60 Seconds with ... Nick Hales



Nicholas Hales, (C.Eng), is a retired critical avionics engineer and project manager, formerly working in the MOD's Technology Office. His work involved de-risking technologies prior to full investment.

He is currently a member of both the Data Safety and Systems Approach to Safety of the Environment, Safety Critical Systems Club working groups.

He is currently looking forward to a second appearance as a pantomime actor, this time in an adult version of Aladdin.

What first attracted you to working in the field of System Safety?

When living in Denmark as a hotel warden I discussed the hazards of a skip of mattresses igniting close to the hotel. I realised I had no comprehension of how to analyse that. From then I seemed to walk the path unconsciously until joining the MOD safety efforts.

What aspect of your career are you most proud of?

My ability to understand when the plug needs to be pulled on a project. It saves a lot of money.

Tell us one interesting unusual fact about yourself!

I used to organise an annual alternative fashion show.

What advice would you give to yourself age 12?

Never drop your guard. Darwin explained why.

"If you could be any fictional character, who would you choose?"

From a philosophical point of view, Ivan Fyodorovich Karamazov in "The Brothers Karamazov" by Dostoyevsky, but while he speaks many truths he does not seem able to change things for the better. Hence from a more pragmatic point of view, Arnold Schwarzenegger's character, Major Alan "Dutch" Schaefer in the film "Predator" would be my choice, because he succeeds in killing his demon that left him friendless, (in a psychological analogy), and survives.

What future changes would you like to see in the field of System Safety?

More effort put in to avoiding damaging the environment.

What's your most favourite quote or motto?

Beston's wise words: *"We need another and a wiser and perhaps more mystical concept of animals.... We patronise them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animals shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth"*

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

How to save children from cancer, though a system approach to safety of the environment may lower the risk of some cancers.

Artificial Intelligence - a positive revolution or are we all doomed!?

The positive revolution will come once we realise we are doomed if we do not have a revolution.

Tell us more about your acting career!

Age 13 won the school interhouse drama competition, age 14 played one of Noah's sons in Britten's opera for schools, then 50 year gap. Now looking forward to third comedy role in 6 years.

