

Connected

newsletter

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NI Connected Health Ecosystem Meeting

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Welcome

WELCOME BY SCOTT RUTHERFORD



Scott Rutherford, Director of Research and Enterprise

In writing the introduction to this edition of the Connected newsletter, I'm conscious that the programme has just completed an extensive external evaluation and I would like to offer my congratulations to everyone that contributed to such a successful outcome. The evaluation highlighted that the programme has delivered a large number of very positive results to local companies and had a wide range of impacts on the local economy including: increased innovation, increased R&D capability, increased productivity as a result of up-skilling and new business generated through the projects delivered. Over 80% of companies that engaged with the programme recorded tangible outcomes including transfer of knowledge from partner(s) to companies and an improvement in existing skills and expertise levels or a development of new skills and expertise. Significantly, some 52% of companies reported an increase in turnover in the last 18 months.

I'm very pleased to note that based on this success, the evaluation team have recommended that the Department for Employment and Learning continues to support the Connected initiative.

This is a very timely endorsement of the programme given that the latest Quarterly Economic Survey released (January 2014) by Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with business advisors BDO, reveals that Northern Ireland's economic recovery persists but still remains patchy and shows slower signs of recovery compared to the rest of the UK. More encouragingly, the survey also revealed

that business prospects for 2014 are generally positive with three quarters of local businesses expecting growth during 2014, albeit modest for the majority. Almost three quarters (73%) of local business envisage they will target new markets in 2014, 62% intend to make new investment in their products and 52% are planning on recruiting more staff. In particular, manufacturing business confidence and investment intentions continue to strengthen, with significant increases in both turnover and profitability in this quarter.

So despite the downturn in the Northern Ireland economy having been deep and protracted, at the start of 2014 most of the economic indicators are pointing in the right direction; albeit the economy is still fragile and a recovery is still in its infancy. Looking forward, it's only through a concerted, collaborative approach on the part of key stakeholders including industry, government and academia that we will be able to achieve a sustainable recovery – the Connected programme being an excellent example of the achievements that can be delivered through genuine collaboration.

In closing, I would like to personally thank the Department for Employment and Learning for their continued support and just as importantly, the delivery agents themselves for their dedication and commitment to the programme.

**Scott Rutherford
Director of Research and Enterprise
Queen's University Belfast**

NI Connected Ecosystem Meeting

BELFAST MET HOST INNOVATIVE CONNECTED CARE ECOSYSTEM EVENT



Event dignitaries with Marie-Therese McGivern, Principal of Belfast Metropolitan College

The Northern Ireland Connected Health Ecosystem meeting was held in Belfast Metropolitan College's e3 Building on Friday 6 December. This is the first time a Further Education College has hosted such an event and was a direct result of Belfast Met's Connected-Care initiative funded by the Connected Programme.

Through this work the College has engaged with the European-wide Connected Health Network supported by Invest NI – the European Connected Health Alliance. This network includes policy makers, clinicians, allied health professionals, businesses, universities, community organisations and other interested parties. Belfast Met is the first college to join the network.

Over 160 delegates attended the conference with 80 delegates participating in a Breakfast Panel Session hosted by Big Data and Cloud Company, EMC. This session discussed Wealth Creation in Health and Social Care prior to the start of the conference with panel members including: John Compton, CE, NI Health and Social Care Board, Mark Ennis, Chair, Invest NI and Chris Roche, Chief Technical Officer, EMC.

The conference was opened by Marie-Therese McGivern, Principal and Chief Executive, Belfast Metropolitan College and Brian O'Connor, Chair ECH-Alliance. The theme of the day was 'Transforming your Care at Home' with the focus on workforce development, innovation in health care and data analytics in the life and health sciences. The event showcased SMEs working on innovative solutions to help with the management of long term conditions. It also heard from community organisations describing innovative solutions on elderly care.



Connected care ecosystem event



Connected care ecosystem event

The keynote presentations were delivered by the CEO of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Colm Donaghy and Dr Malcolm Fisk, Co-Director of the Age Research Centre, Coventry University, who discussed the emerging implications of workforce and skill development and participated in the breakout session which considered 'Developing the skill base to meet the health analytics opportunity'.

This was a very rich event with participation from a wide variety of key stakeholders, including: John McGrillen, Belfast City Council, Karl O'Leary from Microsoft Ireland and Brian Keating, Chair of the Matrix panel.

Karen McCann, who leads the 'connected-care' initiative at Belfast Met said: "This event and our relationship with the ECH-Alliance has the potential to open doors to collaborative projects, both cross-border and European-wide, in the field of Tele-Care. We will be working with key stakeholders such as SMEs, community/voluntary organisations and public sector organisations. We are delighted to trail blaze on behalf of the further education sector in Northern Ireland."

Transferring knowledge to businesses and the wider community, as the following case studies highlight our colleges and universities are open to business.

NORBOOK



Brian Doran, Chief Executive SRC, Dr Stephen Farry, Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Minister and Lord Ballyedmond, Chairman of Norbrook Laboratories.

Since its foundation over 40 years ago, Norbrook Laboratories has grown to be one of the worlds leading pharmaceutical companies specialising in the development of revolutionary veterinary and animal health medicines. Innovation and a commitment to novel research and revolutionary processes and products are seen as the cornerstone of the company's success. Norbrook Laboratories is expanding their workforce with a commitment to employ a further 400 new staff over the next two years.

About the case

Norbrook collaborated with SRC to develop a suite of apprenticeship programmes that will provide them with a highly skilled workforce to build new talent for the future. Research Lecturer for Applied Science, Dr Gillian Lambe has supported Norbrook by providing professional advice and developing a curriculum to suit the needs of the company. Dr Gillian Lambe selected appropriate units and developed a suitable delivery model. Southern Regional College assisted with the recruitment and selection of the apprentices and they will complete their qualifications by attending the College on a day release basis.

Norbrook is further collaborating with Southern Regional College and the University of Ulster to develop a higher Level 5 Apprenticeship in Life and Chemical Sciences to commence in 2014.

About the Knowledge Provider

The i3 Centre at Southern Regional College is dedicated to providing specialist support, innovative solutions and practical advice to assist the needs of local businesses. Working in collaboration with over 1,000 companies annually, SRC delivers a range of programmes to support employer needs. These include training and skills development, bespoke mentoring, research and development and knowledge transfer provision, to help businesses enhance their skillset and improve competitiveness. The diverse range of services available are delivered by a professional team of industry experts and much of this support is either wholly or partly funded through various programmes. The i3 team is staffed by Research Lecturers and Business Development Officers that can respond efficiently to employer requests and offer flexible, tailored programmes to suit the specific needs of each individual business.

The Results

Norbrook has recruited a cohort of apprentices who commenced training with Southern Regional College in January 2014. Work is continuing to develop a pilot Higher Level Apprenticeship programme that will provide opportunities to train at a higher level and offer a direct progression route for those that have achieved. This will enable Southern Regional College to offer an industry relevant curriculum and satisfy the demand for a science skilled workforce as the industry continues to grow.

Lord Ballyedmond, Chairman of Norbrook Laboratories said: "The apprenticeship programme developed in partnership with Southern Regional College provides a significant opportunity for young people to embark on an exciting career within the pharmaceutical industry."

Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning commented: "The work that Southern Regional College is currently undertaking with Norbrook is an example of how our further education colleges can work in partnership with local business and industry. The development of science related apprenticeships is important for the future of our young people and for the local economy. It is hoped that the development of apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3 will lead to piloting a higher level apprenticeship at Level 5 from September 2014. This development will enable young people to progress through the skills ladder and to obtain degree level qualifications through employment."

Since the writing of this article, it is with sincere sadness and deep regret that Lord Ballyedmond was one of four people who tragically lost their lives in an aviation accident at Gillingham, Norfolk on Thursday 13 March 2014. We offer our deepest sympathies to his entire family circle.

Contact Details of Knowledge Provider:

Knowledge Provider Name: Southern Regional College
Contact Name: Laura Kavanagh
Telephone Number: 028 3839 7778
Email: kavanaghl@src.ac.uk



Dr Lillian Cromie, Director of Science, Norbrook, Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for the Department for Employment and Learning, Derek Rodgers, Operations Director, Norbrook, Brian Doran, Chief Executive, Southern Regional College.

CLAREVIEW LEISURE – BRINGING THE PAST ALIVE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Clareview Leisure is a family-run business offering static caravan/holiday home sites, holiday cottage accommodation and a marina on the shores of Lough Erne in North Fermanagh. In addition to the scenic lake views, Clareview Leisure is close to major sites of early Christian monastic importance.

Plans are currently at an advanced stage with regard to building a multi-purpose facility – coffee shop/retail/exhibition space. The owner applied for an Innovation Voucher with a view to building upon the rich Christian monastic cultural heritage and to develop a new tourism product.

This investigation was in some ways unique as a cross-disciplinary approach was required and the University of Ulster team was made up of Ulster Business School academics Dr Sharon Loane and Dr Laura Bradley, Dr Billy Kelly, School of English and History and Dr Éamonn Ó Ciardha, School of Irish Language and Literature. The team commenced with a cultural/heritage audit of North Fermanagh's Christian monastic heritage in order to make recommendations for an experiential, immersive tourism offering. It was evident that an innovative new offering "Island" tour could be developed and operated by water with an interactive exhibition and retail space at Clareview. The current state of the market for such a product was

reviewed as well as how this would fit with the current Clareview suite of offerings. A vision and strategy to take this forward was developed and indicated the multiple target clients for cultural tourism.



The team recognised the growing trend for immersive transformational experiences in cultural tourism products and produced a number of recommendations regarding digitisation and immersion in associated storytelling materials. The multi-purpose space on the Clareview site also provided huge opportunity to use leading edge technology such as holograms and augmented/virtual realities to recreate artefacts and journeys. For example, Lough Erne and the islands proposed for the tour product were viewed as an open-air interactive museum.

Mervyn commented: "I'm delighted with the work by the UU team. They've given us an in-depth report and route map to commercialise the product. Already I've followed up on sources of further support/finance and have a number of key meetings organised. The UU team will be among the first visitors to take the tour."

THERMUS ENERGY LTD



Thermus Energy Ltd

The Thermus Energy Group is an up and coming group of companies within the UK energy sector. Utilising the most viable, innovative and cutting-edge technologies within the renewable, sustainable and conventional industries, Thermus Energy strives to deliver both capital and operational cost savings to their clients' heating requirements.

The Thermus Energy Group comprises Thermus Astar Limited and ThermusEnergy Limited.

About the Case

Thermus ASTAR directors approached SERC to research and consult on an existing non-mechanical driven (no fan) air source heat pump to establish advantages and disadvantages on the operational abilities of the unit. SERC along with Professor Neil Hewitt, University of Ulster and other UUJ staff set about setting up the test site in SERC test facilities utilising the use of an Innovation Voucher to fully investigate the heat pump. The heat pump was fully data logged in performance terms and the information provided to ThermusEnergy. Other work conducted by SERC included staff training for the

company and energy management consultation work. The heat pump design and research findings will now be the main focus for the energy company in providing low cost energy provision to major energy users.

About the Knowledge Provider

SERC is a top UK college and aims to be world class by 2020 and has been described as the 'cutting-edge' college of the Northern Ireland further education sector. As part of this sector we are the delivery arm for government to ensure that the NI economy has the skills to grow, innovate and operate on a global platform. SERC has developed the multi award-winning Environmental Skills Centre specialising in sustainable and renewable technology training and industry consultation. SERC enjoys strong contacts with both local universities and many global research centres and universities.

The Results

The new company ThermusEnergy Ltd has now been established as a new UK business with an official launch. Professor Hewitt, UUJ and John Ross, SERC have been appointed to the company's technical advisory working group, both remaining in direct contact with the group management. SERC is at present in position to provide energy management consultation on operational energy sites for the company on an ongoing basis.

Contact Details of Knowledge Provider

Knowledge Provider Name: SERC & UUJ

Contact Names: John Ross, SERC

Professor Neil J Hewitt, Director of CST Centre for Energy Research and Technology (NICERT), UUJ

Telephone Number: 028 9036 8566

Mobile Number: 07825 835469 (John Ross)

Email: jross@serc.ac.uk or nj.hewitt@ulster.ac.uk

University Focus

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED SUSTAINABLE ENERGY (CASE)



The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE)

The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) will focus on the development of highly innovative technologies for the sustainable energy sector. The Centre, hosted at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), will be industry led and will draw upon the research capabilities of the University of Ulster and the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI) as well as those of QUB.

CASE has been offered £5 million of support from Invest NI, supporting industry-led research in a key strategic sector for the Northern Ireland economy. This is the latest in a series of new Competence Centres being funded by Invest NI, designed to rapidly transform great research into commercial success.

Speaking at the launch of the Centre, Arlene Foster said: "Invest Northern Ireland's support for this new, industry-led centre will fund advanced research into one of our most dynamic and global industry sectors.

"CASE will position Northern Ireland at the forefront of the global sustainable energy market, delivering benefits to the business community and the wider economy.

"Invest Northern Ireland's wider support for Competence Centres aims to help turn great ideas into commercial realities. They bridge the gap between universities, research institutes and innovative businesses, representing a long-term strategic investment in Northern Ireland's innovation capability."

Sam McCloskey, CASE Centre Manager said: "The turn out by industry at the CASE launch is testament to the fact that interest in research, development and innovation in energy is a key business focus. Our rationale is to support these companies to compete in the global



The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE)

sustainable energy market by funding industry-led research and innovation in strategic renewable energy fields such as turbines, demand-side management and energy from biomass. CASE will be the conduit that drives industry research, providing access to world-class researchers and facilities thereby maximising the opportunities for proactive businesses taking first mover advantage."

The three key research themes within CASE are:

1. Turbines

Research will principally focus on wind (on and offshore), wave and tidal turbines with work required right through a development project lifecycle from feasibility stage to decommissioning. Some emphasis will also be given to gas turbines and micro-generation. Turbines are seen as making the most significant contribution to Northern Ireland's renewable energy target.

2. Demand-Side Management

Grid upgrade and innovation (e.g. SMART Grid) is required to prepare for the integration of the 40% renewable energy target in Northern Ireland. NIE has estimated that it will take £1 billion to upgrade the grid to meet this target. With wind farm curtailment now a real threat, energy storage solutions are also necessary to enable electricity to be used when it is most needed. "The maximum demand in the Province is around 1,800MW, but on a summer night it is 600MW. If it is a windy summer night, there could be 1,500 – 1,600MW of wind that cannot be used as there is nowhere for it to go," DETI Barriers report, quoting NIE.

3. Energy from Biomass

Energy from biomass falls into three distinct categories: solid biomass to energy via thermal routes (high quality fuels), anaerobic digestion (wastes, manures and energy crops) and uses for the resulting biogas.

Contact Details

Name: Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy
Address: David Keir Building, Stranmillis Road, Belfast, BT9 5AG
Contact Name: Sam McCloskey, CASE Centre Manager
Telephone Number: 028 9097 5577
Fax Number: 028 9066 1462
Email: s.mccloskey@qub.ac.uk

College Focus

NRC BENEFITS FROM KANSAS BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE



NRC best practice Kansas exchange

In association with University of Ulster and Kansas State University (KSU), NRC is exploring possible expansion of its counselling provision, to include family mediation.

As part of the curriculum development and collaboration between the partnerships, there are plans in place to run a joint conference in March 2014 in Northern Ireland.

NRC has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with KSU and two NRC students have already benefited from its strategic partnership through a successful eight week internship.

Two NRC Counselling Lecturers, Roisin Horner and Liz Carey, have just returned from an exciting and rewarding visit to KSU, on a best practice exchange, which was funded through the Connected project. The aim of the visit was to exchange information on respective academic programmes, explore opportunities for future collaboration and distance learning, discussions on work placements and knowledge transfer and acquisition.

ENDURANCE SPORTS WORKSHOP HOSTED BY NRC



Endurance sports workshop

Seasoned sport enthusiasts flocked to a Northern Regional College workshop which was hosted at the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus, to explore and learn how best to integrate various strategies, outside of the usual endurance training, to more effectively train and compete.

The workshop, which was funded by Connected, was organised to provide a platform for knowledge transfer to the social economy sector and to raise awareness of the value and benefits of the project. The event provided tips on how an athlete and coach can plan for

Kansas State University is recognised as a leading provider of training in trauma and family services and offers a broad curriculum of graduate, masters and doctoral programmes in these and related areas. The University has also carried out valuable research on the benefits of structured family life.

The visit provided the lecturers with the opportunity to meet Professor Sandy Smith, an expert on the impact of domestic violence at the University and exchange experiences on the areas of quality of provision and how this can be developed into evidence based material. They also toured the Family Centre of Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas where evidence of good practice was shared and the new emerging area of financial counselling provision was discussed.

Further collaborative projects including student exchanges, developments in a new trauma non-accredited short programme for NRC, shared research from KSU PhD students, were also explored.

Rosin Horner, NRC Curriculum Manager for Social Care and Early Years commenting on the visit said: "This Connected project is facilitating and linking many of the benefits of health, vitality, safe and secure strands of the programme. NRC has hosted a series of successful conferences where a wide range of Health, Social Care and Counselling Agencies from all over Ireland have been in attendance."

Roisin added: "This visit to KSU provided us with a better perspective in the field of trauma and the physical well-being of individuals, communities and society, in general and outside of Northern Ireland. Through this engagement with KSU and exchange of best practice, we can now work towards developing the expansion of the NRC curriculum and its services."

Information on the forthcoming Connected joint conference is available from NRC.

a successful year. Topics included sports psychology techniques, nutrition for training and competing in the Marathon des Sables, strength and conditioning for endurance athletes and prevention and treatment of common sports injuries in endurance athletes.

Aaron Ballantyne, NRC Sports Curriculum Manager, who organised the workshop said: "This was a great opportunity for athletes and coaches to hear some highly qualified and experienced speakers who would help them think outside the box. The day was aimed at looking at tried and tested techniques and strategies that could help competitors get those marginal gains that lead to improving performance."

Guest speakers at the event included Dr Robert Bones, University of Ulster, Noel Brick, NRC Lecturer, Laura Kerr, Athletics Northern Ireland and Adam Wilson, North Coast Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Clinic.

Organisations who attended were Causeway Cycling Club, Triangle Triathlon Club and Olympian Triathlon Club. Aaron added: "The feedback from our event has been excellent, the tangible and intangible values and benefits of this Connected project will unquestionably assist these sporting groups."

Sonia Knox, who participated in the training, said: "Such a wealth of information – I will be definitely looking at my training in a different way."

Connected Out and About

HOW FAR CAN THE WORLD GO BEFORE THE ROAD RUNS OUT?



Third International Symposium on Expertise in Sustainable Society

In the wake of the Japanese earthquake disaster, a number of Pacific Rim countries shifted their focus to the sustainability sector to provide solutions for some of the most densely populated areas of the planet. To help, some of the world's most forward-thinkers devised possible solutions.

These were presented at the third International Symposium on Expertise in Sustainable Society, hosted by South Eastern Regional College (SERC) in partnership with Toyama National College of Technology, at the Lagan Valley Island Conference Centre, Northern Ireland, from 3 to 4 June 2013.

The conference brought together internationally recognised academics and researchers focusing on a range of topics including energy strategy for Japan, electric power generation, nuclear

energy, coastal engineering, reduction in energy usage within the construction sector and waste management.

Delegates heard excellent keynote presentations and took part in stimulating workshops, paper and poster sessions in an informal small group environment, providing the opportunity to share ideas and best practice with colleagues from across the globe.

Visiting lecturers from Nagaoka University, Japan, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, Toyama University and Toyama National College of Technology participated in the Symposium along with guest speakers from Liverpool John Moore's University, Queen's University Belfast and SERC.

SERC Principal and Chief Executive Ken Webb said: "SERC is delighted that this prestigious conference is coming to Northern Ireland following successful events in Japan and Hawaii. It gives us an opportunity to promote our success in creating strong partnerships among key education and environment groups and highlights Northern Ireland as a leading Centre of Excellence in sustainable development. SERC has had a partnership with Toyama National College of Technology for five years and this conference is a positive output from this global relationship."

Connected has funded SERC's linkages with Toyama National College of Technology since its inception. Lynn Connaughton attended the second ISESS conference in November 2012 with representatives from SERC, Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster. It was at this visit that SERC was asked to host the third conference.

Generous sponsorship was received from The British Council, Colleges NI – Connected Project, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and TAL UK Ltd to enable this conference to take place.

SRC LAUNCH GREENTEC



The Permanent Secretary officially opens the GreenTEC Centre. Also pictured is David Taylor, Deputy Mayor of Newry & Mourne, Brian Doran, CEO, SRC and David Vint, Assistant Director, SRC.

In October 2013 the Southern Regional College launched their new GreenTEC Centre, a new Centre of Excellence for the Construction Industry based at the Southern Regional College's Greenbank Campus.

GreenTEC's new offering to industry will include professional, technical and accredited training, seminars and demonstrations in areas such as retrofit, passive design, ecological building systems, BIM (Building Information Modeling), RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive), thermography, energy efficiency, energy management, MCS (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) and the design and installation of renewable technologies such as solar thermal, heat pumps and solar PV.

Our new multi-functional facility aims to promote knowledge sharing, provide industry support by nurturing new research and development opportunities, facilitate industry testing and product development and provide a platform to launch and showcase new and innovative whole building solutions.

GreenTEC was officially opened on Monday 21 October by Derek Baker, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Employment and Learning.

Mr Baker said: "GreenTEC is an innovative, state-of-the-art facility which will play a key role in providing leading edge technologies and expertise and will contribute in a meaningful way to the development of the global green economy."

As part of the GreenTEC launch, 80 delegates from local industry attended a seminar focusing on key strands within the industry and featuring leading figures within each strand. Liam Brown, Managing Director with Enviroform Solutions, presented on 'Insulating against future costs with a Holistic Approach to Low Carbon Retrofit'; Eamonn Connolly, Managing Director with SIPFIT Ltd, looked at 'Low Carbon New Build; drivers and cost effective solutions'. Professor Andrew Thomas from Room4Consulting presented on BIM and how it will impact on our construction industry and Neil Stewart, Managing Director of Dimplex Renewables, discussed the key developments within the renewable sector and the positive outlook for the future of the industry in Northern Ireland.



Pictured from left to right: Lindsay Bronte, Head of School of Construction at SRC, Liam Brown, Enviroform Solutions Ltd, Professor Andrew Thomas, Room4Consulting, David Taylor, Deputy Mayor of Newry & Mourne, Derek Baker, DEL Permanent Secretary, Brian Doran, CEO at SRC, Neil Stewart, Dimplex Renewables, Eamonn Connolly SIPFIT and Bronagh Harte, Research Lecturer in Sustainable Build Technologies at SRC.

Connected Out and About

ULSTER MEDIA SHOW ANOTHER CULTURE YEAR HIGHLIGHT



Ulster Media Show 2013

North West Regional College's (NWRC) Foyle Theatre, Strand Road Campus, Derry was the venue for the 2013 Ulster Media Show Awards, an innovative showcasing of top media students from Northern Ireland's leading colleges and universities. This prestigious event was hosted by NWRC for the second year in succession, and was featured as one of the educational highlights in the city's 2013 City of Culture programme. It celebrated the best work by creative and digital media students from North West Regional College, Belfast Metropolitan College and the University of Ulster, each of whom, in partnership with a number of leading industry organisations including BBC and UTV, form the Northern Ireland Skillset Media Academy. The Academy is aimed at developing a new wave of talent to create the style concepts and media content of the future.

Hosted by UTV's Sarah Travers, and attended by a who's who of leading professionals from the media industry, the event included the presentation of awards to students in categories which included moving image (fiction and non-fiction), interactive content, photography and radio. Local winners from North West Regional College included Richard Hamilton and Julie Moore, who collected the first prize and commendation prize in the photography category.

Basil Dalton, Head of Media, Multimedia and the Arts at NWRC, explained that the awards would continue to act as catalyst to boost the career aspirations of students of the media industry: "It is a fantastic honour for our College to host the Ulster Media Show, the highlight of the year for the NI Skillset Media Academy. Nurturing the media talent of the future is what this event is all about, and we are extremely pleased to see so many familiar faces from local broadcasting and production joining us to acknowledge the talented work of the students. We are also very grateful to our partners in the Skillset Academy for their support, and look forward to working together in the future by supporting these students as they set out for potential employment in the industry."

Graduates from the NI Skillset Media Academy in the past have gone on to help attract to Northern Ireland production of Panorama, the flagship BBC current affairs programme. Graduates have also worked on HBO's Game of Thrones, one of the highest grossing new television series in the world in 2011, most of which was filmed in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Skillset Media Academy is funded through the Connected programme and partnered by North West Regional College, Belfast Metropolitan College, University of Ulster, BBC, UTV, Northern Ireland Screen, and Creative Skillset.

BEST AWARDS



Best Awards 2013

The Armagh City Hotel hosted the third annual BEST Awards Finals Day on 21 May 2013. The BEST Awards celebrate the creative and innovative talent within Northern Ireland's six regional colleges in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and this year 140 students from all six colleges presented 89 projects to an impressive array of judges drawn from the private and public sectors. The quality of the projects on offer was strongly praised by all present on the day and, highlighting the importance of the event and indeed STEM to the Northern Ireland economy, the Minister for Employment and Learning, Dr Stephen Farry, said:

"The BEST Awards has established itself as the annual showcase for STEM talent within colleges and I have been greatly impressed by the high standards shown by all the entries. I hope that many of the people here today continue to be inspired by these subjects and go on to have a successful career in this sector in Northern Ireland."

PIETA HOUSE DUBLIN



Pictured are Annette McCracken, Roisin Horner, NRC Curriculum Manger, Liz Carey and Laraine O'Brian, Pieta House.

Three NRC counselling staff recently visited Pieta House in Dublin, the award-winning counselling centre set up by psychologist Joan Freeman, to gain knowledge and a greater understanding on the success of its unique services. NRC students and staff will benefit from the visit which was funded through the Connected project.

Connected Out and About

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPOSITES MANUFACTURING COURSE



Composites manufacturing course

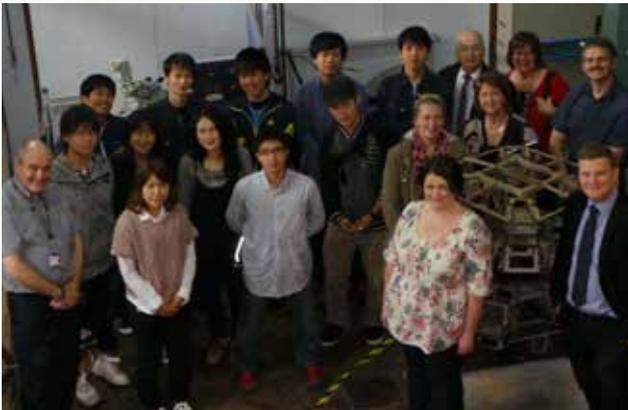
An Introduction to Composites Manufacturing course, supported by the HE/FE DEL funded Connected programme, was held on 15 November in the e3 Building's Composite Workshop with representatives from Queen's University, Invest NI and South

Eastern Regional College attended to find out more about wet lay-up and pre-preg laminating methods.

Composite materials are considered to have significant potential in replacing traditional engineering materials such as metals and plastics across a wide range of industries. Their use in aerospace, marine, construction and industrial goods has grown considerably in recent years and this expansion is set to continue; however, designing and manufacturing products in composites requires an alternative approach to traditional materials and therefore can be difficult to do. Courses of this nature help demonstrate practical manufacturing challenges when working with composites so designers, tutors and researchers can convey techniques to others in a more efficient manner.

Findhan Strain, Belfast Met, has been working on the development of a full National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Performing Engineering Operations (PEO) certificate. This is the first of its kind in the region and is a very desirable qualification for employment in the local aerospace industry. Composites manufacturing is highly dependent on the skill of the people making the product and therefore the successful completion of an NVQ unit represents a considerable step towards achieving high quality standards.

JAPAN INTERNSHIP



Japan internship

SERC recently welcomed 13 international students from four Japanese Colleges of Technology. The group visited South Eastern Regional College for a four week period from 19 August to 16 September 2013 to study English, engineering and business studies. They also sampled the social and cultural life of Northern Ireland as they worked and mixed with SERC students.

In college they learned to improve their conversational English through language classes and technical subjects taught in English. They studied programmable logic controllers, mechatronics, robotics and CAD all delivered by SERC lecturers. The students also researched a business project based on developing Northern Ireland tourism in Japan. The engineering students spent a day at Queen's University in the Polymer Processing Research Centre where they examined polymer morphology, materials testing and manufacturing methods.

BIM GATHERING FORUM



BIM gathering forum

On 23 October 2013, B. Harte, research lecturer within SRC, hosted a BIM gathering/forum in the recently launched GreenTEC Centre in Newry.

Over 30 local architects and construction professionals attended this event which focused on BIM (Building Information Modeling) and the impact it will have on the construction industry in the southern region and beyond.

As part of the event high profile speakers were invited to share their experiences and expertise with the group. These include Melanie Dawson from the NI BIM Hub, Peter Trebilcock from Balfour Beatty Construction London, Rebecca De Cicco from David Millar Architects London and Mark McKane from the University of Ulster.

The College is very keen to develop in the area of BIM and plans a second BIM gathering/forum in the New Year as well as a host of training sessions and industry mentoring in BIM and related areas.

Connected Out and About

CDIO 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP IN INNOVATION AND DESIGN MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & HARVARD UNIVERSITY CAMBRIDGE MA, USA. JUNE 2013



The CDIO Initiative is an innovative educational framework for producing the next generation of engineers. The framework provides students with an education stressing engineering fundamentals set in the context of Conceiving – Designing – Implementing – Operating (CDIO) real-world systems and products. Throughout the world, CDIO Initiative collaborators have adopted CDIO as the framework of their curricular planning and outcome-based assessment.

CDIO collaborators recognise that an engineering education is acquired over a long period and in a variety of institutions, and that educators in all parts of this spectrum can learn from practice elsewhere. The CDIO network therefore welcomes members in a diverse range of institutions ranging from research-led internationally acclaimed universities to local colleges dedicated to providing students with their initial grounding in engineering.

John Moore of South West College attended the CDIO 9th Annual Conference in Boston in June 2013.

South West College is engaged in development and delivery of curriculum and training courses for engineering including: foundation degrees in civil, construction, mechanical, manufacturing, electronic and renewable technology engineering; CPD courses in design, renewable technology, building technology, hydraulics and pneumatics, control systems and others; in-company training in process engineering, control systems, continuous improvement, lean manufacturing and others.

SWC aims to develop for all of these programmes an active learning approach based on project-based teaching, learning and assessment. In this way participants will build skills and gain experience that are relevant to the workplace and are recognised as such by prospective employers. This is in line with the theme of the international CDIO Initiative.

Attending CDIO were almost 300 delegates from universities and HE colleges in 28 countries worldwide. The meeting was jointly hosted by MIT and Harvard School of Science and Engineering and addressed key issues of innovation, change and leading-edge teaching methodologies. Discussions were led by academics of international standing and there was a four-day programme of paper and poster presentations, workshops and round table discussions and debates.

The conference content was most relevant to South West College's technical curriculum development and industry engagement; good international contacts were made and it is the intention of SWC to continue to engage with the international CDIO Initiative, adopt its methodologies and to attend and present work at future CDIO meetings.

CREATIVE SKILLSET MEDIA ACADEMY – 2013/14



Tony Talbot and Ciaran O'Neill from NWRC welcome Stuart Fleming (PRS) and Keith Johnston (IMRO) to the Foyle Studios.

Documenting the Cut

On 11 and 12 September 2013, NWRC and the University of Ulster School of Media, Film and Journalism (working together as part of the NI Media Academy) presented Documenting the Cut, a series of masterclasses, screenings and pitching sessions, with international Documentary Film Editor and Producer Daithi Connaughton (TG4, RTE, CBC, NFB).

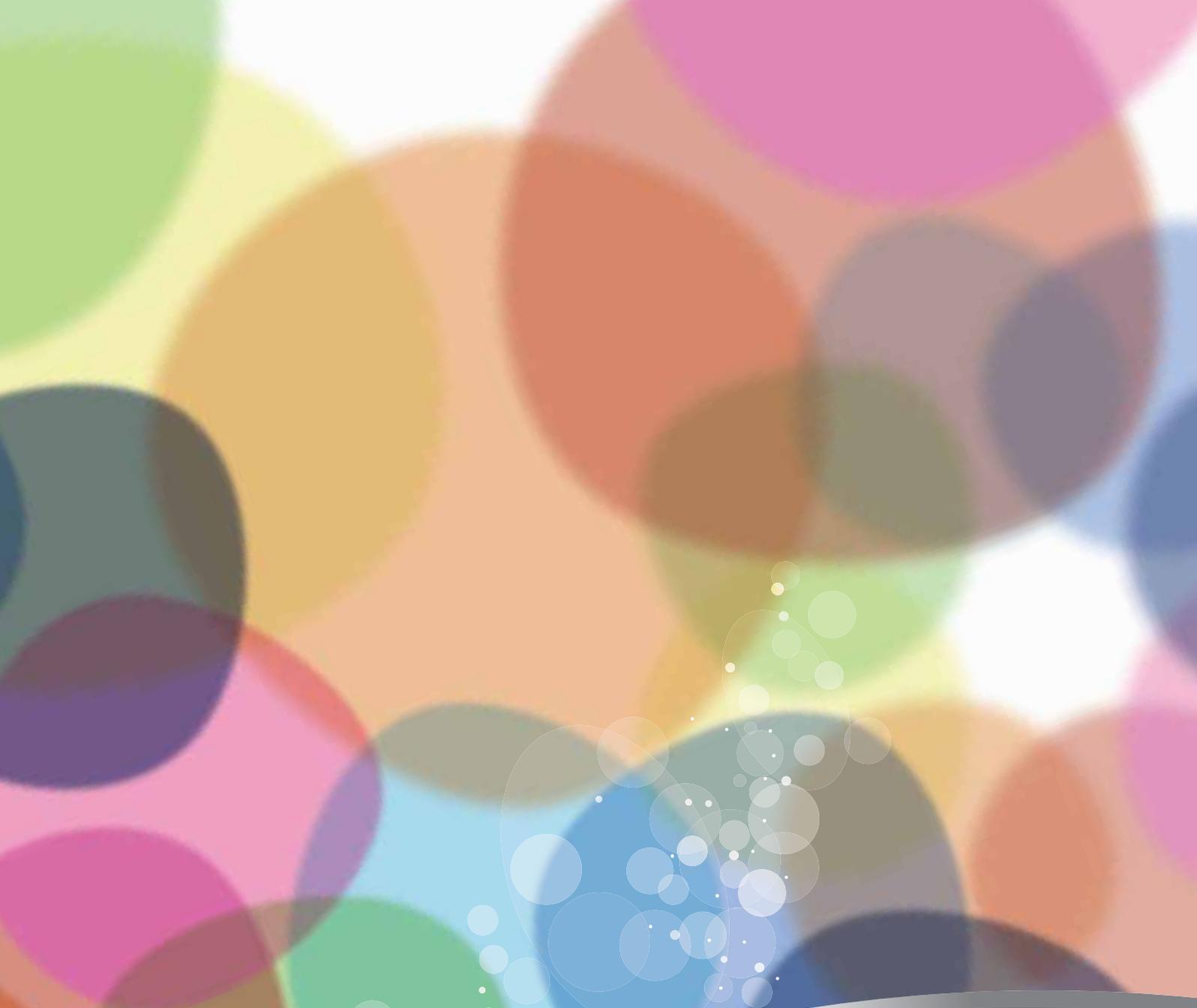
Daithi screened his own work, *Lon sa Speir – Men at Lunch* (2012), hosted a question/answer session, two masterclasses in online and offline editing for documentary production, and organised a final Pitching Session Workshop for film-makers interested in developing their own projects.

All sessions took place at North West Regional College (NWRC), Derry~Londonderry.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING INSTITUTE CONFERENCE BUFFALO UNIVERSITY, NY STATE 20 – 23 JUNE 2013

Carol Viney attended the CPSI Conference, which is an annual event organised by the Creative Education Foundation in USA. This organisation invented "Brainstorming" and the Conference was the tenth to take place and consisted of workshops, evening tutorials, seminars on all methods of "problem-solving" and creative thinking – from workshops on "Humour – The Art of Natural Genius" and "Visual Thinking – How to Energise Your Brain" to "More Lightning, Less Thunder – How to Energise Innovation Teams" and "The Innovation Trap: Rethinking Senior Leader Responsibilities". Carol attended the three-day intensive springboard course which consisted of leading and facilitating teams in problem solving and innovative hands-on problem solving on a day-to-day basis.





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Colleges Northern Ireland, Hawthorn Office Park
First Floor, 39 Stockmans Way, Belfast BT9 7ET
T: 028 9068 4955 www.connected.ni.org