

# Inventique®

The newsletter of Wessex Round Table of Inventors October 2007

17-20 October BIS 2007 www.britishinventionshow.com

## Business Link-up

SUPPORTING FOUR WRTI EXHIBITORS AT BIS 2007

**F**OUR WRTI MEMBERS are exhibiting their latest products at this month's British Invention Show at Alexandra Palace, London on 17-20 October, thanks to support from Business Link South East.

Kim Weiler is exhibiting the Scott Holster™ – a device enabling target shooters to carry a shotgun broken yet ready for use, leaving both hands free for safety and comfort. Handmade in the UK in brown or tan leather, this sporting accessory is already attracting interest in the USA.

● [www.shotgunholster.net](http://www.shotgunholster.net)

Bob Jackson is showing his LongLife Saw™ with its instantly replaceable blade. Made from high-quality steel in a range of different styles and sizes, Bob's saw keeps its edge longer than conventional models, the blade is less expensive to replace – and a range of blades can be carried with just one saw. A UK distributor has already entered into an agreement for the product.

● [bjack@btinternet.com](mailto:bjack@btinternet.com)

Nick LeFeuvre will demonstrate his patented SUHTL™ (Single point, Ultra-low-resonance, Half-wave Transmission-Line) loudspeaker technology, which makes it possible to recreate sound without the usual resonances and interferences.

● [www.Resolution-Loudspeakers.co.uk](http://www.Resolution-Loudspeakers.co.uk)



Above: WRTI members are exhibiting the Scott Holster and the Milli-grip (below) at Alexandra Palace.



Andy Manuel is showing the Milli-grip™, a range of open-ended metric spanners in one precision tool. With its revolutionary ratchet system, the Milli-grip eliminates the slippage problems inherent in the 150 year-old traditional worm-gear design, and will not alter its setting during use – thus avoiding skinned knuckles and burred edges.

The Ameri-grip™, an imperial measure version for the US market, and UK applications such as vintage cars etc, will be launched at BIS. ■

● [www.milli-grip.co.uk](http://www.milli-grip.co.uk)

● [www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast)

● [www.britishinventionshow.com](http://www.britishinventionshow.com)

Next WRTI meeting

**WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER**

■ 'MARKETING TO PROMOTE your invention' by guest speaker Emma James of Tasty Marketing ([www.tastymarketing.co.uk](http://www.tastymarketing.co.uk)) is followed by an Inventors' Clinic in Room HC 017, Herbert Collins Building, Southampton Solent University, commencing 6.30pm.

● Non-members wishing to attend should e-mail: [secretary@wrti.co.uk](mailto:secretary@wrti.co.uk) or tel: Mike Overy on 01420 562 378. Map: [www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk) (SO14 0RP) [www.wrti.org.uk/events](http://www.wrti.org.uk/events)

**Fast Growth Business Awards**

THE SEARCH IS ON to find Britain's best mid-market business, with an online entry deadline of 7 December 2007.

The Fast Growth Business Awards 2008, sponsored by T-Mobile, Royal Bank of Scotland, Growing Business Magazine and PLUS Markets Plc, celebrate the very best of the UK's fastest-growing companies. Fifteen awards covering every business area will be presented at a Gala Dinner at London Marriott Grosvenor Square, London on 12 March.

As an FGBA winner, your business is recognised as the best in its category by a 10-member judging panel made up of experts, entrepreneurs and journalists including business advisor Teresa Graham OBE, Piper Private Equity director Christopher Curry and Pearson non-executive director Sir David Arculus. ● [www.fgba.co.uk](http://www.fgba.co.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

## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

THE GREAT THING about the WRTI is that ideas don't die – they multiply. Come to one of our clinics with a good idea and you'll go home with ten, and hopefully they will form the basis of a sound business. But how do you find a winner?

First and foremost you have to believe in your idea: even if others have doubts it shouldn't undermine your confidence. At the club we've learnt that even other innovators are not always the best judges.

On the other hand, you don't want to throw years of your life away on a dud. You may think you have found a problem that needs a solution – but that's not enough; you have to be sure you have an unbeatable solution that really works.

Before you rush out and start paying for patent searches, check out the market yourself. See if you can buy the type of product you're considering. Search in every way you can, and not just on the internet but in magazines and adverts. And ask the experts – those people who'd sell your idea and those who'd buy it, be they a professor or a child (you don't have to say why you're asking).

If no serious competitor emerges you can start development. With a good working demonstrator, go back to those you trust. Let them play with it, listen hard to their opinions and try to accommodate their advice.

Try also to find technical and marketing specialists to evaluate your solution and business (in confidence, of course). Such assessments can provide a real confidence boost and add that world-beating refinement to make it worth filing a patent, or – just as likely – blow it wide open and send you back to the drawing board.

It's hard being an inventor, but sometimes it's worth it, so pick yourself up and check that sure-fire winner you thought of just yesterday!

Over the coming months I'll share a few tips on how to make your ideas happen.

Sincerely, Peter

**PETER HEBARD, WRTI Chairman**

**INVENTORATOR** Paul Sloane

# Leading the way

COMPANY CREATIVITY STARTS WITH THE LEADERS

**I**F YOU SPEAK TO people about what is impeding innovation in their organisations, you often encounter a paradox.

Senior managers feel frustrated that their people are complacent and are not showing initiative or enterprise. Mid-level managers and support staff feel upset that they are micro-managed, that they are not empowered to try out their own ideas, and that their managers stop them from challenging the established way of doing things.

Both groups blame the other for the company's problems, but who is really at fault? Middle managers may block new proposals, but the real problem lies with the leaders.

It is easy for company leaders to make visionary statements that include all the right words about the importance of innovation, change, enterprise and risk. Unless, however, they back up the words with actions, they will be seen as paying lip service to innovation and not having the will to make it happen.

## Surveying the seen...

A recent survey on ideas receptivity shows that people consider themselves to be open to new ideas but consider their bosses to be closed. Whereas only 4% of respondents thought they would

not consider outside ideas, fully 31% thought that their bosses would not. According to the survey, bosses are much more likely to claim the credit for outsiders' ideas and more likely to reject challenging questions or suggestions than are the respondents.

What does this mean? One possibility is that only reactionary diehards are promoted. A more likely hypothesis is that we are critical of our boss's behaviour but that we have a blind spot for the same failings in ourselves.

What the survey says about us is more telling than what it says about our managers. We think of ourselves as open-minded and receptive, but maybe this is not the case. What if we are just as bad as the managers, but fail to see it? ■

© Paul Soane 2007

**Continued next month**

● *Paul Sloane is a recognised expert on innovation, lateral thinking and leadership. He is the author of 17 books – including The Innovative Leader (Inventique, August/Sept'07). His clients include: AA, American Express, ARM, BT, DWP, Lloyds of London, Motorola, Reckitt Benckiser, Shell and 3M.*

[psloane@destination-innovation.com](mailto:psloane@destination-innovation.com)  
[www.destination-innovation.com](http://www.destination-innovation.com)

## YOUR SCIENCE MUSEUM NEEDS YOU...

The Science Museum is looking for public support to open a new centre in Wiltshire in which to display scientific and technological innovations which are currently stored in seven giant aircraft hangars.

Imagine a vast, magnificent exhibition centre containing over 200,000 of the greatest innovations of science and humanity. The Science Museum's 'Inspired' is a brand new kind of museum opening in Swindon in 2010 – but it needs public votes to make this happen.

'Inspired' is one of six transformational projects shortlisted to receive £50m from the Big Lottery – the winner to be decided in a televised public vote later this year. With your support, the Science Museum hopes to win the bid.

● For further details: [www.voteinspired.org.uk](http://www.voteinspired.org.uk)

**Inspired™**  
science museum swindon

# First aid kit talks to you!

**I**F YOU WERE the first to arrive at the scene of an accident, would you know what to do before professional help arrived?

Nearly 4,000 deaths occur in UK home accidents every year (**Source: RoSPA**). With this in mind, WRTI member and entrepreneur Brian Stickley has launched a Talking First Aid Kit that is set to save lives around the home.

The unique kit, designed by medical and educational experts, contains first aid supplies, visual and audio instructions that talk users through the process of administering first aid care in an emergency situation.

**Right: Designed by medical experts, WRTI member Brian Stickley's patented Talking First Aid Kit is organised into eight colour-coded 'injury packs'.**

The Talking First Aid Kit is part of the product range offered by Intelligent First Aid, based in New Jersey, USA.

Brian's Romsey-based company, Talking Products Limited, won a contract with Intelligent First Aid to develop the electronics used in the product and is the official UK distributor. It retails for £79.95 and can be ordered online. ■

● [www.IntelligentFirstAid.co.uk](http://www.IntelligentFirstAid.co.uk)



## RAISE YOUR GAME BY ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

**INNOVATION NEEDS TO BE encouraged if companies are to succeed in the long term regardless of market highs and lows. This powerful message will be projected at the 2nd Thames Valley Innovation Conference on Tuesday 16 October at GreenPark, Reading. Admission is free. Fielding a dozen keynote speakers from Microsoft, Acision and Cisco Systems, this one-day event attracts innovators, investors,**

**entrepreneurs and advisors from across the UK. This year's conference, also includes Innovation Showcase exhibitions from thrusting young hi-tech companies, and is expected to attract over 500 delegates.** ■

● **Thames Valley Economic Partnership**  
100 Longwater Avenue, Green Park, Reading RG2 6GP  
Tel: 0118 945 0040 Fax: 0118 945 0037  
[info@thamesvalley.co.uk](mailto:info@thamesvalley.co.uk) [www.thamesvalley.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.co.uk)

### LICENCING / IP CLINICS

WRTI and Business Link host a free lecture and a series of one-to-one advice clinics on 'Intellectual Property and Licensing your technology' at the SETsquared Centre, University of Southampton on Tuesday 27 November.

SETsquared is a joint initiative of the Universities of Southampton, Surrey, Bristol and Bath which supports high-tech, high-growth potential enterprises in Southern England.

● To reserve a place or for further information, contact Peter Hebard: [chairman@wrti.co.uk](mailto:chairman@wrti.co.uk)  
Tel: 01590 622 51  
[www.wrti.org.uk/events](http://www.wrti.org.uk/events)  
[www.businesslink.co.uk/events](http://www.businesslink.co.uk/events)

### ● FAST-TRACK PATENTS AT UK-IPO

The UK Intellectual Property Office has launched a public consultation on proposals to introduce a fast-track system for patent and trade mark applications, building on a suggestion made in the Gowers Review of Intellectual Property.

Gowers acknowledged an existing fast-track process for patents. The process is limited, however, and little used: patent applicants must currently give 'adequate reasons' for using the service, and UK-IPO's approval and rejection criteria are unclear.

The UK-IPO advocates a new accelerated grant process that would be open to all applicants on payment of a premium of between £300 and £600. It envisages that a typical application could be granted in under a year under the proposed fast-track process, compared with

two-to-three years for a typical application under the current, non-accelerated system.

For trade marks there is currently no form of accelerated examination; applications are simply examined in the order in which they are received. UK-IPO proposes a new system enabling trade mark applicants to request examination within 10 business days as opposed to the 4–6 week timescale a standard application can currently take.

The current application fees for a trade mark are £200 for an application (covering one trade mark 'class') and a fee of £50 for each additional class requested. For a fast-track application the UK-IPO is proposing a fee of £500 for the application (covering one class); the cost for an additional class will remain at £50.

● Source: [www.out-law.com](http://www.out-law.com)

## Sam Corry, account executive at Blue Rocket Group, thinks the UK can learn lessons from Apple's use of IP

**E**ARLIER THIS YEAR, Apple overhauled its entire product line, adding a touch-screen iPod to its vast array of popular portable music players. For many companies this would be a risky move, but Apple's astounding ability to turn intellectual property (IP) into major commercial gain is something companies in the UK could learn lessons from.

Apple's success in harnessing the creativity of its staff to produce revenue-generating technological innovations such as the iPod, iPhone, iTunes and now the iTouch has been praised throughout the world. British businesses often talk about the need to commercialise their IP, but seem to have less success than their US counterparts.

Mike Herd, executive director of the Sussex Innovation Centre (SInC) and an expert in product incubation, believes that the

problem is not Britain's lack of innovative ideas; we have plenty of these. The real problem lies in the fact that most UK companies lack the knowledge, confidence or support to turn their IP into commercial products or services.

### Sitting in the comfort zone

"Apple's example shows us that continuous innovation is essential for the ongoing growth of a successful company, and is the key to global success," Mike says.

"Most companies are comfortable sitting on a single innovation or product and simply don't have the time or resources to develop new intellectual property. Whilst this may make money in the short term, companies run the risk of stalling if they fail to continually develop their portfolio of IP, products and services."

With funding from the East

Sussex Economic Partnership and SEEDA, SInC is currently running the East Sussex Technology Transfer project, to assist companies with the commercialisation of IP into new markets through a series of debated, interactive workshops.

These workshops are driven by the participants and give delegates a unique opportunity to speak directly to a diverse panel of experts geared towards helping businesses protect, finance and sell new products or ideas. ■

© Sam Corry, 2007

● A series of workshops – including a seminar dedicated to intellectual property on 14 November – is currently taking place at SInC. Information can be found at: [www.newproductnetwork.co.uk/esep](http://www.newproductnetwork.co.uk/esep)  
Blue Rocket Group Tel: 01273 779196  
[sam@bluerocketgroup.com](mailto:sam@bluerocketgroup.com)  
[www.bluerocketgroup.com](http://www.bluerocketgroup.com)  
[www.sinc.co.uk](http://www.sinc.co.uk)

## HOT TOPICS LECTURE

**THE LATEST HOT TOPIC** lecture, entitled 'Manufacturing Innovation: winning in the global game', takes place at Portsmouth Business School's Richmond Building on Wednesday 17 October.

Professor Nick Bennett talks about the latest innovations in manufacturing to help companies gain global competitiveness

Creativity and innovation are drivers for successfully competing in today's global manufacturing economy. With innovations in science, research and emerging technologies, the future of manufacturing is fascinating, particularly in the use of new materials, processes and applications. Professor Bennett will take us through these points in his lecture.

● Contact: Maricar Jagger  
Tel: 023 9284 3757  
[events@port.ac.uk](mailto:events@port.ac.uk)

## WRTI AWARD WINNERS HONOURED



**THERE'S** something fishy about the WRTI Awards sponsored by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, which are to be presented to two Southampton Solent University students at their Graduation Ceremony next month: both are aimed at Britain's 3.5m anglers.

Jonathan Buckie won the Product Design Award for his Revolution SB Fishing Seat Box, designed to provide recreational anglers with a comfortable, stable platform from which to enjoy coarse fishing. Key features include built-in wheels, a telescopic travelling handle, four telescopic legs with articulated 'mud feet', a quick-release bump bar, eight rotary drawers, an under-seat storage compartment, umbrella mounts and lifting handles. The Revolution SB will wholesale for £117.50.

● [Jbuckie@hotmail.com](mailto:Jbuckie@hotmail.com)



Fellow SSU student Ian Cowan won the Engineering Award with his Easy-Cast Levelwind Fishing Reel (above) with its unique drive train. A traditional levelwind multiplier reel reduces casting distances by approximately 26.9%. Ian's product reduces this loss to only 11.6% per cast.

● [ian.cowan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ian.cowan@hotmail.co.uk)

"Two-thirds of UK companies fail to generate new products and services" ● – Sir George Cox

# www.wrti.org.uk

THE INVENTORS WEBSITE

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE** InventorResource.co.uk

## Online infoboard

**C**REATED IN May as a free, non-profit, public-interest resource to help budding inventors get their ideas off the ground and into the marketplace, InventorResource offers a unique reference point on design, patents, business plans, funding and legal advice for inventors.

The founders' concern was that there was no single, easy-access UK resource for interesting features with practical advice about developing a new product or business idea.

InventorResource includes articles written by professional journalists and experts: over sixty articles are already available on topics of immediate interest to innovators, and ten new articles per month are planned.

By registering for the free e-letter, visitors to InventorResource can also enter their own comments and suggest future topics. ■

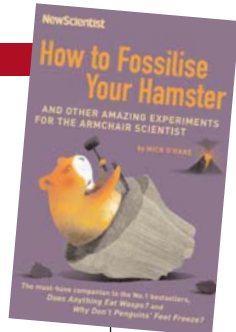
● **Contact: Jane Marshall**  
**JaneM@InventorResource.co.uk**  
**www.inventorresource.co.uk**

### BOOK OF THE MONTH

**How to Fossilise Your Hamster** by Mick O'Hare  
Profile Books 256 pages  
ISBN 1846680441 £7.99

This companion to No.1 bestsellers *Does Anything Eat Wasps* and *Why Don't Penguins Feet Freeze?* is the perfect gift for anyone who wants to know how to measure the speed of light with chocolate and a microwave, why hot water freezes faster than cold water, and how to create a lava-lamp with an alka-seltzer.

Why do yo-yos yo-yo? Find out at [www.newscientist.com/hamster](http://www.newscientist.com/hamster).  
"It's very funny, very ingenious and not hard to foresee another Christmas bestseller" – Publishing News.



### WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

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

A web forum with a community of 1.5m scientific experts from around the world, from full- and spare-time scientists to retirees and students. When a major firm such as Procter & Gamble needs to develop new products, it sometimes posts its requirements on InnoCentive rather than just rely on its in-house researchers. Crucially, it offers payment for successful solutions. "If they're looking for a new molecule to take red wine off a shirt... sure enough, there's a retired chemist in London, or a grad student in Taipei, who comes up with a molecule, and they get paid." – Dan Tapscott.

### E-MAGAZINE OF THE MONTH

**ORNL Review (online from [www.ornl.gov](http://www.ornl.gov))**

This informative free magazine publicises the latest R&D developments at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, and is emailed to subscribers two or three times per year. ORNL – established in 1943 as a part of the Manhattan Project to pioneer a method for producing and separating plutonium – is now home to the US Department of Energy's largest science and energy laboratory, after becoming an international centre for both the study of nuclear energy and related research in the physical and life sciences.

## BUSINESS LINK WESSEX INNOVATION CLINICS

Are you thinking about developing a new product or process? Have you invented something and don't know what to do next? Through its series of free Innovation Clinics, Business Link Wessex provides confidential and impartial guidance on such subjects as investigating an innovative idea, developing a new product or process, working with universities, exploiting inventions and intellectual property rights. Innovation clinics are held in the Bournemouth, Portsmouth and Southampton regions.

● **Advice Hotline: 08454 58 85 58** [innovation@businesslinkwessex.co.uk](mailto:innovation@businesslinkwessex.co.uk) [www.businesslinkwessex.co.uk/events](http://www.businesslinkwessex.co.uk/events)

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