



The Insurance  
Institute of  
Ipswich, Suffolk  
and North Essex  
Chartered Insurance Institute



I can definitely feel the festive season in the air now; I love this time of year, with its frosty mornings, the need for scarves and mittens, the first twinkling of fairy lights in the dark evenings, shop windows aglow with red and gold, and a general sense of pleasant anticipation.

## Christmas Curry Night!

The seasonal socialising is starting early this year - with the first festive event in my calendar being the Christmas Curry night that our YPG have organised for Thursday 23rd November. The menu was sent round last week and having made my meal choice, which was very difficult from the wide and varied menu, I am now very excited (and on a diet until the 23rd!) We have a great group of people already attending, but there is always space for more, so if you want to join us, do click [here](#) to book your place..



Our Sports and Social Secretary is already working with our YPG group to organise the next networking event and we are hoping to ring the changes with something a little different. Look out for this in the New Year!

## Are you following us?

Those of you who follow us on social media may have noticed an increased presence over the last few weeks, and this is because we have created a new role on council, 'Social Media Secretary', which has kindly been filled by Laura Blyth. These are the kinds of things that we discuss at our council meetings; how to move with the times and make sure all our members are as engaged as possible. We agreed that the 'Communications Officer' role was becoming far too time consuming for one person, and that managing social media needed to be a separate responsibility if we were really to make the most of the increasing digital opportunities available to us - Laura is already proving us right, and making great progress with this.



If you aren't already following us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, look for @ipswichcii and get connected! We also have a LinkedIn group that you can join - search for The Insurance Institute of Ipswich, Suffolk and North Essex.

## 60 Second Interview

Our fourth 60-second interview is with someone whom many of you will know: David Williams, technical director at AXA. David presented a fascinating session at our all-day conference about driverless cars and we were lucky enough to secure an interview with him to find out a little bit more about his career so far. Enjoy reading this at the end of my message.

## Annual Dinner – 20th April 2018 – SAY CHEESE!!!!

Yes, that's right - at the annual dinner this year there will be a fabulous cheese board for each table following what is looking to be a spectacular three-course menu. The dinner committee and I are attending a menu tasting next week to make sure we are happy with our selections (another example of what you might end up doing when you become a council member!) - and those who have booked will be getting details of the final menu to make their choices soon.

Photo  
GRAB A  
PROP BOOTH  
Strike A Pose

Also, we are excited to announce that we will have a photobooth at the event! Kindly sponsored by my employer, Broadspire UK, this will allow guests to grab a prop, strike a pose, and take a picture; we are planning to have a booth that will accommodate large groups so that tables will be able to have a memento of their evening, should they wish. We still have tables left, so please spread the word and don't miss out! Email me at [Johanna.mulley@crowco.co.uk](mailto:Johanna.mulley@crowco.co.uk) if you would like to book tickets



Johanna Mulley  
President at the Insurance Institute of Ipswich, Suffolk and North Essex.

## \*\* JUST A MINUTE... \*\*



*David Williams, technical director at AXA, has over thirty years' experience in the business - which isn't bad for a career that he more or less stumbled into by accident...*

**Q What was your first job?**

**A** Well, when I was quite young I used to walk the neighbours' dogs, and they'd pay me for that - but my first 'proper' employment was putting cardboard boxes into a crushing machine at a supermarket in the centre of Bristol. I would have been about 16 or 17, doing my A levels. It was quite interesting, actually - you had to wear different coloured coats depending on what your role was; the boys from the posher schools all worked on the shop floor, in blue coats, and they treated us menial types like we were a lower life form. Realising that some people thought they were better than me, just because of the type of job they were doing, was an eye opener.

**Q Did you know what you wanted to do for a career when you were at school?**

**A** I thought I did. I've always liked seeing things grow, so my plan was to take a degree in horticulture, which would open up all kinds of interesting career options. Unfortunately, though, the most important A level in order to access that course at university was chemistry - my least favourite subject, especially the practicals.

Still, all that became something of a moot point anyway, when I got thrown out of school just before my exams. I was still allowed to take them - however, I was convinced I'd ruined my chances, so I went out looking for alternative jobs. I was already working at the supermarket, but a friend of mine got taken on as a trainee underwriter at the Coop; he taught me enough about underwriting so that I managed to blag an interview at Provincial, and bluff my way in. I wasn't intending to make it a career - but that was 37 years ago, and I'm still here!

I did pass my A levels, by the way - although not with the grades I probably should have been capable of, given how well I did at O level.

**Q Who have been your inspirations along the way?**

**A** There's not one colleague I'd put out there in particular - but I've been helped and inspired in my career by a number of people over the years. I'm over inquisitive (I must have been incredibly annoying as a small child), so I'm always grateful when anyone takes the time to explain details to me. I don't just want a quick answer - I want to understand how things work.

Someone who's definitely made a huge impression on me in business is a guy called Wim Roelandts, whom I met when AXA sent me on a study course in the States a few years ago. He runs a multi-billion dollar company, and is the most unassuming character. I was incredibly struck by the way he relates to staff, and his understanding of how to get the best out of people. He realises that a strict hierarchy is limiting, and that you need to be flexible in terms of things like timing. So for example, one of your employees might have a great idea when they are pushing their kids on the swings in a park on Sunday afternoon - if you want them to remember it, write it down, and feed it back into the business, then you need to be accommodating if, say, they need to leave the office early on a Wednesday afternoon. I've read countless books on management techniques, because that's the kind of thing that interests me, and there are thousands more out there; no one's even heard of Wim Roelandts, but as far as I'm concerned, he's the best.

**Q What advice would you give a young person considering a career in insurance?**

**A** I don't think enough people do consider insurance, actually, which is a real shame. It's a great profession, and one that does real good. Sure, we're not doctors, or nurses, or teachers - but our work helps people from all kinds of backgrounds and in all kinds of circumstances get back on their feet when life goes wrong. And without insurance, you'd have no international trade; the whole system would collapse. So, there's a noble purpose there. It offers much more variety than most other careers, too.

In terms of advice, it's a bit strange - I think I've done everything wrong, and been incredibly lucky. I didn't have a plan, and I should have done. So, I would say: have an idea of where you want to be in five years, or ten, and work out what you need to do to get there. Don't just leap at something because it's a bit better paid, or feels like a promotion; instead, think about the training and development that will take you where you genuinely want to go, and push yourself out of your comfort zone. I would also probably not advise staying with the same company for 30 years! It's worked for me, but in today's world, people move around, and I see that as a positive thing.

**Q And finally - what do you do to relax?**

**A** I love food and music - those two things would be top of the list. And football, too - I support Bristol Rovers, and probably go to see ITFC play 10 or 12 times a season. Music is my real passion though. I probably download four or five albums a week. My era was 70s punk, so I might be listening to the Damned or the Stranglers one minute, then something like Radiohead the next. I enjoy complicated

noises - although if I'm honest, I like everything that Britney Spears and Madonna have ever done, too!

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