



# The Lancashire Occupational Health and Safety Group



*Registered Charity No 1032462*

## THE HISTORY OF THE LANCASHIRE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP

### Introduction

The Lancashire Occupational Health and Safety Group was founded in 1930 as the Preston and District Industrial Accident Prevention Group, which makes it one of the, if not the, oldest safety groups in the country.

### Early History

The Group owed its existence to the concern for the welfare of their respective workforces demonstrated by the following founder firms:

- English Electric Company
- Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Company
- Leyland Motors
- Siemen's Lamps
- Wood Milne Company

These companies became increasingly concerned at the growing rate and severity of accidents in their respective organisations during the years following the First World War (1914-1918). They felt that an exchange of information and ideas at joint meetings might contribute towards bringing about better and safer work practices and conditions in their factories.

The then "Ministry of Labour" prudently recognised the benefits such meetings would bring to everyone engaged in industry and they encouraged all firms in the Preston District to join in. This joint recognition is carried on today by the Health and Safety Executive who actively support the Group in all its activities.

The 1939-45 war period brought about a suspension of the Group's activities but after the war the Group reformed and regularised its monthly meetings. Continuing support and assistance was readily forthcoming from the Government and professions when the Group embarked on a serious educational programme in the 1950's. This training programme expanded steadily as the need to train all levels of employees was recognised. The main driver within the Group for these developments was Bill Handley and soon Alston Hall in Longridge became the centre of the Group's regular residential training courses.

Over the years other Groups from the North West, including Blackburn, Burnley and Wigan, combined with the Preston Group to form the North West Area Association of Industrial Accident Prevention Groups.

## **Later History**

At the AGM in 1977 the decision was taken to change the name of the Group to the Central Lancashire Occupational Safety Group, and in the 1980's it was changed again to the current Lancashire Occupational Health and Safety Group. At the same time a competition was run to design a new logo for the Group, which was judged by the MP for North Preston, Robert Atkins and the winning entry was designed by Arnold School.

In 1992 Preston held its 20-year Preston Guild celebrations, and LOHSG combined with the Health and Safety Executive to put on a series of presentations in Preston in support of the Proud Preston Exhibition. These lasted from Friday 28 August 1992 to Sunday 6 September 1992, with a presentation each day.

In the early 1990's a sub-committee was formed to investigate the benefits of the Group becoming a registered charity and it was subsequently decided that there would be benefits to the Group. These would include tax benefits, raising the status of the Group and making it easier to get support from bodies such as local government. In addition, the endorsement "A Registered Charity" on stationary would emphasize that the organization was not a commercial company or private individual trading for profit. This proposal was put to the Group membership who agreed with the decision to become a registered charity. One of the requirements of being a charity is registration with the Charity Commission and part of that registration was the requirement for a Charity Commission approved constitution. This was constructed based on existing constitutions, was then approved by the Charity Commission and made live. So, in 1994 the Group became a Registered Charity.

## **Presidents of the Group**

In its 80 years of existence, the Group has had three presidents; in 1979 Bill Handley relinquished the role of Chairman and became the Group's first President. Harry Banks took on the role of Chairman and became the first Vice President, becoming in turn President in the 1980's. When he died in 1998 the current President, Robert Cunningham, took office.

## **The Groups Charity Work**

The Group has always been generous in supporting worthy causes and over the years has donated funds to various organisations for specific objectives. Examples include:

- In 1991 the Group donated £5,000 so that Pegasus beds could be bought for the Burns Unit at Royal Preston Hospital.
- In the 1990's the Group donated £3,000 towards an ambulance for St John Ambulance cadets, £5,000 towards the Magic Million Scanner appeal at Royal Preston Hospital, and monies to the Blackpool Victoria Hospital scanner appeal.
- In 2000 the Group donated £2,200 to both the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance and £250 to the Windmill Appeal
- In 2005, to celebrate the Group's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Group donated £750 to both the Windmill and Rosemere Cancer funds.
- In 2007 the Group donated £200 to the South Lancs Advanced Motorcyclists for road safety training and £250 for outward bound training for underprivileged children
- In 2008 the Group donated £500 to both the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance
- In 2009 the Group donated £1,000 to the South Lancs Advanced Motorcyclists to support members through their advanced test, £1,000 to St John Ambulance to support a Moving Patients course and £1,000 to British Red Cross.

In addition, in 2009 and 2010 the Group received sponsorship from the North West Development Agency for the annual seminar. This was for £5,000 each year.

At its annual AGM, the Group will present the Handley Shield to the St John Ambulance and the LOHSG (now Harry Banks) Shield to the British Red Cross. These shields are competed for within the two organisations and the winning unit keeps the shield for a year and receives the donation, usually £200, presented at the same time as the shields. The LOHSG shield was first presented in 1992 and on that occasion a message of congratulations was received from the Queen.

### **The Groups Main Anniversaries**

During its 80 year existence the Group has celebrated its main anniversaries, as follows:

- In 1980 the Group celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Group. A dinner was held at the Pines Hotel and the guests included Bill Simpson, the then chairman of the Health and Safety Commission and captains of industry from the Lancashire area. Messages of congratulations were received from HRH Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister and the General Secretary of the TUC.
- In 1990 the Group celebrated 60 years with a dinner at the Barton Grange Hotel. Messages of congratulations were received from HRH Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister and the General Secretary of the TUC.
- In 2005 the Group celebrated 75 years with a celebratory lunch at BAe Systems Warton. Guests included the Mayors of Preston and the Fylde and representatives of the sponsors of the Group. David Ashton, Area Director of the HSE, was one of the speakers and messages of congratulations were received from HRH Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister and the General Secretary of the TUC. In addition, each member attending received a suitably engraved wine glass.
- Also, in 2005 the Group were presented with a glass shield to commemorate their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by Lord Brougham and Vaux on behalf of the National Health and Safety Groups Council. This presentation took place at the annual National Health and Safety Groups Council awards ceremony held in the House of Lords.
- In 2010 the Group celebrated 80 years with a celebratory lunch at the Villa at Wrea Green. Messages of congratulations were received from HM The Queen, HRH Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister's Office and the General Secretary of the TUC.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011 the Group held its 600<sup>th</sup> meeting since its inauguration in 1930. This was held at the St John Ambulance HQ, Garstang Road, Preston, and a buffet was provided for all the members attending. The Commander St John Ambulance in Lancashire, Brigadier Ian Robertson, gave a welcome speech in which he outlined the early history of St John Ambulance in Lancashire. The event was well attended by Group members who all enjoyed the afternoon.

### **The Groups Affiliations**

The Group has been a member of Safety Groups UK and its predecessor the National Health and Safety Groups Council and is affiliated to RoSPA. The Group is also a founding member of the North West Regional Association of Occupational Health and Safety Groups.

## **Conclusion**

Over the years the Group has grown in size and strength and every organisation and individual in the Lancashire area is eligible to join the Group, with the principle objective of helping to promote the highest practicable health safety and welfare standards in every working environment, for the public benefit. The current membership list is made up of large multi-nationals and self-employed alike and it is the breadth of this membership that gives the Group its strength. Currently (2010) the membership is around 55 members but it has been as high as 200. Many companies can be traced back to the early days of the Preston and District Industrial Accident Prevention Group, albeit with another name than at present. Company names may change but the membership has remained solid for a very long time.

The Group provides an annual programme of relevant topics and speakers in the form of regular monthly meetings and supplements this programme with specific seminars and training sessions. It also enjoys practical links with St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross Society in assisting them in the promotion of education in first aid. The Group has also responded to consultation documents published by the Health and Safety Executive, thus having a (small) say in influencing HSE policy

The Group has its own website that has recently (2010) been totally redesigned. This can be accessed at <http://www.lohsg.co.uk>.