

TOGETHER WE

CAN BE BETTER

PWIPM providing support and mentoring for women within the pest management industry



Throughout history there are many great women and men who have significantly changed the lives of both those around them and future generations, however whilst these remarkable people did great things a clear message is that they cannot and did not succeed alone.

Professional Women in Pest Management was founded for this very reason; providing a support network for women within the industry. Launched in the UK in 2009 and having celebrated its first anniversary in London in March, the group comprises of individuals from all areas of the industry including technicians, biologists, administrators, managers and suppliers, coming together to support, encourage and develop.

The meetings aim to be educational and enable networking and mentoring. During the March meeting presentations were given by had two fantastic speakers - Philippa Codling, Ecolab and Sandra Edmeade-Walters, Food Safety and Public Health Co-ordinator, Joint Local Authority Regulatory Services (JLARS).

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Philippa discussed her experiences in pest management and how as biologist she has developed her career in the industry she loves. Her introduction to the pest management industry was in 1991 when she joined Peter Cox as a biologist. It could be described as a ‘baptism of fire’ as she jumped in the deep end learning how to do biologist inspections and how to be a pest controller all at the same time; however she soon became Ecolab Regional Biologist for the North-West, responsible for three other Biologists, all of whom were women.

Pip currently provides technical field support & training in the North and is responsible for reporting systems nationally. She now manages a team of seven Biologists across six districts and through her experience has gained a real passion for the industry along with a spectrum of knowledge from practical pest control itself to management in one of the UKs largest pest companies. She actively encourages women to get involved in the

industry as it can provide a highly rewarding career.

Also speaking at the meeting was Sandra Edmeade-Walters, principal environmental health officer for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. During her presentation Sandra explained how she has been seconded, for the past six months, to the Joint Local Authority Regulatory Services (JLARS) as the food safety and public health co-ordinator for the host Local Authorities.

“My job is to make sure that the four Boroughs – Waltham Forest, Newham, Hackney and my own Borough, Tower Hamlets, – work with the other stakeholders, which include the Health Protection Agency and the National Health Service, to protect public health,” she said. “It’s quite a challenge,” she added.

The Olympic Park is part of a massive urban regeneration project, at the heart of which is diversity and inclusion as the games are not just for London and contracts are being awarded and won throughout the UK.

The importance of pest management is being addressed as the National Pest Advisory Panel is working with JLARS. Pest infestations a real risk as the games present the largest peace-time catering project in the UK, whilst the various water features across the park and potential risk of bedbugs infestations have also been identified as a potential problem.

“At the moment we are in the construction phase, so the feeding arrangements for the construction staff have been the main public health issue,” she said. “But going forward we need a cohesive approach. The PCO’s in the host boroughs are eager to get onto the site so that they can start to assess the risks and make plans to deal with them. They can only do this once the construction phase is completed which will be towards the end of the year.” This exciting project illustrated the importance of pest management in public health and the part the industry plays in creating the nations legacy as no one wants this to become ‘the bedbug games’.

The PWIPM event celebrated the contribution women already make to the industry with such a vast wealth of knowledge and experience in pest management within the room. PWIPM enables women to share and benefit from each others experiences. To join the organisation or to find out further information please contact info@pwipm.co.uk or go to www.pwipm.co.uk