



**Presidential Address 2023**

**HELEN LOOMES FSLL**

Having to make a speech such as this has made me reminisce on my journey through lighting. (Of course, it was pre-ordained with Helen being the Greek for light and Loomes being very close to lumen.)

Like many people, I love the combination that lighting brings of science and art.

But science was my first Love. I always thought I wasn't artistic because I was one of those very clumsy children who always knocked over the water jar in art lessons. However, much later in life when I was making Costumes for the local drama group, I was described as artistic and I realised there is more, much more, to art than just the ability to draw.

A chance job advert in the local paper led me to Holophane and I still have very fond memories of my time working in the laboratory there - the usual pranks, being sent to the stores for sky hooks and being taken to the pub on Fridays by all the lads (of course I was the only girl in the technical department!).

But I was also sent to Southbank Polytechnic to study City and Guilds in Illuminating Engineering and Lighting Technology.

I recently had a chat with one of my lecturers, David Loe, who remembers me as his first female student.

I have very fond memories of my mentor David and I hope he is watching the live streaming now, having very wisely moved in his retirement to the sunny south west.

I probably wouldn't have known what a mentor was then, but David made everything seem so interesting and could explain it further on the train back home to Hemel Hempstead. . David had the uncanny ability to make everything not quite as complicated as it first seemed.

Other people encouraged me and I learned from them in a very informal way. There were the three musketeers- Barrie Wilde, Bob Venning and Eric Maddock. Knowledge was shared over the lunch table and I wish I still had the napkins with detailed drawings of lighting designs or ideas!!

Recent presidents have come from the design side of lighting and I felt I would like to bring a new emphasis to my presidential year— I want to bring the focus back to the science and the fun.

I love the intrigue that new developments bring, the thrill of learning something new. Many of you will be aware that I became interested by the discovery of the intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells, and this added a new dimension to my career in lighting. I started attending scientific conferences, even reading Learned papers, which led to my presenting on the topic of human centric lighting, and I am pleased to say that I still have good friends gained from this new interest and Professor Debra Skene is joining us today.

Now we have a global crisis, which is urgent and is leading the drive towards sustainable lighting and circularity of our products.

This has led me to a new area of learning and I am enjoying the challenge. Science is helping us once again and I am keen to see where it takes us. It could be cornstarch light fittings or new developments in LED to reduce the gold content and other rare earth metals. Maybe it will even be bioluminescent plants.

To share this aspect of lighting with the world. I propose that the SLL holds a large conference.

We have a tradition within the SLL of having a symposium prepared and delivered by the Lighting Research and Technology Editorial Board. This has taken place when there is a consensus of knowledge around a given field of lighting. The LR&T Journal is a valuable and well respected part of the SLL, enabling research to be published via a peer review, and it provides a platform to share these ideas with the lighting community.

However, for the event next year I would like to widen their scope, invite other practitioners to present interesting case studies and create some crosstalk between potential researchers, and those who will put this knowledge into practice. It will also be an occasion when the lighting industry can come together and celebrate all we have achieved. Lighters are not unknown to enjoy a party.

Of course this will be a lot of hard work and it should not only fall on the shoulders of LR& T. We have the brilliant machine that is CIBSE behind us and I would like to call upon everyone to spread the word, encouraging others to attend. The ideas for this event are still very much at the germination stage, but I will keep you informed and would welcome assistance from anyone who is interested in making this a landmark event for the lighting industry.

We will also be expanding our presence at Build2Perform. This will be branded as Light2Perform and will consist of our own area and dedicated theatre. In addition to sharing knowledge this will become a meeting hub for all lighting people, and at lunchtime, we will provide refreshments and drinks to enable networking and meeting up with old friends.

The content for this two day event is still being worked upon, but it is more a case of thinning it down rather than not having enough. We will also use the event to announce the winner of the Young Lighter Award and hear the winning paper, which we hope will encourage more young people to attend, building on the work that Andrew has been doing.

I would also like to encourage people to take advantage of the grants and bursaries that are already available from both the SLL and CIBSE. Following a webinar last year 'Agile Lighting Research' we sparked an ongoing conversation between researchers, practitioners and those who have access to funding. This conversation will have the benefit of drawing our community together, and possibly providing some answers to the questions we already have, and those we haven't thought of yet.

I would like to thank so many colleagues, the Society owes an awful lot to the dedicated professionals behind us within CIBSE and the whole SLL family. Special thanks are due to Brendan Keely, the secretary of the SLL. So thank you Brendan.

It is a joy for me to see so many people here today and to enjoy the camaraderie that has always been present in this emerging profession. Recent years have made this a rarity, and I am delighted that two previous presidents are joining me on the podium bringing us their thoughts and reminiscences, in person, that we missed during the pandemic.

The SLL legacy and continuity is something that many of you will not be aware of. We have a very informal group, which we call the VP Group consisting of all the vice presidents, president elect, president and immediate past president. We meet approx. every 2 months to consolidate our ideas and make sure that new initiatives are not just for one year but that we can build on everything

together as a team. So from tonight it will be Andrew Bissell, Dan Lister, Kristina Allison, Carolina Florian and myself. This team is expanded by all of the Exec and Council members whose hard work and dedication make our Society what it is, the regional reps add the local touch which is invaluable but ultimately the SLL is you and I am looking forward to working with everyone, including the CIBSE staff and regions, over the next year. Please make yourselves heard and bring your ideas and ambitions to us, but right now let's have a drink together to round off the evening, as we used to do.