



## SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE

**SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE** is the largest college of higher education in the UK, with an 11,000 student population drawn from across the world.

Although primarily a teaching establishment, the Institute enjoys a high reputation for research in advanced and design technology, film, media and cultural studies, fine art, history of collecting, law, maritime technology, political and international studies and a broad range of business disciplines.

The Institute also incorporates a diverse range of other activities – commercial, communal, cultural and recreational – which support and reinforce its academic work.

In addition to housing both the Inventors' Academy and the Technology Research Centre, the Faculty of Technology consists of three academic schools: computing and digital communication, design and manufacture, and maritime and coastal studies.

The Faculty of Media, Arts and Society comprises two schools: media and visual arts, and human sciences and communication studies, whilst Southampton Business School comprises business analysis, law, management, marketing and leisure.

Southampton Institute, which hopes to achieve full university status in the future, has offered degrees under the authority of Nottingham Trent University since 1992.

● Contact: [www.solent.ac.uk](http://www.solent.ac.uk)

## Inventors' Academy is open for business

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING INITIATIVE TAKES OFF

**T**HE INVENTORS' ACADEMY at Southampton Institute is up and running – and seeking inventors who require facilities to manufacture prototypes, protect intellectual property and create new products for the marketplace.

WRTI members Shamal Barzanji, of Gravity Pumps Limited, and Brian Flynn of Greentec Limited are two recent success stories, having created their products – the Gravity Pump and the AutoCone – by utilising the design, engineering and technological expertise available within the Academy's workshops.

"I approached a number of universities for help in the early days of creating my AutoCone machine," Brian said. "Basically, they didn't want to know."

He added that it was only when he was introduced to Southampton Institute's Professor Richard Penson by David Nicholas of Business Link Wessex that things started to happen.

"Because they took me on, I have been able to prototype my machine, gain development capital

and enter a first-option agreement with the industrial engineering firm Balfour Beatty," Brian explained. "It's only been possible because of Southampton Institute's initiative."

### A veritable cornucopia

The Inventors' Academy has a vast range of facilities available, including computer-aided design systems and specialised engineering workshops for metals, plastics and wood.

Direct access to experts in business, intellectual property law, maritime technology, product design and many other areas is assured, and the Academy also assists inventors in gaining funding awards, grants and loans. ■

### Next WRTI meeting WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH

Dr Lester Simmons from the University of Reading will present an illustrated talk on water technology, while Richard Little of Jenton Ltd will clarify useful sales and marketing techniques.

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[www.inventorsacademy.org.uk](http://www.inventorsacademy.org.uk)

Wessex Round Table of Inventors meet at 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Southampton Institute, East Park Terrace SO14 0RP



## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

IT WAS VERY GOOD of Professor Richard Penson, associate dean at Southampton Institute's Faculty of Technology, to address our meeting last month, reminding us all of the very real benefits we enjoy through our collaborative agreement with the Institute [See page 1 – Ed].

Michael Coyle is also connected to Southampton Institute – as a part-time lecturer on intellectual property issues – and heads his own local company, Lawdit Solicitors, who deal directly with inventors and innovative businesses. Michael's refreshingly frank description of the perils and pitfalls of IP deserves a fuller presentation at a later date.

Our main speaker, Dave Skertchley of Product Technik, combines an in-depth knowledge of composite materials with practical experience on how they can be applied in practice. He illustrated this with work he undertook for Matra on satellite communications systems, and on the awe-inspiring McLaren F1 sports car, where he headed up production for six years.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Dave's presentation came when he challenged us as to how we might use 'Smart' materials (which might embody sensors to persuade the material to adjust the shape of the product to suit particular applications, for instance). Many members are likely to want to hold discussions with Dave, and that's something he is happy to arrange.

Finally, congratulations to our deputy chairman Richard Little – or more accurately, to his wife Alison – on the birth of their son, Duncan. An innovation indeed.

Sincerely,

David

PROFESSOR DAVID NICHOLAS MBE, Chairman

INVENTORATOR Joff Wild

# Controlling powers

IP MANAGEMENT IS AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS SKILL

**S**TAYING COMPETITIVE through judicious management of a patent portfolio is the theme at Flying Null Ltd, which [like CDT in last month's article] also operates in eastern England. Started in 1996, the company employs just six people but owns 114 patents covering electromagnetic technology, including anti-counterfeiting devices.

"This is an area where the opportunities are very big," says business development manager Mark Gostick. "One of the best ways to secure a place at the table is to have a patent portfolio. It means the big companies will take us seriously – if it weren't for our IP they would not even talk to us."

## The return of the naive

As a small company, Gostick continues, Flying Null has to be highly aware of IP issues. "Large companies have big resources and if you try to deal with them in all innocence they have the means to ruin your business," he says.

With a well-managed portfolio of rights, however, the company can deal from a position of

confidence. "It is about working together to encourage sharing in ways that are understood and defined," he adds.

## Maximising assets

Owning IP also makes Flying Null a potentially attractive target for acquisition. "Other companies may have the manufacturing, marketing and distribution capabilities. But we have a bit of the puzzle that they do not."

Although essentially legal rights, intellectual property rights should be seen as major corporate assets. For those able to use them in this way, the rewards can be immense. Those who choose to ignore them, however, will not be in business for long. ■

● Joff Wild is editor of Intellectual Asset Management magazine. [www.iam-magazine.com](http://www.iam-magazine.com)

*This article is reproduced from the Financial Times Understanding Entrepreneurship supplement, 12 November 2003, by kind permission of editor James Pickford. [www.ft.com/entrepreneurship](http://www.ft.com/entrepreneurship)*

Parts 1 and 2 of this article appear in the January and February issues of Inventique.

## News in brief

● WRTI member Graham Rawlinson presents a two-day course entitled 'TRIZ Innovation and Mind-Mining™ – 3D thinking in practice,' in Vedbak, Copenhagen, on 17th/18th March.

The course demonstrates the analytical skills and three-dimensional thinking required for excellence in creativity and innovation.

Dr Rawlinson, a world-renowned expert in TRIZ, Syntectics and other analytical techniques, has facilitated innovation and taught creativity at more than 40 universities and to over 100 companies world-wide, including BAe Systems, Coca Cola,

Nissan and Scottish Power.

His book 'How to Invent (Almost) Anything', co-authored with David Straker (ISBN 1 904298 87 7), has been acclaimed as 'an exciting integration of the art of scientific analysis and the science of creativity.'

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WRTI is seeking a Treasurer and a Membership Secretary. Interested members should email: [secretary@wrti.co.uk](mailto:secretary@wrti.co.uk)

## COMMENT

ONE MAN'S THEORIES REGARDING THE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF INVENTORS

# The inventors' pool

**G**ENERALLY SPEAKING, those who swim in the inventors' pool do so using a range of strokes demonstrating easily-recognised character traits, writes Chris George.

### The Breast-stroke

This is used by those inventors who wish to pull every facet of an idea into the bosom of their own fiercely-guarded protection and control.

Breast-strokers have a need to be intimately involved with every aspect of the development and exploitation of their invention, even when they lack the expertise.

They are overly-concerned

about their inventions being stolen by somebody else – to such an extent that they are even reluctant to release important information to those assisting them in taking their ideas forward.

Because of their fears about others benefiting from their inventions, breast-strokers rarely succeed in exploiting them properly.

### The Butterfly

Many serial inventors have myriad, often unrelated, ideas. However, butterfly inventors spend their time flitting between projects, constantly shelving one and moving on to the next. Their ideas are rarely, if ever,

brought to market because they are continually redefining their concepts without committing to anything.

### The Crawl

These are the inventors who crawl painfully slowly towards achieving a marketable concept, because they are never satisfied with their current position and keep making 'one last improvement' to enhance it.

### The Back-stroke

Back-stroke inventors constantly go back to their ideas to make further, often very minor, tweaks. Crawl and back-stroke inventors would both be better off refining their ideas at a later stage as part of a properly managed development plan.

### The Medley

Most of the inventors who swim in the inventors' pool use a combination of the strokes mentioned above. These are the medley inventors, whose different characteristics surface at different times and in different circumstances.

Which kind, I wonder, are you? ■

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## Competition news

● THE OXFORD SCIENCE Enterprise Centre at the Said Business School, University of Oxford, has launched its 2004 Business Plan Competition, the largest science- and technology-focused competition in the UK.

Open to entrepreneurs, inventors, scientists, students and companies from any country, the competition – which offers £30,000 in prize money and attracted 94 entrants last year – seeks out the best new business ideas, as judged by a panel of specialist investors.

Many entrants have used the competition as a launch-pad to raise investment and form successful commercial ventures, adding to the UK's fast-growing technology business sector.

The winner of last year's competition, Peterborough-based Surface Generation, developed a novel rapid-tooling process for manufacturing large engineering components such as aircraft wings and yachts. The company is about



Venturefest  
2004

to launch a prototype and is currently negotiating with investment partners.

"Winning Oxford's 2003 Business Plan Competition has opened doors for me," said Ben Halford, Surface Generation's managing director. "I gained an automatic head start."

Entrants have until 12 May to enter their business plan and take advantage of the help and advice offered by the Oxford Science Enterprise Centre. The six teams with the best plans will be invited to present at Venturefest, Oxford's fair for entrepreneurs, on 29 June.

The winning business plan will earn its creators the Apex Prize of £20,000 in cash; two runners-up will each take home £5,000. All finalists will receive business mentoring from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The competition is sponsored by Apex Partners, Oxford Instruments, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Infineum.

[www.science-enterprise.ox.ac.uk](http://www.science-enterprise.ox.ac.uk)

[www.venturefest.com](http://www.venturefest.com)

## CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE Innovention 2004

# An open invitation

REGION'S PREMIER SHOWCASE CALLS FOR ENTRIES



**T**HE SOUTH'S INVENTORS and entrepreneurs, already enjoying an enviable track record for creating innovative products, received a further boost this month with an invitation from Business Link Wessex, the impartial route to business advice, to enter the *Innovention 2004* competition before its 14th May deadline.

Hosted by Business Link Wessex and organised by the South East Hampshire Enterprise Agencies (SEHEA), the competition gives innovators a unique opportunity to fast-track their inventions into the commercial marketplace. Selected entries to the competition will be invited to showcase their ideas at the *Innovention 2004* exhibition, to be held at Winchester's impressive Intech Centre on Friday 25 June.

### Eyes on the prize

A prize pool of £30,000 awaits those inventors whose concepts – which will be examined for commercial potential – most impress the competition judges.

Anything could capture the judges' imagination, from low-tech consumer solutions devised in the garden shed to hi-tech industrial technologies developed after years of research and development.

Investment managers, business leaders and media representatives from across the region attend the event, seeking to capitalise on new product ideas and inventions.

David Bartlett, Business Development Director of Business Link Wessex, said: "Turning new ideas into marketable products is extremely challenging and we're committed to providing support and advice to our community of entrepreneurial innovators.

"*Innovention 2004* represents a unique opportunity for the South's inventors to get noticed by people who matter," he added. "It gives them a platform for turning their ideas into profitable businesses."

● **Contact: South East Hampshire Enterprise Agencies (SEHEA)**  
**Tel: 023 9244 9449 for entry form**  
**or enter online at [www.sehea.co.uk](http://www.sehea.co.uk)**

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

### Will It Sell?

James E White & Associates  
ISBN 0 9676494 0 4 344 pages  
List price \$19.95  
or £10.55 via [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)  
Published by [www.willitsell.com](http://www.willitsell.com)  
'The best book for inventors I've read to date' – Mike Overy.

## WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

### [www.tenonline.org](http://www.tenonline.org)

"An excellent US site with dozens of informative articles for inventors and entrepreneurs" – Mike Overy

## MEMBER SERVICES

Entries in this column are free to WRTI Members, who should mail their details to the Editor (see panel at foot of page).

**CONCEPT TO MANUFACTURE.** Help with presentation, prototyping, technical & manufacturing issues. Contact: Innovate Product Design, 01722 410 295

**ELECTRONICS CONSULTANT** with 30 years experience, specialising in wireless and positioning technologies. Contact: Mike Overy, 01420 562378  
[mike.overy@zen.co.uk](mailto:mike.overy@zen.co.uk)

**ELECTRONICS ENGINEER** Concept to proof of principle. Ex- scientific civil servant. Own lab. Contact: Mike Wright, 01428 722833  
[mike@fwright21.freemove.co.uk](mailto:mike@fwright21.freemove.co.uk)

**INNOVATION CONSULTANT** and trainer specialising in TRIZ, author of *How to Invent (Almost) Anything*. Contact: Graham Rawlinson 01403 871 321  
[Graham@dagr.demon.co.uk](mailto:Graham@dagr.demon.co.uk)

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