

Trailblazer

What motivated you to pursue an actuarial career and what contributed to your decision to become an actuary?

Some of it was the usual 'good at maths/pays well' stuff, but I also met an actuary who seemed to have fun doing what he did so that clinched it. (Oh, and it was also the only job offer I got!)

Has the profession changed much since you first came aboard?

Out of all recognition. Nearly all actuaries worked in life assurance companies. In the Faculty newly qualified actuaries celebrated by buying themselves a bowler hat.

You have been very involved in the profession, sitting on the Council of Faculty of Actuaries and the CIPFA Pensions Panel, as well as being an ex-chairman of the Pensions Board. What excites or intrigues you about the actuarial world and how can actuaries make their mark within the profession?

For me the best thing about being active within the profession is the opportunity to meet actuaries from other firms and other disciplines. We can learn so much from each other.

You were principal examiner for the profession for a time. What do you think inspires young actuaries today and how can the profession ensure we retain the most talented ones?

Exams don't excite anyone! What excites young people is a vision for the future and the part they can play. The profession needs to do even more to stimulate more vision.

What advice do you have for actuaries trying to break into wider fields?

It takes courage to venture into fields where actuaries are not well established. But the skills we have, when combined with good communication are in short supply. My advice is 'go for it!'

Of your many career accomplishments, what do you consider the most satisfying?

When I started at Hymans Robertson in Glasgow I was the sixth employee (four of the other five were part-time clerks). Today we are still a successful and independent firm and employ nearly 400 people across our three UK offices in Glasgow, London, and Birmingham.

This month's trailblazer, **Ronnie Bowie**, works at Hymans Robertson in Glasgow and is a vice-president of the Faculty of Actuaries.

How do you personally measure success?

For me success is being part of something that is stimulating and fun.

Are you proud of your profession?

Yes. But I wish we were more 'glass half full' than 'glass half empty'.

Do you feel your background as an actuary has positively affected your career?

As long as the actuary can listen and communicate, then definitely yes.

What is the most important lesson you've learned in business?

Do your homework then commit yourself.

How have you shared your actuarial and business expertise with other parts of the world?

As a director of the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice I am able to put my experience to some use. Attending monthly meetings at the hospice also brings perspective to life.

I wish the profession were more 'glass half full' than 'glass half empty'

What do you do to relax?

I spend precious time with my family, especially on holiday where we can get away from it all. I play golf and tennis as a reminder to hold on to the day job.

What words of wisdom would you like to share with aspiring actuaries?

Your skills have application way beyond the traditional fields. Think of yourself as a problem-solver and have confidence.

What mark or legacy would you like to leave on the world?

I want my children to have happy, fulfilling lives. □

