



IFW Launched its Awards for the first time in 1996, the same year that Hilary Devey sold her house and car to set up Pall-Ex

growth". There are a further three women on the board alongside Moya.

In 2005, Ruth Waring of Labyrinth Consulting carried out research into the experiences of women working in logistics. She found that although they were under-represented in the industry (fewer than 10% of logistics managers were female), those who had chosen to make their careers in this field generally agreed it is a varied and rewarding sector, with great opportunities for both women and men. Most women had experienced uncomfortable situations, such as inappropriate language, imagery or behaviour in the workplace and their attitudes to it varied. A small number of women encountered serious discrimination and in those cases, they usually felt lonely and were unlikely to remain in logistics.

Ruth clubbed together with some of the women who had taken part in her research, to explore the prospect of creating a new organisation. The main aim was to champion the needs and rights of female logisticians. And from the start it was important to have fun too. It is highly appropriate that Women in Logistics (UK) held its first public networking event at Pearson Education's UK Distribution Centre.

When Marjorie Scardino became Pearson's Chief Executive in 1997, she was the first ever woman to head up a FTSE100 company. The first presenter to address the membership at

that initial meeting was Beverley Bell, Britain's first female Traffic Commissioner, who spoke passionately about her commitment to ensure that women and girls at all levels of ability achieve their potential.

Some of the main challenges women face in logistics include explicit and implicit stereotyping, which can limit their horizons; shift-work and long hours which are incompatible with affordable childcare; and bullying or sexist behaviour which make their working lives miserable. These challenges are not specific to women, as better standards which improve working conditions will benefit men too. 18% of Women in Logistics (UK)'s members are men.

For the time being, Women in Logistics (UK) continues to grow: there are now over 1,600 members. In future, when women are adequately represented in the sector, there will be no need for such an organisation.

Meanwhile, we like to think that Jean Haslam would be proud of the progress we're making. But, along with Beverley Bell, Hilary Devey, Moya Greene, Anne Preston and Ruth Waring, she would challenge us to ensure that men recognise the barriers which women face.

We need everyone to engage in the battle for equality.

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