

Groupnews

Happy 50th Birthday NSHSG!



► With the North Staffordshire Health & Safety Group celebrating its 50th birthday this year, group president, **Frank Cooper** CMIOSH, provides an overview of the group's work and how it has changed over the last fifty years.



Fifty years ago, on 13 June 1961, a group of 17 people from local companies in Stoke-on-Trent met to discuss health and safety issues that affected businesses and industry in the North Staffordshire area.

Mr J.H. Goodier JP, a senior lecturer at the then Stoke-on-Trent College of Building and Commerce, chaired the meeting. With a lifelong interest in health and safety issues, particularly as they affected the construction industry, he was instrumental in setting up this first meeting of what was to become the North Staffordshire Industrial Safety Group of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (later to become the North Staffordshire Health & Safety Group – NSHSG). By the end of the first month the group had a total of 38 member companies from the Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire areas. The group now has over 250 members.



► **J.H. Goodier JP, founder and first chairman**

In the past, industry in North Staffordshire and the surrounding areas was largely dominated by the pottery industry, coal mining and the iron and steel industries, although many other trades have played a large part in the wider industrial development of the area. As with all industrial work, the health, safety and welfare of the area's workforce has during the fifty years that the NSHSG has been in existence been affected by the processes and conditions in which such work took place. Ill health and workplace accidents have both affected the lives of the local population.

Today, the health, safety and welfare of the workforce bears little or no resemblance to that of fifty years ago and we like to think that the group has played its part in making these improvements happen for local workers and continues to do so.

Meetings

Affiliated to RoSPA and a registered charity throughout its fifty year history, the group has continued to meet on the third Tuesday of the month with the exception of July and August. The meetings include a mix of breakfast and afternoon meetings, usually held at the North Staffs Medical Institute, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent. These meetings involve talks, seminars and technical presentations; all presented by speakers who are experts in their chosen field. The meetings also provide an excellent opportunity for members to network with like-minded health and safety professionals from various industrial and commercial backgrounds.

The group's Executive Committee prepares a wide-ranging programme of events on an annual basis and the group is actively supported by the HSE and the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Prior details of all

group meetings are sent out to members by email or by post, and our website contains details of the annual programme as well as a members' area where videos and DVDs can be borrowed from the group's media library.

Awards

Over the years, the group has won several awards, including the *HSE European Week for Safety and Health award* in both 1996 and 1997 and the National Safety Group Council's (now Safety Groups UK) *Alan Butler Award for Excellence* for the best European health and safety week event in 1998. This event involved encouraging members of the public to take part in a health and safety survey and hazard-spotting exercise in the Potteries Shopping Centre (see photo).



► **Hazard-spotting exercise in the Potteries Shopping Centre, 1998**

Celebrations

Last month the group celebrated its 50th birthday with a luncheon for members at Keele Hall, University of Keele. The guest speaker was Judith Hackett CBE, HSE chair. Other guests included RoSPA's chief executive, Tom Mullarkey, and Subash Ludrah, president elect of IOSH, as well as local dignitaries and MPs.

To celebrate this special birthday, group members were all presented with a booklet detailing the history of the group and the new NSHSG logo was unveiled (see above).

To join NSHSG or to find out more about the group's work, contact Trevor Fletcher on 01785 615279 or 07711 199484. Alternatively, email: trevor@nshsg.org.uk or see www.nshsg.org.uk

Safety Groups UK would like to thank its current sponsors – Haix, Deb, Arco and Scott Health and Safety – for their continuing support.