

ROUTE TO SAFETY



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GIVING SOMETHING BACK

IIRSM BOARD MEMBER **GEOFF LLOYD** TELLS US HOW HE FELL INTO A CAREER IN HEALTH AND SAFETY – AND WHY HE HAS NO REGRETS.

I started my career as an apprentice high voltage fitter for the London Electricity Board in 1960. My father and uncle worked in the industry and I decided to follow suit. I enjoyed the work, although one downside was that we were always sent to huge substations in the summer and we were sent to work outdoors in the winter! So a career change was much needed.

I moved on to North East London Polytechnic to work as a biology technician. I had always had an interest in biology, and fancied a change in career – plus it offered a bit more money! I became actively involved in health and safety when I became a trade union safety rep at the Polytechnic in 1975 when the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act

(HSWA) came in. I was there for 20 years in total. Well, why did I leave? I suppose it was because I became bored. I realised I had put in place all the systems that needed to be in place and, to use the buzz phrase of today, I felt I needed a new challenge.

In 1991 I joined the London Metropolitan Police as one of two safety advisers. Health and safety in police forces was a very

new concept, because police officers didn't come under the HSWA at that time. In fact, they didn't come under the Act until 1997, when the Police (Health and Safety) Act 1997 came into force. I was part of the Home Office-working group that met for four years and produced the guidance to all UK police forces. I eventually became the professional head of safety for the Met, heading up a team of safety advisers and providing advice for 46,000 staff.

On the day I joined the Met, the IRA launched three mortar bombs at 10 Downing Street during a Cabinet meeting. It was definitely an eye-opener and sharply brought home to me what sort of challenges I faced. Those challenges involved bringing health and safety into operational policing, while still allowing officers to carry out their operational role. I became heavily involved in police search teams – in fact, I still lecture on the international courses that are held at the Police National Search Centre which is part of the Royal School of Military Engineering, providing advice to the police security advisers (POLSAs). They head search teams who go out before events, such as Trooping the Colour and royal weddings and funerals. Sad memories include the funerals of

Princess Diana, Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother. I was also tasked with providing health and safety advice to the body recovery teams for the Ladbroke Grove railway disaster in 1999. It was a difficult task – very sobering, I suppose you would say.

I think my favourite event was Millennium night. It took months of providing advice to the MPS and the Government Office for London. The main task was assisting in the identification of potential risk areas that required resolving, by bringing in more officers and monitoring crowd safety.

I am keen to keep active within the health and safety profession during my retirement. By doing so, I see it as putting something back into the profession. To just walk away from it after so many years would be very hard to do. I am very glad my career was in health and safety and I have absolutely no regrets. In some ways I am in a privileged position, as I have always enjoyed my work.

I am extremely proud to be a board member of IIRSM – the Institute's excellence has certainly come into the 21st century.

Geoff Lloyd FIIRSM, CFIOSH has been a member of IIRSM's Board of Governors since 2000.

