

Inventique®

The newsletter of Wessex Round Table of Inventors October 2005

20-23 October BRITISH INVENTION SHOW www.thebis.org

**Next WRTI meeting
WEDNESDAY 12 October**

**Room HC 017, Herbert Collins
Building, Southampton Solent
University, commencing at 6.30pm.
Guests welcome.**

● www.wrti.org.uk/events
Map: www.streetmap.co.uk (SO14 0RP)

WRTI stand at the BIS

THREE CLUB MEMBERS will be promoting their products on the WRTI stand at the British Invention Show 2005, being held at London's Alexandra Palace on 20-23 October.

Richard Little presents his company's microwave-powered UV sanitisation technology, which combats airborne viruses and bacteria such as the deadly MRSA 'superbug'; Joe Silver is exhibiting his pocket-sized LifeLock® – which will secure a door from the inside 'anytime, anywhere' – while Brian Stickley will promote his PillPress® and other products from his range of Talking Products.™ This year's show is bristling with novel ideas: over 350 inventors and 400 exhibitors will be at the event, including many from the UK's inventors' clubs. ● www.thebis.com



Jewel of the southwest



BOURNEMOUTH'S NEW PROTOTYPING
AND VIRTUAL MANUFACTURING CENTRE

LAUNCHED LAST MONTH, the Prototype and Virtual Manufacturing Centre (PVMC) at Bournemouth University is now available for inventors, businesses and entrepreneurs to produce low-cost rapid prototypes in a variety of materials. Techniques available include fused deposition modelling, rapid vacuum casting, rapid metal part casting and multi-jet modelling.

Located in the School of Design, Engineering & Computing, PVMC also offers a range of related services, including research and development, low-volume manufacturing, products and parts testing, rapid tooling, reverse engineering, computer-aided design, 3D scanning and design analysis.

Bournemouth University is in the 13th year of its *Festival of Design & Innovation*, which this summer exhibited over 150 innovations in product design, computer-aided product design and design engineering.

The Festival – supported by Business Link Wessex, the Institute of Directors, the South West of England Regional Development Agency, the Learning & Skills Council and Aimhigher – now includes business seminars on design, innovation and business

**REVOLVER™
multi-bit
cordless
drill**



Loftus Hall, a BSc (Hons) in product design at Bournemouth, won the James Dyson Foundation Award 2005 with his device, which can automatically change four tool bits from its magazine

support such as funding streams.

Bournemouth University enjoys considerable expertise in the field of Intellectual Property and provides consultancy and training in the region. It also sponsors the *IoD Innovation Award* at the Dorset Business Awards, and has a commercialisation programme established through its subsidiary company, BU Innovations Ltd, which is seeking to secure patents and take a range of innovative products to market. ■

● **For further information, contact:**

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www.dec.bournemouth.ac.uk**

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

How to avoid making a mess of marketing

CHRISTINE CRYNE, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), says small businesses can learn a lot from the marketing gaffes made by big companies that ought to have more sense.

"Marketing has been proven to make more difference to bottom-line success than any other activity, but even larger companies often don't give marketing the attention it deserves," she says.

One mistake is not taking marketing seriously enough. A survey carried out by the CIM revealed that just 12% had a marketer on their main board, while 72% had no marketing professionals on their main board or senior management team. Just 22% of CEOs had a marketing background – compared with 27% who came from operations and 40% whose area of expertise was finance. ■

Here are some useful tips to help avoid making a mess of marketing:

- Do your homework.
- Don't underestimate local competition.
- Let others in to share your market if the alternative is to lose it.
- Respond quickly to customer complaints.
- Keep an eye on your critics.
- Test the water – target one small region before launching a national service, or focus on one type of customer before attempting to appeal to a wider base.
- If you're ahead of your time and the market might not be ready for your product, think about PR first and focus on educating before selling.
- Choose the right blend of promotional tools such as advertising, direct mail or telesales. If one technique does not work, try a different tactic.
- Measure the results so that you know your marketing budget is being spent wisely.
- If you employ a marketing professional make sure they are properly qualified.
- If you can't afford to take on professional help, consider taking a part-time marketing course.

● For more practical advice, and details of marketing courses for small businesses, see the CIM website at www.cim.co.uk/sme

Reprinted from *The Guardian* 29 September 2005

INVENTORATOR Laura Wilson

Famous achievers

THE LINK BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND DYSLEXIA

EDISON, Da Vinci, Faraday, Alexander Graham Bell, Einstein, Henry Ford, Walt Disney, Sir Norman Foster, Sir Alan Sugar, Sir Richard Branson, Anita Roddick, Trevor Baylis – all reported to be dyslexic, all creative, some inventors and many entrepreneurs: there appear to be plenty of role models to support a commonly-held perception that dyslexia is somehow associated with creative genius.

Now judge the following list: Cher, Tom Cruise, Whoopi Goldberg, Lindsey Wagner (yes, the bionic woman of the 1970's), The Fonz, singer Robbie Williams, comedians George Burns and Eddie Izzard.

OK, maybe it's a stretch, but actors, performers and singers – that's an artistic link, surely? Even if you flinch at describing Lyndsey Wagner as a creative genius, Eddie Izzard is certainly a bit off the wall.

But please also consider the likes of racing driver Jackie Stewart, rower Sir Steven Redgrave, basketball player Magic Johnson, politician Sir Michael Heseltine – and even President George Bush. They're all reportedly dyslexic.

Are you wondering exactly what the link with creativity and innovation might be now?

A definite maybe

Some academics believe that those who can be diagnosed with dyslexia form about 4% of the population. Scientists in the UK believe its prevalence to be nearer 15%, while those in the USA think that around 20% of schoolchildren are dyslexic. It should come as no surprise, then, that scientists even disagree on the definitions of dyslexia.

According to Albert Galaburda, Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, we tend to think of dyslexia as one condition, where something happens to stop the

'normal' brain development in some children, who go on to experience varying degrees of difficulty with reading and writing. His research now suggests that there are different types of dyslexia, and sometimes children considered dyslexic might really have other problems: difficulties in attention span in terms of learning, or an intellectual impairment.

Dyslexia can also be caused by an aural problem – associating word-sounds with written words – or less commonly a visual problem. At Oxford University, Professor John Stein studies dyslexics with visual disturbance and has reported the probability of this being a congenital issue. Studies elsewhere are beginning to link dyslexia with genetic inheritance, and even with an abnormal immune response in early childhood.

Creative potential

The UK's Arts Dyslexia Trust has been drawing attention to the creative potential of many dyslexics since 1896, arguing that we can all benefit from enhanced understanding of the dyslexic's special relationship with visual-spatial awareness.

What it all comes down to is this: unless dyslexia is a true barrier to professional achievement – which the above lists clearly demonstrate is not the case – there will be famous achievers who are dyslexic in any sphere of life. ■

Concluded next month

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS-2

AS MENTIONED last month, intellectual property (IP) is one of the most important assets a company will own, *writes Dr Rosanna Cooper.*

Intellectual property rights (IPRs) fall within two main categories: registered and unregistered rights. Patents, trade marks and registered designs are registerable rights. Unregistered IPRs include copyright, designs, brands and know-how.

Disclosure: Patents

Disclosure is only relevant to patents, registered designs and know-how. If an invention is disclosed in any form (which could be oral, written or by use), the invention loses its novelty and the proprietor of the invention loses the right to obtain a patent for that invention (see panel below).

It should be noted that an application published in the UK may still be patentable in the USA, as the invention date will be taken from the dated, signed and countersigned page of the researcher's laboratory notebook which first described the invention.

Computer Programs

With the advent of the Internet and the growth in IT, companies are seeking to obtain patent protection for computer programs. Patents of computer programs are more readily obtainable in the USA and Japan than in the UK and the rest of Europe. The EPO and the UK Patent Office only granted patents

ROSANNA COOPER CLARIFIES THE LEGAL POSITION FOR INVENTORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

for computer programs where the program brought about a technical effect. The Directive on the patentability of computer-implemented inventions (CII Directive) was rejected on 6 July by the European Parliament during Second Reading. It was intended to maintain the status quo of permitting the patenting of certain types of inventions involving the use of computer programs, providing they made a 'technical contribution' – and providing they also met the normal patentability requirements of being new, inventive and having industrial applicability (see:

- www.patent.gov.uk/media/pressrelease/2005/0607a.htm
- www.rtcoopers.com/software_patents.php

However, the UK Patent Office will accept patent claims to computer programs, either themselves or on a carrier, provided that the program is such that when run on a computer it produces a technical effect which is more than would arise from the running of any program on a computer.

Patents of business methods

In the USA (but not in the UK), patents for computer-implemented business methods are available.

If a company has a novel business method it should consider making an application for a US patent. Certain formalities have to be adhered to.

Design Rights

Design rights are of two types, registered and unregistered. Unregistered design right affords protection to functional as opposed to purely aesthetic designs. Design right arises automatically by the operation of law and protects new original, non-commonplace designs of the shape or configuration of articles. Design right is not a monopoly right but a right to prevent copying, and lasts until ten years after first marketing articles made to the design (subject to an overall limit of 15 years from creation of the design). Certain exceptions apply to design right.

In general, design right protects designs created by nationals, residents or companies of the EU. The design right owner has the right to take civil action in the courts and the remedies available are the same as above. The Dyson case represents a significant decision regarding unregistered design rights. ■

Continued next month

© RT Coopers Solicitors 2005

● *Dr Rosanna Cooper is a partner at RT Coopers, a commercial law firm focusing on inventors and business start-ups.*

(RTC)
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The following disclosures, before the priority date, can lead to an invention losing its novelty:

- If the invention is published (even in an obscure journal).
- If an invention is published on the Internet.
- If the invention is disclosed at an international conference 6 months or more before the priority date.
- If the patent application is published by the UK Patent Office.
- If the invention is used by a member of the public (without breaching confidentiality).
- If the public is given sufficient information in the patent application to perform the invention.
- The oral disclosure of an invention.



OUT AND ABOUT

Winchester Festival of Art and the Mind

LANGUAGE, POETRY and the Brain is the theme of the Fourth Art and Mind Festival to be held at the Theatre Royal, Winchester on 22 October.

Founded in 2004 by artist Garry Kennard, Art and Mind is a partnership between science and the arts that brings eminent artists, scientists and thinkers together for a day of live performance and discussion to examine the ways contemporary culture is created and experienced.

Presented in association with University of Winchester, The Poetry Society and The Poetry School, this month's event features internationally renowned poet Ruth Padel and cellist Matthew Barley with his group Between the Notes mixing rhythm and rhyme and exploring the question: is language based on music? ■

● 22 October, Theatre Royal, Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8SB
Box Office / brochures: 01962 840 440
www.artandmind.org

THE ROYAL SOCIETY PUBLIC LECTURE

The Royal Society is holding a public lecture by John Gribbin entitled *The Roots of the Royal, and the Scottish Connection*, on Tuesday 4 October at 6.30pm.

How did a group of scientists establish the Royal Society almost as soon as Charles II was restored to the throne? John Gribbin, author of *The Fellowship*, a new history of the scientific revolution and the origin of the Royal Society, argues that it was largely thanks to a 17th Century Scottish spy...

● The Royal Society
6-9 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AG
Tel: 020 7451 2681 / 2583
events@royalsoc.ac.uk
www.royalsoc.ac.uk

Admission free. Doors open: 5.45pm.
No ticket or advance booking required.

From 1st October issue of New Scientist magazine, two stories to gladden the hearts of students everywhere. Can rigorous consumer testing be far behind?

THE TOASTER THAT NEVER BURNS THE BREAD

● **A TOASTER** that uses radiation to prevent toast burning has been given the go-ahead in the UK. By combining a household smoke detector with an electric toaster, it promises to deliver "perfect toast every time".

The device works by sucking in particles of caramelised bread and blowing them through an ionising sensor. In this sensor a small electrical current flows through an airborne path of ions, emitted by a pellet of radioactive americium-241. The ions attach themselves to any toast particles and reduce the strength of the current. You can set the toaster to switch off when the current drops by a specific amount

according to how brown you like your toast.

The toaster, by Magnetic Design of Cambridge, UK, has been authorised as a "justifiable" use of radiation by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

● **A BEER MAT** that can tell when a glass is nearly empty and prompts bar staff for a refill has been created by thirsty researchers in Germany. The mat, which was developed by Andreas Butz at the University of Munich and Michael Schmitz of Saarland University in Saarbrücken, contains a pressure sensor to detect when the drink is running low and a radio transmitter to alert the bar. ■

£25 MILLION TO TURN IDEAS INTO REALITY

RESEARCHERS HAVE UNTIL 4 November to apply to turn their innovative ideas into commercially marketable products via £25m in government funding launched through the Public Sector Research Exploitation Fund (PSRE).

Aimed at bringing the latest research and developments in technology and innovation to commercial success, the third round of funding opened in August.

The PSRE initiative was set up to help public sector organisations other than universities make the most of their research (universities receive similar government funding through the Higher Education

Innovation Fund).

PSRE has previously supported proposals in all nine of the English regions, including projects for faster DNA profiling, the development of new medical equipment, and the 3D laser conservation of historical artefacts. Grants have been awarded to a range of organisations including museums, the forensic science services, NHS Innovation Hubs and other R&D institutes.

The government has increased its investment in this area from £15m in the second round and £10m in the first round, bringing a total of £50 million of grants made available under the initiative.

"Many public sector research institutes and organisations that are developing cutting-edge ideas have until now had little chance of gaining venture capital funding to take their idea to market," said Lord Sainsbury, Minister for Science and Innovation.

"In a world in which we have to compete with industries in countries that have a fraction of the operating costs that we have here in the UK, the public sector has a valuable part to play in maximising the economic opportunities available." ■

Source: www.graduateengineer.com

● <http://www.ost.gov.uk/enterprise/knowledge/index.htm>

www.wrti.org.uk

THE INVENTORS WEBSITE

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE National Physical Laboratory

Time travellers...

MEASURING LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING

THE NATIONAL PHYSICAL Laboratory (NPL) is the UK's national standards laboratory, and has been an independent and internationally-respected centre of excellence in research, development and knowledge-transfer in measurement and materials science for over 100 years.

Improving measurement accuracy and the technology to deliver it continues to offer fundamental challenges for physics and materials science, and the NPL – home to 400 scientists – is pushing the frontiers of measurement science forward in areas that will change the way we live and work.

Creating the Future

The mathematics genius Alan Turing joined NPL in 1945 to work on the ACE (Automatic Computing Engine) computer – the first practical realisation of his logic theories, which laid the foundation for all modern computing (the ACE is displayed at the Science Museum, London).

NPL helps shape national measurement R&D by assisting the DTI's sponsorship of three-year programmes covering a range of technology areas for wealth-creation and quality of life.

Measurement and materials science areas within the NPL include nanotechnology, acoustics, quantum, biotechnology, optical, radiation and thermal time.

For all measurement-related and scientific enquiries, the NPL Measurement Helpline researches and answers queries, or callers can

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

FreePatentsOnline.com

Free, easy-to-use access to millions of patents and patent applications with the web's most powerful patent search engine.

be put directly through to an expert for a free consultation. ■

- **NPL Measurement Helpline**
Tel: 020 8943 6880 Fax: 020 8943 6458
enquiry@npl.co.uk www.npl.co.uk
- **National Physical Laboratory**
Hampton Road, Teddington,
Middlesex TW11 0LW
Tel: 020 8977 3222 Fax: 020 8943 6458

NPL is calling on innovators to apply for a share in a £500,000 DTI fund to solve measurement problems. Small to medium-sized businesses are offered help to bring their ideas closer to reality. One year into the programme, 70 companies are already receiving consultancy from NPL.

- www.npl.co.uk/measurement_for_innovators

'ADVANCE FEE' FRAUDSTERS TARGET INVENTORS

INVENTORS WHO have posted their inventions on websites are being targeted by the so-called 'Nigerian e-mail scam', writes Farag Moussa.

Fraudulent e-mail messages are sent to inventors from a purportedly Japanese businessman, naming the inventions and expressing an interest in a deal, but invariably leading to demands for advance payments – and in some cases telephone harassment – after months of seemingly plausible negotiations.

● *Dr Farag Moussa is president of the*

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