

25th Anniversary Of The Chemical Hazards Communication Society – How CHCS Came Into Being

The Formation Of CHCS

In the late 1980s the EU introduced its 1st Dangerous Preparations Directive (88/379/EEC), which included a requirement to provide a Safety Data Sheet. This development led to concerns about training and support for those involved with chemicals.

In the early 1990s, two things happened that really started to spawn the idea of a “CHCS”:

1. Some interested parties tried to set up a chemical hazards training course with a University. The University sought support and funding from industry, and Desmond Waight, working at 3M, expressed his interest in this initiative.
2. Then in 1992, HSE’s Bob Warner was invited to speak at a meeting of the USA Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC). Bob presented a paper titled “[New Developments In Classification And Labelling In The European Community](#)”. On his return to the UK Bob suggested that industry may wish to consider setting up something similar to SCHC in the UK.

Bob’s idea was taken up and the idea of setting up a UK-based Society was led by Terry McKinley. You can see from copies of documents that we have in our archive, that a name of “Society for Chemical Hazard Communication” was given to the Society, mirroring that of the US-based Society. ([See letter from Terry McKinley to Bob Warner, dated 16 February 1994.](#))

Terry organised a date for a first meeting and started to invite people who might be interested in such an initiative. He prepared a “[Background and proposed Policy paper](#)” which included a first draft of the aims. It’s interesting to see, from the archive documents, that [Terry invited Desmond Waight](#) to the planned meeting, and asked whether he could “support personally and wish to be involved”. [Desmond replied on 5 March 1994](#), confirming his interest in being involved, but stating that he had a conflicting meeting on the proposed date of the first meeting: 14th April 1994. Desmond followed up this letter with a [fax to Terry on 13th April 1994](#) stating that his conflicting meeting had been cancelled. There is a handwritten annotation, presumably from Desmond, on the edge of this document stating, “*IF MEETING HADN’T BEEN CANCELLED THEN CHCS WOULD HAVE HAD DIFFERENT INITIAL CHAIRMAN*”.

The Inaugural Meeting took place, as planned on 14th April 1994 at HSE, Baynard’s House, London. About 40 people from Government and Industry attended this meeting. They included Desmond from 3M, Gill Pagliuca (then “Gill Lyons” - our current Chair) and Dave King (one of our current Office Administrators) who then both worked at the National Chemical Emergency Centre and Tony Bingham – Chair of our Remuneration Committee and long-standing Council member. The meeting agreed that a professional society should be formed, known as the Chemical Hazards Communication Society – CHCS for short (changed from the initial idea of “Society for Chemical Hazard Communication to differentiate the UK Society from the US Society). We have the [Draft Agenda](#) and the [Minutes of this meeting](#) in the archive, as well as the [Press Release](#) issued after the meeting.

12 volunteers came forward at the meeting and retired to a local public house to discuss the details of how to get the Society up and running! This group, the “Steering Committee” elected Desmond Waight as Chair, Terry McKinley as Treasurer and Ray Jones as Membership Secretary.



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Desmond saw the Chairman's position through until he stepped down as Chair in 2009 (to be succeeded by Stuart Longworth and then Gill Pagliuca in 2015). This photo is of some of the Steering Committee (some people are missing from the photo, including CHCS' Gill Pagliuca) at the 1st seminar in 3M in autumn 1994 (left to right – back: is Desmond - 3M, Debbie Hussey - DEFRA, Joe James of Dow (which generously gave CHCS an initial £1000 donation to overcome initial funding issues), Dr Ray Jones - Open University. Left to right – front: Marion Evans – HSE (not a member of the Steering Committee but she provided valuable liaison with HSE), Mary Bradfield - 3M, Arthur Hancock - Consultant and Dave Quigley - ROSPA.)



CHCS produced its first Newsletter in August 1994, with 2 further editions in 1994:



- [1st CHCS Newsletter – August 1994](#)
- [2nd CHCS Newsletter – September 1994](#)
- [3rd CHCS Newsletter – November 1994](#)

The 3rd Edition has the very sad news of the death of Terry McKinley, so instrumental in setting up CHCS, in November 1994 – so soon after the Society got off the ground in April of that year.

Lindy Waight (Desmond's wife) started to get involved with CHCS in these early days when Desmond was working full time at 3M. She says she realised that she needed to "either join Desmond in supporting CHCS or lose him to CHCS!" In 1995 she joined Desmond on a voluntary basis, with her position being regularised in May 1996 when she was 'engaged' to provide office services support. This was, of course, before the establishment of email and everything had to be done on paper and by post! Desmond says "We always had CHCS at breakfast, lunch and evening meal right up until



March 2015. Communication between Chairman, (up to 2009) and the Office was uniquely catered for!" Following Desmond's retirement as Chairman in 2009, he and Lindy continued to run the CHCS Office until the end of March 2015, when Dave King took over, with Sharon Rice also joining in December 2016. Tragically, Desmond died in 2016 – a great loss to our industry.

As the services offered by CHCS grew, so did the work of the Office. CHCS held the first of its many "events" (seminars, AGMs, webinars, etc.) "EC Chemical Hazard Communication" on October 1994, just 6 months after its formation, with 95 delegates in attendance. Then, with membership continuing to grow, the highly successful CHCS Modular Training program started in February 2001, and, of course, has continued to thrive ever since.

25 Years On

25 years later the CHCS is thriving and supporting our members in so many ways. For example:

- we have nearly 500 members, from a wide range of countries: UK, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey and the USA.
- we continue to operate our successful [modular training programme](#) comprising around 20 courses, training around 250 people a year. The programme is designed to help our members comply with current regulation and has necessarily evolved over the years with regulatory change.
- our email [Questions Forum](#) (started by Desmond Waight in 1998, now has over 800 subscribers from all over the World).
- we liaise and work closely with Government bodies and Departments, giving our members access to important consultations and discussions on policy and legislation. An excellent example of this was the event we ran in conjunction with HSE in January 2019, with nearly 100 delegates attending: “EU Exit: CHCS / HSE Joint Stakeholder Event”.
- we have held 24 “Annual General Meetings” and 7 “Annual Lectures” – the 2018 Lectures featuring speakers from HSE, DfT, industry and the USA.
- we have held 117 “Council Meetings” – the management committee of CHCS.
- in 2015 we formalised our legal status by becoming CHCS CLG (a Company Limited by Guarantee).

Thank You!

From everyone at CHCS, now and in the past, thank you for supporting us.

Thank you to:

- our members
- our sponsors
- our colleagues in Government Departments and Agencies
- our many speakers at our events
- our trainers
- our volunteers: Council and sub-group members
- our professional support colleagues
- our Forum Operator
- all other people, bodies, agencies, companies who support CHCS and our members in so many ways.

We look forward to the next 25 years!