21st century economy. Especially when the neighbourhood and the local environment might be covered for days afterwards in residual smoke particles, combustion ash, or worse still, potentially toxic chemical residues or fibres. Many of these substances can be re-suspended into the breathing zone by air movement (i.e. breezes) and re-deposited on general surfaces, fruit, vegetables or

foodstuffs and other places available for skin contact. In most cases where any latter comment is made, the authorities nearly always describe the risk as “having been low”. In other words, business as usual. And although this is accurate to various degrees, it’s rarely fully scientifically assessed because the resources, expertise and perceived necessity (i.e. the longer term risk) don’t appear to warrant it.

However, is this correct? Without the kind of assessment an occupational hygienist could contribute, what could be missed and to what consequences? It may be instructive to consider a few examples across a broad span of impacts. One could argue that all raise questions we should regard as relevant.

1. The World Trade Centre, New York (September 2001)

Within the last few years, the actual and quite dreadful health consequences of the September 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre (i.e. the Twin Towers) are becoming increasingly clear. Reports suggest that there is an ongoing post-event health crisis and an even worse one looming. The total number of people dying from exposure-related illnesses is likely to exceed the numbers actually killed on the day of the attack (circa 3,000 persons). A relatively short while after the Twin Towers incident, the US Environmental Protection Agency is cited as having reassured people living in lower Manhattan that the air was safe in the days after the attack. But although there was a huge amount of debris, and the challenges in cleaning it up well recognised, the more complex human exposure risks were perhaps significantly under-recognised.

As of 2017, some 16 years later, there are very large numbers of New Yorkers who have already died or who are seriously ill with various forms of chronic respiratory lung disease. Many sufferers are predicted to lose at least 10 years from their normal life span. Exposure-

related premature deaths have been numerous and among younger people, and cancer-related deaths linked to secondary exposures are well above expectation. With 20/20 hindsight, it’s now acknowledged that the air was laden with asbestos fibres, and fine dusts/ashes containing lead particles, glass (i.e. silicates), heavy metals, toxic gases, hydrocarbons and many other harmful substances. Many of these contaminants had in fact remained in the general environment and were available to be breathed in for a protracted time after the actual incident.

In many examples, we know or can generally surmise that many significant emergency events aren’t being routinely supported by extensive monitoring, accurate profiling of toxics, exposure management or a post-event risk review worth its salt

Interestingly, many US-based occupational hygienists (known as “industrial hygienists” in the USA) predicted this scenario over a decade ago. Where field measurements were available and scientifically assessed by the hygiene profession, concerns regarding what was perceived as a hidden “iceberg” of ongoing exposure consequences was often raised. It’s sad to say, but some of the more alarming hygiene assessments and the more worrying health outcome predictions made at the time proved to be correct.

2. The Grenfell Tower, London (June 2017)

In June 2017, we witnessed the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire. Although the Public Inquiry has some way to go before completion (at the time of writing, November 2017), the list of urgent building safety and building practices

issues to be priority-assessed appears to be wide and comprehensive. However, media reporting suggests that not all residents are happy with the full range of the Inquiry and the outcomes will no doubt pan out as the Inquiry and its eventual interested parties and reviewers respond to it.

Nevertheless, we do know that the extensive smoke and fumes will have impacted a very large number of people, including those downwind of the plume (s). Many TV viewers will have observed the media coverage the following morning showing casual members of the public and media presenters picking up chunks of blackened, charred debris from around the streets without any form of protection. My own subjective response was to ask why warnings hadn’t been issued by the authorities, if necessary via the media, to refrain from doing this. What, if any, health advice had been given? More so given the possibility that the broadly scattered charred remains might contain carcinogenic (i.e. pyrogenic) combustion residues, harmful fibres and toxic remnant semi-volatiles. Moreover, although much discussion raged over the immediate and desperate plight of the tenants, I had hoped to hear something about air monitoring checks, long term health screening for the affected population and the effectiveness of the clean-up steps. Well, it might have been happening, and I hope it was, but it didn’t appear to be on the main radar or cited as a concern for the future.

Indeed, from a review of the actual Inquiry itself, an assessment of the health of the residents and their long term risks isn’t prominent on the agenda, if at all. Indeed, if it’s being talked about in any meaningful way, the coverage is sparse. Instead, the current media coverage appears to be centred on planned efforts to support people in terms of the effects on their mental health, which although laudable, is no excuse for paying any less focus to the

Whither the Role of Occupational Hygiene in Emergency Responses (Part 1) |

Dr Alex Bianchi, BOHS Past-President

effects on their physical health over longer term horizons. Surely, although on a different scale, one might ponder whether the lessons and experiences of the New York 9/11 incident had been learned?

Perhaps in vain, I scoured the airwaves and printed media for comment or discussion on the topics that people with occupational hygiene expertise would have contributed. But none came. Perhaps a very comprehensive health and hygiene control programme was indeed put in place, but if there was, no-one spoke openly in support of it or asked whether it was in place, least of all the omnipresent and pervasive media and assorted politicians purporting to represent 'the public interest'.

3. The Birling Gap Incident, East Sussex (August 2017)

A rather unusual incident took place on Sunday, 27 August during the Bank Holiday Weekend at the Birling Gap on the East Sussex coastline. Approximately 130-140 people had to be treated in the local Eastbourne hospital after what was described as a chemical 'haze' rolled in from the sea and descended upon the unfortunate beachgoers.

The entire beach was then evacuated by emergency services a little while after complaints of breathing difficulties and

irritation to eyes and throats were widely experienced. It was clear that people were suffering badly and for a while the hospital had its hands full. A spokesperson described having to 'decontaminate' some of the patients.

The local press gave some space to the post-event investigations which continued on into early September, but with no defined outcome as to the cause. Theories ranged from elevated ozone levels or perhaps a gaseous discharge from nearby shipping, or maybe even outgassing from the tanks of a sunken ship. Ultimately, no conclusion was reached. It all started to look a little bit "Pirates of the Caribbean" or for the older readers, "The Fog".

If you were aware of the incident at the time, you might have thought it rather odd that the same beach was re-opened up to the public on the Bank Holiday Monday, the very day after the incident. So, despite acknowledging that the cause was unknown, the beach was not quarantined for further investigation, and the seemingly 'risk-relaxed' public allowed to re-occupy it. One might speculate how an investigation at a forensic level might be carried out with several hundred sun-worshippers liberally applying sun cream and making sandcastles nearby.

From an occupational hygiene perspective, one might have considered collecting air and surface samples on the same day, or at very least the day after. We can collect samples from the patients themselves and from their clothing and other artefacts. After all, we can analyse substances to below picogram per gram levels, perhaps sufficient to see evidence on a mass-spectrometer? Was the chemical cause really so hard to find?

Nonetheless, with the cause and mechanism unknown and the effects clearly non-trivial, one could only wonder what part of the risk assessment could have concluded that the beach was safe to be re-occupied. I surmised whether an experienced occupational hygienist could have contributed something more to the investigation.

However, while recognising that the authorities ostensibly made the right decision based on the information they had, perhaps the bigger question is whether even they would have recognised the value of bringing in an occupational hygiene specialist. We may never know the answer to this, but I anticipate many in the occupational hygiene community were left feeling that more could have been done to identify the source and assess the risk.

Part 2 of this article will appear in the next issue.



COMING SOON IN 2018

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Asbestos: The Truth | Joe Mott, Membership Communications Officer



Above: BOHS staff (Natalie Horton and Joe Mott) supporting the stand at the event
 Below: Our advert in the conference brochure

As part of our ongoing activities to promote BOHS’ asbestos qualifications and brand new faculty, FAAM (Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management) we recently exhibited at the 2017 Asbestos: The Truth conference, and sponsored the handbook.

This event is currently the UK’s only Asbestos conference that connects industry professionals to network, learn about changes to legislation and discover new solutions to support them in their roles.

Now in its eighth year, the event took place on 8 November at the Hilton Deansgate Hotel in Manchester, and was well attended with around 200 delegates.

The programme featured multiple seminars and workshops, and keynote presentations from Martin Stear (Workplace Environment Solutions); David Lambert (Kier Group); and Bob Watt (Nottinghamshire County Council).

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FAAM
 THE NEW ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONALS IN THE ASBESTOS INDUSTRY

WHAT IS FAAM AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?
 FAAM is BOHS’ new Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management. FAAM aims to help ensure asbestos practitioners can operate with the relevant levels of competency and expertise, so that the ongoing issues caused by asbestos can be reduced.

Asbestos still kills around 5,000 workers each year, and around 20 tradesmen die each week as a result of past exposure.

JOIN FAAM TODAY
 Join FAAM and make a difference, by demonstrating competence and commitment to the asbestos industry. Come along to Stand 4 and find out how to join.

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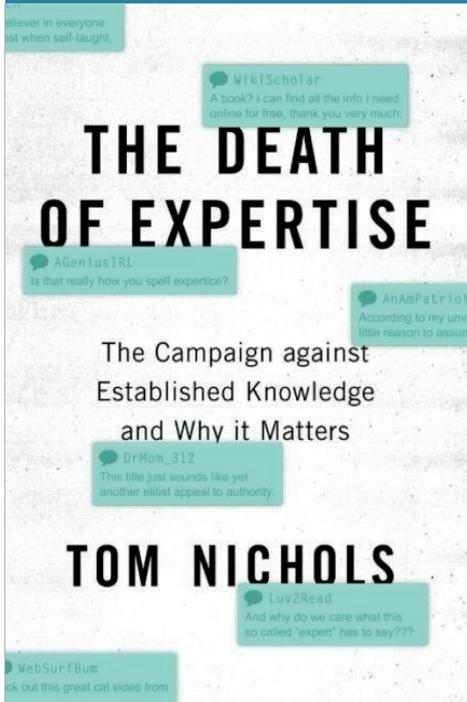
BOHS
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BOHS’ Asbestos Qualifications Technical Advisor, Colette Willoughby attended the event and participated in a panel discussion on: “Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), the case for greater reassurance air monitoring in schools.” The panel included Mark Ede, Adrian West, Martin Stear and Dr Patrick Morton.

The event provided us with an excellent opportunity to publicise our brand new faculty FAAM which generated a great amount of interest. Additionally, we were also able to promote our asbestos qualifications, and BOHS services.

Find out more about
 FAAM at:
www.iamfaam.org

Book Review: The Death of Expertise (The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters) by Tom Nichols—Part 2 | Dr Alex Bianchi, BOHS Past-President



Part 1 of this article can be found in issue 5 of *Exposure*.

Threats to democracy?

Ultimately, Nichols continues to caution that where any semblance of an open and honest debate becomes difficult, skewed by bias, disrupted by 'the mob' and where traditional experts risk being undermined by an 'opinion free-for-all', then even the most absurd or ridiculous perspectives demand attention or risk the accusation of democratic elitism. Once we cross that bridge, he says, then modern society as a whole is under risk from a misinformed, ebullient, plebeian onslaught. Nichols also warns that the 'death of expertise' isn't only a dangerous phenomenon in itself, but also a cautionary red flag about the stability and survival of modern democracy in the new Information Age. Government and institutions simply cannot operate on this basis, and will fail. And if we cannot place full trust in our appointed experts, then who do we trust?

The death of expertise and occupational hygiene

It would probably be fair to suggest that the majority of people working in occupational hygiene, and particularly those who hold first degrees, post-graduate degrees, Certificates or Diplomas in the field of occupational/ industrial Hygiene or closely related subjects, do perceive themselves as "experts". Furthermore, this view is held not only by those who are active in the profession and participate in Continuous Professional Development programmes (CPD) but also those who are less immediately active in the field but who maintain a strong academic and professional following of the profession.

Furthermore, occupational hygienists are often working alongside those in many allied or associated professions (e.g. occupational medicine, occupational health & safety, safety engineering, epidemiologists, toxicologists, environmental scientists etc.) all of whom we recognise as partners in expertise or who, in turn, acknowledge and respect us as experts. We are also supported by various specialist groups and professional institutions who exist to promote and promulgate our organisation, development, growth, internal standards and codes of conduct.

Within BOHS and allied organisations, much work has been done to help us develop competency frameworks, examinations and certification, and to promote and disseminate training organisations and vehicles for occupational hygiene competency (e.g. OHTA), to ensure our voice at the tables of the regulators and partner institutions.

This all sounds good, doesn't it? Should we therefore feel comfortable and possibly even complacent? Or does Nichols have something to say that we should pay attention to, at least to some degree?

USA today, UK tomorrow?

There is a saying that what tends to happen in the USA will eventually happen over here to some extent or another. Indeed, many occupational hygienists I have worked and interacted with over recent years would argue that it already has. And that some of the cautionary warnings expressed by Nichols aren't still en route from North America so much as already here.

On one side, genuine 'experts' are being challenged like never before and their opinions and recommendations open to more criticism, vilification and even ridicule from an increasingly doubtful and apprehensive public. You could probably name at least five such examples of "expert failure" within a few moments' contemplation or before finishing spelling "Weapons of Mass Destruction", "Thalidomide" or "2008 Banking Crisis". Indeed, experts have managed to "get it wrong" on plenty of occasions and can be very tardy indeed in 'owning up' or showing humility and a willingness to learn from their mistakes.

What does an expert look like, then?

We also live in an age where, say, a university professor appearing on the BBC's 6 o'clock news might be someone who appears in a formal suit, polished shoes and otherwise 'traditional' attire, or may equally present themselves on the sofa with purple hair, tattoos, nose rings and a Def Leppard T-shirt. Irrespective of your own personal opinions and preferences for dress codes and how people look, the world has changed and who an 'expert' is and what they look like, has changed too.

Similarly, if the good professor is receiving funding or sponsorship from a major commercial bank or, say, a big pharmaceutical company, and this is made clear during the interview, the intrinsic value you place on the 'expert'

opinion will be influenced, probably adversely. So, the viewing (or listening) public get to make their own mind up about experts. Whatever, the days of the title “Professor” or “Dr” or “Her Royal Greatness” meaning that this is someone who will be likely to be listened to and whose opinions and advice consented to, let alone endorsed by the public, have also long gone.

In other words, it is possibly harder than ever before to recognise the difference between ‘experts’ and those who might be ‘sufficiently’ expert enough for the issue they’re advising on. A leading forensic epidemiologist once told me that despite attending many three-day high level scientific conferences over the last decade, even he couldn’t always tell the difference.

Occupational hygienists as experts

Nichols indicates that even the very word “expert” is at risk of becoming toxic. Occupational hygienists who have found themselves in courtrooms could probably testify to this, whether serving as an independent expert witness, or working more directly for the prosecution or defence. In some cases, ‘experts’ have been shown to be inadequate for the task, a fact that rarely

comes without cost to someone in the room.

In other examples, occupational hygienists have had the unenviable task of explaining to an irritated management, union and works council (and often the workers themselves) why Occupational Exposure Limits for harmful substances have changed and why limits regarded as likely to protect health 10 - 20 years ago, are no longer regarded as remotely satisfactory today, especially when the new limits are 10 - 100-fold lower, and the underlying toxicology is concerning. One cannot simply say, “oh, that was yesterday’s expert, I am your expert today”, especially when the agent is chronic and the key health effect is life threatening. We used to call this the occupational hygienists’ dilemma back in the 1980s and it is as true today as it was 30 years ago.

Indeed, one would argue that professional occupational hygiene is one of several areas of endeavour where the role and expectations of being an expert are not really optional, but in a Malvolio-like twist are thrust upon the title holder. And in many cases, the issues are complex and the stakes are high.

This lofty precipice is no place for the faint hearted. People’s lives and wellbeing are on the dealing table, along with significant financial implications, regulatory and organisational standard compliance, and a myriad of risk consequences if ‘anything goes wrong’.

Moreover, for the occupational hygienist, their name (and their reputation) can be found on the documentation and thereafter for many years to come. This is no small consequence, and one reason why consistently delivering genuine expertise at all levels is no minor matter. To be more candid, it also explains why occupational hygienists may be at risk of prosecution or litigation where their work falls below the required standard, both today and yesterday. If we fail in our expertise, the penalties can be profound.

In other areas, highly experienced and qualified occupational hygienists have encountered significant challenges in trying to further worker health programme development and exposure controls, in the face of organisational pushback. Many hygienists recall being referred to perhaps more patronisingly

FACULTY BOARD NOMINATIONS

The Faculty of Occupational Hygiene will have a number of vacancies at the time of the next BOHS AGM in April 2018. These vacancies are for full Members/Fellows and also for Licentiates, to provide a wide range of views and experiences.

The formal commitment is for four meetings per year in Derby, and an hour or two ahead of each meeting to review papers. Of course, we also have improvement activities and we look to Board members to support those too, but usually that would be no more than a few more hours during the year. Being involved increases your network, can provide development opportunities and gets you involved in the running of the professional arm of BOHS. I do hope you will join us.

If you are interested and want to find out more please contact BOHS head office and Neil Pickering (Registrar of the Faculty) will happily call you to discuss.

We look forward to receiving your nominations.

Book Review: The Death of Expertise (The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters) by Tom Nichols—Part 2 | Dr Alex Bianchi, BOHS Past-President

as “the expert” even as the decision makers decided to water down, delay or even reject key health recommendations. Trying to manage such challenges without simply walking away, marks out the real ‘experts’ from those that would like to be known as experts.

A way forward for the occupational hygiene expert?

Helpfully, Nichols suggests various approaches that anyone who practices being an ‘expert’ can, and perhaps should, adopt. Take heart - all is not lost:

Remain within the field of one’s expertise: It seems simple enough, but this marks out a key stumbling area for many in the health professions. We’re all tempted to expand our reputational horizon long before the skills and experiences are there to match. However, Nichols strongly counsels that this demonstrates honesty, integrity and character.

Remain humble, but firm: Arrogance and lofty attitudes have long troubled the reputation of the “expert”, especially the expert who believes that intellectual and knowledge superiority also confer social and behavioural superiority. Nothing is more likely to annoy the recipient. However, Nichols also advises adopting a firm, knowledge-based stance for what is required or recommended from that expertise, and staying with it. One’s assessment should not be up for negotiation.

Improved awareness: Nichols argues that experts, once properly established and accredited, should be given (i.e. awarded) authority to provide guidance. However, that means that the recipients of the guidance (whether government, management or member of public) must agree to equip and educate themselves properly so as to engage with it, and

award due respect to the expert.

Experts as ‘Servants’, not ‘Masters’:

Finally, Nichols makes the point that an expert should see themselves as the ‘servant’ to the authority or individual requesting expertise, and behave appropriately with humbleness, understanding and a willingness to patiently explain. They should not seek to also be the ‘Master’ or to usurp the role of the ‘Master’. For example, the expert may advise on nuclear safety, but the decisions on what controls to be implemented must lie with the responsible senior management.

Remain within the field of one’s expertise...remain humble, but firm.

Conclusion

It feels to me, as the reviewer, that Nichols does make a series of very well-made points. Whether he is understating or overstating the case, we cannot really know, more so as he is principally addressing North America. We can, however, recognise and understand many of the risks he lays out before us. And it is true that across many fields and disciplines, ‘experts’ are being challenged quite seriously. Many have played their roles inadequately and in ways which have made current day challenges to their authority, possible. Indeed, some of you will probably argue that Nichols could have gone even further in his analysis and recommendations, but these are still early days.

Turning to occupational hygiene, many of us share concerns that many contemporary expert-led processes for improving quality assurance, quality control and system verification, still manage to produce poor quality outcomes. I recall senior academics and

managers arguing that one day, most occupational hygiene systems and processes can and should be codified and perhaps even performed by robots. The field of occupational hygiene remains one area which I believe will be hard to replace with artificial intelligence and robotics. I for one hope that day never comes and I doubt that it would ever fully work, especially for complex situations. There will always be a place for the true (i.e. human) ‘expert’, providing we decide that is what we want.

However, if the apparent current trends against ‘experts’ and ‘expertise’ are real and are genuinely gaining momentum, our best defences lie in continuing to develop quality skills, qualifications and expertise provided under the umbrella of tested institutions (e.g. BOHS, AIHA, AIOH) and via high quality training courses on offer via OHTA, approved training providers and appropriate universities. Furthermore, we must continue to seek the right place at the table with both regulators and standard-setting bodies, as well as key organisations that we mutually network with and support.

Whilst on one hand acknowledging Nichol’s guidance and recommendations, all of which seem very sensible, it feels more imperative than ever that we must achieve a more powerful dialogue with the public in all their forms, and not be afraid to confront them. Not as their ‘superiors’ but as a benevolent and learned entity working ultimately in their service. Once they hear our voice and understand our message (e.g. the ‘Breathe Freely’ campaign being an excellent example), the integrity and coherence of what occupational hygiene is all about, will win through. We will remain the experts in worker health protection, whatever comes next.

For full conference rates and details of sponsorship and ex



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Andrew Hatch
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Stewart Cruikshank
Pristine Condition



Philip Baker
Association for Project Safety

Asbestos Risk Assessment for Occupational and Environmental Health Applications

Andrey Korchevskiy
Chemistry & Industrial Hygiene, Inc.

CALL FOR PAPERS

See overleaf or visit www.x2018.org



9th International Conference on the Science of Exposure Assessment

MANCHESTER | UK

24-26 SEPTEMBER 2018

The British Occupational Hygiene Society is hosting X2018, the 9th International Conference on the Science of Exposure Assessment. This three day international conference will bring together the leading experts to exchange knowledge in exposure assessment sciences for human health studies. X2018 will contribute to the development of state-of-the-art methodologies and practices, and thereby improve our knowledge to effectively assess and control exposure to hazardous agents in the work environment, at home and elsewhere in the general environment.

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9th International Conference on the Science of Exposure Assessment MANCHESTER | UK | 24-26 SEPTEMBER 2018

The call for papers is now open.

We are seeking abstracts on all aspects of exposure science but particularly welcome suggestions on the following themes:

- ⊗ Building exposure science in low and middle income countries
- ⊗ Health impact assessments – using exposure data to maximum effect
- ⊗ Population occupational exposure assessment methods for estimating (global) burden of disease
- ⊗ Apps-based / Always- on exposure assessments – the future for exposure assessment?
- ⊗ Exposome – delivering results and real impact in occupational and epidemiological studies
- ⊗ JEMs – methods to improve on current approaches
- ⊗ Advanced methods for low exposure risk assessment/management
- ⊗ Recent advances in Exposure Models
- ⊗ Nano technology - advances in exposure assessment
- ⊗ Managing exposure assessment for pooled studies

We welcome abstracts (250 words) for both oral and poster presentation. All presenters of accepted abstracts will be entitled to a reduced speaker rate on registration.

Oral abstract submission deadline: 30 March 2018.
Poster abstracts submission deadline: 30 May 2018.
To submit your abstract, please visit
www.x2018.org/abstracts/

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The conference will take place at the Manchester Conference Centre in the heart of the northern city of Manchester. Known throughout the world as the birthplace of the industrial revolution, Manchester has a proud history in science, politics, music, arts and sport.

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Manchester Airport is just a 20 minute train journey to Manchester City Centre.

On behalf of the Local and Scientific Committees, we look forward to welcoming you to the city of Manchester to help us make this a stimulating and memorable conference.

Kate Jones & Martie van Tongeren
Chairs, Organising Committee



For any further information
please contact Rachel Sipson,
BOHS conference team:
conferences@bohs.org
+44 (0)1332 250713

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Communications and Marketing Updates | Evi Karmou, Head of Communications and Marketing



The last few months have been very busy, not only for the Communications and Marketing team, but also for BOHS. As you may have already read in other areas of the magazine, we have recently appointed a new CEO as well as a new Head of Commercial Operations – Qualifications and Training. We are all excited about the new appointments and looking forward to the opportunities this will bring to the organisation.

The last few months have been packed with lots of exciting events surrounding the Breathe Freely campaign. As most of you already know, we launched the second stage of the campaign in May of this year, focusing on the manufacturing sector and more specifically, welding.

Breathe Freely in Manufacturing

After the successful launch of the campaign, the team tirelessly worked on spreading the word about occupational lung disease in the sector and developing new tools for the website. A team of expert volunteers under the guidance of Mike Slater, Chair of the campaign steering group, are currently finalising a welding selector tool, which will be live on www.breathefreely.org.uk at the beginning of 2018.

With the kind sponsorship of SKC and Plymovent, three roadshows took place in Glasgow, Birmingham and Middlesbrough respectively. The roadshows focused on educating the audience on lung disease, with a special focus on welding. Speakers from the HSE, BOHS and the industry, such as BAE Systems and Plymovent, discussed the issue of lung disease, the measures that can be taken to control exposures to hazards and presented case studies of successful implementation of these controls. We are organising one more public roadshow at the beginning of 2018 in South Wales. Additional details will be published on the website in due course.

Breathe Freely in Construction

After two successful years, the construction campaign has now moved to its second phase. The last few months, we completed the cycle of our 2017 roadshows, kindly sponsored by RVT Group. Our team travelled to Bristol,

Edinburgh and London to educate audiences about occupational lung disease in construction, discuss about measures to control exposures to hazards that lead to the disease, and present successful industry case studies. These events also gave industry professionals, through interactive sessions, the opportunity to have their questions answered and discuss challenges they are facing in their fields.

A team of volunteers are currently finalising the development of a construction RPE Guidance as well as reviewing the existing tools on the website. The new RPE Guidance is set to go live beginning of next year.

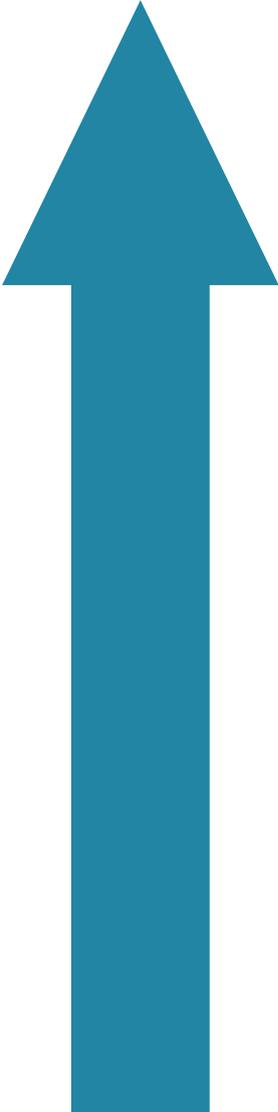
A Special Thank You

As we are approaching the end of the year and reflecting on the year that passed, I would like to send a big thank you to all our members who have been supporting the Breathe Freely campaigns. Without your valuable contribution – from assisting the development of new tools to speaking on behalf of BOHS at public events and spreading the word – the campaigns wouldn't have had the success they have enjoyed so far.

Finally, I would like to end my article with a huge thank you to Mike Slater, who has been the Chair of the Breathe Freely campaigns since their inception. Mike has played an incremental role to the success of both campaigns, and I have enjoyed working with him since my appointment as Head of Communications and Marketing.

Do you
breathe freely?

For tools to help you tackle occupational lung disease in the manufacturing or construction industry, go to www.breathefreely.org.uk



Attendance
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your CPD!

For more info, log
onto your BOHS
account:
portal.bohs.org



Upcoming FREE Regional Meetings

12 Dec: South Wales and South West
Government Buildings, Cardiff
President-Elect Visit and Welding

16 Jan 2018: Northern Ireland
Queen's University, Belfast
President-Elect Visit

31 Jan: London, South and South East
Society of Chemical Industry, London
President-Elect Visit

Why not sponsor a regional meeting?

BOHS regional meetings provide a cost-effective sponsorship opportunity for companies, with benefits such as:

A launch platform for new products and services
Increase brand awareness
Contact with key decision-makers
Networking opportunities

If you would like to sponsor a BOHS regional meeting, please email membership@bohs.org to discuss

Member Services Updates | Shani Jackson, Head of Membership



2017 has, yet again, been another busy year for the Membership Services Team and lots of changes have taken place. I'm pleased to announce that we have two new team members. Firstly, let me introduce you to Joe Mott who is our new Membership Communications Officer. We've discovered Joe likes chicken nuggets, coffee and being creative. He dislikes wasps, exercise and ill-fitting clothes! On a serious note, Joe has recently graduated from Sheffield Hallam with a degree in Business and Marketing. His previous job roles include shelf stacking, administration and selling ice cream. He is looking forward to working with and meeting BOHS members at events and conferences and creating new and exciting communication techniques. He hopes to meet you all soon!

Our second new team member is Val Stanley. Val is our new Professional Qualifications Administrator. Before coming to BOHS, Val worked in the local media industry for 15 years. She spent 13 and a half years at the Derby Telegraph working in the advertising department in their Business Support team and then transferred over to the Nottingham Post working in a similar role in their Production team. She is looking forward to the new challenge of her position here at BOHS back in Derby, assisting candidates on their successful journey through Professional Qualifications. She hopes to contribute to the company's continuing success, building strong and positive relationships with potential candidates, working closely with you all to help you achieve your future goals.

We needed to appoint a new Professional Qualifications administrator



as our long-serving member of staff, Thelma Thompson, has recently retired. Thelma was with BOHS since 1996 and many of you will have met or dealt with her as you have progressed through your professional qualification. Thelma said:

"When I joined BOHS in 1996, I was involved with both membership and qualifications but as time went on, I concentrated on qualifications. It has been an absolute pleasure to have worked with the many candidates starting their journey through the modular system and progressing to a professional qualification. Well done to you all! To those candidates who are starting on their journey: my best wishes to you all for a successful transition. I have had the privilege of representing BOHS at events and conferences over the years and I would like to thank those concerned for this opportunity. I have worked with and met a lot of people during my time at BOHS and value their friendship. I will miss you all."

Thank you Thelma - we will miss you, too. Enjoy your retirement, you deserve it!

Can you tick off the checklist?

As always at this time, Membership Services is a flurry of activity, preparing for the New Year.

Last year, we compiled a list so that you, our members, can check you are receiving your membership benefits and we thought it would be a good opportunity to run this checklist again. Please contact the membership team if you can't tick everything off but don't forget that the team are always on hand to offer you support and guidance with your membership experience. You can contact them on +44 (0)1332 50714 or email at membership@bohs.org or at iamfaam@bohs.org.

Checklist for Members

Are your contact details and preferences up-to-date in My BOHS? Have you renewed your membership subscription for 2017?

- Are you an asbestos professional? Have you considered FAAM membership?
- Have you checked the Regional Meetings page to see which upcoming meetings you'd like to attend?
- Have you sent in a Direct Debit form to ensure your membership renewal is automatic?
- Have you registered for your online access to the *Annals of Work Exposure and Health*?
- Have you checked your My BOHS profile to ensure all your details are as up-to-date as possible?
- Have you taken advantage of the member booking rate for the BOHS annual conference in 2018?
- Have you signed up to BOHS on LinkedIn to join discussions with other members?
- Have you shared your experience with your colleagues and encouraged them to join, too?

Additional Checklist for Faculty Members

- Have you entered your CPD activities for 2017?
- Have you planned the next step in your professional progression?
- If you are a FAAM member, have you joined the FAAM LinkedIn Group?

If you are not able to tick off all the items on the checklist, please contact us on the above telephone number or email address.

In our 2017 survey, 100% of our customers said they would recommend us to a colleague.

Here are 10 reasons why:

- 1. Established for over 40 years**
- 2. Impartial product range**
- 3. Partnerships with world-leading manufacturers**
- 4. A technical knowledge authority figure within the industry**
- 5. Advice and guidance to identify requirements**
- 6. Flexible hire options and 'try before you buy'**
- 7. Unlimited technical support for the instrument lifetime /duration of hire**
- 8. Free product demonstrations and training**
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- 10. Manufacturer-approved, in-house service, calibration and repairs.**

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Qualifications Updates | Natalie Horton, Qualifications Project Manager



Identification and Quantification of Asbestos in Soils using PLM and PCM qualification. In brief, this will be the first in a series of ‘asbestos in soils’ qualifications, suitable for different asbestos practitioner roles and land remediation specialists.

P408 is designed for the role of the asbestos analyst. It builds on the skills learnt during the P401 and P403 qualifications on analysing bulk samples and air samples. It will also teach students how to identify the different types of contaminants in soils, how to dry and weigh a soil sample correctly to prepare it for analysis, and how to carry out a full quantitative and qualitative analysis of the soil sample to determine how much asbestos is present. Asbestos in soils is a big problem on brownfield sites where land may not have been previously cleared correctly, so it is important that analysts understand how to analyse soil accurately to ensure the land is safe to work on.

P408 will be the first qualification of its kind in the industry, so we anticipate a high level of demand once it has been launched. We are aiming to pilot the qualification in January 2018, with an official launch to follow in Spring 2018. If you would like to register your interest as a candidate, please email qualifications@bohs.org.

In October, we completed our first pilot run of IP601: Thorough Examination and Testing of LEV (local exhaust ventilation)

Systems in South Africa, which was received positively by candidates with a high pass rate. We are now working on the final stages of this qualification, with a view to launching early next year.

On the subject of local exhaust ventilation systems, over the last few months, we have been working on a number of revisions to our LEV Proficiency Module series (P601, P602, P603 and P604). Revisions will come into effect from 1 January 2018; the biggest of which will affect the P604 - Performance Evaluation and Management of Local Exhaust Ventilation Systems qualification. From 1 January, the exam will be changed to a mixed Written Theory/Written Practical exam paper, and instead of preparing field assessment reports (as candidates would for P601), candidates will now be asked to produce one commissioning report instead. Training providers have already been notified of the full list of changes to prepare their training courses, and a summary of revisions will be published on the BOHS website in January.

Back in the Qualifications office, we’re delighted to announce that BOHS has now appointed a new Head of Commercial Operations, Lisa Williams. At the time of writing, Lisa is already in her second week with the Qualifications Team so please offer her a big welcome, and keep an eye out for her in the next issue of *Exposure!*

It’s been a busy and exciting time here at the BOHS Head Office since the launch of the new Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management in October! Word is really starting to spread about the new home for asbestos professionals. A few of us from Head Office attended the Asbestos: The Truth conference in Manchester, where attendees were keen to find out more about FAAM and understand which grade they could join at based on their experience and qualifications. It was great to see how positively it was being received by asbestos practitioners and building managers alike.

Our big project here in the Qualifications Team continues to be the P408 –

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LEV



Extracting the Best Practices

6 & 7 February 2018
Jurys Inn Hinckley Island
Watling Street, Hinckley, LE10 3JA

BOHS/ILEVE are holding their third joint event: 'BOHS/ILEVE LEV - Extracting the best practices'

In 2018 we will continue with a TWO day programme leaning towards occupational hygienists on Day 1 and LEV Engineers on Day 2, but hopefully with universal appeal. Aimed at delivering insight and debate into the topics affecting local exhaust ventilation control and its role in the reduction of industrial disease, we're looking for enthusiastic participants!

For LEV control to become more effective at reducing ill health at work we need to be installing and maintaining effective LEV systems. We need to build stronger relationships between LEV engineers and occupational hygienists.

If you agree, please join us and let's reduce work-related ill health.



IGNITE
Could you inspire the audience in 5 minutes?

You need 20 slides (that automatically advance every 15 seconds) and sharp delivery to tell us what excites you - LEV related only, please. Useful products, success stories, disasters averted, peculiar case studies - tell us your story. Please contact the organisers conferences@bohs.org and volunteer!!

Topics for discussion include:

Day 1:

- ILEVE / BOHS Update
- Controlling metalworking fluid (MWF) exposures
- Commissioning and TE_{XT} of MWF LEV systems
- Capture hoods - function and testing - are we being too optimistic?
- Ignite....
- HSE upcoming focus
- BOHS P601 - P604 update on new syllabi
- Clearance testing enclosures

Day 2:

- BOHS / ILEVE Update
- Testing equipment - getting the best info from old and new
- Recirculating filters - legal and practical implications (HSE lead)
- Breathe Freely campaigns - past, present, future
- Ignite....
- Commissioning benchmarks
- Air monitoring in LEV testing
- Workplace Health Without Borders including design a rubbish fan competition

The programme is still being developed so may be revised.

Conference Rates	Day 1	Day 2
Member	£140	£90
Non Member	£200	£110

Visit www.bohs.org
to book your place.

All prices are subject to UK VAT at 20%.
From receipt of payment for any of these options
your company will be included in all pre and post
conference publicity.

Stand Package	£1000
• 3m x 2m exhibition space for two days	
• One delegate place	
• Listing in email campaigns and social media posts	
• Logo on holding slides throughout the conference	

Insert in delegate pack	£250
• Single sheet flyer (A4/A5)	

Sponsorship Opportunity	£1500
Increase your conference presence by sponsoring a drinks reception on the Tuesday evening.	
• Branding at the drinks reception	
• 3m x 2m exhibition space for two days	
• One delegate place	
• Listing in email campaigns and social media posts	
• Logo on holding slides throughout the conference	

Meet the Member | Damien Stear, BOHS Member



How long have you been a member of BOHS (Or any of its predecessors)?

Since 1989 (approximately).

When and why did you become interested in occupational hygiene?

My ambition was always to join the Royal Navy. Unfortunately, officer entry was very competitive and they weren't as keen on me as I was on them, so it was over to Plan B. Unfortunately, there wasn't one. I had never heard of occupational hygiene until I saw an advert for a job described as an 'Environmental Technician'. I applied and got the job. For the next eight years, I worked as a consultant in occupational hygiene, gaining a wide range of professional and practical experience in all aspects of the profession. I joined HSE in 1993 and moved to the Offshore Division in 2001. So, 18 years after leaving the Royal Navy recruiting office a broken man, I finally got to go to sea, although the installations tended to stay put.

What is your 'pet subject' in occupational hygiene?

I wouldn't call it a pet subject but more of a 'stalker'. Although I have been involved in all aspects of occupational hygiene, asbestos management and control would never seem to be far away, however much I tried to dodge it. As with many other hygienists, I started my career carrying out building surveys and asbestos clearances. In fact, during my time with the HSE, I authored several guidance documents including the HSE bestseller, *Asbestos Essentials*. I was also involved in legislative reviews including the early days of what we now call the 'Duty to Manage', the final ban on chrysotile asbestos etc. That's a long-winded way of saying asbestos!

How has BOHS or BOHS membership (including its predecessors) helped you in your career?

Besides providing the qualifications which formed the basis of my career (including chartered status), opportunities for networking are the other main ways by which BOHS membership has helped me. There was always someone out there that would know the answer to the obscure question you had. I have been able to call upon the knowledge and experience of my peers in obtaining industry input (via working groups) into several projects undertaken whilst with the HSE e.g. development of COSHH essentials and its progeny offshore COSHH essentials, asbestos essentials, offshore manual handling etc. I was also honoured to serve three years as a Council member as well as being an examiner on the S301 course. Conferences were always enjoyable events but most importantly, they gave the English boys their annual opportunity to batter the Rest of The World on the football pitch. These were always hard-fought games, especially when certain Scottish and Welsh hygienists (you know who you are) played and things got physical.

Describe a typical day in your job

As I'm a gentleman of leisure, my days tend to be rather civilised. I rise at a reasonable 7.30am, have a light breakfast

Current job title and organisation for which you work?

A gentleman of leisure. Retired 29th September 2017. Formerly HM Inspector of Health & Safety (Energy Division - Offshore) and Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

What A-Levels and first degree did you take?

Biology, economics and general studies. BSc (Hons) Biology and Environmental Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University.

What was the first job you got when you finished your full-time education?

Working in the labs at Hope Hospital (now Salford Royal Infirmary). This is where I inadvertently had my first exposure to occupational hygiene – decanting 10mls of toluene into something like 100 small bottles at a time in a small room with the door closed (the office opposite was occupied by someone senior to me and who didn't like the smell). I had a small open window for ventilation.

What further qualifications do you hold?

Certificate of Operational Competence in Occupational Hygiene, Diploma of Professional Competence in Occupational Hygiene, MSc Environmental Toxicology from the University of Central Lancashire (awarded the prize for the best thesis in class called 'Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE): The Environmental Implications' - BSE was very topical at that time) and a NEBOSH Certificate (Distinction).

followed by a hard session at the gym. This is normally followed by a few of us going for bacon butty and then home to do my chores. However, back when I was working for a living, I was an occupational health inspector in the HSE's offshore division. My time would be spent assessing safety cases, preparing for and carrying out offshore inspections, providing support to investigations and enforcement, managing our asbestos inspection programme, input to strategy development, general advice to anyone who rang or emailed etc. As most people say, no two days are the same. This was illustrated on one Wednesday in September 2012 when the helicopter I was travelling in developed a technical fault (the pilot could smell smoke) and had to do a forced landing in a farmer's field which was some way short of the installation which we were supposed to be travelling to.

How did you get your current job?

I'd worked in HSE's occupational hygiene unit for eight years and I was thinking it was time for a move to something completely different – the offshore division seemed to fit the bill perfectly. It was an industry in a remote location with its own unique set of challenges, not least trying to understand Geordies, Glaswegians, Texans and Norwegians in full flow.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Spending time with my wife Amanda and three kids aged 21, 17 and 15. My other passion is sport, whether it be watching Pep's Manchester City play or playing football. I also enjoy going to the gym and ran in the Great Manchester Marathon the week after the bombing at the Manchester Arena. It was an emotional day and will be long remembered.

Football or rugby (and which team?)

I think I've covered this already. I would like to add that I've held a season ticket at City since the 1975/76 season with my first game being a nil-nil draw at the swamp (Sorry, Old Trafford) in 1972, I think. The football fans amongst us will appreciate the toll this has taken on my nerves over the years.

Where did you last go on holiday?

A relaxing two weeks in Javea, Spain. The temperature was mid-30°C and brutal. I went on one run and that was it.

Cat or dog?

Dogs but we have two cats and our family history with pets is a sorry one. The male cat recently had a serious condition which required numerous tests, injections, scan and a stay in cat hospital. Unfortunately, we realised that due to a clerical error (by the wife!), one of the cats was uninsured. You can guess which one and you are correct. The bill was not far short of £2,000.

Favourite film

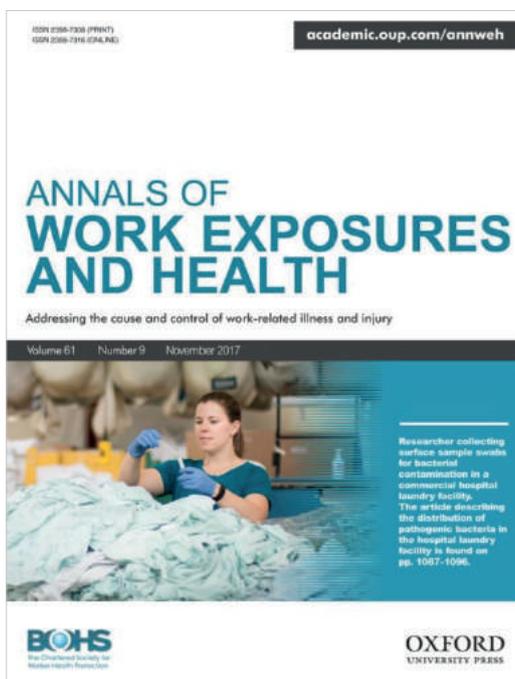
Easy - Apollo 13! Even though I'm old enough to have seen the drama unfold live on TV, I still find the film gripping. They were basically in an aluminium can with wafer-thin walls, hurtling along knowing that a one-degree error in trajectory could result in a fiery death or a lingering demise in the cold depths of space – no Starship Enterprise warping to the rescue. It must have been terrifying, but their training took over. As the Flight Director said, "Work the problem, people. Let's not make things worse." There's probably a message for all of us in that quote (although, it may have been dreamt up by the writers).

What was the last music album you bought?

I tend to download individual tracks rather than albums. If I were to buy a music album, it would be something by Oasis or Queen.

Favourite book?

A read before lights out when I was working offshore was relaxing after a very long day. I enjoyed George Orwell's *1984* at school. I also enjoyed *The Exorcist* until it was confiscated by an overzealous teacher (the film had just been released and was causing quite a stir). A book called *3 Para* is also a favourite as it chronicles a battalion's tour of Afghanistan in 2006. It goes without saying that it is hard-hitting stuff. However, my favourite is *Insomnia* by Stephen King.



Our latest issue is out now!

The front cover is relating to a paper called "Assessment of Environmental Contamination with Pathogenic Bacteria at a Hospital Laundry Facility" by Karen E. Michael, David No, William E. Daniell, Noah Seixas and Marilyn C. Roberts.

The Editor's Choice is "Field Measurements of Inadvertent Ingestion Exposure to Metals" by Melanie Gorman Ng, Laura MacCalman, Sean Semple and Martie van Tongeren.

You can now read the latest issue of the Annals here:
<https://academic.oup.com/annweh/issue/61/9>

In case you missed it...

The Annals' Chief Editor, Noah Seixas, has compiled a brief list of relevant research papers from past issues to raise awareness of November's Lung Cancer Awareness Month in collaboration with Oxford University Press (OUP). Check out the collection here which also includes research from other OUP medical journals:

https://academic.oup.com/journals/pages/lung_cancer_collection

HSG 258 – 10 YEARS ON

It's now 10 years since the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) launched their first guide to local exhaust ventilation: HSG 258. So, how have things changed since that time? Adrian Sims from Vent-Tech Ltd looks at the progress so far and what he thinks needs to change in the future.

The 'Facts'

Latest figures

Unfortunately, many of the figures available from the HSE are estimates due to the difficulty in determining exactly what may have caused a problem. However, the estimates do suggest it is a **big** problem:

Around **13,000 deaths** each year from occupational lung disease and cancer are estimated to have been caused by past exposures at work, primarily to chemicals and dusts.*

Latest HSE estimates suggest there are around **18,000 new cases of "breathing and lung problems"** each year caused or made worse by work - up from 14,000 in the previous figures. Along with **13,500 new cancer registrations** per year caused by past occupational exposure to known and probable carcinogens, these problems are not going away.*

10 years ago

If we look back, figures from 10 years ago aren't directly comparable. However, the HSE estimated then that 'the annual number of work-related cancer deaths is likely to be in excess of 6,000', and that 'there could be some 4,000 COPD deaths each year due to past occupational exposures to fumes, chemicals and dusts' suggesting things have not improved much if at all over those 10 years.**

At the same time, though, injuries which are probably what most people think about when they think about health and safety at work, have been declining steadily. The 137 people*** killed as a result of a workplace accident in 2015/2016 is still 137 people too many but is dwarfed by the 13,000 deaths estimated to have been caused by past exposures.

Vent-Tech believes the lack of improvement in figures is due to:

• Lack of co-ordinated action

There are lots of groups doing good things individually, for example, the HSE, the Institute of LEV Engineers (ILEVE) etc, but they are not talking enough to each other. An example of this is that the HSE recently organised an HSE 'Healthy Lung Summit' but did not let ILEVE (the Institute for LEV Engineers) know about it until the last moment and only then because they were looking for sponsors. The result of this is that the message is not getting across clearly enough and Vent-Tech will still go into construction companies, for example, where having the proper LEV in place is barely being considered while 'safety' aspects such as whether or not boots and helmets fit properly are given much greater prominence

• The HSE is not taking a strong lead

At the moment, Vent-Tech thinks industry and volunteers are pushing this through – with industry leaders giving up their time voluntarily to give talks, organise conferences etc

• Some big businesses in the LEV sector are still not employing 'competent' engineers

The lack of a co-ordinated industry strategy means this is allowed to carry on which along with companies offering 'off the shelf' / 'off the web' solutions means that even where companies are having LEV installed, it is often not actually 'fit for purpose'

The positives

It is not all doom and gloom:

- ILEVE is now up and running and speaking to more stakeholders than ever before. Following a round table summit in 2016, there are now working groups looking at improving both competence and awareness in the industry

- The British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) is pushing its training programme and promoting awareness through campaigns such as *Breathe Freely* etc. They are also improving the training programmes from 2018 to make the courses more relevant and to provide a more obvious path to becoming a qualified LEV engineer
- The importance of competency is starting to trickle down to industry with the launch and recognition of initiatives such as the ILEVE card, MILEVE, BOHS CoC (Certificate of Competence) etc. In fact, one well-known pharmaceutical company has recently started demanding that people doing their LEV testing must hold the BOHS CoC in Control
- Vent-Tech has heard that the HSE has indicated a focus on design of ventilation systems moving forward and will hopefully be promoting the fact that this needs to be done by competent LEV engineers who can provide evidence that a control system will work before installation

Making a difference quicker

Whilst the initiatives outlined above will all help, Vent-Tech thinks that change is happening too slowly for the thousands being made ill each year by work.

If things are to change more quickly, Vent-Tech thinks that someone with authority within the HSE needs to recognise the requirement for focus in this area and take it on, bringing in stakeholders to advise and help.

Vent-Tech would like to see a five-year plan with a specific focus on raising awareness of the importance of competency, to help ensure that people stop buying the wrong equipment and installing it incorrectly. This, in turn, would lead to higher standards within the industry as companies realise that they need to ensure their staff are properly trained or risk losing business.

The plan needs to support the education of the entire industry – both suppliers and customers and from top to bottom to raise awareness of the importance of LEV so people across industries start to question 'What am I breathing in'?

Sources:

- * <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/>, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/cancer/index.htm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh1617.pdf>
- ** <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh0708.pdf>
- *** <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/index.htm>

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