

## Securing the future: Your “new” Chemicals Northwest

As the new Chair of Chemicals Northwest (CNW) it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this Spring edition of the CNW newsletter. A belated Happy New Year to all our readers!

Since our last issue much has changed. The end of 2010 saw the Chemical Industries Association (CIA) joining forces with CNW – the private sector stepping in as government has stepped away. Personally I am delighted by this move as it enables a “new” CNW to continue to provide valuable business support to a sector in the Northwest that boasts an annual turnover of more than £10 billion and provides over 50,000 direct jobs. This is a sector and a region of the UK economy that really matters and will be influential in leading the country’s general economic recovery.

Looking ahead – and with our new membership year in mind - I am pleased to confirm that in 2011/12 we will be offering a full events schedule and a high profile web and communication service, delivering quality business support and advice to the chemical sector within the region.

The offering has been developed in response to what you, our members, have told us, reflecting the recent member feedback survey in which:

- More than 90% of respondents identified Events, Networking and Knowledge Sharing, as the main reason for being a CNW member.
- Nearly 80% indicated that Networking was the highest value activity of being a CNW member.

In addition, the event subjects will focus on the topics emphasised by the survey

respondees: Sustainability; Innovation; Skills; Regulation and Legislation. Working with the Chemical Industries Association, our new operation will deliver national sectoral leadership combined with local on-the- ground practical support and advice.

The membership structure aims to meet the needs of businesses within the sector, offering marketing opportunities, member discounts and industry intelligence. Although there will be some changes, we will minimise any cost impacts for existing members, offer a competitive package for new members and a discount for early payment!

Full details of the membership can be found on pages 4 and 16 of the newsletter.

To help take the organisation forward I am also delighted to confirm that Duncan Simcock has agreed to lead CNW. Duncan has over 30 years of industry experience, initially with ICI and Zeneca and latterly with BP before joining CNW. Duncan will be supported by Alex Heys who has been with the team since 2007; she will look after member coordination and communication activities. They will both remain in our Runcorn office and be supported by the CIA team.

Jenny Clucas, Stephen Hoskins, Amy Peace and Helen Cross will leave the organisation at different dates in March and April and I should like to personally thank them all for their excellent work under Jenny’s passionate leadership.

As I have said before, lots of change, but at the same time, lots of continuity of service – informed by your responses to our survey.



On behalf of CIA and CNW the team and I look forward to working with you all and I wish you and your businesses every success for the future.

**Steve Elliott**  
Chairman CNW

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## Thanks to the team

I wish to express my personal satisfaction that a sustainable future for Chemicals Northwest has been secured. Joining forces with The Chemical Industries Association further strengthens their role as the voice of the industry and also ensures Chemicals Northwest can continue to deliver services directly to the Northwest chemical sector, as illustrated elsewhere in this edition.

As Steve Elliott has already stated in his editorial, change has led to a restructuring of the team and I'm delighted that Duncan has accepted the role of Operations Manager and will be leading the organisation. He and Alex will do an excellent job in supporting the membership in the future.

However, this restructuring means that Amy, Stephen, Helen and I are leaving over the next month. Stephen is the longest serving member of the current team having joined in 2006. He has been the lynchpin of Chemical Northwest's sound financial management, managed our membership systems and contributed heavily to our successful bids for a number of projects. Amy and Helen both joined in the summer of 2008 and have each played a major part in the revitalisation of Chemicals Northwest. Helen's immediate background was in the ICT sector, but she quickly assimilated the world of chemicals and beneficially improved many of our communication systems, and has ensured that a positive image of the industry has been promoted. Amy joined us from INEOS Fluor and has successfully led our sustainable development and innovation themes resulting in a wide range of initiatives for the benefit of the sector, including the Process Innogateway Pilot featured on page 12-13.

I want to thank each of them for their valuable contributions to Chemicals Northwest and wish them all every success in the future.

Also leaving Chemicals Northwest this month is Sarah Grindrod. Sarah has been on secondment from PICME to Chemicals Northwest since June last year as Project Manager of the Process Innogateway pilot project. Thanks to her for all her passion and hard work; she has worked miracles on a severely reduced budget to deliver this project.

**Dr Jenny Clucas**  
CEO, CNW

### Board Changes

The Board of Chemicals Northwest has also changed with the change of ownership – Jenny Clucas and non-exec Directors Tony Bastock, Nick Lindop, Paul Daniels and Arnold Black all stepped down in December. We thank all of them for the time and effort they contributed to the organisation and especially Tony for his invaluable chairmanship over the last 3 years.

The new board consists of Diana Montgomery, Simon Marsh and Steve Elliott of the Chemical Industries Association as Directors, with Sharon Todd and Len Sharpe as non-exec Directors.

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).



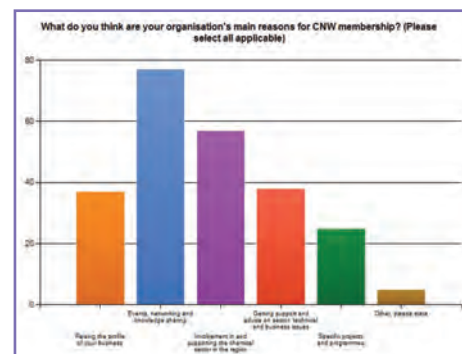
INVESTING IN  
englandsnorthwest

## Chemicals Northwest member survey

We would like to thank our members who gave their time to fill in our member survey in early February. We had an excellent response rate and all of your feedback has been duly noted. One thing that stood out from the feedback was that 92 percent enjoy the events, networking and knowledge sharing; while for 72 percent the main reason for being with Chemicals Northwest is to grow the business.

We will be taking all the feedback into consideration over the coming months so please keep yourself up to date with our latest events and news by visiting [www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/events](http://www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/events),

even if the event does not tick your boxes then please pass the word on to your colleagues who may be interested.



# Purchasing size matters

## When it comes to purchasing... size matters.

As a member you can now access discounts that have been negotiated as part of the UK's largest private-sector purchasing consortium, with a buying power in excess of £1 billion.

Over 100 competitive discount agreements have been negotiated for all the common overhead purchase categories. Members contract directly with the suppliers under the basis of joint price agreements which are made freely available to members as part of a sophisticated desktop Purchase Agreements Directory. The consortium is also one of the largest energy buying pools in the country.

## Guaranteed savings on overheads

## Members of the Buying Group receive the following:

- License to use 100+ negotiated discount agreements
- Comprehensive Purchase Agreements Directory
- Telephone and e-mail help desk
- Energy negotiation service
- Implementation support programme
- On-site savings analysis
- Regular local customer support
- Membership certificate

All services are provided for an annual membership fee, fully backed by a no-win/no-fee guarantee. Typically Buying Group members save around 10x the membership fee.



## Book your company savings assessment now

Site visits are taking place in your area over the next few weeks and will provide you with a detailed estimate of the impact of joining the Buying Group.

To reserve a visit please call **0870 755 2579** or email [membership@independentbuyers.com](mailto:membership@independentbuyers.com)

## Don't miss your chance to attend the 2011 CIA Industry Awards

The Chemical Industry Association Awards which are taking place on 23rd June in Birmingham are now open for table bookings.

For further details please go to [www.ciaawards.co.uk](http://www.ciaawards.co.uk). At the time of going to press the award entry deadlines was 25th March so, if you have missed the opportunity to enter for an award then make sure you don't miss out on attending this highly regarded national event for the chemical industry.

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## Chemicals Northwest Membership 2011-2012

As we move into the new, post public funding, era we are faced with a new set of challenges. Whilst we are focused on members and growing the membership we have to be mindful of costs. We have revised the membership categories to reflect a realistic proposition with some linkage to value and size of the member business. As part of the Chemical Industries Association, Chemicals Northwest will continue to operate as an independent entity on a 'not for profit' basis.

Benefits are, and will continue to be, shaped by what the membership is telling us, including the feedback from our recent survey. The initial intention is to retain current membership benefits, while increasing the benefits for the businesses moving from the current 'Individual' category to 'Micro Corporate'.

Corporate Membership will be split into two categories: Standard Corporate for businesses with 10+ employees with the status being the same as the current offer; and Micro Corporate aimed at businesses with 2-9 employees. The Micro offer will be approximately 50% of the Standard offer costs. In order not to significantly impact this type of business current members are offered the individual rate for 2011/12, moving on to the new rate in 2012. New members will join at the new rate.

The Individual Membership category is aimed at the 'one person' business. We see these businesses as predominantly in the service and support area but offering a wide range of services by individuals who have significant expertise in the sector.

Movement within the current membership will be addressed on a case by case basis.

### How all members can benefit:

- Belong to the community of chemistry-using industries in the North West, the leading UK chemical manufacturing region.
- Opportunities to promote and grow your business within the sector and beyond.
- Networking and learning from peers at industry events.
- Participate in 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.

See back page for membership details and rates

## Chemicals Northwest – introduce **breakfast networking**

Feedback from the recent member survey has indicated that the majority of CNW members are interested in networking and attending events that will promote information and knowledge sharing and generate new business opportunities.

We have taken on board this feedback and have decided to trial a breakfast networking event in conjunction with the Heath Business Park. Our first event is likely to be in quarter 2 so please keep a look out on our website and future e-bulletins for further details.

If you are interested in speaking at, or sponsoring this event or have any general feedback or comments, then please contact **alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk**.

This breakfast event is being launched as a direct result of the feedback received from our members so please take some time to come along to the event and pass the word on to colleagues to ensure the event is a success and will therefore continue as part of our continued support to the chemical sector.

## Do you want to be in the spotlight?

Have you been a member of Chemicals Northwest for a few years and not had a feature in the members spotlight? If so then please contact Alex Heys (**alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk**). Since we changed the layout of the newsletter a couple of years ago we realise that many of our loyal members will not have had a chance to feature in the members spotlight. If this is the case then please contact

Alex and we can arrange to let you have a feature in a future newsletter as part of your membership with us. With a current circulation of over 1000 this is a very beneficial way to get your business recognised, not to mention the publicity the newsletter can generate from events that we attend where we hand out the publication – and the pdf which is available for download on the website.... so don't delay, contact Alex today.

## Calling all CNW members – 2011/2012 Sector Directory

Distinctive Publishing are currently calling all Chemicals Northwest member companies for the 2011/2012 edition of the sector directory. The directory contains the most up to date information on companies within the chemical sector from the North West and surrounding areas. Therefore, it is very important that you, our members, speak to Distinctive to ensure all the information about your company is correct in the directory.

A copy of the directory will automatically be sent to our member companies and advertisers and disseminated at events and on our website.

## Sharing your expertise

A number of our members and associates have been supplying guest blogs to the Chemicals Northwest website over the past few months. Diverse issues such as: managing your corporate reputation; the impact of fuel prices; opportunities for businesses using social media; and the lack of women in the chemical industry have all

been tackled by our members. If you have an industry related issue that is close to your heart and you would like to share your thoughts with our web visitors then please drop Alex an email ([alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk)). We publish all articles that we feel are in the spirit of sharing information to the North West chemical industry. Equally if

you want to alert over 300 chemical industry professionals about an event or article of interest or do a quick straw poll of their thoughts then sign up to our linked in group and join the conversations.

Go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and search for Chemicals Northwest.

## Incorez Ltd - Introduction

Founded in 1986, Incorez Ltd (formerly Industrial Copolymers Ltd) has rapidly gained prominence as a specialist manufacturer of oxazolidines, waterborne epoxy curing agents and waterborne polyurethane dispersions. These high performance materials are sold globally to producers of coatings, adhesives, sealants and elastomers.

Incorez is a member of the Sika Group with a manufacturing facility both in Preston, UK and in the USA. Incorez Corporation, based in Connecticut, was established in 2001 to serve the North American coatings and sealants market with local supplies of speciality coatings additives originally developed in the UK.

### Products

Incorez Ltd is a global leader in oxazolidine chemistry, manufacturing a diverse range of products marketed under the Incozol® umbrella. The Incozol® range has been widely adopted in polyurethane coatings and sealants, where they operate as moisture scavengers, reactive diluents and curing agents. Applications for our products include coatings in aerospace applications e.g. For the Eurofighter; waterproofing compounds used extensively on buildings such as the NEC and in many areas where longevity is paramount such as offshore wind turbines – a growing market for Incorez.

In addition, the company supplies waterbased polymers such as polyurethane dispersions and an extensive range of waterborne epoxy curing agents. These materials, marketed under the Incorez® brand, are used extensively in high performance coatings across a broad spectrum of applications. Examples include surface treatment for banknotes, coatings

for uPVC double glazing elements and treatments for plastic packaging film to prevent inks from “smudging”.

### Product Development

Our modern research and development laboratories have been equipped to meet the stringent demands of innovative product development. Continued investment has allowed us to recreate the environment of our customers to provide test data that is both relevant and practical. Incorez has been the recipient of several SMART awards and Grants for R&D over the last 10yrs. It received the first “Green Chemistry Award” from the RSC in 2001 for SME’s.

### Accreditations

At our manufacturing facilities in Preston, England and Connecticut, USA, all production is carried out in accordance with the demands of ISO 9001, the international standard for quality assurance.

Our ethos is to remain environmentally conscious and ensure that not only do our end products help customers meet the demands of increasingly stringent environmental legislation, but also that the production processes have minimal impact on the environment. As part of this continuing strategy, Incorez has achieved the international environmental standard ISO 14001.

In addition, Incorez has also achieved BS OHSAS 18001. This is the internationally recognised assessment specification for occupational health & safety management systems.

OHSAS 18001 has been designed to be compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 in order to help organisations meet their health & safety obligations in an efficient manner.



**Incorez**  
custom chemistry

# Beaufort Performance Management

Beaufort Performance Management offers business improvement consultancy services aimed at helping make organisations perform more effectively. We work to add value, reduce costs or improve the efficiency of our clients. Our main areas of work are:

- Improving Business Performance – Facilitating and helping organisations to find and implement creative solutions to their business or organisational problems. Examples of the work we do are managing change, overcoming conflict, planning & implementing projects and the streamlining of business systems & procedures.
- Improving Personal Effectiveness/ Leadership Development – Supporting managers and leaders to improve their own performance and effectiveness and helping tomorrow's business leaders fulfil their potential. We offer one to one coaching & mentoring for individuals,

managers and leaders to help them address issues such as being more effective, achieving results or being better able to adapt to change.

- Improving team and organisational effectiveness – Supporting managers and leaders to improve the performance and effectiveness their teams or organisations. We can deliver group based coaching for work teams or business units to address issues such as being empowered to drive towards their goals and targets.

We focus upon engaging the human resources within our clients to release their knowledge and creativity to generate practical and workable ideas and solutions. Not only does this generate better ideas, it ensures that the solutions will have grass roots support at the point of implementation and therefore a strong commitment to make them succeed.

Our services are bespoke, tailoring the solution and methodology to the problems



and the particular needs of the client but based upon previous practical experience of solving business problems. We know and understand the business and operational issues of the sectors we operate in and understand the needs of clients in these areas.



For Further information, please contact Beaufort Performance Management at:  
E-mail: [info@BeaufortPerformanceManagement.co.uk](mailto:info@BeaufortPerformanceManagement.co.uk)  
Web: [www.BeaufortPerformanceManagement.co.uk](http://www.BeaufortPerformanceManagement.co.uk)

## Ebury Partners

Ebury Partners is fast establishing an enviable track record in assisting clients in the chemical sector to develop and execute strategies to reduce exchange rate risk, save time, improve margins and enhance income. Our ethos is to work with our clients in a proactive manner to ensure that they have the ability to make informed dealing decisions, whether that relates to timing, product or procedures.

In a world dominated by rising commodity prices, increasing exchange rate volatility and a plethora of currency-based financial products, we are improving the financial strength of an increasing number of companies in the chemicals sector. In one case this was as simple as identifying the benefits of using currency accounts (chemical packaging); in another, the rationale behind forward contracts – specifically their advantages and disadvantages (sodium hydroxide distributor). In yet another case our

multi-discipline approach has reduced import costs associated with currency-denominated trade finance by several thousand pounds for this financial year (sodium chloride importer). Our ability to consistently deliver extremely competitive exchange rates has benefited all of our clients, irrespective of sector, whether selling currency from exporters or minimising currency-denominated import costs.

With substantial fluctuations in currency markets, we appreciate that many chemical manufacturers simply do not have the time to devote resources to this one small aspect of their business; an aspect that could well be the difference between reporting a profit or a loss if managed. Ebury Partners, led by former directors of Rabo Bank and Travelex, will always have the time to advise you of currency movements, what is driving the markets and identify strategies to minimise your

exchange rate risk.

We can, and do, deliver consistently competitive foreign exchange rates, but our success is built on our ability to provide clients with the right knowledge at the right time.

Like you, we exist in a highly competitive market; like you, we add significant value to our clients; and like you, we want to create long lasting relationships, not short-term excess profits.

Please contact Tristan Barrett or Jane Sim on **0845 519 1009** for more information or just a quick appraisal of prevailing market conditions.

## A&W Launch Sabisu

After many years at large corporations, we founded A&W in 2009 to provide inexpensive, flexible and easy to use software which would make our customers more efficient.

Our focus since mid-2010 has been solely on developing Sabisu.co, our automation and manufacturing collaboration solution.

Designed in collaboration with leading petrochemicals companies to their exacting standards, Sabisu is inexpensive, flexible and user driven. It interfaces with virtually any system and delivers an easy to use portal through a browser, making it an ideal front end for manufacturing data, ERP or bespoke systems.

Our customers are already reporting tangible benefits;

- Internal IT development costs reduced by 80% – or 90% for legacy system development.
- Cost savings of 5% of their IT budget.

- Increased speed of access to expert knowledge.
- Decreased travel costs and time to market for products/services.

Benefits like these make Sabisu a world leading platform for facilitating internal and external facing collaboration. Without doubt it's the only one of its kind in the manufacturing sector, providing a unique opportunity for early adopters to gain a competitive advantage.

Using web 2.0 technology Sabisu facilitates the rapid propagation of best practice and quick resolution of issues. It's shared data environment is proven to make organisations more agile as feedback and visibility is instant, ensuring decisions are supported by data and expertise which otherwise would be hard to locate.

The platform has been particularly successful with automation and manufacturing process data but has applications wherever organisations

need to work together more efficiently. Using our unique cloud computing architecture, data and processes can be shared with peers, partners, customers or suppliers wherever they are and whatever they're using – laptops, iPads or smart phones.

Our customers are now seeing Sabisu as a new channel for delivering their services as it provides a common, ready to use platform which can be branded easily. It's not just a platform for our business; it's a platform for yours too.

Email: [tim.sharpe@argentwaugh.co.uk](mailto:tim.sharpe@argentwaugh.co.uk) Web: <http://www.sabisu.co>  
Phone: +44 (0) 1642 438124



## Thought into Action Ltd

Karen Hands writes...

"Most companies these days are working on minimum staffing levels so when a new initiative is launched, it's hard to know where best to focus your attention. And if you came into management because of your technical expertise, it can be especially tough to handle the human conflicts which inevitably occur.

"Remember how it felt to be part of the team, when you gained your problem-solving reputation because you knew exactly what was going on? Specifying change was simple when you had all the data to hand. The more strategic your role becomes, the harder it is to get solid information. Changes might be driven by customers, competitors, legislators or a break-through elsewhere in your company. That's why it's so important to know precisely what's happening and what's possible in the operations for which you're responsible – but can you risk losing face to ask members of your team when you were once the expert?

"In my experience, two questions need to be answered at this point:

- how to rescue the change initiative to deliver bottom-line results; and
- how to keep your reputation intact without becoming dependent on outside consultants?

"Thought into Action Ltd recognises both of these concerns. We provide high-level facilitation skills that chime with the high profile and importance of your change initiative. Our methods open up criticisms, complaints and arguments in a safe environment and turn them into constructive proposals which often

produce less expensive and more effective changes in which everyone feels they've played a part.

"The first priority is always to deliver the results you've promised, but in the long term we aim to develop your skills in managing people so you won't need to call us in next time round.

"If you recognise these symptoms in yourself, your colleagues or in people who work for you, please call me on **07775 707140** or by e-mail: [karenhands@thoughtintoaction.com](mailto:karenhands@thoughtintoaction.com)."

For more information, please visit our website: [www.thoughtintoaction.com](http://www.thoughtintoaction.com).



THOUGHT INTO  
ACTION LIMITED

Guiding your business through change

# Liverpool Science Centre Launched supporting R&D, and manufacturing in the North West



Liverpool Science Centre (LSC) sited on Southern Gateway, Speke, was built as a research inhalation manufacturing facility by GlaxoSmithKline. The site was subsequently acquired by Gresham House PLC who have recently completed a phase 1 development providing specialised facilities for the science sectors and other technology sectors across the UK's North West region,

Southern Gateway is located 2 miles from Liverpool's John Lennon airport and has good access to motorway and rail networks. Close by there are leading R&D companies, manufacturing plants, universities, Liverpool scientific communities, the National Blood Service Centre and National Biomanufacturing Centre.

LSC offers to potential clients fully serviced high quality 'clean rooms' or controlled environments, and/or laboratory space together with associated support and office areas for short and long term periods, all within a landscaped secure environment with 24 hour security.

The base generic design of LSC is capable of configuration into multi user requirements from a clean room and controlled environment through to wet chemistry areas, general and bioscience laboratories. The facility is able to provide start up and 'grow on' research and manufacturing space for companies engaged in biomed, biotech, chemical, science based activities and other sectors that require controlled environments for their operations.

The facility is available for occupancy as a whole building comprising an area of 97,385 sq ft (9,047 m<sup>2</sup>) or in smaller units of 807sq ft to 5,543 sq ft (75m<sup>2</sup> to 515 m<sup>2</sup>) and is therefore ideal for both an established business or start up enterprise with room to grow and expand. Each unit can be adapted to have a separate entrance and reception area and there are 400 car parking spaces available

The building meets all minimum guidelines and standards as is required to support all the industry sectors, highlighted above, both from a design and operational perspective. The development of LSC delivers a high quality science building from an occupant perspective that will support their businesses in terms of image, brand and associated FM management services supplied by a specialist management and FM operational team.

The key aim of Liverpool Science Centre is to offer a facility within the North West region that:

- Fosters close links with North West R&D activities and specifically within the Liverpool region.
- Supports R&D companies in their various stages of development – start-up, growth, research and manufacturing – and to enable them to deliver their goals and associated activities in high quality facilities.
- Offers commercially viable solutions to companies located in or looking to locate within the North West UK.

- Offers a unique facility that not only supports R&D but has the capability to offer manufacturing space in a highly designed facility.

LSC is a prime example of how a facility can be regenerated to deliver high quality work space that can support multi industry activities and is willing to work with companies to ensure delivery of their goals and aspirations.

LSC has developed close working arrangements with the Innovations Technology Access Centre (i-TAC) at Daresbury Laboratory and The Heath and together we can work to help companies across the North West and those looking to come into the region.

Mike Boyens, a director of Gresham House plc's property development arm, New Capital Developments Ltd, marked the building as officially open during a recent ceremony that was well attended by representatives from Eli Lilly, Novartis, The Heath and Daresbury Laboratory as well as directors from the recently incepted Liverpool Citizens and lecturers from Hope University.

Please come and visit us to see how we can help your business.

For further Information please contact:

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# Innovation for growth: Lancaster University's student challenge

Free access to one of Britain's leading management schools and a chance to embed innovation within your business. That's what Lancaster University Management School's Innovation For Growth (IFG) programme offers to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who apply for one of the three hundred places available on the programme.

Open to North West businesses, IFG offers practical, structured workshop programmes, masterclasses, access to academic resources, online resources, and a chance to get an insight into how other SMEs approach innovation.

Science-based companies are perhaps expected to be brimming with innovation, but the realities of running any business means that survival and profit can dominate priorities. The aim of the Management School, through this programme and others, is to embed innovation in a business's practice so that it becomes a way of life.

Environmental consultancy Stopford Energy and Environment Ltd are one of the latest new businesses to benefit from IFG. They took part in the New Venture Challenge, a programme whereby Lancaster MBA students work with a company to produce a business plan or diversification strategy.

Most of the MBA students at Lancaster have already worked in industry, so they have real experience of the commercial world. A team of three students was allocated to work with Stopford, and Research Director Dr. Ben Herbert was delighted with the quality of the students who were chosen to work with them.

"We've been given a very gifted team who've met our expectations," he said. "They've given us ideas, shown us potential for improvement, and we'd like to work with them on a long-term basis. The project's given us time to focus, how we can market and grow the brand."

At the end of the New Venture Challenge participating companies retain a comprehensive plan for their own use, which contains features such as growth projections, cash-flow forecasts and

key personnel profiles, all of which are hugely useful when applying for grants or finance.

As well as the New Venture Challenge student project, IFG runs a variety of other activities focussed on making North West businesses, products and people more innovative.

The Management School sources more than 100 projects throughout the year from North West businesses.

If you are interested in teaming up with students for a Lancaster University Management School project, please ring **01524 510718** or email [ieedprojects@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:ieedprojects@lancaster.ac.uk).

For further information, visit [www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/ifg](http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/ifg).



**Lancaster University**  
**MANAGEMENT SCHOOL**



## Chemicals and Materials for Printed Electronics

The global market for printed electronics is forecast to rise steeply over the next 10 to 20 years. The UK has a leading science and technology position in printed electronics underwritten by the development of innovative materials, low cost deposition, high precision patterning and additive printing.

Whilst viewed as a high risk/high reward business for the UK, the supply chain starts with the design, synthesis, manufacture and formulation of high added value materials: organic and inorganic chemicals.

On the 19th January at the Hilton, Manchester Airport, Chemicals Northwest together with the Knowledge Centre for Materials Chemistry, UK Trade and Investment and three Knowledge Transfer Networks: Electronics, Sensors and Photonics; Chemistry Innovation and Environmental Sustainability, held a one day meeting that focused on the chemicals and materials required by this rapidly developing supply chain.

The meeting, which included presentations by companies already engaging in the supply chain including High Force Research, Peakdale Molecular, Ossila and Polyphotonix, was extremely successful with a sell-out audience of over 100 delegates representing 70+ companies and organisations.

A topic that attracted a lot of interest included the high specification of purity required for the new compounds (>99.9%);

greater than many manufacturers are used to with even pharmaceutical intermediates.

Representatives from PETEC (the Printable Electronics Technology Centre, based in Sedgefield) provided a view of how the chemistry developments have been integrated in to real prototype devices, ranging from flexible screens to low energy lighting and 'flat' batteries. A number of projects to help companies get through the development stage and into prototypes had been funded by a joint programme across several Regional Development Agencies: The Northern Way. This step of producing demonstrators appears to have been key in generating interest from downstream customer facing electronics companies. This is certainly not a market whereby just turning up with a 'chemical in a bottle' will get investors reaching for their virtual cheque books.

One of the more niche opportunities presented was a cosmetic patch application, with integrated electrical components to aid skin penetration of active ingredients. However, when it was suggested that millions of pre-orders had been received with a healthy profit margin, niche seemed like an area that many people would be more than happy operating in!

As an aside from the talks focusing on new products and new chemicals, Ian Holmes from the Environmental Sustainability KTN gave a fascinating talk on the lessons that

should be learnt from one of the present generations of technology: LCD screens. Ian described a Technology Strategy Board funded project, "reflated", that was tasked with finding value from the ever increasing mountain of display screens that are required to be diverted from landfill through the WEEE directive. Although many extremely valuable components were present in the screens, such as Indium and high spec glass, the diverse range of chemical formulations present in the displays and myriad backlighting and fastening devices in use meant that it was almost impossible to envisage an automated piece of equipment capable of returning the value from the waste. Although printable electronics offer many environmental advantages over current technologies (e.g. less material required), their flexibility and potential for use in a much wider range of devices certainly raises questions regarding how these end-of-life products will be managed in future; a problem much easier to remedy now than 5 years down the line.

Feedback from the delegates who attended has been very positive and a more focused clinic based workshop is planned for the 5th May 2011 in Runcorn to support companies that wish to participate in the development of the supply chain for printed electronics in the UK.

For more information, please contact [mike.holmes@materialschemistry.org](mailto:mike.holmes@materialschemistry.org)

# Demise of Train to Gain heralds new era for skills funding – who can employers turn to?

As the last learners to benefit from Train to Gain Funding complete their training by July, employers are looking to their Sector Skills Councils and Skills Academies for funding support that is critical to their business success. The government has been explicit in removing financial support and asking employers to fund their own training. The only positive news for the future comes in the form of Joint Investment Programme (JIP) funding.

Cogent Sector Skills Council (SSC) and the National Skills Academy Process Industries (the Academy) have successfully secured over £2m of support for training in the Cogent sector. It brings together private and public investment, in a rare opportunity to access a fund which will contribute to up to 50 per cent of the cost of a range of qualifications.

JIP is an organisational development fund specifically aimed at training programmes seen as being essential to the UK economy and in direct response to employer demand. Cogent is one of only five sector skills councils to receive JIP funding and the project has been split into two years.

Employers that expressed an early interest in the programme have already received funding allocations for the first year. However, if employers act quickly then there are still funded places available for year one.

Year one qualifications are as follows:

- Business Improvement Techniques – Level 3
- Diploma in Jetty Operations
- Certificate in First Line Management - Level 3
- Diploma in Management - Level 4
- Diploma in Operations & Technical Support in the Process Industries
- Certificate in Process Technology
- NVQ Diploma in Process Engineering Maintenance

Numbers for Year 1 are limited and training must be delivered through Academy Accredited providers. Training must begin before 31st July 2011 to take advantage of this opportunity, though employees will have up to 12 months to complete their training.

As the only funding available from August onwards the demand is highly likely to out-weigh supply and pro-active employers should register



their interest as early as possible. If you are an employer and would like to find out further information contact Roger Langford on **07894 483695** or Karen Brown at the Skills Academy on **01325 740 900**



The strategic skills alliance for the Process Industries

## NSAPI wins Round 5 funding bid

Following the success of the bid for Round 5 funding to expand the Academy footprint to include bioscience and composite sectors, there has been a restructuring within Cogent and the National Skills Academy process Industries and these have led to a number of key changes. Roger Langford who formerly managed the North West region is now the Key Account Director leading a team of Account Managers in Process, Downstream, Bioscience and eventually Composites. The Account Managers will be responsible for implementing interventions with employers from these sectors such as Roger has been doing across the region. Roger will still be hands-on and looking after a portfolio of

clients including all those with whom he is currently working.

Alongside these changes and those within Chemicals Northwest it has been agreed that The Academy will retain a presence at The Heath as before. It has also been agreed that The Academy and Cogent will continue to support and facilitate the Chemical Industries Employer Network, which continues to offer enormous support for the development activities within Cogent and the Academy. Further the Academy will fully support the efforts of employers in the North East to establish a similar network there led by Phil Bather of GrowHow and supported by Kevin Thrower from the Academy.

If any employer has any interest in involvement with either or both groups please contact Roger on Mobile: **07894 483695** or Office: **01928 515678** or by email [r.langford@process.nscademy.co.uk](mailto:r.langford@process.nscademy.co.uk)





## Process Innogateway – Reviewing

Over the last 12 months Chemicals Northwest have developed and run a pilot programme to improve the **business excellence** of process industry manufacturing sites across the North West region, with funding from the North West Development Agency: **Process Innogateway**.

Seven companies took part in the Process Innogateway diagnostic pilot programme: Innospec Ltd, PQ Silicas UK Limited, RS Clare & Co Ltd, William Blythe Ltd, Akcros Chemicals Ltd, Innovia Films Ltd and Springfields Fuels Ltd. This range of organisations from SME to large multi-nationals, and from low level regulated to top tier COMAH provided a good cross section of companies from within the process industries for the pilot.

The programme works through taking independent sector specialists onto sites to perform an in-depth diagnostic of the company against world-class benchmarks. The process was designed to assess current tangible benchmark performance metrics and practices, as research shows a strong correlation between good business practices and improved performance. The diagnostic is customised to focus on target improvement areas for the business, so a choice of 12 modules are offered falling under the categories of Operational Excellence, Chemical Process Excellence and Better Technology in Manufacturing.

Although much interest was shown across all modules, those that had the cluster of focus fell into the category of operational excellence, which included manufacturing improvement, OEE, flexibility, quality, yield, engineering maintenance and overhauls.

Over the past decade the UK has lost too many chemical manufacturing sites. Some of these losses may have been avoided had sites been able to adapt and improve quickly enough. The trend towards greater foreign ownership has continued, rendering many sites part of large multinationals in name but downsized in terms of resource. That said, chemical manufacture continues to be a major part of the North West of England economy and the aim of the Process Innogateway pilot project was to provide sites with the kind of support that could enable them to survive and grow.

General observations from the sector concluded that many UK sites had a difficult 2009 but strong upturn in demand (and profitability) in 2010 with firm plans in place for the future. Significant investment has, or is, being made in many cases, providing evidence that the sector still has a strong future in the region. The sector is more mature in continuous improvement than 10 years ago and it is no longer virgin territory, however even sites that are contenders for manufacturing excellence awards have scope for further improvement and could draw high value

from a Process Innogateway assessment.

Businesses vary in the way that they measure various aspects of performance and much opportunity is often hidden – sometimes half-knowingly and sometimes completely unknowingly. Compared to ten years ago, management teams display greater knowledge of “world class” benchmarks but still lack the experience to assess their collection of results appropriately. Looking at each discreet measure in isolation can be just as inappropriate as discounting one measure because of another or because of a “unique” constraint.

All companies demonstrated continuous improvement activities, many of which have had significant tangible benefits and are commended. Although all companies are on a continuous improvement journey, and much evidence of the various elements could be seen, most companies are unable to demonstrate their strategy towards improvement and the level of engagement of employees working towards a common goal. Hence it appears that the approach to continuous improvement, in the main, is pretty much a disjointed one and not aligned to a formal business objective.

All companies are able to demonstrate the use of overall equipment effectiveness and it is calculated using a common method consistent with best practice. In the main,

## Chemical Sector – Resource Efficiency Programme – Delivery Change

The Resource Efficiency Programme, specific to the chemical sector, was originally planned to be delivered by CNW for 2.5 years. However, due to changes in the Chemicals Northwest structure and organisation it is no longer possible to do this directly.

The good news is that the programme will continue to be delivered by Enworks and its partner organisations within the Northwest sub-regions. The programme is available to all SME's within the Northwest, with the specialist support being completely free to access and flexible in approach to meet individual business needs.

The programme covers a range of efficiency aspects including raw materials, processing, products, energy, water and waste. It can also assist with Corporate Social Responsibility and strategy development.

The programme was very successful for those in the sector who participated, identifying significant opportunities and savings, including over £1.5m of efficiency savings and nearly 5700 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction opportunities. So please don't underestimate its value to your business.

If you want more information, go to the Enworks website, [www.getsupport.enworks.com](http://www.getsupport.enworks.com) or contact Duncan Simcock who will be able to direct you to the sub-regional teams – [duncan.simcock@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:duncan.simcock@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk)  
Tel 01928 515818

ENWORKS



# Excellence

the metric is owned and calculated by the middle management and cascaded through the business. The extent to which the metric is used to drive improvement varies significantly from not-at-all to prioritising improvement activities and initiating daily root cause analysis. In all cases quality is incorporated in the overall equipment calculations, often as an adjustment once the results are known rather than a real time measure. Yield and waste figures are less commonly available and the figures somewhat remote to the production processes.

The supply chain teams generally consist of very experienced personnel. Although this is the case, the production planning process can be complex and labour intensive and often a bespoke system for the organisation. Production plans are often tweaked on a regular basis and can rely heavily on people's experience. The key metrics in this area are varied and often missing, with potential impact on the ability to improve. Understanding the supply chain and the dynamic inter-relationships between stocks, lead times, planning process and the consequent impact on service levels is a huge area of opportunity for most organisations.

Maintenance good practice is evident where critical equipment is identified and systems are strong around statutory inspections. Systematic and documented

approaches to formally recording high impact breakdowns have been seen and are amongst the best within the industry. However, similar to continuous improvement, strategies for maintenance and integrated asset care plans are not widely used and most organisations could benefit from bringing all the good practice elements together under a common objective.

In conclusion, businesses typically measure more than in the past but it is often not sufficiently well aligned to strategy, and target setting is not based upon a good understanding of what is truly possible. Some sites gather lots of data but struggle to swiftly analyse it and take appropriate action. Others don't gather enough and operate "blind". Sites find it difficult to strike a good balance. UK chemical sites have significant opportunity to make their internal supply chains flexible and lean. Although sites have moved forward considerably, they are still grappling with basic operations, maintenance and logistics challenges.

The Process Innogateway detailed findings will be available from Chemicals North West from 1st April 2011. Chemicals Northwest will be working with industry stakeholders and the Chemical Industries Association to establish how best to take the programme forward to benefit from the opportunities identified.

# Success for two Cheshire pupils in science competition

Chemicals Northwest was delighted to support a fantastic competition for budding young scientists from across the region. The North West Schools Science Competition, run by the North West Business Leadership Team, asked pupils in Years 7 and 8 to write a 500 word essay on why they want to be a scientist when they grow up.

The competition finale saw a 12-strong shortlist deliver short presentations on the subject and answer questions from an expert panel of judges at Catalyst Science Discovery Centre in January.

The finalists impressed the judges from scientific, business and educational backgrounds, who praised the high standard of entries before selecting a winner from each year group.

Ellie Herbert, 11, a pupil at Cheadle Hulme School in Cheadle was crowned the Year 7 winner. She said: "I am so happy to have won; I want to be a scientist because there are so many different bits to it you can explore and there are never any wrong answers."

Maisie Hogan, 13, a pupil at Queen's Park High School in Chester won the Year 8 category. She said: "I was really shocked when my name was called, my Science teacher told our class about the competition and I decided to enter because my dream job is to become a scientist and help people."

Ellie and Maisie each received an iPod Touch and £250 for their school to spend on science equipment. In addition each winner's class receives free entry to the exciting Flash Bang – What a Reaction! event at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre in March 2011.

The North West Schools Science Competition aims to encourage more young people in the region to consider science as a career. Geoffrey Piper, Chief Executive of the NWBLT and Chairman of the Judging Panel, said: "The second North West Schools Science Competition has been a tremendous success. The standard of the entries was extremely high and all of the finalists here tonight have done very well indeed. Congratulations to all the competitors and especially to our winners. We hope this competition will inspire more young people to pursue careers in science and innovation."

Stephen Youd-Thomas, Director of Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, added: "As the Northwest has such a tremendous scientific



(l-r): Geoffrey Piper, Chief Executive of the NWBLT and Chairman of the Judging Panel, Maisie Hogan, Year 8 winner from Queen's Park High School in Chester, Ellie Herbert, Year 7 winner from Cheadle Hulme School and Stephen Youd-Thomas, Director of Catalyst Science Discovery Centre.

heritage it's both rewarding and encouraging to see so many young people demonstrate a passion and flair for science. We've been delighted to support the North West Schools Science Competition again this year and we're looking forward to hosting the winners and their classmates at our popular "Flash

Bang – What a reaction" event where we'll show that science is fun as well as vital to all our lives."

For more information about the competition visit [www.nwblt.co.uk](http://www.nwblt.co.uk).

## Schools Programmes

For many years Chemicals Northwest has played a significant role in education outreach in the region by promoting science, particularly chemistry, to young people. This has primarily been through our support of the primary programme 'Children Challenging Industry' (CCI) and a secondary one 'Collaboration of Schools and Industry' (CoSI). Through our support of these programmes students and teachers have been able to experience hands-on science and relevant curriculum related lessons, and industry visits to see 'chemistry in action'. Both of these programmes have been very successful in changing students (and teachers) perceptions of chemistry, illustrating its relevance to our everyday lives and highlighting the wide range of exciting career options the chemical industry offers.

As a consequence of CNW's public sector funding cuts we will no longer be able to support these programmes.

We wish to express a huge thanks to all those who have ensured their success; to the Chemical Industry Education Centre at York University and particularly to Sue Andrews and Jonathan Barton for all their enthusiasm and hard work in building up and running CCI; to Jane Gamble, Business Education Matters and her team for devising and successfully delivering COSI; and finally thank you to all the companies who have supported the programmes and to the staff who have generously given their time to host visits and support the teachers.

It is hoped that that both of these very valuable programmes can continue to operate in the region. However, in order to do this they will need financial help as well as in-kind support. If your company is interested in sponsoring or helping either of the programmes please contact Chemicals Northwest for more information.

# Pick your element

Catalyst Science Discovery Centre has launched a series of Corporate Partnership Opportunities for companies to take an active role in promoting chemistry to the younger generation.

From as little as £250 companies can have a presence at the centre in Widnes which welcomes over 24,000 visitors through its doors each year. Companies can choose an element to sponsor for the year and become part of the periodic table of supporters.

In addition to the periodic table there are plenty of opportunities for companies who would like to have a bigger presence such as their own film or exhibit to educate and inspire the young visitors.

Not only is the North West chemical industry steeped in history but it is also embracing the future through innovation and sustainable products and processes. Catalyst plays a key part in enthusing primary and secondary school children through its workshops so that we have the



expertise to grow the industry in the future. The centre also helps to train future chemistry teachers and takes its workshops out to schools to widen its reach.

If your company is interested in hearing about how you can get help secure Catalyst's work in the future and grow this fantastic resource right on our doorstep then please contact [meryl@catalyst.org.uk](mailto:meryl@catalyst.org.uk)

# Chemicals companies urged to enter new excellence awards

Innovation is strength in the chemical industry and we know that in recent years many companies have worked hard to introduce lean manufacturing and make their operations more sustainable.

Now chemicals businesses in the North are being encouraged to win recognition for achievements like these in the North of England Excellence Awards 2011. Six new awards are being introduced for this year, to reward excellence in innovation, lean, sustainability, customer service, innovation, leadership, and learning and development.

Application for the new awards is via a streamlined process, with the deadline being 31 July. The new awards will run alongside the existing Excellence Awards, in which organisations are subject to a more in-depth assessment covering all aspects of their operation and for which the deadline is 31 March.

The North of England Excellence Awards, now in their 18th year, are open to private, public and voluntary organisations of all sizes throughout the North. They are organised by North of England Excellence and supported

by the British Quality Foundation and Chartered Quality Institute.

North of England Excellence is also seeking volunteer assessors – typically managers or consultants with an understanding of business management and a commitment to excellence and quality. Assessors undergo specialist training and have the opportunity to broaden their understanding of business improvement processes.

David Teale, chief executive of North of England Excellence, said: "There are some outstanding examples of innovation, lean and sustainability within the chemicals sector and we would urge these companies to have their achievements recognised.

"Given today's challenges, organisations are increasingly looking for ways to improve service, increase efficiency and enhance performance. The awards are in line with these aims and are good for business."

North of England Excellence is a non-profit organisation which aims to promote continuous improvement and business



excellence. It is an accreditation body for a number of quality schemes and runs regular events and workshops. If you are new to lean but want to learn more, a forthcoming seminar, 'Using lean in times of economic uncertainty' on 14 April at Haydock Park Racecourse, may be of interest.

For further details of the awards and events see [www.northofenglandexcellence.co.uk](http://www.northofenglandexcellence.co.uk) or contact Suzanne House at North of England Excellence on **01925 715242**.

Anyone with a professional interest in continuous improvement and quality matters can also join the North of England Excellence LinkedIn group.

# MEMBERSHIP

## Individual Membership (one person business) £140 + VAT

- Free/reduced entry to Chemical Elements – the monthly industry networking event.
- Free website profile to promote your business.
- Feature opportunities in the quarterly Chemical Northwest newsletter.
- Free entry into the annual Chemicals Northwest Sector Directory.
- Support and assistance with regulation and other legislative issues
- Discounted ticket for the Chemicals Northwest Awards Dinner.

## Micro – Corporate Membership (2 – 9 employees) \*£250 + VAT

*\*we will hold the price for current members, in 2011/12, at the new individual rate of £140*

### As Individual membership +

- Free multiple-entry to Chemical Elements – the monthly industry networking event.
- Free exhibition opportunities at Chemical Elements.
- Speaker opportunities at Chemicals Northwest and other industry events.
- Discounted ticket/s for the Chemicals Northwest Awards Dinner.

## Standard Corporate Membership (10+ employees) £490 + VAT

### As other categories +

- Discounted rates to attend the Royal Society of Chemistry's Essential Skills Management courses.
- Access to the Chemicals Northwest Buyers' Club on a no savings, no fee basis.
- Discounts and special rates for professional services, such as recruitment and insurance.
- Discounted ticket/s for the Chemicals Northwest Awards Dinner.

## A discount of 10% for all membership payments made before 1st May 2011

Once your application is complete, your membership certificate will be issued and you can benefit from being part of the community of chemistry-using industries in the North West.

For a comprehensive list of member benefits\* or to join us, visit:

[www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/membership](http://www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk/membership) or call **01928 515678**.

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



## Sharing best practice in the Chemical Industry

Our 97th Chemical Elements was held at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre in Widnes and featured case studies from three of our 2010 Chemicals Northwest Award Winners.

Croda started off the event presentations discussing their approach to product developments and innovation in the personal care sector.

Springfields Fuels discussed their

manufacturing improvements and impact on the local economy; and Innovia focussed on their strong relationship with a local school and the benefits this has reaped.

These three companies all won awards at our 2010 Awards Dinner and the event was a showcase of "Best Practice". Feedback we received for the event was excellent with comments like "Excellent event, very good speakers" and "Concise, good delegates, interesting location - Thanks!"

## Kickstart your career

In early February over 100 students from chemistry departments in North West universities joined together at the University of Manchester to network and learn about career options. The group heard from a number of young industrialists about the paths they took, where they are now and their plans for the future. The talks covered working in industry, research, teaching and public sector support organisations and showed the range of possibilities open to chemistry and chemical engineering graduates.

We would particularly like to thank member companies who came along to network with the undergraduates and answer questions about their careers including INEOS, ABB, Victrex, Innospec, Unilever, Axion and Polartech.

The event will be at Liverpool University next year so if you would like to register your interest to help promote the regional chemical industry to undergraduates please email [alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:alex.heys@chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk)

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### May – July 2011

Printed Electronics follow up event

**Date: 5th May 2011**

Venue: Heath Business Park

**CE:99** Employment/pensions law update

**Date: 12th May 2011**

Venue: Heath Business Park

Breakfast networking event

**Date: TBA**

Venue: Heath Business Park

### **CE:100**

Skills event in conjunction with NSAPI

**Date: 9th June**

Venue: TBA

**CE:101** FP7 or innovation

**Date: July (TBA)**

Venue: TBA

For more information, visit

[www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk](http://www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk)  
or call **01928 515678**