

Dr Liz Bentley

What inspired your interest in meteorology?

When I was about 13, I suddenly acquired an obsession for weather. I remember spending one summer holiday analysing synoptic charts trying to predict what was going to happen. About a year later I visited Leeds Weather Centre to find out more about a career in meteorology. I think the obsession had been brewing for a number of years having experienced the weather in Yorkshire on top of the Pennines – I recall winter mornings when the snow was so deep you needed to dig your way out of the house; on wet and windy days producing horizontal rain and arriving at school with your front half soaking wet and the rest of you bone dry; and stand-pipes outside in the street providing water during the summer of '76.



What job do you do now?

I am Head of Communications at the Royal Meteorological Society looking after brand awareness; corporate communication through the media, promotional material and public engagement; and membership development. I am based at the Society's Headquarters in Reading and have been working there since March 2008. During this time, I have helped to develop a new strategic plan for the Society, produced numerous corporate publications, implemented initiatives to increase Society membership and dealt with many enquiries from the media and general public on weather and climate related issues.

How did you reach your current job?

I have been fortunate enough to take on a wide range of jobs within the world of meteorology. After completing a PhD in applied mathematics at the University of Manchester, I applied for job with the Met Office. I was due to start work on Monday 13th December 1993 – a date that sticks vividly in my mind – heavy snow on the Sunday prevented me from travelling South and it was 2pm on the Monday afternoon before I arrived in Bracknell – just in time for the office Christmas Party!

After a few months in a research post I began training to be a weather forecaster at the Met Office College. I decided then that one day I would become Chief Instructor at the College. But there were more complicated things to get my head around first. Like how do you know that the cloud is at 10,000ft and why don't we predict minimum temperatures to 4 decimal places?

After forecasting at RAF Brize Norton, I headed east and didn't stop until I hit the coastal town of Shoeburyness. There, with my white Ford Escort, I fitted in very well with the

Essex crowd and managed the outstation on an Army range. The job including weather forecasting as well as acoustic prediction, something I had specialised in during my PhD. Shiftworking was supposed to be a thing of the past when I had my first child, but that only meant more sleepless nights. Then it was a move to the Met Office College in 1997 to become an instructor on the Advanced Forecasting Course, where Smartie tubes and Baked Bean tins helped explain vorticity. My ambition to become Chief Instructor came true in 1999 and led to one of the most enjoyable jobs I've had.

In 1995, I met BBC Weather Centre boss Bill Giles and told him that one day I would be doing his job. So when this post was advertised in 2002, I jumped at the chance to work at TV Centre in London. What a fantastic place to work, a great team of people and many interesting challenges.

After this I spent a couple years working in the Ministry of Defence looking after their environmental research programme which included everything from the seabed out into space. This leads me to my current post as Head of Communications here at the Society to diversify my skills even further.