

Newsletter

Issue 21

July 2010

Chemicals
northwest

Industry is the winner at this year's Awards



On 20th May, 315 guests gathered at The Midland, Manchester to celebrate the achievements of the region's £10bn chemical sector at the Chemicals Northwest 2010 Awards.

Building on the success of 2009's inaugural event, this year's prestigious black-tie dinner was a sell-out and succeeded, once again, in drawing the attention of the media and

the wider business community to the hard work and innovation that is happening within the region's chemical-using industries.

The evening was hosted by science communicator, Steve Mould, who oversaw proceedings as nine winners from a total of twenty-four shortlisted companies were called up on stage to accept their Awards.

2010 WINNERS

Environmental Technology for the Chemical Industry Award

Axion Polymers

Investor in Training Award

Total Petrochemicals Ltd

Sustainable Manufacturing Award

Springfields Fuels

Innovation Award

Croda Europe Ltd

Corporate Social Responsibility Award

Innovia Films Ltd

International Trade Award

Evans Vanodine International plc

Service Provider Award

CoEBio3

Young Achiever Award

Croda Europe Ltd (Paul Staniland)

Chemicals Northwest Company of the Year

RS Clare & Co. Ltd

Thanks to our sponsors

Awards 2010

Congratulations to all the winning companies and thanks once again to our sponsors for supporting the 2010 Chemicals Northwest Awards and making it possible:



Hammonds



ENWORKS



The strategic skills alliance for the Process Industries



See inside for more details

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Chemicals Northwest

The Heath, Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 4QX

Telephone
01928 515678

Fax
01928 515677

Email
info@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Website
www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Chemicals Northwest is an industry-led organisation driving strategic and sustainable development for the 'chemistry using industries' in England's Northwest. Chemicals Northwest is a non-profit organisation funded by industry and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).

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Northwest
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

INVESTING IN
englandsnorthwest

Catalyst welcomes new director

Catalyst Science Discovery Centre in Widnes, has appointed Stephen Youd-Thomas as director, replacing Julie Burgess-Wilson who has moved on after leading the team for five years.

Stephen, who has a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Liverpool John Moores University, runs a successful Corporate Social Responsibility consultancy and was formerly head of social goals at the Co-operative Group.

Stephen said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to help develop the work of the UK's only science discovery centre with chemistry as its main theme.

"Catalyst brings alive the subject of chemistry for thousands of young people from across the North West and beyond, and hopefully this experience will encourage many of them to consider a career in science in the future."

As part of his role, Stephen will also manage a European Regional Development Fund project to deliver an

educational outreach programme for young people.

Welcoming Stephen to Catalyst, Bryan Davies, chairman said "It is a pleasure to welcome Stephen as the new director of Catalyst.

"He will continue to manage our ERDF project and strengthen the management team, and I look forward to working with him as we shape the future of Catalyst."

For more on Catalyst, visit
www.catalyst.org.uk



NWDA launches manufacturing website

Supporting business and improving the image of manufacturing is at the heart of the Northwest Regional Development Agency's (NWDA) new Manufacturing Strategy and Action Plan. So much so, that it has commissioned a new web portal; www.ThisIsManufacturing.co.uk to give manufacturers in the region a voice.

ThisIsManufacturing shows what manufacturers are doing to succeed through a wealth of news, features, interviews, videos and podcasts. Because, who better to give practical information but manufacturers themselves? With social and business networking at its core, the site is fast becoming a crucial platform for savvy entrepreneurs to share ideas and pool resources.

The mission? To put manufacturing at the heart of the UK's economy by using manufacturers to

shout about their own success stories and guide others to places they can find support, training, funding, and above all inspiration.

In doing that, the site can boast unashamedly everything that is good about modern manufacturing for business people, investors, media and those thinking of starting a new career. It's a place where industry can present a picture of what its success looks like today and how it could look tomorrow. We know it's a brilliant world already, but ThisIsManufacturing hopes to make the future even brighter.

See for yourself at
www.thisismanufacturing.co.uk



THIS IS northwest
MANUFACTURING



The Chemicals Northwest team on Awards night from left to right: Sarah Grindrod, Stephen Hoskins, Jo Spragg, Alex Heys, Amy Peace, Duncan Simcock, Jenny Clucas.

Say hello, wave goodbye

Chemicals Northwest is delighted to announce the arrival of two new recruits to the core team:

Duncan Simcock has been appointed to head up the ENWORKS resource efficiency programme for the chemical sector which provides businesses with free, specialist advice on how to improve resource efficiency.

Duncan brings with him a wealth of experience in the chemical, energy and manufacturing sectors. He joins us from BP where his most recent role was as plant manager at the Lubricants Plant in Ellesmere Port.

Prior to that, Duncan held roles in business and operations management within BP's energy division and had also worked previously for ICI and Zenecca in control/electrical and multi-disciplined engineering and management roles.

For more information on resource efficiency and how we can help your company, please contact Duncan:
duncan.simcock@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Sarah Grindrod has come onboard as a programme manager for the Process Innogateway project, which aims to improve the manufacturing performance of North West chemical companies.

A chartered mechanical engineer with over 20 years worth of experience in

manufacturing, Sarah joins us on secondment from PICME.

Sarah joined PICME in 2002 as an improvement engineer specialising in delivering improvements in manufacturing and support functions, and led a Process Industries Benchmark mission to the US with a team of UK industrialists and academics. In 2008, she became client services manager with responsibility for all facets of operations management and the development of training services.

For more information on Process Innogateway, please contact Sarah:
sarah.grindrod@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

In other team news, interim marketing manager, Jo Spragg, will be handing back to Helen Cross in early August when Helen returns to work following a period of maternity leave.

During her time with us, Jo's achievements have included implementing an updated brand identity, managing the roll-out of a new website and integrated database, and overseeing our most successful awards dinner to date.

Jo, who runs her own business providing freelance marketing and PR services, said: "I've learnt a lot over the last twelve months and met some great people who I have to thank for making this, my first foray into the world of chemicals, so enjoyable!"

Jenny Clucas

CEO

Tel: 01928 511827

jenny.clucas@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Amy Elliott Peace

Industrial Development Manager

Tel: 01928 513440

amy.peace@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

For innovation and sustainable development enquiries

Jo Spragg

Interim Marketing Manager

Tel: 01928 511831

jo.spragg@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

For image, marketing & communications enquiries

Stephen Hoskins

Finance Manager

Tel: 01928 511828

stephen.hoskins@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

For membership & invoice enquiries

Alex Heys

Admin & Event Manager

Tel: 01928 515678

alex.veys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

For events and website enquiries

Sue Andrews

Project Manager

Tel: 01928 515678

sue.andrews@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

For Children Challenging Industry enquiries (primary school programme)

Jane Gamble

Project Manager

Tel: 01928 515678

janegamble@businesseducationmatters.co.uk

For Collaboration of Schools & Industry Programme enquiries (secondary school programme)

Duncan Simcock

Programme Manager – Resource Efficiency

Tel: 01928 515818

duncan.simcock@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Sarah Grindrod

Programme Manager – Process Innogateway

Tel: 01928 515678

sarah.grindrod@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Process Diagnostics from AJM Consulting

Every manufacturing process exhibits variability, leading to sub-optimal productivity. Statistical process control techniques (SPC) are often used, but these are not appropriate in process applications because SPC addresses individual variables, and most process problems are multivariate.

Developed with assistance from the Centre for Process Diagnostics and Process Control (CPACT) at Newcastle University and with substantial funding support from the EU, AJM Consulting has developed the MS2 Process Diagnostics System. Already proven in over 45 applications, MS2 has been applied to sectors including chemicals, nuclear, pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals and others.

MS2 combines many techniques into an integrated package. Preliminary data

processing – essential to handle issues such as time shift, noise and missing data – uses a rule-based system. Analytical techniques include multivariate principal component analysis, projection to latent structures, correlation matrices and more, whilst the all-important visualisation of results uses powerful graphical techniques including parallel coordinates, time series and scatter plots, Manhattan significant change detection and more.

Designed for both continuous and batch processes, MS2 can be used either to help identify the causes of previous poor production, thereby enabling more consistent performance, or in real time mode to provide early detection of events such as catalyst poisoning or fouled heat exchangers; events in which no single variable is in alarm, so the operator does

not know that the process has less than optimal performance.

For further details contact AJM Consulting on **01472 500306** or see www.ajm.co.uk

What our customers say:

“Demonstrates the business benefit through the knowledge gained.”

Sellafield

“Improves understanding of our innovative processes upon which much of our business depends.”

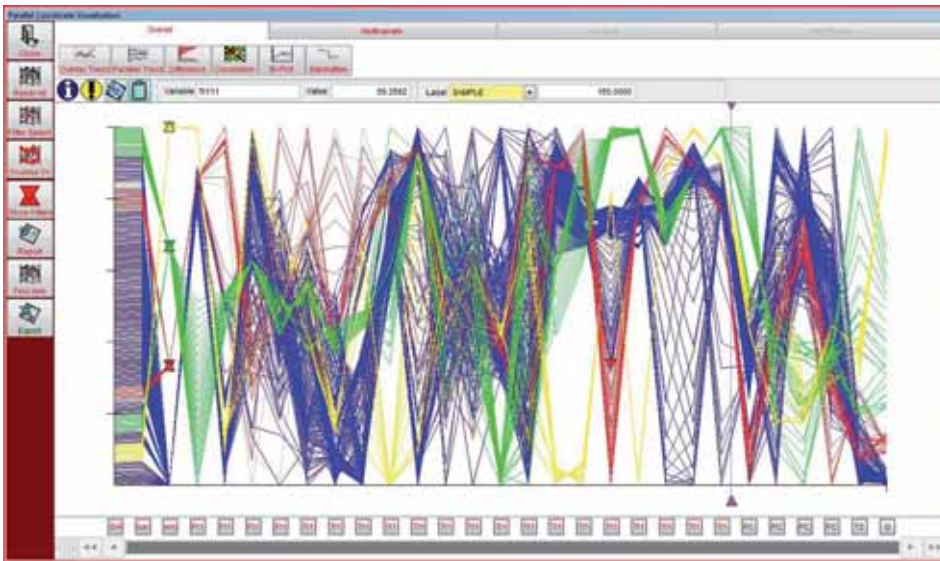
Johnson Matthey

“We see this as a key tool to include in our continual efforts to improve production excellence.”

Piramal Healthcare

“Has enhanced our understanding of our processes, enabling us to focus on significant areas.”

Ciba (now BASF)



MS2 uses the parallel coordinate visualisation to display both univariate and multivariate results.

AJM Consulting

EUROSOLVE

Providing Solvent Solutions 

Eurosolve is a highly reputable supplier of solvents and services to the printing industry. With an extensive wealth of knowledge, our management has over 25 years experience in the chemical industry.

We pride ourselves on the service we deliver through a highly skilled workforce that is dedicated, interested and determined to provide high levels of customer satisfaction. We are here to provide solvent solutions effectively, efficiently and at the

right price for our customers.

Eurosolve offers a vast range of Virgin Solvents and has the capacity to

provide bespoke mixed solvents. We also have the technical knowledge and ability to provide our customers with a free solvent consultation.

We offer a waste disposal service that provides the highest standard of professional waste management. Using experience and knowledge that we have acquired over many years of dealing with solvent based products, we can help you to manage, reduce and dispose of your

hazardous and non hazardous waste products.

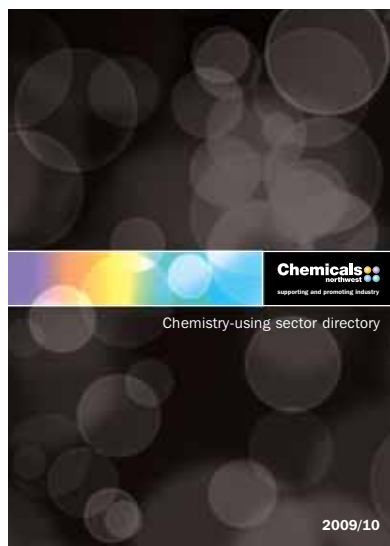
In addition, we provide all of our customers with the option to recycle their solvents and buy the exact product back at a reduced rate using our toll recovery service, which can also help to reduce your carbon footprint.

For more information or to request a quote, please contact:

Rachael Gratton,
Business Development Manager

08702 424852
rachael@euro-solve.com
www.euro-solve.com

2010/2011 Directory coming soon



Chemicals Northwest is currently working on the 2010/11 edition of the chemistry-using sector directory.

Widely recognised as the industry's most comprehensive resource of information relating to the North West's chemistry-based businesses and related service industries, the annual directory is popular with companies and individuals within the region, throughout the UK and beyond.

The array of companies and organisations listed in the 2010/11 edition illustrates the diversity of the sector in the North West and provides a priceless source of contacts for both Chemicals Northwest members and other organisations that are looking to actively engage with the sector.

Members should expect to receive their copies in the autumn, however, we will also be distributing the directories throughout the year at events, exhibitions and conferences.

For details of last-minute advertising opportunities available exclusively to Chemicals Northwest members, contact Jo Spragg: jo.spragg@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk

Law firm launches environment and safety helpline

No organisation wants to think that it may, at some point, find itself dealing with the aftermath of an environmental or safety incident. The reality is that an incident can happen at any time, even where organisations have robust risk management policies and procedures in place.

The fact is that it doesn't matter how small the incident is, it is critical that organisations are prepared for what to expect should the worst happen. What is often lacking for organisations faced with an environmental or health and safety incident, is the professional and legal support necessary to deal with not only the immediate aftermath of the event, but also the response coordination and regulatory proceedings which are likely to occur as a result.

Described by client's guide to the legal sector, Legal 500 as a 'truly excellent' team of specialists, the environment and health and safety team at national law firm, Dickinson Dees, is addressing this need with the launch of an advisory support service which is to be made available to businesses throughout the UK around the clock.

The 'Environment & Safety Helpline' will allow callers to access specialist advice in the immediate aftermath of an incident as Stuart Wardlaw, head of the environment & safety team at Dickinson Dees explains:

"When an environmental incident or serious workplace accident occurs, regulators can be onsite speedily, so having immediate access to specialist advice is vital for businesses to ensure that they are able to prepare for resulting investigations and possible enforcement proceedings. The manner in which an organisation handles the first hours and days of an incident can have a major influence on the overall conduct of the investigation and enforcement decision.



Stuart Wardlaw, head of the environment & safety team, Dickinson Dees.

"Depending on what the incident is, organisations will need to prepare themselves to deal with a number of different regulators including the Police, Health & Safety Executive and the Environment Agency to name just a few. Each of these regulators has a different remit and responsibility, and businesses can find themselves subject to scrutiny on a very wide range of issues. In addition to providing specialist advice, we hope that with an easy to access helpline, we will be able to provide organisations with peace of mind and reassurance that focussed advice is available from experts in the environment and safety field whenever it may be needed."

For more information about this service, contact Anna Hart, solicitor in the environment & safety team on **0191 279 9295**. Alternatively, for direct access to the specialist 24/7 helpline, call **0844 836 2121** (local call rates apply).



DICKINSON DEES

CoEBio3 breaks down Industrial Biotechnology barriers

Industrial Biotechnology (IB) is a complex, multi-disciplinary and rapidly evolving area. As a result, sourcing specialist skills in IB can be costly and time-consuming even for well-resourced multinational organisations.

Chemicals Northwest 2010 award winner, CoEBio3, has established a single point of contact model whereby companies who wish to familiarise themselves with individual techniques or develop entire processes in industrial biotechnology can gain access to an extremely broad range of support and development services through one portal.

Accepting the Service Provider Award from Brian Richardson of Business Link Northwest, Paul Goddard, commercial director at CoEBio3, explained: "Although we have a very complicated name – we have a very simple operating process. We ensure we provide a service that drives our customers' costs down and their profits up."

In 2007, CoEBio3 was approached by a multinational company who wished to develop technology in IB. Within four months of initial contact, CoEBio3 located and represented the individual capabilities of eleven separate technology providers in the UK (7 university departments and 4 private SMEs).

Within another four months, it had negotiated, compiled and concluded a multimillion pound contract between the multinational company and four of these providers. Thereafter, CoEBio3 went on to manage the entire project to its successful conclusion and the complete satisfaction of the company concerned.

The portfolio of services that CoEBio3 offers includes the fundamental scientific disciplines of molecular biology, systems biology, enzymology and



Paul Goddard addresses the audience at The Midland Manchester.

biocatalyst screening; biochemical engineering; access to scale-up/pilot plant facilities; industrial/academic training courses; trans-European networks in specialist areas such as glycobiology and project management.

Furthermore, CoEBio3 prides itself not just on its quantitative technological breadth, but also its qualitative commercial depth. Biotechnology is a notoriously expensive business and an informed understanding of the commercial viability, patentability and profitability of nascent processes is essential to success in the field.

Croda innovation means more fun

Increasing travel and increasing awareness of the dangers of over-exposure to UV radiation are two of the key factors driving growth in the sun protection market. The latter factor is also driving consumer demand for ever high levels of protection.

A complex regulatory environment means that achieving high SPF formulations that provide acceptable aesthetics to the consumer is quite a challenge to today's personal care formulator. Scientists from Croda's Sun Care & Biopolymers team, based at Widnes, were alert to this difficulty (due to the care they take to ensure that their R&D teams are in touch with the market via regular customer contact) and hence identified an opportunity for an ingredient that acted to improve the activity of formulations containing absorbers via enhanced film formation.

Extensive screening and experimental design were employed to arrive at a candidate that delivered very impressive SPF boosting and an appealing sensory profile. The product is now being supplied from the Widnes manufacturing site.

SolPerForm 100 was launched in early 2009. Despite a number of competing product launches and promotions from other Croda divisions,

SolPerForm 100 was by far the most sampled Croda product to personal care customers in 2009.

First sales were reported within six months of launch, a remarkably fast turnaround for the personal care market. The launch is therefore being recognised throughout the company as one of Croda's best, an achievement the team at Widnes are now working hard to repeat.

Jennifer Hart, sales and marketing manager at Croda (Widnes), said: "We are a small part of the company but are proving ourselves to be a site of real innovation, creation and success.

"The formal recognition of this innovation via the Chemicals Northwest Award has served to further inspire us for the future."

Working for a cleaner world

Established in 1919 in Salford by chemist, William Charles Evans, Evans Vanodine initially specialised in developing and manufacturing soap and spraying essences, which were sold to cinemas, theatres and local industry across the North West.

Today, the family-owned business has expanded into an international plc selling through over 300 distributors in the UK and exporting specialist livestock and industrial/institutional cleaning and hygiene product ranges to over 60 countries worldwide.

Most of Evans Vanodine's competitors in export markets are local manufacturers operating on a low price platform. Of the few real competitors, two are multinational with vastly more resources available to them; yet it is Evans Vanodine which continues to set the benchmark to the industry and is developing products which others seek to imitate.

From a state-of-the-art production base in Preston, responding to emerging diseases has become a part of Evans business. Their sights are now firmly set on becoming the world's leading manufacturer of Animal Health disinfectants.

Peter Thompson, international sales manager, confirmed: "Exporting is integral to Evans Vanodine's culture and business plan, and in times of downturn our international sales have maintained the profitability of the company.

"A large part of our international growth over the last 10 years has been facilitated by UK Trade & Investment. We started out on a mini-mission to Belgium and have continued to utilise UKTI's overseas teams for market research and business introductions. The current Gateway to Global Growth programme is helping us look more strategically at our international journey.

"Evans export turnover now represents 30% of our business, with the Middle East – from Turkey to Yemen – being the largest market for our janitorial ranges."



Kirsty Sanderson and the Export Sales team at Evans Vanodine show off the Chemicals Northwest Award for International Trade. Presented by Mike Eccleshall (back row, right), Deputy Director, UKTI NW Region.

On winning the International Trade Award, Peter said: "It is truly an honour to win this Chemicals Northwest Award.

"Recognition of the effort and investment put into our export business will continue to incentivise us to maintain our growth and achieve our targets.

"It is hoped that the Evans example of successful proactive exporting will encourage other North West companies to invest in international markets."

in the sun for consumers



The team from Croda (Widnes) celebrate their double win at this year's Chemicals Northwest Awards.

A Total commitment to training

Based in Stalybridge, Cheshire, Total Petrochemicals UK Ltd is a major player in the polymers market and the last remaining polystyrene manufacturing plant in the UK. It employs over 90 people, of which around 60 are directly involved in the manufacture of polystyrene compact and compound material.

Following a restructure of the business in 2008, the Company undertook a review of the Stalybridge site in terms of its future competitiveness and viability. Recognising that employees were integral to ensuring the long term competitiveness of the business, Total put in place a learning and development strategy with the aim of improving the business and motivating employees to aim higher.

Measures undertaken as part of the strategy include:

- Using the Cogent Gold Standard as a benchmark for excellence, enabling the identification of areas of weakness.
- Putting in place a programme of learning in leadership and management, and in business improvement.
- Working with NSAPI to put relevant employees forward to begin the NEBOSH Gold Standard award to level 2.

The Company is already realising direct benefits from this approach. For example, the development of site shift managers has created a stronger first line management role and has enabled Total to put together teams that now work together as one shift. The site shift managers themselves are clear of their role and responsibilities, and have the confidence to handle day-to-day issues. In turn, this benefits the Company by giving other managers more time to focus on other issues.

The strategy over the next 5 years is to continue to build on the progress that has been made, keeping in mind the gold standards and benchmarking the Company against its peers.



Andrew Ritchie receives the Award from Roger Langford, NSAPI, and Joanna Woolf, Cogent, with host Steve Mould.

Receiving the Chemicals Northwest Investor in Training Award, Total Petrochemicals UK Ltd managing director, Andrew Ritchie, said: "This is the first time we have won an award for training and we are delighted to be recognised for our efforts.

"Training and learning is at the heart of everything we do on the site. It is important for the Company and all members of staff to have access to a first-rate training programme to create excellence within our organisation."

Young achiever gets a big reaction in the community and in the lab

Paul Staniland has worked at Croda since 2008 as a research scientist in the metal oxides group; whose activities centre on research and development of novel UV attenuating products for the global personal care market.

Paul joined the group in a period of flux and spent his first six months away from home in the North East before transferring to the Ditton site in his native North West.

Paul's key project to date is an innovative product offering unprecedented broad spectrum UV protection from an ultrafine TiO₂ based inorganic UV filter. During this project, Paul's activities have ranged from liaising with colleagues from numerous manufacturing sites to drive forward product scale up from the lab to full scale manufacture, to working with sales and marketing to put together a technical overview which he has presented to numerous customers in Europe. This product has received recognition from senior management and has led to Paul receiving an award for innovation within Croda.

Outside of his normal work duties, Paul embraces new challenges and activities to benefit not only Croda employees, but local schools and the wider community too. For instance, he has recently taken on the role of site ambassador and co-ordinator of the Croda 1% club, where employees are able to spend 1% of their working time each year to benefit the local community.

In his two years at Croda, Paul has demonstrated exceptional team working skills, commitment and flexibility to achieve a great deal both related to his scientific research and his community projects.

AEV benefits from NSAPI business partner service

THE UK's largest electrical varnish and resin manufacturer is encouraging 'bottom up innovation' after signing up to a 'pay as you go' organisational development service from the industry's national skills body.

Sixth generation family business AEV, which was established in 1849 in Birkenhead, is putting 60% of its factory floor workforce through subsidised Gold Standard training in a bid to improved productivity, quality, efficiency and cost throughout the business.

The company employs 28 staff and is the UK's largest manufacturer of electrical varnishes and resins, exporting to 60 countries and with subsidiaries in Spain and Malaysia.

Registered to ISO BS EN ISO 9001:2008, AEV runs continuous regulatory compliance training, and also carries out ad hoc technical and generic skills training, the majority of which is internal and non-accredited.

Managing director, Jonathan Kemp, explains the company's skills history: "Traditionally, we have always maintained a training plan of sorts, but without the benefit of a clear development framework.

"We got involved with the National Skills Academy Process Industries via a Manufacturing Advisory Service event, where we met Regional Skills Manager, Roger Langford. The Academy's new business partner service is ideal for our needs, and we immediately saw the value of committing to it.

"Basically we are benefitting from the equivalent of a sector-specific organisational development specialist for around £100 per month. For a relatively small company like ourselves, without those in-house skills, it's an absolute no brainer when you look at the return on investment."

One of the most immediate opportunities the Academy spotted was a way of cascading the results of a MAS lean manufacturing programme which its production manager had attended.

Roger Langford explains: "This was an excellent programme, and AEV had done some work on disseminating the results, however there was a big opportunity to really maximise on that investment by integrating that new knowledge right through the shop floor.

"As a follow on, we are now helping AEV take six of its ten factory floor staff through national Gold Standard Chemical Process Operator NVQ Level Two, and three supervisors through Business Improvement Techniques NVQ Level Three.

"This will give individual recognition, to a national standard, and encourage everyone's buy in to lean manufacturing. The ultimate result will be improved productivity, quality, efficiency and cost control throughout the business.

Jonathan is clear about where he sees the business partner service adding value: "Process improvements will come not from some edict issued from the top, but from



Roger Langford, Regional Skills Manager

the people who actually do the job, and that in turn will come from their self-confidence.

"In a long-standing business it takes time and thought to change the legacy mindset.

"We want to encourage a culture where our people feel they can say: 'I know we've always done process X this way, but I've had an idea about how we can do it more efficiently.' That's when we will see real, bottom up innovation and improvement."

The current NVQ L2 and L3 programme is expected to take between six to 12 months, and Roger has identified a subsidy to offset the cost. This will fund up to 70 hours per person, spent out of the factory on training.

Accepting the inaugural Young Achiever Award from Nicola Eagleton-Crowther of the Manufacturing Institute, Paul said: "I want to thank Chemicals Northwest for giving me this award and everybody back at Croda Widnes for giving me the opportunity and encouragement not only to carry on my day-to-day work but also to get involved in the community schemes which I very much believe in and enjoy.

"I feel very fortunate to work for Croda, a place where I am given great opportunities to develop."

Paul Staniland accepts his Award from Nicola Eagleton-Crowther, with host Steve Mould.



Axion targets carbon reduction

The UK is the first country in the world to set legally binding 'carbon budgets' with the aim of cutting emissions by 34% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050 on 1990 levels. To achieve these ambitious targets, widespread action is needed right now.

As a leading plastics recycler, Salford-based Axion is committed to reducing its carbon impact on the environment, providing sustainable products with a long term future. The Company has developed a unique and novel sorting, separation and refining process to convert a range of waste plastics, both from the WEEE sector and retail packaging waste (garment hangers) into very high grade polymers.

Axion applies the very best in process and chemical engineering principles for the conversion of waste into a highly-technical product and is in the final audit stage of gaining the Carbon Trust's CO2 Footprint for its Axpoly product range. Axpoly PS13, derived from retail packaging waste, will be the first carbon labelled product in the range with others, such as PS02 and Axfoil, to follow.

"We're absolutely delighted and honoured to win this prestigious award which helps to highlight our commercial success with manufacturers and retailers incorporating recycled plastics that consumers would choose to buy," said Simon Wilkinson, Axion's Senior Chemical Engineer, who is leading the firm's carbon reduction project.

"It also helps to raise our profile further in attracting the brightest academic talent from the region's universities to advance their careers with us and, most importantly, to communicate the overriding message of how recycled plastics can contribute towards a sustainable future for all," he added.

Axion's submission highlighted several case studies of 'real-life' examples of closed-loop recycling of plastics reclaimed from waste consumer goods, such as Axpoly PS02 made from end-of-life TV sets being used to make back-panels for new flat-screen display panels by a world-class brand leader and Axpoly PS01 made from recycled fridge plastic being used to make injection moulded parts for Indesit washing machines.



Simon Wilkinson accepts the Environmental Technology for the Chemicals Industry Award from Rebecca Turner of Envirolink Northwest with host Steve Mould.

For these applications, the alternative material would be a virgin polymer made from petrochemical processing. Recycling waste plastic materials using a low carbon impact process is considered to be much better for the environment than converting a non-renewable resource in a large scale, energy-intensive oil refinery.

Axion Polymers is part of the Axion Group that develops and operates innovative resource recovery and processing solutions for recycling waste materials. The Group works with a wide range of clients within the recycling and process industries on the practical development of new processing and collection methods.

Manufacturing improvements engage workforce at

Springfields Fuels Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of American firm, Westinghouse Electric Company. At its site in the North West of England, Springfields processes uranium and uranium derivatives into finished nuclear reactor fuel elements. The site also has the capability to manufacture all associated intermediate products and does so for an array of global customers.

Springfields' products include: Advanced Gas Reactor Fuel (AGR), Pressurised Water Reactor Fuel (PWR), Magnox Fuel, Uranic Powders & Intermediate Products and Uranium Hexafluoride

Uranium hexafluoride, is produced in the Hex manufacturing facility from uranium trioxide powder supplied under a contract for Cameco Mining Company of Canada.

Within the Hex manufacturing facility, substantial improvements have been made in manufacturing capability, quality and costs which have supported the continuance of the contract with Cameco until 2016, with the possibility of a further extension to 2026. This has protected more than 200 jobs and the associated supply chain. Much of the raw material spend is sourced locally which itself represents a valuable contribution to the local economy.

These improvements have been achieved with the aid of Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma methodologies and the application of Westinghouse's in-house manufacturing improvement system in partnership with the workforce.

Lean Manufacturing techniques have been used extensively to engage the workforce in effective problem solving and continuous improvement techniques. Six Sigma techniques have also been used to address complex problems, bottlenecks and capacity trials, and to understand key operational parameters.

Benefits to date include an increase in plant capacity of 25%, a reduction in production losses and a significant reduction in operating cost.

Straight bets for international success at Chester

The International Chemicals "Meet the Buyers" event took place at Chester Racecourse in March. Focusing on fine and speciality chemicals, the fixture, funded by the Northwest Regional Development Agency in partnership with UKTI, aimed to match-make North West chemical companies with international buyers actively seeking new suppliers from the UK.

Thirty buying companies from twelve countries attended the event. Requirements ranged from green pest control products in UAE and coatings for corrosion protection in Oman to custom synthesis/contract manufacture in Belgium and pharmaceutical ingredients in Bulgaria. Nine of UKTI's chemical commercial officers from across Europe also attended in order to raise awareness of chemical industry opportunities in their local market.

On average, North West suppliers had 12 appointments each throughout the day, with front-runner Anikem on 20 just ahead of Pentagon with 19.

Paul Duggan, sales director of Anikem stated, "The twenty minute appointment system stops you wasting a lot of time." From a buyer perspective, 100% of responding buyers stated they were confident of placing business, with over 82% stating that the suppliers they met were "on the nose" as far as their



Jenny Clucas searching the Chemicals Northwest directory for suppliers with British Embassy chemical commercial officers.

requirements were concerned. This feedback is very promising when it comes to future business to be placed as a result of the event.

The 12 month feedback survey from the 2006 edition estimated a total order book of £1.7 million. For the 2010 meet at Chester, factoring in a difficult economic climate yet assisted by Chemicals Northwest to focus closely on known manufacturing strengths within the region,

the stakes are high. UKTI is nevertheless hopeful, given the exit poll statements from both suppliers and buyers, that the North West's number one exporting industry will sail past the 2006 result by a length.

For more information on how UKTI can assist in growing your business overseas contact Tricia Francis, International Trade Adviser – Chemicals, UKTI North West International Trade Team – tricia.francis@uktinorthwest.co.uk

Springfields Fuels

In light of the nuclear renaissance, the industry's future looks bright. Westinghouse, supported by its Springfields subsidiary, is looking forward to playing a leading role in the expansion of the industry and supporting the UK market in particular. Change programmes, such as those being successfully implemented at Springfields, enable Westinghouse and its customers to be confident in the manufacturing capabilities of the North West.

Awards such as the Chemicals Northwest Sustainable Manufacturing Award help to provide a platform to showcase the success of Springfields' uranium hexafluoride manufacturing business and



the innovative nuclear fuel capability here in England's Northwest.



Springfields Fuels Limited

Chemicals Northwest 2010 Awards – A



Jenny Clucas with the 2010 Award winners from left – right: Paul Goddard, CoEBio3, Tricia Francis, UKTI, Andrew Ritchie, Total Petrochemicals, Paul Staniland and Jennifer Hart, Croda, Simon Wilkinson, Axion Polymers, Tony Shannon, RS Clare, Jenny Clucas, David Oldham, Innovia Films, Chris Goddard, Springfields Fuels.

The second annual Chemicals Northwest Awards brought together the great and the good from the region's chemistry-using industries for an evening of celebration at The Midland, Manchester.

Guests were welcomed with a champagne reception where there was an opportunity to enter a free prize draw in association with drinks sponsor, Manchester celebrates Jaguar.

Key speakers on the night included Chemicals Northwest Chairman, Tony Bastock OBE, Deputy Chair of the Northwest Regional Development

Agency (NWDA), Vanda Murray OBE and Chemicals Northwest CEO, Jenny Clucas.

Over the course of the evening, nine winners were called on stage to collect their Awards to rapturous applause from the audience.

Vanda Murray OBE said: "I have heard tonight about how companies are being more innovative and sustainable in the current climate and I hope that these Awards will not only inspire companies and their employees but also help to improve the public view of the chemical industry.

"It was clear that this year's Awards built on the success of 2009 and I am sure they will continue to go from strength-to-strength in future years."

The Awards provide the perfect opportunity for a spot of networking.

Chemicals Northwest CEO, Jenny Clucas, said: "It was a great evening and amazing to be able to celebrate our local companies' achievements of the last 12 months.

"We are only able to do this because we have such a strong and diverse chemical industry in the region.

"Again, companies have proven that they are still investing in skills, innovation and sustainable development in order to improve their businesses and that they have not dropped corporate social responsibility activities from their agendas."



Guests were welcomed with a champagne reception.

celebration of excellence across the region

The Runners-up

Throughout this issue, we have featured case studies about our 2010 winners but congratulations must also go to all the shortlisted companies that made it through to the final:

Environmental Technology for the Chemical Industry Award

Elga Process Water, Lanstar Ltd, MacDermid Offshore Solutions

Investor in Training Award

SGS UK Ltd, William Blythe Limited

Sustainable Manufacturing Award

Multisol Group

Innovation Award

Hydra Polymers, IOTA Nanosolutions Ltd, Nanoco Technologies Ltd

Corporate Social Responsibility Award

Norkem Ltd, Pentagon

International Trade Award

Contract Chemicals, RS Clare & Co. Ltd, Stirling Lloyd Polychem Ltd

Service Provider Award

STFC Innovations Technology Access Centre (I-TAC)

Young Achiever Award

Pentagon (Joanne Potter), The REACH Centre (Matteo Dalla Valle)

Chemicals Northwest Company of the Year Award

Banner Chemicals, Contract Chemicals, Multisol Group



Jenny Clucas, Tony Bastock OBE and Vanda Murray OBE.



The Awards, commissioned from Year 10 pupils from Bridgewater High School, Warrington.



Over 300 guests gathered to celebrate the region's chemical industry

Another chance to see

If you missed out on going to the Awards Dinner or if you were there but want to relive it all again, you can check out all the highlights of the evening on the Chemicals Northwest YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/ChemicalsNorthwest

For more images from the event, visit our online photo gallery – who knows, you might even find yourself on there! Go to:

www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/events/awards/

A rewarding experience

As part of Chemicals Northwest's education outreach activities, the Awards up for grabs on 20th May were commissioned from Year 10 pupils at Bridgewater High School, Warrington.

Back in November, Chemicals Northwest tasked the 14-15 year olds with designing a unique trophy to represent each of the nine Award categories.

The pupils accepted the challenge and began working up their ideas with some assistance from their design and technology teachers, Jenny Butterworth and Jo Garry. After pitching them to Chemicals Northwest and Solvay in front of

their classmates, the strongest designs were selected to move forward to the production stage.

The result was a selection of unique designs made from natural and synthetic materials, each offering its own individual and creative interpretation of a particular category.

For the students, the project really got them enthused about product design. Jo Garry, Bridgewater High School, said: "We're delighted to have been involved in the Awards and we really hope the winners enjoy their trophies as much as we enjoyed making them."

Meet the designers



James Roscoe

Environmental Technology for the Chemical Industry Award



Tom Watson

Investor in Training Award



Anthony Montague

Sustainable Manufacturing Award

AWARDS CASE STUDY

Innovia is top of the class at NTS

Innovia Films is a major producer of Biaxially Oriented Polypropylene (BOPP) and cellulose (Cellophane™) films. With production sites in the UK, USA, Belgium and Australia, the Company is a global business employing 1350 people worldwide, 850 of whom are based in Wigton, a small market town in Cumbria with a population of just 5500.

As well as being a centre of production, the Wigton site is Innovia's global business headquarters and home to employees working in R&D, engineering, sales, marketing, technical service, IT and finance. Attracting the right people at the right level is vital to the Company's ability to maintain its position as a successful global business and employing local people has always been a significant part of its recruitment strategy.

Innovia has had a close relationship with its local school, the Nelson Thomlinson School (NTS), for many years. It is one of the top 100 state schools in the country and a great place to be educated. Innovia has supported Young Enterprise in the school for the last 20 years, provided science research projects for the Gold CREST Award for the Sixth Form students for the last 15 years and has been involved in work experience for as long as anyone can remember.

In 2007, a decision was taken to try to strengthen the relationship by engaging directly with teaching staff and students, and a number of new initiatives were introduced, including:

- An Innovia noticeboard within the School which is used to advertise suitable vacancies, e.g. summer work, and wish pupils good luck with exams etc.
- Drop-in sessions where Innovia provides a couple of reps to attend the school at a prearranged lunchtime to allow pupils and staff to raise any issues directly with the Company.
- Paying more attention to work experience which has resulted in great feedback from the pupils regarding its value to them and good feedback from Innovia management regarding the standard of the pupils themselves.

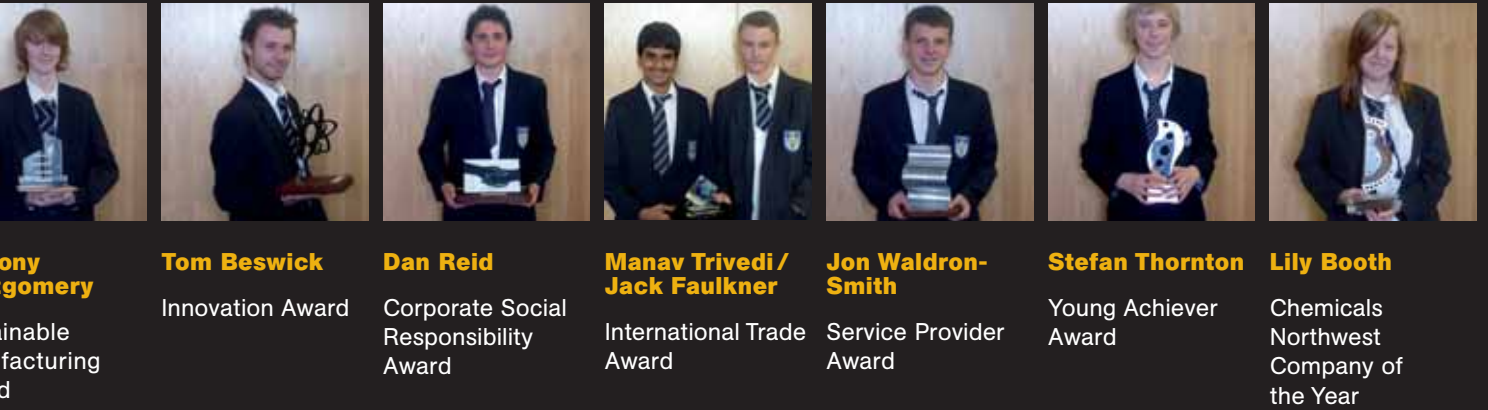


Representatives from Innovia Films and Nelson Thomlinson School with their Corporate Social Responsibility Award

- An annual tour of the engineering departments for Year 10 Engineering pupils.

David Oldham, site HR manager at Innovia Films, explained: "Every pupil who attends Nelson Tomlinson is proud and privileged to do so, and we are delighted to work with them on a range of activities through our team approach to Corporate Social Responsibility.

"We have past pupils from Nelson Tomlinson working at Innovia Films right through from the shop floor to board room level and know how tremendous this is. To receive further acknowledgement of this with this award is amazing."



AWARDS CASE STUDY

From a proud past to a favourable future

RS Clare and Co. Ltd is a well known manufacturing company based on Merseyside. Established in 1748 in Liverpool as a turpentine distiller, the Company has reinvented itself ten times since its inception and has undergone a further metamorphosis over the last eight years. RS Clare regards itself as a modern company with a long history that is well equipped to employ modern business techniques to drive overall improvement.

This progressive performance reflects the resurgence of RS Clare as a strong contender in the numerous markets in which it is active. Under the leadership of Ian Meadows, chairman and CEO, the Company introduced a total improvement strategy employing a Balanced Scorecard system in 2002 and can now demonstrate how this has enabled the company to go from strength to strength ever since.

Key Performance Indicators were introduced right across the business and have been actively pursued to form a total and cohesive business plan. It is the application of the Balanced Scorecard approach that has enabled the company to harness the talents of its people, whilst providing the structure for solid business improvement.

The company rightly recognises that it is people who make things happen and Ian Meadows acknowledges that for a small enterprise, it has some of the best people in each sector of the business.

RS Clare personnel are actively involved in industry forums, helping to shape the future of those industries and they are also actively engaged outside the company in raising much needed funds for local charities.

RS Clare crowned Company of the Year

Four companies were shortlisted in the Company of the Year category at this year's Awards and the judges faced some tough decisions. In the end, the panel selected RS Clare as its winner on the basis that the Company was able to clearly demonstrate:

- Good growth and strategic plans for future performance.
- A willingness to embrace its environmental responsibilities positively.
- A highly professional approach.
- Clear engagement (internally and externally) with the chemicals and wider community.



The team from RS Clare & Co. with their Award

Accepting the Award on the night, Tony Shannon, business sector manager at RS Clare, enthused: "We feel very proud and privileged to receive this Award.

"We have been around for a long time but we like to think that we are well-established rather than old.

"We are also a youthful and innovative company, and it is that mix of experience with youthfulness that drives us forward and ensures our success.

"I am very proud to work at RS Clare and I think most of us who work there would agree with Chemicals Northwest that we really are the Company of the Year."

Since winning the Company of the Year Award, RS Clare has benefitted from increased exposure in both industry and local media. Internally, it has also reinforced the idea that company policies and strategies are effective and instilled in employees a belief that their efforts are worth it and rewarding.



Not currently a member of Chemicals Northwest?

Why not join us and add your voice to the community of chemistry-using industries in the North West, the UK's largest chemical manufacturing region?

How you will benefit:

- Opportunities to promote and grow your business within the sector and beyond.
- Networking and learning from peers at industry events.
- Participate in strategic regional projects and advocacy for the benefit of your business and the industry as a whole.
- Contribute to the industry's voice in influential forums.
- Workforce development opportunities through the National Skills Academy for the Process Industries.

Membership rates for the year 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011 are: £130 +VAT for Individual Members and £470 +VAT for Corporate Members.

For a comprehensive list of member benefits* or to join us, visit: www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk or call 01928 515 678.

**Please note that some benefits are date specific and may not be applicable to companies joining throughout the year.*

Big Bang Fair 2010

March 2010 saw the Big Bang Fair come to Manchester for 3 days. The team from Chemicals Northwest worked alongside Catalyst making keyrings and bracelets for thousands of visitors. Meanwhile, Solvay showcased its solar powered plane and

Children Challenging Industry showed visitors how different toothpastes work. The overall event, which was open to schools and the general public, showcased all the interesting things that STEM careers can lead to.

CE:93 Regulation, Regulation



Over 30 delegates attended our June event, which was themed around legislation updates on carbon reduction, F-Gas, water, REACH and CLP. The event featured speakers from WSP Environmental, the Environment Agency, The REACH Centre and a case study from Mexichem Fluor on F-Gas regulations and how they have dealt with this.

There was lots of discussion and plenty of networking at the end of the presentations and feedback received was very positive. If you have an interest in going into further detail on any of the topics featured in this event, please contact our Events Manager.

CE:92 Industry Academia Collaboration: Adding Value to your Business

Our April event was held in conjunction with the Knowledge Centre for Materials Chemistry (KCMC) and took place at Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus. The event highlighted the world-class academia that we have in the North West and illustrated how industry can make the most of this resource to deliver real commercial benefits. Featuring case studies from SAFC Hitech and Nanoco Technologies, the event attracted over 60 attendees and provided plenty of opportunities to network.

Missed this event? Catch up on the highlights in 'In Our Element' on the CNW Blog www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/blog

EVENTS CALENDAR

Date: 7th July 2010
Event: New Frontiers – Sustainable Design and Chemistry
Venue: University of Manchester

Date: 16th September 2010
Event: CE:94 Resource Efficiency
Venue: Haydock Park

Date: 23rd September 2010
Event: Chemistry for Sustainable Buildings
Venue: CUBE, Manchester

For an updated list of events please see www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk