

# newsletter christmas 2010

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year from all at Catalyst!



catalyst

science discovery centre

It has been 7 months since I joined Catalyst and the time has passed in something of a blur! Since the outset I have worked with the team here to improve our maintenance and repair programme, boost our marketing strategy and strengthen the synergies that exist between our dual roles of Science Centre and Museum. This has meant some difficult choices relating to expenditure and prioritisation and I want to take this opportunity to thank both colleagues at Catalyst and the Board of Trustees for their support during this time. The other big priority has been working with our industry partners to generate greater support for Catalyst and the role it has in promoting Chemistry and science in general, to young people of school age as well as the general public. It would be difficult to list all the businesses and groups who've responded to this challenge in this space but as you read this newsletter you'll see we feature a number of companies in particular who've partnered with us during 2010. It would also be remiss of me not to thank Halton Borough Council, the Friends of Catalyst, the SCI and the many branches of the RSC in the North West who have supported or collaborated with us during the year.

At this time of year we now have our sights firmly set on 2011 – the International Year of Chemistry (IYC). We hope to step up the refurbishment and development programme, securing additional support and funding to upgrade our content and presentation. We're developing new and fun workshops and educational activities for the schools' programme and we're also planning a series of events and activities to celebrate IYC and the important role chemistry plays in all our lives.

If you'd like to be a part of this as a "Friend", a sponsor, a volunteer or a visitor then do get in touch and help make 2011 an even better year for Catalyst than 2010 has been. Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year.



## Catalyst appoints new Chair of Trustees



In January Catalyst was pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Bryan Davies as Chairman of its Trustee Board, following the retirement of Dr Tony Bastock OBE after six years service.

Bryan Davies, a graduate of UMIST, brings a wealth of experience to Catalyst having held numerous senior positions within the chemical industry over a career spanning more than 44 years.

Bryan said "I am very honoured to be appointed as Chairman of the Board at Catalyst. The previous Chairman, Dr Tony Bastock has given outstanding service and commitment and enabled Catalyst to establish itself as a leading science centre.

We are fortunate in having an excellent, highly professional and committed team at Catalyst and I look forward to working with them to deliver future, ongoing success."



Looking forward to 2011, we've got some great plans! Read on for more details.



International Year of  
**CHEMISTRY**  
2011

# sponsors news

## ERDF funding



INVESTING IN  
england'snorthwest

EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Catalyst continues to operate its European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project which aims to enthuse young people in STEM subjects in order to improve the perception of these subjects, particularly chemistry, and increase young people's intention to study these subjects further and perhaps pursue a career in science based industries.

After an audit in the early part of the year, the project is on track to deliver against all of its specific objectives. One of these objectives, the requirement to work with 18 small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) remains challenging though and we'd like to take this opportunity to ask any SMEs to consider contacting us, to find out how they might be able to benefit from Catalyst's assistance in engaging with young people. Whether Catalyst's support would form part of a workforce development programme or part of a corporate responsibility agenda it really doesn't matter, Catalyst has something to offer you if you are communicating to or engaging with a young audience.

## Catalyst gets "Up Close and Personal"!



Total  
Solar Panel  
exhibit

With funding from the Liverpool and North West Regional Group of the SCI, Innospec and Unilever, Catalyst was able

to develop a brand new workshop which was launched at the beginning of October. "Up Close and Personal" is a workshop designed as an introduction to surfactants and their use in personal products such as shower gel and shampoo.

Thanks to funding from the organisations mentioned above we were able to offer free workshops for pupils from across the North West and in some cases, cover the cost of coach transport.

The week long launch culminated in a family event for Saturday Science Club members and members of the SCI, which included a presentation by Dr Glyn Roberts from Unilever PLC.



**Total Petrochemicals UK** pledged their commitment to Catalyst with a sponsorship cheque for £20,000.

This funding has supported the construction of a new solar power exhibit and additional information panels which will be housed in our Scientific Gallery.

Total has held significant stakes in solar energy companies for around 27 years and is undertaking a project to build a photovoltaic panel production and assembly facility in North East France.

## support from local companies



Once again Catalyst is thrilled to be supported by **Novelis Recycling**, the aluminium can recycling plant in Warrington.

This sponsorship will fund the building of a brand new exhibit, due to be launched in Spring 2011!

Another new exhibit funded by the **Nuclear Skills Council** is also due to be installed in Spring 2011.

**Chemicals Northwest** also continued their support for Catalyst when CEO Jenny Clucas presented a cheque for £10,000.

To enhance the solar panel display in Scientific, **Solvay** from Warrington have pledged some funding for the design and installation of an information panel about Solar Impulse, the innovative solar powered plane which was designed with technology support from Solvay.

For information on how  
you can help



support Catalyst,  
please contact  
Catalyst Director

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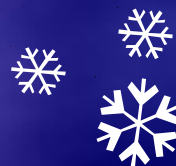
## support from Friends



Each year the "Friends of Catalyst" group make a donation to Catalyst to support a project and this year was no exception.

The donation from the "Friends" this year was used to help refurbish the conference rooms and with new carpet tiles, refreshed paintwork and free wi-fi in all rooms, we'd love to take your bookings for conferences and corporate events at Catalyst!

# another great year for education



## Science at Work Week

Here at Catalyst we are passionate about enthusing and inspiring young scientists of tomorrow and we were thrilled when our "Science at Work" event was such a HUGE success!

This year the week was sponsored by pharmaceuticals company AstraZeneca and without the significant assistance and enthusiasm from them and their volunteers, this event would not have been possible. We brought nearly 700 pupils to Catalyst over the four days and the support we had enabled pupils to attend free of charge.

From explosions to energy production, skeletons to soap making and from plastic making to pumping water, the supporting companies had it covered. Over 20 different organisations took part during the week, making it the most successful "Science at Work" event we've ever held. Let's hope we can make next year's event just as great!



Left:  
Pupils from Bankfield School, Widnes learn about diabetes and kidney function from Nancy Wrigley, AstraZeneca

Below:  
Pupils learn how to assemble the United Utilities pipe rig



## International Year of Chemistry 2011



Catalyst will be actively involved in the International Year of Chemistry and so far we have plans for:

- A new molecular trail around our galleries
- Make it Molecular workshops in the lab throughout the summer
- Speaking at the "Women Sharing a Chemical Moment in Time" event
- Participation in the ASDC Nationwide Chemistry Demonstration
- Chemistry at Work Week
- The return of Dr Bunhead with his Exploding Energy Shows
- Flash Bang shows during National Chemistry Week in November

## RSC NW support

Catalyst was very proud to hear that its application for sponsorship from the RSC NW Trust had been approved. This will enable us to create a unique molecular trail around the galleries for school pupils, university students and the general public to follow as they explore.

In addition to this funding Catalyst has been involved in the production of a DVD of science experiments that the RSC NW Trust will deliver to all schools within the NorthWest. Sue Halliday our Education Manager and Lorelly Wilson of 'Chemistry with Cabbage' fame starred in the DVD due to be distributed in the Spring.

## Catalyst lunchroom gets a makeover



School visitors noticed a difference when they stopped to have lunch, thanks to a community initiative from a local company. As part of their corporate social responsibility project, Rowlands Pharmacy from Widnes visited Catalyst where they designed and painted two large murals to brighten up the lunchroom. A spokesperson from Rowlands Pharmacy said "We wanted to choose a local project

that was connected to the pharmaceutical industry and with Catalyst's strong ties to the community through its education programme it was the obvious choice."

# general news

## archive room named



Left to right: Bryan Davies, Chairman of Catalyst Trustees, John Blewett and Stephen Youd-Thomas, Director

Following the annual "Friends" Christmas Party last week we had a special ceremony where the archive room was officially named "The Blewett Room". This award was made in recognition of the hard work and dedication that John Blewett has shown over the last eight years in caring for and organising the collection and being instrumental in Catalyst attaining the MLA accreditation, a national standard for UK museums. At the ceremony Stephen Youd-Thomas, Catalyst Director said "John joined us as a volunteer eight years ago and has invested a considerable amount of time and money in cataloguing and organising the collection. His friendly and helpful style has made him a valued part of the Catalyst team and this seemed a fitting recognition of the impact he's had on the Centre and the esteem in which he's held."



## local MP visits Catalyst



Local MP Derek Twigg stressed the importance of high quality science education for young and old during a recent visit to Catalyst. During his visit Derek met with Director Stephen Youd-Thomas and Chairman of the Friends of Catalyst, Chris Lewis for an update on recent events and to hear of exciting plans for the future as the International Year of Chemistry approaches in 2011.

Commenting on his visit, Derek Twigg said "We are very fortunate to have a centre such as Catalyst in the borough to enthuse people of all ages about science and the important role it plays in our everyday lives and I fully support them as they plan for the future under Stephen's direction."



Director Stephen Youd-Thomas with Derek Twigg MP

## puzzle room a success



Following the refurbishment of the conference suite it was decided to open it up to the general public as the Puzzle Room during October half term. This was an outstanding success, adding to the Catalyst offer, so much so that it's now a regular feature!

Families enjoying the Puzzle Room during half term



## archive update



Throughout 2010 Catalyst has been working on a project called Halton's Collections. This project brings together four diverse collections covering the history of Runcorn and Widnes on the River Mersey held separately in Catalyst, Runcorn Town Hall, Halton's Libraries and Norton Priory Museum. The collections are being catalogued in a database for future ease of public access, while a local artist is exploring the collections and presenting them to the public through personal interpretation, themed displays and public events.



### And finally...

We'd like to thank everyone for their continued support this year and we look forward to an equally successful year in the next 12 months!

**Catalyst has received £5,000 from Renaissance NorthWest** who offer a wide range of support in various aspects of museum practice. This funding, awarded through the Big Energy Saving initiative will be used to replace lighting in Reception and Scientific to increase energy efficiency, saving Catalyst approximately £2,000 per year.

**Please note:** Catalyst will be closed on 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st Dec and 1st Jan.

