



## British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS)

- British Society for Social responsibility in Science
- Set up by about 100 distinguished scientists,
- Including the DNA Nobel Laureates Crick, Watson and Wilkins
- Who became President
- However, active members saw themselves as socialists
- Advertised for ‘Pollution Man’ (sic)
- I had 3 degrees (inc PhD) in Agricultural Science, but ‘got out’
- Took ‘Pollution Man’ job

# **BSSRS – Liberal to Left**

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## Environmental

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- Supported Community Groups
- Fighting local Pollution
- One group complaining about BP in South Wales causing noise and fumes
- It made PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) plastic.  
Common, clean, cheap, plastic

## Occupational

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- This is a polymer made from a monomer called
- Vinyl Chloride Monomer
- Just when news emerging from United States (often sourced from OCAW union)
- That VCM Caused a rare cancer
- Declared by Company Doctor at BF Goodrich when 3 workers diagnosed and claimed compensation

**From outside work to inside**

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## APPROACH TRADE UNIONS..

- News travelled fast
- The image of whole plastics industry under threat
- I was in perfect position to translate
- For TV programmes
- And trade unions, and contacted them through local links of the pollution pressure group
- At first national union (TGWU) reluctant
- Saying they were sorting everything out with management were genuinely concerned
- Not surprising this was a new cancer in what was considered a clean industry
- But I was picking up local workers wanted a lot of answers..

**My talk to BP Baglan Bay Trade Union Committee about VCM 1975 for BBC TV programme...[click here](#)**



# A ROLE FOR SOCIALIST SCIENTISTS



I wrote some learned articles ([Death in the Plastics industry](#))

*More importantly learnt that*

There was an important role in translating scientific information' into forms that people can understand.

We, as scientists had major role & responsibility

A role that a lot of us were eager to embrace...

both as 'social responsibility' and 'socialist'

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- This gave a lot of us more meaning in terms of what we could do – use our skills more directly
- Invited all over the country to speak (eg Dave Gee - here)
- 3 in BSSRS office..Tony Fletcher(also here) wrote ‘Noise’, and Alan Dalton ‘Vibration’
- I don’t think any of us could believe the stories we were hearing
- They sounded ‘Dickensian’ in terms on noise heat and chemicals.
- When we knew what science could do elsewhere
- One afternoon, the other two in office turned to me saying ‘we’ve done this and that pamphlet, well what are you going to write?’
- I said: ‘I have this idea for a magazine’
- To save all the stories we hear when giving our talks
- Publish a regular update;
- That brings together “our expertise” with “workers’ experience”.
- V. clear powerful vision



# 1<sup>st</sup> thoughts

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## IHAB

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- Sent my ideas to about an [Industrial Health Action Bulletin](#)
- 'Stories' of what workers had done with a little help from their scientific friends,

### Sent to

- Well-known Trade Union contacts
- Our 'Science for People' groups
- Enough response to warrant, setting up a meeting...but not in London..



# 1st Meeting

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## Who what where

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- Original Meeting in Manchester
- TUs & Science for People groups together discussed
- What we would write
- How would act as editor just to get it going
- Created format, co-ordinated content, stuck it all together, and got it published.
- At very end, we decided it should have a better name. Somebody suggested in respect for [Patrick Kinnersley's Hazards of Work](#)
- Why not call it .....**Hazards Bulletin!!**

### Details of First meeting

### Wiki: Hazards History

Years later Rory, present Editor said we wouldn't exist without that name change.

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## TUC

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- Thought that TUC would pick it up
- And Dave Gee in Education did,
- But another 25 years before TUC 'adopted' it.

**But it was considered by many to be essential resources for H&S Representative Course, now a legal requirement..**

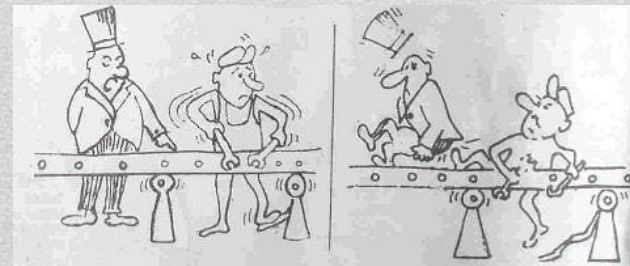
# Slowly slowly..

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## Trade Unions

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- Union resistance (As VCM had taught me). Mistrust 'as outside'
- Many wanted to continue 'Compensation' culture
- Opposed to our 'prevention' (clean up at source/ No to Masks and Cover ups)
- Was a threat to that
- Seen in TGWU, Landworkers..and NUM
- Most H&S was situated in legal department
- Compensation used to recruit members
- Now 'Hazard sseen as utterly normal



## Rest of Left

- We saw H&S as part of the conflict between capital and labour
- Some on left saw it as a diversion
- Many on left surprised how we made it 'political'
- A lot of different people becoming interested.
- Saw it as a way of bringing them together



## Workplace

- Till then, H&S was DULL
- They said: 'Put your mask on'
- We said: 'Take your mask off, let's clean up'
- And the science and technology is there to do whatever.

We also had the nerve to make it funny...

# Together...



## FIRST OFF THE PRESS..



- Many contributed various ‘chunks’
- I had a the job of getting it laid up and printed. I was in the Nat Union of Journalist so had some necessary skills – particularly regards what goes on each page.
- Front = Action, (local dispute, picket line)
- Page 3 next most important – Policy, (Safety Policy – Me & PK)
- Back page important – Law cases,
- Middle Pages ‘Double page spread about a particular hazard, Back Pain
- Page 2 contacts/who we are , Also ‘Tech’ page..
- This layout stayed for years. Although I was told afterwards ‘good job C, but in future leave the layout to Eve!’..... who is still in charge! [More Comments](#)

[First Hazards](#)

# 1st Edition

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## What has happened

- Many campaigns, inc  
asbestos, noise, FACK  
RSI
- Hazards Campaign  
Conference annually

*Hazards* is the winner of The Work  
Foundation Workworld Media Award 2007  
and 2008 for online journalism.<sup>[9]</sup> The judges  
commended the magazine for its "depth and  
seriousness, and its spiky determination to  
campaign for those at the rough end of  
working life."<sup>[9]</sup>

## To now



## Me

- 30 years representing Rural &  
Agricultural Workers) now part of  
Unite) Just retired from National  
Committee
- On various H&S Exec Committees
- Particularly Pesticides (Chemag)  
and Occupational Ill health. Eg  
Aspergilliosis
- Developed vocational  
qualifications to tackle farm  
fatalities
- Was member of government expert  
Advisory Committee on Pesticides.
- Recently retired from Agricultural  
Industry Advisory Committee.