

UK history of occupational safety and health website

by Sheila Pantry OBE BA FCLIP

The website has been continuously updated since the launch and now contains under the various headings a wide range of references and links to full text documents – the earliest of which is about 500 years old. (Who dares to say health and safety is a new subject?).

Many of the items listed have been passed on to the British Library for safe keeping for the future.

Request

Anyone with documents or contributions to make for the website should contact Sheila Pantry by emailing sp@sheilapantry.com

The following press release initiated by Sheila Pantry has kindly been sent out in January 2016 by the RoSPA Press Office. Members of NOHSC may be interested in checking out and examining the content in the website www.historyofosh.org.uk by clicking on the links.

Press Release January 2016

Why the UK is one of the safest places to work and live!

The UK history of occupational safety and health is being preserved in a website that shows over 200 years of development in all workplaces.

A law stipulating that women and children aged 13-18 could only work 63 hours per week in factories and another one setting out the first compensation structure for injured workers are listed on the website that charts more than 200 years of industrial history.

These two laws, from 1847 and 1897 retrospectively, are among many mentioned on the website, which shows how the UK has become one of the safest places in the world to work.

Already acclaimed in many parts of the world the *History of Occupational Safety and health* website www.historyofosh.org.uk is fast becoming an invaluable resource for students, academics, health and safety professionals and others with a general interest in industrial history. It sets out developments from the 1802 Factory Act to various regulation changes made by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in recent times.

It was launched to coincide with the [World Day for Safety and Health at Work](#), which is also [Workers' Memorial Day](#), the new site has taken shape over the past three years, in a project led by [RoSPA's National Occupational Safety and Health Committee](#) (NOSH).

Karen McDonnell, RoSPA's occupational safety and health policy adviser, said: "Contrary to what some might believe, the management of safety and health at work is not a 21st century

phenomenon. With roots stretching all the way back to the turn of the 19th century, this is an area at the heart of the UK's industrial history.

"Numerous pieces of legislation have come on to the scene over more than 200 years, covering a wide array of different industries, but their shared aim has been to ensure that workers can go home to their families safe and healthy at the end of each day.

"It is important to value the history of occupational safety and health, not just to honour its pioneers but to develop a sense of perspective about what needs to be done today to continue to tackle preventable harms associated with work, not just in Britain but around the world."

Teresa Budworth, CEO of NEBOSH says

"the site is an invaluable resource for those studying all aspects of occupational safety, health and fire in workplaces for their qualifications. It shows how we have developed systems and good practices over many years. Sheila Pantry, the site's editor is a pioneer in her field of safety information. The site features the pioneering work of the first women factory inspectors. The site shows how Safety professionals today stand on the shoulders of giants."

The website provides a wealth of information for those wishing to track the development of occupational safety and health, be they studying for professional qualifications or carrying out other research. Covered on the site are: **'Two steps forward, one step back': A brief history of the origins, development and implementation of health and safety law in the United Kingdom, 1802–2014**, written by David Eves CB, the HSE's former deputy director general and chief inspector. There is also **History of Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture Development of the Agricultural Inspectorate (The Early Years)**, written by **David Matthey, HM Chief Agricultural Inspector 1996-2000**.

There is a continuously updated timeline; details of government reviews, majority of legislation, standards, inspectorates and notable people/organisations; lectures; a reading list; training; and related museums. Full text documents abound, including one very relevant document that is over 500 years old can be accessed via the website.

The project has been made possible thanks to support from Sheila Pantry OBE, Managing Director Sheila Pantry Associates Ltd, the former head of the HSE's Information Services who has compiled, designed, hosts, funded and continuously updates the website. Anyone with documents or contributions to make for the website should contact Sheila Pantry by emailing sp@sheilapantry.com.

It is not the first time that RoSPA's NOSHC has created a website to mark April 28. Its [Workers' Memorial Day](#) website, launched in 2010, is still a must-visit site for information about memorials to those who have been killed or injured at work.

January 2016

End