

# GIBSON INDEX NEWSLETTER

JULY 2011 – Issue No. 72

Your Monthly e-Newsletter on British Enterprise and Innovation

## Welcome to the UK's most comprehensive and best-read Newsletter on Small Technology Companies, Academic Enterprise and Latest Innovation

In 2011 food & drink became the UK's largest manufacturing sector. Without doubt – almost every out-of-work artisan, retired executive, pension-deprived operative and impecunious farmer I know has started a food & drink company.

Individually flavoured marmalade, fruit cocktails, cakes, bread, sausages, redcurrant-topped chutney, and beer named 'Old Engine Oil', are among the many thousands of new products hitting the market – supermarket or street market – each year.

Yet this renaissance in UK low-tech manufacturing should not be sniffed at. **The Speciality Food Fair**, held twice a year, has more than 350 exhibitors each year – one man/woman businesses. It is a business you can start in your kitchen, and test-market the goods at local markets, and sell it very profitably – perfect for business beginners.

Two quick examples of 'Making It Big' in food & drink. First, **Debbie & Andrew's Sausages**. Owners of a failing Yorkshire farm, the pair started making organic sausages. So popular did they prove the firm is now the 6<sup>th</sup> biggest maker of sausages in the UK.

Secondly, Scottish beer company **BrewDog** is making record sales. Galloping growth of the irreverent company's products means it is now Scotland's largest independent brewery – with a 230% increase in UK sales compared with 2009.

Its strongest beer is named 'Sink the Bismarck'. BrewDog sold more than £7m bottles worth of beer in 2010, having sold £3.2m bottles worth in 2009. Company co-founder **James Watt** said: "BrewDog's success is evidence that the UK's growing taste for artisanal beers is not a temporary trend. Mainstream breweries are 'running scared' of the craft beer revolution."

So if you're stuck at how you're going to pay the mortgage, those school fees, care home fees or tomorrow's lunch – start your own food & drink business. Everyone else is...

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[www.gibson-index.com](http://www.gibson-index.com)

The Newsletter is compiled and edited by **Marcus Gibson**, former *Financial Times* technology correspondent, who has been covering enterprise and innovation for more than 20 years. The Newsletter aims to highlight developments in at least 100+ companies each month. It is derived from the wide-ranging news-gathering operation that produces the [Gibson Index SME database](#), which now contains profiles on more than 47,000 UK-based technology SMEs.

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## COMPANY OF THE MONTH

### GRP Laminates Ltd win the Spirit of Innovation Award at Seawork

Isle of Wight-based **GRP Laminates** make the MSV Explorer sub-surface viewing craft which sits 1.2m below the ocean surface and offers a clear, unobstructed view of the undersea environment.

Insiders believe companies will eventually lead the market in large scale 'extrudable' composite manufacturing of marine craft – the next technology breakthrough in the sector. In addition to the obvious leisure and tourist applications the MSV Explorer provides commercial opportunities for filming and sub-surface survey and security inspection of floating structures and vessels.

The firm is gaining an international reputation for producing sturdy marine workboats made of composite materials – in high performance fibreglass, carbon fibre and other reinforced composite mouldings. The firm recently won an exclusive world licence to manufacture the workboat range of **South Cats**, designed by **Clive Jeffery**.

GRP Laminates and South Boats have worked together for many years on a wide range of products and contracts. With South Boats' yard fully booked for aluminium build projects, their composite moulded hulls were outsourced to GRP Laminates in 2009. In 2010 GRP Laminates launched the 'kit & fit' scheme to make South Boats catamarans accessible and affordable to independent fishing and dive operators. From now on, GRP Laminates will be able to deliver complete build projects for an even wider range of uses.

"These excellent boats have great potential," said GRP Laminates MD **Mark Gulesserian**. "The licensing agreement from Clive Jeffery enables us to do much more, by giving us control of the whole process from marketing and generating orders to customer service and aftercare." Recently, GRP Laminates was awarded the sole rights to manufacture on behalf of **MSV Explorer Ltd**, the SP02 Catamaran and Explorer. It has diversified into a wide range of non-marine products utilising the latest laminating technologies, including resin transfer moulding (RTM), vacuum infusion and traditional hand-laid moulding using both epoxy and polyester resins.

Other winners of the Spirit of Innovation award were **Houlder Ltd** for their wind Turbine Access System which has been jointly developed with Southampton-based **BMT Nigel Gee**. The lightweight, motion-compensated gangway provides safe and reliable access from workboats and is already strongly supported by developers and vessel operators in recognition of both the significant safety improvement and increased maintenance window it provides from workboats in rougher weather.

**Wave Craft UK** from Eastleigh in Hampshire won the Marine Civil Engineering & Construction category with its Waveblade, the world's first hand held power barnacle remover.

Contact: [www.grplaminates.com](http://www.grplaminates.com) – [www.houlderltd.com](http://www.houlderltd.com) – [www.waveblade.com](http://www.waveblade.com)

## SME NEWS – ENGINEERING, ELECTRONICS, TELECOMS

### Gordon Murray Design unveils T.27 – an ultra compact electric city vehicle

Unveiling the T.27 at the **RAC Club** in central London, **Professor Gordon Murray**, CEO of Gordon Murray Design said: "Lightweight is the most powerful tool we have in our armoury in the fight against emissions and fuel consumption. This is true of all cars and especially so with electric vehicles. A lightweight car means a lightweight battery increasing the levels of safety and reducing the retail price dramatically."

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**Gordon Murray Design** is currently talking to three possible manufacturers for T.27. The car will make its public road debut at the **RAC Future Car Challenge** on 5th November 2011.

Compared with the short-range electric mini-cars arriving from Japan the T.27 has the potential to become the next cult format in urban motoring. The design and development programme of T.27 was funded by a £4.5 million investment from the **Technology Strategy Board**. The running prototype has taken just 17 months to design and build, including development of a completely new electric powertrain by **Zytek Automotive Ltd**, one of the consortium partners.

T.27 specifically targets the urban city environment and aims to significantly reduce lifecycle impacts and enable low cost, efficient manufacture within the UK. The electric car sets new standards in weight, footprint, small car dynamics, safety and packaging and minimises the impact and costs of CO2 emissions, congestion and parking.

Contact: [www.gordonmurraydesign.com](http://www.gordonmurraydesign.com) – [www.zytekautomotive.co.uk](http://www.zytekautomotive.co.uk)

### **Wolfson devises new component for making ‘clearer mobile telephone calls’**

The Edinburgh-based microchip maker, unveiled the WM5100, which it claims will allow mobile phone users to make and receive ‘crystal clear’ calls in both quiet rooms and noisy environments.

According to the firm the chip is the world’s first “audio system-on-a-chip” (SoC).

Mobile phone manufacturers are moving away from having their audio chips integrated into the phone’s main processor and are instead choosing stand-alone chips that offer better sound quality. Wolfson made its name developing audio chips for hi-fi systems.

**Duncan Macadie**, product line manager for audio hubs at Wolfson, said: “As audio components in mobile phones and tablet PCs are increasingly becoming dis-integrated from the application processor, the demand is growing for separate audio SoCs and Wolfson is leading the way with the WM5100.”

Wolfson issued a profit warning in June after delays in the take up of its chips by key customers – which analysts named as Blackberry-maker **RIM** and **Samsung** – due to a slowdown in consumer demand for smartphones. Shares in Wolfson lost 25% of their value on the day of the profits warning.

Contact: [www.wolfsonmicro.co.uk](http://www.wolfsonmicro.co.uk)

### **Cambridge TV White Spaces Consortium gathers big name membership**

A Cambridge startup just nine months old has unveiled a plan to drive forward a new long distance wireless standard for M2M communication of its own making and the key technologies that underpin it.

Operating in the spectrum vacated by the switchover from analogue to digital television known as ‘white space’, **Neul Ltd** in Cambridge lifted the lid on the technology and business model behind the months of speculation that have surrounded the venture ever since **James Collier**, Neul CEO, announced he was leaving **CSR plc** to start up a new company.

The **BBC**, **BT**, **Microsoft** and **Nokia** will test out white-space broadband technology in Cambridge, as part of a new consortium to support the experiment.

The Cambridge TV White Spaces Consortium, which also includes **BSkyB**, **Cambridge Consultants**, **Spectrum Bridge** and **TTP**, will test the use of white-space broadband to see how it works in towns, cities and rural areas. BT is already taking the technology for a spin on the Scottish isle of **Bute**.

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The consortium stated: “With the number of connected devices and data applications growing rapidly, and with mobile networks feeling the strain, we must find ways of satisfying the traffic demands of today and tomorrow.

“This trial will attempt to demonstrate that unused TV spectrum is well placed to increase the UK’s available mobile bandwidth, which is critical to effectively responding to the exponential growth in data-intensive services, while also enabling future innovation.”

Microsoft has been pushing white space hard in the US for a while and now the fight has come to Cambridge, home to **Microsoft Research**. The company is bringing in **Dr Dan Reed**, its corporate VP of technology policy and strategy, leader of the eXtreme Computing Group and the man charged with helping shape Microsoft’s long-term vision and strategy for technology innovations.

Other key figures involved include the BBC’s R&D general manager, **Stephen Baily**, General Manager, BBC R&D, **Bo Olofsson**, director of the BSkyB Product Research Group, **Tim Whitley**, group strategy director for BT and **Joe Butler** of Ofcom.

*Contact:* Neul Ltd, Suite 42 Innovation Centre, Unit 23, Science Park, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 0EY – 01223 437 022 – [info@neul.com](mailto:info@neul.com).

### **Sanderson Group plc sees strong demand for its new ‘Green IT’ products**

The software group, which has its manufacturing headquarters in Sheffield and its retail office in Bradford, has launched two new software products aimed at cutting energy bills of retailers.

The first allows clients to combine a number of servers which saves on carbon emissions and energy costs. The second puts devices such as cashiers’ tills into sleep mode if they haven’t been used for five minutes. Currently devices go into stand-by mode after five minutes, but this still uses 80 per cent of the energy that the device would use if it was fully up and running. In contrast, Sanderson’s sleep mode uses just 20 per cent of the energy.

Sanderson’s chairman **Christopher Winn** said “It pays back within 12 months.” He said ‘Green IT’ products are proving popular with both small and large retail groups. Reporting on annual results for the year to September 30, Sanderson said it has increased order intake. Despite the UK economy’s slow recovery from recession and competitive market conditions, the group has gained new customers in both manufacturing and retail. Revenues for the year to September 30 rose eight per cent to £27m. Underlying operating profits increased by 12 per cent to £3.1m and underlying pre-tax profits rose by 79 per cent to £1.91m. Total order intake for the year was strong at £15.55m compared with £12.73m in the previous financial year.

The group signed up 24 new customers over the year including **Hamley’s, David Austin Roses, TJ Hughes, Aquascutum** and **Links of London**. Large projects were awarded by a number of existing customers, including **Wilkinson, The Original Factory Shop, Fenwick** and **Lakeland**.

Sanderson said that while it remains cautious in its outlook and sensitive to conditions in the general economy, the new financial year has started well. “Business confidence levels are better,” said Mr Winn. “By no means have they fully recovered and it will be 18 months to two years before the economy becomes a bit more sustainable, but there is improvement.”

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

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## Ultramo Ltd working on what may be ‘the world’s most efficient engine’

Ultramo is working on an engine featuring the ‘Ultramo cycle’, which reduces heat loss, significantly reduces engine running costs ‘and halves CO2 emissions’. Early models are suitable for stationary applications where there is a constant load. The Ultramo design will run on multiple fuels, including sustainable and carbon-neutral fuels.

Last month the startup Ultramo appointed **Dr Nick Barter** as a director of the company.

Dr Barter’s engineering and managerial career spans nearly 50 years, including working at **Jaguar Land Rover**, and for the last eight years as non-executive director for **Torotrak**, a developer of energy efficient transmission technology. Here he has helped to transfer innovative technology from the drawing board to commercial success. Dr Barter also works with the **Technology Strategy Board** on its steering group for the Low Carbon Vehicle Innovation Platform and has experience on financing emerging technologies.

Dr Barter will help Ultramo with the design, build and testing of its engine, as well as on technology licensing, securing investment and overcoming barriers to growth.

Contact: [www.ultramo-engines.com](http://www.ultramo-engines.com) – Dr Nick Barter – 01444 471 574 – [info@ultramo-engines.com](mailto:info@ultramo-engines.com)  
– Unit 5b Morehouse Business Centre, Ditchling Road, Haywards Heath, East Sussex RH17 7RE.

## Liberty Electric Cars snaps up Modec’s entire engineering team

Twelve key staff at Modec, the Coventry-based electric commercial vehicle manufacturer which entered administration in March, have been employed at Liberty Electric Cars.

With this move, the company has reinforced its engineering team and has now one of the most experienced teams in electric vehicle technology in the world. The 12 highly skilled experts count some 200 years of automotive engineering experience and in particular 70 years of experience in EV technology.

This team of engineers have created EVs that have driven over 2.5m miles, ‘the longest distance and thus best experience of any electric commercial vehicle team in the world’.

The company’s engineering activity has been consolidated into its new **Innovation & Customer Support Centre** based in Coventry. In addition to Liberty E-Tech, the advanced EV engineering and EV development centre, Liberty Electric Cars has created a support and maintenance facility, called **Liberty E-Care** to provide a high level of service to its own European EV customers and those of other companies.

This expansion has taken Liberty Electric Cars into a new sector, commercial vehicles, which offers a large potential for EVs, especially since routes tend to be repetitive and daily journeys are often under 100 miles round trip.

Contact: [www.liberty-ecars.com](http://www.liberty-ecars.com)

## Airbox Aerospace aims to ease pilot workload in aviation navigation

A firm formed in early 2008 by pilot and engineer **William Moore** and **Tom Hedges**, a design and marketing director hopes to combine their experience in aircraft navigation technology.

Based at **Grove Technology Park**, Oxfordshire, the firm has opened an in-house software development and design studio, with manufacturing partnerships with several Far East electronics specialists. AAL has been working with leading aviation organizations such as the **Civil Aviation Authority, National Air**

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**Traffic Services, AOPA, DFS**, the airborne emergency services, the military and **Jeppesen GmbH**.

In May 2011 the **Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA)**, online flight planning company **RocketRoute** and aviation navigation innovator Airbox Aerospace agreed that all European AOPA members and users of RocketRoute and Airbox Aerospace products will be able to file visual flight rule ('VFR') flight plans free-of-charge for flights within London's restricted airspace during the **2012 Olympics**.

William Moore, technical director of Airbox Aerospace, says: "Airbox and RocketRoute both work hard to make pilots' lives easier. We know our customers are concerned about how they will navigate the Olympic airspace, but the free filing service combined with our comprehensive airspace information system should take virtually all the stress out of the exercise." The two firms will share VFR flight planning information and pool technical resources to benefit the customers of both organisations.

**Kurt Lyall**, RocketRoute co-founder, says: "There has been growing concern in the UK aviation community that planned Olympic airspace restrictions will make it hard for many pilots to get VFR flight plans approved during the summer of 2012."

Contact: [www.airboxaero.com](http://www.airboxaero.com)

## SME NEWS – CHEMICALS, MATERIALS & ENVIRONMENT

### eoSemi gears up for launch of new electronic timing device

The company closed a £3m funding round led by **NESTA Investments** and **Capital-E** last year, to add to existing investors **Enterprise Ventures (EV)** via its RisingStars Growth Fund II and **South Yorkshire Investment Fund**.

From their facility on Rotherham's **Advanced Manufacturing Park**, eoSemi is developing a silicon solution that replaces quartz crystals, allowing a move away from physically-vibrating devices and the associated high manufacturing cost, large package size and susceptibility to shock.

A vibrating crystal is still used in nearly every electronic device on the planet to provide a stable timing reference. eoSemi will bring a new timing device to market, based entirely on silicon circuitry.

**Ian Macbeth**, CEO and co-founder at eoSemi, added: "eoSemi's solution offers significant size and cost advantages and is uniquely positioned to revolutionise the market. With the benefit of Steve's expertise we will push forward our first silicon-only kHz timing reference and derivative products into applications such as industrial, medical and consumer microprocessor-based systems and mobile handsets."

Last month it appointed **Steve Cliffe** as VP of sales and marketing, as they prepare to launch a new product that will revolutionise the way electronic devices keep time.

Steve Cliffe has more than 25 years experience in the electronics industry with significant exposure to global markets. He joins eoSemi from **ProVision**, where he was CEO. He said: "eoSemi's all-silicon solution is a simple and inexpensive replacement for quartz crystals with substantial market potential."

Contact: [www.eosemi.co.uk](http://www.eosemi.co.uk)

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## **Adhesives maker Zouch Converters looks to provide Fifth Generation tapes for cars**

The finish on new cars is one of the key factors in encouraging customers to sign on the dotted line, say salesmen, and this means the products made by Zouch Converters is vital to the auto industry.

Foam and adhesive tape bear surprising significance in the construction and finish quality of many motors on the market today. A vehicle's finish has long been a major selling point when it comes to buying a new car, making component quality and design prowess a load bearing detail that car manufacturer's cannot afford to avoid.

From pressure sensitive adhesive tapes for bonding of inner and outer tread plates, body side mouldings, roof mouldings and many internal trim applications – **Zouch Converters** produce high bond adhesive tapes that aim to fulfil this market need. Together with Zouch's Dutch partner company **AFTC**, they aim to revolutionise the automotive industry with a new brand range of VHB tapes, which take the sector to a new level.

AFTC SilverTape is a high performance acrylic-based adhesive solution, and these next generation tapes which are especially designed for bonding steel, aluminium, and specific kinds of plastics in modern vehicle manufacturing are capable of absorbing the differing thermal expansions of the two different materials.

The tapes have a 'closed cell' structure which make them wind and water resistant. As they are 100% acrylic based they will form an almost indestructible bond between the materials. These tapes bond immediately and offer resistance to the peel and shear loads that can affect a bond. They are very well suited to absorb dynamic loads as they are viscoelastic in nature and can act as a sealant as well as form a permanent tension free bond in addition to being suitable to join many different types of synthetic materials.

Contact: [www.zouchconverters.co.uk](http://www.zouchconverters.co.uk) – [www.atfc.eu](http://www.atfc.eu)

## **Tidal Energy wins approval to install its DeltaStream device in west Wales**

The firm will deploy its 1.2MW DeltaStream tidal energy device in Ramsey Sound off Pembrokeshire. The Cardiff-based company's device will provide electricity to the local distribution network during its 12-month test period, with the potential 'to power up to 1,000 homes' – not much but at least it is a more reliable solution than wind.

According to Tidal Energy, DeltaStream sits on the seabed without the need for a positive anchoring system, generating electricity from three separate horizontal-axis turbines mounted on a common frame.

The use of three turbines on a single, 30m-wide, triangular frame produces a low centre of gravity that stops the device overturning and sliding.

Energy secretary **Chris Huhne** gave the nod in what is hoped to be the start of a sadly long delayed move in tidal energy around the UK.

Separately, **Marine Current Turbines** (MCT) has secured an agreement for lease from the **Crown Estate** for a four-turbine tidal farm in Kyle Rhea — a strait of water between the Isle of Skye and the Scottish mainland.

The project is likely to have a maximum power of 8MW and have the capacity to generate electricity for up to 8,000 homes in the Highlands and Islands by harnessing the power of the fast tidal currents that pass through Kyle Rhea. MCT is aiming to deploy the £40m Kyle Rhea tidal farm by 2014.

Contact: [www.tidalenergyltd.com](http://www.tidalenergyltd.com)

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## **Prof Ivan Andonovic unveils accelerometer at Embedded Technology Solutions Ltd**

In July 2011 the **University of Strathclyde** academic helped to create a ground-breaking cattle product using the same technology found in popular games consoles.

Prof Andonovic started his company, Embedded Technology Solutions (ETS), and invented the 'Silent Herdsman' technology using a 'three-axis accelerometer'; the movement-detection hardware found in consumer consoles like the **Nintendo Wii**.

The technology, a collar which sits around the neck of cows, works by monitoring the animals' movement. Cows move around more when they are in heat and ready for breeding.

To save battery life, the collars remain dormant until they detect a change in the animals' movement patterns; at which point a signal is sent to a computer to alert the farmer. The signals can also be picked up via mobile apps on smartphones to allow farmers to pick up alerts while working outside on the farm.

The Silent Herdsman is apparently increase pregnancy success rates from 10 per cent to more than 30 per cent, boosting a farm's efficiency by removing the need to rely on traditional fertility detection methods. Andonovic said the technology freed up farmers' time, enabling them to run more efficient and profitable farms.

He said: "We've installed 70 of these already on farms around the UK and we've received feedback from farmers telling us it's freeing up their time to complete other tasks on the farm and making it a much easier job to breed cattle." The ETS product can also alert farmers to animals which are unwell.

The three-axis accelerometer can monitor a cow's head position and determine if there are any unusual eating patterns. The team is now working on a way to detect illnesses.

**Dr Tony Waterhouse**, head of **SAC Beef Research Centre**, believes that new technology advances in Scotland were paving the way for major gains in farming efficiency. Combined with traditional good husbandry, the research and technology coming out of Scotland at the moment could help farms increase efficiency by 20-30 per cent."

Contact: [www.embeddedtech.co.uk](http://www.embeddedtech.co.uk)

## **SME NEWS – IT, SOFTWARE, SERVICES & INTERNET**

### **Serial entrepreneur Oliver Billson chalks up another success with Black Code Ltd**

In June 2011 prices helped Staffordshire-based entrepreneur **Oliver Billson** sign up 60 Black Code franchisees. **Black Code** uses tailor-made computer equipment to change the settings of engine-control units (ECUs) on cars and trucks to maximise power or reduce fuel consumption.

The ECUs are computer-controlled circuits that determine ignition timing and how much fuel is needed to keep the engine running. Black Code thinks car manufacturers' standard settings do not maximise fuel efficiency or power because they allow for poor fuel quality and extreme climatic conditions in other parts of the world.

It claims that by 're-mapping' the ECUs for UK driving conditions drivers can increase engine power and torque 'by 35 per cent'. This has made its services popular with the owners of performance cars. Last year Mr Billson began targeting owners of more run-of-the-mill cars by offering re-programming aimed at reducing fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent without affecting engine performance. That – and rising prices at the pumps – has seen more than 40 new Black Code franchises opened in the past 12 months.

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**Mr Billson** said: “Black Code appeals to two markets – the car enthusiasts who want to get the maximum driving experience from their vehicle and anyone who is looking to reduce fuel consumption and save money.

“The last year has seen a huge increase in Black Code franchisees and associates. We had 18 in the summer of 2010, and now have 60. Motorists have seen fuel prices leap from about £1 a litre to over £1.30 in around 18 months. This has clearly made our economy tuning very attractive for both fleet and individual drivers.

“All our operatives are fully trained and we provide motorists with a guaranteed solution as we offer a 100 per cent refund, and will return the vehicle back to standard mode for anyone who is not satisfied with the results.”

Black Code now has outlets in every English region, as well as Scotland and Northern Ireland, and franchises in Devon, Cornwall and North London have been added this month. It employs six people directly, and turnover this year is expected to be £500,000.

Re-mapping is available to most cars made after 1999, and it costs between £299 plus VAT and £379 plus VAT, with discounts for groups and fleets.

Mr Billson developed the brand through his consultancy business **Craoli**, which manages franchise development and recruitment projects. The 27-year-old set up his first business, building and exporting computers, at the age of just 15, and he also runs car window tinting operation **Eclipse**.

Contact: [www.black-code.co.uk](http://www.black-code.co.uk) – 0845 643 6898 – [info@black-code.co.uk](mailto:info@black-code.co.uk)

#### **‘World’s first 3D website designed by Sunderland-based Stereografix Ltd**

While the days of browsing the web in three dimensions are a while away, Stereografix founder **Saif Chaudhry** has demonstrated the potential of such a move by launching the ‘first-ever stereoscopic 3D website’.

Although the site requires both a 3D- capable HDTV and 3D glasses, Chaudhry is confident that the taster could provide another reason for consumers to invest in 3D screens. He said: “I don’t think many people are even thinking this far ahead, and we’ve got a prototype already. It’s not every day you can say you’re first with something where the internet is concerned.”

Chaudhry is a former CGI senior designer who worked on a 3D helicopter simulator project at one point for the Ministry of Defence. He agreed a partnership with **Blaydon Communications** earlier this year to develop 3D signage which can be viewed without special glasses, and is currently working on projects for local, national and international clients.

Originally from Manchester, the **University of Sunderland** graduate was supported in setting up his business by **Sunderland City Council** and **Sunderland Software City**.

He has already worked with the council to create a short 3D film to promote the city’s recently launched Economic Masterplan, and is developing several projects in partnership with Durham University. Chaudhry also hopes to bring businesses and freelancers to the North East to learn more about 3D from the company’s new 3D training courses. The courses are eligible for funding of up to £800 from Skillset.

Contact: [www.stereoscopic-3d.co.uk](http://www.stereoscopic-3d.co.uk)

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## **Airport operations software firm FS Walker Hughes is bought by Amor Group**

**FS Walker Hughes** have become the provider of choice for core operational systems in the most important airports in the world.

The firm is based near Manchester and has a strong customer base including **BAA, Manchester Airport Group, Peel Airport Group and TBI**, including **London Luton**. The rapidly expanding FS Walker Hughes team, currently standing at 25, will remain at their base outside Manchester, taking on the Amor Group name. The three directors – **Ian Forde-Smith, Gary Walker** and **Geraint Hughes**, who have built up the company for the last 11 years will stay on, continuing to lead the development of the Chroma Suite.

Ian Forde-Smith, solutions director at FS Walker Hughes says: “We already share a number of clients with Amor Group and respect what they’ve achieved in the market. We have similar innovative, can-do cultures and are looking forward working together to extend the reach and potential of our technology through this deal.”

Business technology company Amor Group and FS Walker Hughes now have significant market share within the global aviation market and the deal will enable Amor to offer a unique end-to-end operational airport tool-kit.

Amor, whose clients include **BAA, Dubai Airports**, Scandinavian operators **Avinor and Finavia, Toronto Pearson International Airport** and **NATS** will now be in a position to enhance its current solutions, through the Chroma suite. This new capability will encompass: terminal and passenger solutions, airport operational database systems technology for flight information displays and stand management and planning.

Amor believes that this deal represents a compelling fully-integrated technology offering for the global aviation industry.

**John Innes**, Amor’s CEO said: “The FS Walker Hughes acquisition delivers early mover advantage for us in the aviation business – making Amor the first provider to be able to deliver proven ‘kerb to gate’ solutions to our customers. The FS Walker Hughes business model was very similar to Amor’s with an emphasis on building strong recurring revenues internationally through unique IP and domain expertise.”

Contact: [www.amorgroup.com/airports](http://www.amorgroup.com/airports)

## **Hidden Creative pioneers ‘Gesture Controlled Window Displays’**

The technology helps to provide interactive on screen content and promotions to shoppers.

Hidden creates ‘augmented reality’ – detailed video visualizations – and gesture recognition products for clients such as **Channel 5, JCDecaux, ABB** and the **BBC**. Its gesture-controlled displays were built for **Knauf**, the UK’s leading insulation company, who were looking for a new method to engage clients and attract new business.

One of the potential uses for this was to allow window-shoppers to browse a catalogue, brochure or website projected onto the shop window, meaning they could check stock, prices and even make purchases without entering the store, or while the store is closed. The ‘Gesture Catalogue’ allows customers to check stock, locate products in store and make purchases. Hidden is also launching its new managed service which gives retailers access to the agency development team that can create bespoke augmented reality and gesture recognition solutions tailored for individual retail and FMCG clients.

**Peter O’Brien**, operations director at Hidden said, “These products are available here and now and in the next 12 months retailers across the UK will be using these types of gesture and augmented reality technology to acquire and engage with customers, drive footfall and run promotions.

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“The technology supports bricks and mortar retailing by driving customers into store but supporting online offers and promotions, helping to make traditional outlets more integrated with multichannel retail strategies.”

Most recently, **ABB Power Systems UK** asked Hidden to produce an ‘immersive experience’ for its stand at the RenewableUK exhibition. Delegates could navigate and explore in detail numerous aspects of ABB’s HVDC systems in HD, displayed on 65 inch screens with slave monitors on the reverse.

Contact: [www.hiddenltd.com](http://www.hiddenltd.com)

## SME NEWS – BIOTECH, PHARMA & MEDICAL SCIENCES

### Isogenica Ltd launches joint venture with Biolauncher and Cresset Biomolecular

The trio will integrate their expertise in peptide library design, evolutionary screening, next generation sequencing, state of the art structural analytics, and molecular field-based computational chemistry to identify active compounds against high-value therapeutic targets.

Enrichment of the peptide libraries towards greater specificity for the target is driven by an advanced computational biology system that is also used to identify the active conformations of populations of binding peptides.

**Kevin Matthews**, CEO, Isogenica, **Rowan Gardner**, chairman of Biolauncher, and **Rob Scoffin**, CEO of Cresset Biomolecular Discovery, believe the new approach harnesses the vast chemical and conformational diversity of very large (10<sup>14</sup>) peptide libraries to explore available chemical space around a novel biological target.

Isogenica specialises in the discovery and optimisation of therapeutic and diagnostic peptides, proteins and antibodies using its proprietary technology, CIS display. Founded in 2000 Isogenica has developed a unique capability in the field of protein engineering. BioLauncher is specialising in providing services to grow life science businesses. The company develop informatics and analytics systems to enable greater efficiencies in life science research. Cresset develops software for calculating and comparing the molecular field characteristics of chemical compounds.

Contact: [kevin.matthews@isogenica.com](mailto:kevin.matthews@isogenica.com) – [rowan@biolauncher.com](mailto:rowan@biolauncher.com) – [rob@cresset-group.com](mailto:rob@cresset-group.com)

### Broughton Laboratories Ltd turns old rural building into a state-of-the-art facility

Broughton Laboratories, which operates from the grand setting of Broughton Hall estate in Skipton, North Yorkshire, has transformed the unused building with a £90,000 cash injection from **Finance Yorkshire**. The renovated property is now being used as a facility for monitoring the stability of drugs within a controlled environment and has opened up growth opportunities for the company.

**Dr Paul Moran**, who set up Broughton Laboratories in 2006, said: “After much searching for a suitable location, we discovered the building – ideal for purpose – on the estate.”

Broughton helps its pharma clients with a ‘unique and pre-emptive service’. They offer extensive analytical testing and support services. Over the next two years it will take on another five staff. It is known for providing high quality laboratory services and provides an excellent personalised service for a range of healthcare and pharmaceutical clients.

Contact: [www.broughtonlaboratories.co.uk](http://www.broughtonlaboratories.co.uk) – 01756 700 255.

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### **Imagen Biotech gains £200,000 through the private investor network Investors**

Based at Manchester Science Parks, **Imagen** will use the funds to buy equipment enabling it to serve larger pharmaceutical firms and to recruit a senior scientist and business development manager.

It is a preferred supplier to **AstraZeneca** and works with several other big drugs companies. It achieved sales of £232,000 in 2010 and aims to double revenues by 2013. Imagen tests new drugs by analysing images by computer.

**Tom Wilkins**, MD of **Investors North West**, said: "Imagen has an enviable client base and holds a unique position in the market with its data-handling technology and cell-screening techniques. This deal is a great example of how pivotal angel investment can be in unlocking growth potential of a fledgling company."

Established in 2008, Imagen is led by chief executive **Rod Benson**. He said the investments would be key to helping the business become one of the UK's leading providers of outsourced research and development services to the pharmaceutical industry.

Contact: [www.imagen-biotech.com](http://www.imagen-biotech.com)

### **Syntopix Group expands with purchase of firm with test bed facilities**

In what is seen as pivotal move, the Syntopix Group has paid £900,000 to acquire West Yorkshire pharmaceutical testing firm **Leeds Skin Centre for Applied Research Ltd**, in Wetherby.

The move will provide Syntopix with its own test-bed for compounds it is developing to produce new skin and oral care products as well as space for expansion. The acquisition of Leeds Skin will enable Syntopix to carry out testing in-house.

Leeds Skin is a profitable private company with a turnover of more than £500,000. It runs an independent commercial testing facility specialising in human skin microbiology and dermatology research. It also provides laboratory facilities, contract research services and consultancy to the pharmaceutical, personal products and healthcare industries. Clients include **Boots**, **L'Oreal** and **PZ Cussons**.

**Dr Stephen Jones**, Syntopix chief executive, said it was almost certain that the ten-strong business would leave Bradford over the next few months. Founded in 2003, Syntopix has most recently operated from the **Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation at Bradford University**. Dr Jones said: "We've had an excellent base here in Bradford which has enabled us to progress to our current stage. But the Leeds Skin premises will offer both the laboratory testing facilities with room for further expansion under one roof." Syntopix is also looking to raise £2m by issuing new shares to fund the acquisition and provide additional working capital.

Contact: [www.syntopix.com](http://www.syntopix.com)

### **Infonetica Ltd launches Good Clinical Practice online training course**

Infonetica provides a range of web-based software and services for the international clinical research industry. Infonetica developed, with the **National Research Ethics Service**, the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) the online system for applying for permissions and approvals for health and social care/community research in the UK.

In addition it has produced for clients in Canada and Australia, research management software, and human tissue tracking software. Infonetica's products and services are in use with government, university and private sector clients, as well as individual researchers, throughout the world.

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In June 2011 the Richmond-upon-Thames-based firm unveiled its GCP Practical Implementation online course, which takes users into the workplace so they can see how to apply what they have learned in real-life situations.

The need for training to advance from theory to practice was highlighted at this year's **European Federation of Good Clinical Practice Annual Conference**, held in Budapest, Hungary. The same objective was behind Infonetica's decision to develop the new course, also released in June.

**Gaynor Bray**, Infonetica's Director of Commercial Services, said "The 25,000-plus people we have already trained provided us with useful feedback on course needs," said. "One of the key advantages of our existing GCP online course is its wide applicability to all those involved in trials, from investigators to support staff, research nurses, R&D personnel and ethics committee members, satisfying the desire for standardised training.

"We discussed the need for a practical course with experts in the clinical trial sector and they felt that real-life dilemmas could be an invaluable tool in our unique training format. There are in the region of 80,000 medical trials actively recruiting worldwide whose personnel are under very real pressure to perform, so it makes perfect sense for us to focus our courses on application in the workplace."

Successful trainees receive a certificate accredited by the **Royal College of Physicians' Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine** in London, with nine CPD points as well as the option of being added to a publicly accessible database of GCP-certified personnel who have passed the course.

Contact: Gaynor Bray – 020 8334 6907 – [gaynor.bray@infonetica.net](mailto:gaynor.bray@infonetica.net)

### **Atlas Genetics raised £16.9m from a syndicate of new and existing investors**

The diagnostics company develops ultra-rapid point-of-care tests for infectious diseases, and the new investment will be drawn down over three years. The funding will be used to accelerate the global launch of the Velox point-of-care products for chlamydia and gonorrhoea. The newly announced financing follows a £1.5m round in February 2011 supported by **Consort Medical** and other investors.

The new money will also be used for the development of other infectious-disease tests and expand the immunoassay capability of the Velox system. Velox is said to be a highly novel molecular diagnostic system for the ultra-rapid diagnosis of a range of infectious diseases using either nucleic acid or immunoassays and is based on a patent-protected electrochemical sensor.

It is claimed that the Velox system will make it possible, for the first time, to carry out infectious-disease tests in primary-care clinics and GP surgeries that are as accurate as those carried out in hospital laboratories.

The new investors in this series-B financing are **Novartis Venture Funds, LSP (Life Sciences Partners), BB Biotech Ventures** and **Johnson and Johnson Development**.

**Florent Gros**, MD of Novartis Venture Funds, said: "We have searched long and hard for novel molecular diagnostic technologies and the Velox platform is a very ingenious solution to the key issues that have hindered the development of ultra-rapid and highly sensitive point-of-care molecular diagnostic instrumentation. Combined with the ability to make immunoassay tests, this makes for a diversified all-in-one diagnostic platform that will be commercialised around the end of 2012."

Contact: [www.atlasgenetics.com](http://www.atlasgenetics.com)

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## **Roslin Cells teams up with American firm Advanced Cell Technology Inc**

The renowned Scottish-based world leader in the isolation of new clinical grade undifferentiated stem cells – Roslin Cells Ltd – has agreed a deal with **Advanced Cell Technology, Inc (ACT)**, one of the leading US companies in regenerative medicine.

The two firms will establish new clinical grade human embryonic stem cell (hESC) lines using ACT's patented 'single cell blastomere' technique. This can be used to establish a stem cell line without the destruction of an embryo or multiple cell lines whose properties may prove more stable than stem cell lines established from whole embryos. HESC lines generated by this technique will be made available for both research and commercial purposes.

Roslin Cells has already established itself as one of Europe's leaders in the translation of stem cell therapy research to clinical application and has already produced several GMP grade hESC lines which are being used in a pipeline of new cell therapies.

**Paul De Sousa**, chief scientific officer of **Roslin Cells**, said single blastomere derived stem cell lines have the potential to have more stable properties once expanded:

"Early embryos from which hESC lines are derived are known to be genetically mosaic, containing variable cells. Single blastomere derived cell lines theoretically will permit the creation of more genetically uniform and robust stem cell lines."

*Contact:* Dr Paul De Sousa – 0131 527 4243 – [www.roslincells.com](http://www.roslincells.com)

## **OncaScan Ltd emerges fresh and new as a spinout in Yorkshire**

Researchers at the **University of Bradford** have developed a novel technology (patent applied for) that provides a diagnostic assessment of an individual's cancer status.

The test, called OncaScan, is able to categorise individuals into those who have cancer, those who have a pre-cancerous condition that could lead to cancer, and those who do not have the disease. The OncaScan test is based on a subtle but important variation of the well proven comet assay and it is carried out on lymphocytes extracted from a small sample of blood. The comet assay is a well-established measure of DNA damage. By contrast OncaScan provides a measure of susceptibility of DNA to damage – effectively DNA fragility.

OncaScan Ltd has now been launched as a university spin-out company with the specific aim of commercialising the assay as a diagnostic instrument. The firm is now seeking equity funding that will enable them to carry out stage one product development.

The successful management on cancer hinges on early detection and this has led to screening programmes supported by appropriate technology for the higher incidence conditions with the aim to detect patients before the symptoms show.

*Contact:* [www.oncascan.com](http://www.oncascan.com) – William Finch, MD – [william.finch@oncascan.com](mailto:william.finch@oncascan.com)

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## FUNDING & INVESTMENTS

### Shadow Robot Company joins the EU's HANDLE project

The new project is combining Europe's leading robotics experts to create hands that can learn fine manipulations and adapt to different manual tasks much like humans can.

The €6.35m HANDLE project groups partners from Germany, Spain, France, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. UK partner the **Shadow Robot Company** was established in 1987 and has been developing dexterous robotic hands for the past five years. **Rich Walker**, Shadow's director, said that there were still many challenges facing robotics researchers in this area.

He said "HANDLE is about looking at how humans learn to do manipulation and how can we transfer that to robot hands and what tips and tricks do humans use. We knew there were challenges in manipulation that humans can do relatively easily but that are incredibly difficult for robots to do at the moment – for example, right now I'm twiddling a pen around my fingers."

Part of the project involves looking in detail at how humans naturally do these tasks.

The team has a unique experimental set-up that includes a special glove with fingertip sensors to measure precise contact points when handling objects and head tracking to ascertain where attention is directed. The objects themselves also have sensors to gauge where subjects are making contact with the object and how hard.

Mr Walker said there would be some obvious opportunities if the technology comes off.

He said: "There's some interest in remote maintenance-type tasks where at the moment you can use a machine with tele-operation, but it's really hard work, a highly skilled job, and it would be a lot better if you could show the machine how the task was done."

Contact: [www.shadowrobot.com](http://www.shadowrobot.com)

### 'Summer of Love' for AIM market as flurry of IPOs take place

In one week alone four companies have come to market with two more announcing their imminent arrival. Three of the four companies raising money were resource companies.

The most high profile was **Jellybook**, an investment vehicle focusing on the social media sector chaired by **Jonathan Rowland**, the founder of **Jellyworks**, which raised £11m and the largest, **Zambeef Products**, a major Zambian agri-business which raised almost £34m; the others were **Ubisense** (technology) raising £5m and **Red Emperor Resources** (oil and gas), a straight introduction.

Of the four completed new arrivals, Ubisense and Zambeef are trading at a premium, and Red Emperor and Jellybook at a discount. The good news was tempered by the continuing flow of announcements of proposed departures from AIM including, perhaps somewhat symbolically, **RAB Capital** – a leading investor in many companies that came to market in 2006-2008. Four companies announced their intention to de-list and a fifth, **Education Development International** will be de-listed following completion of its acquisition by **Pearson Education**. All have slightly different reasons but absence of liquidity is frequently high on the list – but, in the opposite direction, two Plus-listed financial services firms announced plans to move to AIM.

Contact: [www.londonstockexchange.com](http://www.londonstockexchange.com)

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## Scotland launches first stock market flotation of 2011 with smart metering firm

Smart Metering Systems plc (SMS) is raising £10m through an over-subscribed share placing with “big institutional investors”, with founder and deputy chairman **Steve Timoney** and chief executive **Alan Foy** selling a further £17m stake between them.

SMS is the first Scottish company to join Aim since January 2011, when former Sigma Capital subsidiary **Frontier IP** – which helps universities to commercialise their inventions – transferred from the **Plus** stock market. The last Scottish company to float on Aim was Duns-based **Produce Investments**, which raised £15m in November to fund the expansion of its **Greenvale** subsidiary, which already provides potatoes to supermarket chains **Tesco** and **Sainsbury's**.

Mr Foy added: “Our technology is so simple to install, it literally takes just 30 seconds. We’ve chosen to float now because of the opportunity with our smart meter.”

Mr Foy said the £10m raised through the IPO would allow SMS to secure a further £50m of lending from a group of banks including current partner **Clydesdale**. He said the cash would allow SMS, founded in 1995, to develop its smart meter technology, which allows gas suppliers and customers to see exactly how much energy they’re using, doing away with the need for estimated bills.

Foy expects SMS to start paying a “small” dividend by the end of 2012 and promised a “progressive dividend policy”. He added: “We’re very profitable and we expect that to continue.” He said the firm’s technology also had applications in the electricity and water metering markets. Mr Timoney retains a 30 per cent stake and Foy 16 per cent.

Energy regulator **Ofgem** requires some 300,000 industrial and commercial gas customers to switch to smart meters by 2014 – creating a £300m market, according to SMS.

SMS returned a profit of £2.2m in 2010 on turnover of £12.4m through its gas meter installation and maintenance business, which works with big suppliers including Scottish Gas-owner **Centrica**, Perth-based utilities giant **Scottish & Southern Energy** and gas producers **Shell** and **Total**.

Contact: [www.uk-smg.com](http://www.uk-smg.com)

## Amantys Ltd wins \$7m in funding from elite investor ARM Holdings, and more

Digital power control startup Amantys Ltd claims to have patented techniques that will enable efficient high frequency switching of power loads at voltages of 100s of volts up to 100-kV.

Applications for the technology could include inverters for wind turbines and solar power, solid-state transformers, high-voltage dc transmission and fast charging of electric vehicles, according to **Pete Magowan**, co-founder of the company. “From a system point-of-view we achieve a 50 percent reduction in conversion losses and further increasing from there,” said Magowan.

The company was founded in 2010 by a number of former ARM executives and **Patrick Palmer**, who teaches at the Engineering Department of **Cambridge University**.

This month Amantys received \$7 million Series A round of funding from **ARM Holdings plc** and **Moonray Investors**, which is part of **FIL Ltd** – or **Fidelity International**.

FIL Ltd also purchased an external minority interest from **IP Group plc**, which in turn was involved with founders in a \$1m seed round in 2010.

One thrust of Palmer’s academic work has been the use of active gate control for power devices such as

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insulated gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs) and power MOSFETs connected in series. The use of closed-loop voltage control can avoid the use of snubbers circuits allow for more compact and more efficient power devices.

Magowan stressed that Amantys technology can not only reduce losses in medium-to-high voltage systems but is a generic approach that will also apply to more exotic power devices made using silicon-carbide and gallium nitride.

Magowan declined to describe what product or service Amantys would supply as it goes to market, but said that the company was "looking to engage with system-level companies," as well as looking to partner with power semiconductor device companies.

**Bruce Beckloff**, ARM's VP of business development, said "The high-calibre Amantys founding team is well-placed to deliver a disruptive solution to address the problem of efficiency losses. We believe power efficiency needs to be tackled across the power supply-chain and not just at the device level."

Contact: [www.amantys.com](http://www.amantys.com)

### **Sale of Shetland Wind Power nets multi-million-pound windfall for founder**

Founded by Shetland mechanic **Michael Anderson** 17 years ago, Shetland Wind Power designs and installs small-scale wind turbines. These can be used to generate enough electricity to power a house or farm or buildings like rural schools.

Depending on the wind, the turbines may be able to generate surplus power.

Shetland Wind Power has installed 250 turbines to date. Many of these are on the eponymous islands where wind is in abundance. However, the company has won orders from across the UK.

Recently, **Nevis Capital**, owned by the **Pirries brothers**, acquired Shetland Wind Power from Michael Anderson to give the investment business a position in a sector of the renewable energy industry that directors believe is 'set for dramatic growth'.

**Brian Aitken**, a partner in Nevis Capital, said Shetland Wind had acquired market-leading expertise in what is a very specialised business. Besides advising and installing on the right sort of turbine, the company can help people who want to generate power to navigate the related planning and grant regimes. Nevis decided to take a controlling stake in the expectation that demand for turbines will surge as a result of measures introduced by the Government to encourage investment in small-scale renewables.

Aitken said: "For customers in the windier parts of the UK, the combination of FITs, supplying their own electricity and selling any surplus to the grid has resulted in a payback period of just four years." The company expects to be able to help Shetland Wind Power make much quicker progress in the national market than it could under its own steam.

Mr Aitken noted that the Pirries and other Nevis executives gained experience of building a national power systems business at **LCH Generators**. The Pirries sold this to **Speedy Hire** for £62m in 2006.

The deal is the seventh completed by Nevis, which is building a portfolio of industrial services firms. It is understood 42-year-old Michael Anderson will be paid around £3m 'if all goes to plan'.

Contact: [www.shetlandwindpower.co.uk](http://www.shetlandwindpower.co.uk)

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## Innovative building materials firm Lime Technology secures a £3m investment

As firm advocates of bringing lime based building products into the 21st century, **Lime Technology** has pioneered the application of dry mortar technology to the long established use of lime. For the first time, this has allowed hydraulic lime mortars, renders and plasters to be considered as viable materials in both the new build and refurbishment markets.

Already close to doubling last year's revenue, sales of the firm's sustainable building materials have skyrocketed. A revolutionary building material, **Tradical Hemcrete** 'locks away CO2' within wall construction to create better-than-zero carbon buildings that require minimal heating or cooling. This is a cost-effective solution to meet the requirements of code level 4 and above of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The growth follows on from the acquisition of **Hemp Technology** in 2009 to make the group the UK's foremost renewable materials supplier for the construction industry and enable the company to fulfil its business plan of bio-composite building materials supply from seed to finished building.

The £3m investment comes from two funds, **Calculus Capital** and **Hazel Cleantech Opportunities Fund LP**, plus some smaller investors in order to fund the company's future development.

Lime Technology is using the investment to develop sales and marketing resources as well as fund further product development and certification of its systems in order to continue its strong growth. The investment will also help to create more jobs at its two main facilities in Oxford and Suffolk.

**Ian Pritchett**, the founder, has stood down as chairman and will focus on the technical development of the business. **Prof Gerry Musgrave** has become Non Executive Chairman to help the management team achieve cost effective solutions for the building environment. **Mike Eberlin**, Lime's MD, said "Investment will help the company to continue in its quest to supply sustainable, low carbon building materials for use in high code level housing and BREEAM excellent buildings at prices competitive with mainstream building materials."

Contact: [www.limetechnology.co.uk](http://www.limetechnology.co.uk)

## Line up to enter the new EUREKA Eurostars support programme

**Eurostars** funding is for high growth SMEs, defined as those companies that can show they deploy 10% of their staff or turnover to R&D (SME according to EU definition). There are additional rules for micro companies with fewer than 10 employees.

Under the rules SMEs, large companies, universities research centres can participate in the Eurostars project consortium however UK academics, educational institutes and large companies are not eligible for funding. The main consortium partner must be 'an R&D-performing SME'.

The Eurostars is the first European funding and support programme specifically directed at innovative intensive and research performing SMEs. Its purpose is to provide funding for market-orientated research and development, specifically with the active participation of R&D-performing SMEs.

The Eurostars programme is a **Eureka Network** initiative. As an EU programme, each national government funds its own participants directly. Currently 27 countries are actively participating through the Eureka network of national offices. In the UK the **Technology Strategy Board** is the funding body. Between 2009 and 2012 the Technology Strategy Board is investing £3 million through the Eurostars programme.

To qualify for Eurostars funding a project must involve at least two organisations from two different participating countries.

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Although the UK's participation in UK – one of the few highly effective EU programmes for SMEs throughout its history – has been poor following its abandonment during the last days of the old DTI – Eureka has many successes to its name. These include DAB, or digital audio radio, pioneered by the UK in the 1990s.

*For all interested parties, Gibson Index maintains its own comprehensive lists of European-based SMEs that it has been following, and appraising, since the early 1990s. Some surprises: Belgium has many excellent agri-tech firms; Greece has world class expertise in photonics, and Spain's aerospace sector is very high quality. If your organization is keen on sourcing the right SME partner, especially the little-known technology stars emerging in Eastern Europe, please get in touch.*

Contact: [www.eurostars-eureka.eu](http://www.eurostars-eureka.eu)

### **Process Systems Enterprise Ltd gets down and dirty in the marine emissions project**

New technology that can capture carbon emissions from ships at sea and store them until they reach port is being developed by a UK company. The £1.1m **Maritime CCS** (carbon capture and storage) project aims to develop a blueprint design for an on-board process to capture and temporarily store CO<sub>2</sub> emissions until they can be discharged into transmission and storage infrastructures at the next suitable port.

Process Systems Enterprise Ltd, the lead UK partner in Maritime PSE has received £360,000 from the **Technology Strategy Board** to pursue designs of the new technology and is working with Norwegian partners **Det Norske Veritas SA** (DNV) and the **Norwegian Research Council** as part of the Eurostars initiative.

The project will use PSE's model-based innovation (Mbi) software technology and approach, in which mathematical models are applied to simulate the behaviour of complex physical processes.

With a virtual model of the process it is possible to explore many different design aspects of the process design, see the effects of changes and find optimal design solutions before a single pound is spent on expensive physical prototypes.

Maritime CCS's designs will be of interest to shipping companies, shipbuilders, maritime engineering companies and process licensors aiming at a maritime market.

**Professor Costas Pantelides**, MD of PSE Ltd, said in late 2010 the project will come to the end of its first phase. Once the technology screening is complete and the project is closer to the actual design phase the partners will engage with manufacturers regarding the potential for providing the systems or their components to shipbuilders.

Contact: [www.psenterprise.com](http://www.psenterprise.com)

### **Awards for the 2011 Angel-VC Investments of the Year have been announced**

#### **Elonics Ltd – Investors: Scottish Equity Partners with Octopus**

The judges felt that the scale of the transaction and the level of contribution from the Angels was an excellent demonstration of Angels and VCs working together to conclude a major funding round. We believe that co-operation of this type represents the future for early stage technology funding.

#### **Angel Mobile Investment of the Year:**

#### **Ipadio Ltd – Investors: London Business Angels and LBA EIS Fund**

With the ability to link a telephone call from any telephone, anywhere in the world to a website, the judges said this was a highly innovative concept and technology offering and could become the new 'Skype'.

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Ipadio provides a substantial growth opportunity, having gained strong traction with several referenceable blue chip customers. It combines strong financial performance with a highly attractive revenue model and strong management.

#### **Angel Med Tech-Healthcare Investment of the Year:**

##### **Fertility Focus** – Investors: **Envestors & Midven**

Fertility Focus has demonstrated the capability to halve the time and cost in the growing market of female infertility which could be transformative. Moreover the angel investment has encouraged not only parallel VC investment, but also corporate investment from a partner who will aid access to the important US market.

#### **Angel Clean Tech Investment of the Year:**

##### **Syrinx Ltd** – Investors: **London Business Angels EIS Fund** and **London Business Angels**

Syrinx impressed with their approach to the water market and the fact they are already securing orders. With advances in technology — sophisticated sensor networks, smart metering and analytics, Syrinx enables water companies to be smarter about how they manage mains supplies and prevent leakages. Syrinx is a viable business in a growth market.

Early Stage Team of the Year was **Northstar Ventures**, which has been instrumental in making investments and raising funds across a number of stages and sectors in an extremely challenging environment. Next, **Angel Investor of the Year** was New Zealand-born mobile telecoms entrepreneur, and current chairman of Cupcakemum.com **Dale Murray**, who ‘represents a new breed of angel investor’ – having personally invested £1m to date in a variety of technology/product sectors, and able to tailor her input to the differing needs of investee companies whilst playing a key ambassadorial role for female investors.

Contact: [www.northstarventures.co.uk](http://www.northstarventures.co.uk) – [www.cupcakemum.com](http://www.cupcakemum.com)

#### **Oxford Innovation appointed managers of Market Harborough Innovation Centre**

Oxford Innovation already manages a network of 19 business and innovation centres across the country, providing office and laboratory space for more than 500 businesses.

The £4.2m Centre, located about 12 miles south east of Leicester, is at the gateway entrance to the new **Airfield Business Park**.

The Innovation and Business Centre forms part of developer **William Davis'** 20-acre Airfield Business Park where already four of the six speculatively built industrial units have been sold to local businesses looking to expand, construction work on the rest of the site is underway.

The project will help fledgling businesses set up and prosper and will bring approximately 180 jobs to the area. Start-up and growing businesses joining the Centre will have access to a wide range of support provided by Oxford Innovation, including funding assistance through business angel investment networks, networking events and mentoring. Developer **William Davis** contributed complementary work space as part of the project to the value of £1m and **Harborough District Council** added £200,000 and will own the building.

**James Briggs**, local businessman and chairman of **Harboro Rubber**, a major employer in the area, was invited to cut the ceremonial ribbon signifying the official launch of the building.

Contact: **Mick Judge**, Centre Manager – 01933 303 000 [m.judge@oxin.co.uk](mailto:m.judge@oxin.co.uk).

In a second move, Oxford Innovation will manage the new **Scott Bader Innovation Centre**, set up in June 2011 in refurbished buildings on the R&D HQ of the **Scott Bader**, the chemicals multinational, at Wollaston in Northamptonshire.

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**Philip Bruce**, group MD of Scott Bader, said “The innovation centre marks the 60th anniversary for Scott Bader, and it will offer shared laboratory space and high quality offices on flexible terms for around 20 growing companies, as well as access to funding from investment networks and business planning support.”

Scott Bader is a £180 million multinational chemical firm, employing 600 people with manufacturing sites in Europe, the Middle East and South Africa. Core products are polyester resins, structural adhesives and polymers used by firms in the building, marine and chemical containment sectors.

Oxford Innovation already manage four centres in the East Midlands region – **Wellingborough Innovation Centre** and three centres in Nottinghamshire – which form part of a portfolio of 20 centres across the UK used by over 400 companies.

Contact: [www.williamdavis.co.uk](http://www.williamdavis.co.uk) – [www.scottbader.com](http://www.scottbader.com)

### **Technology Strategy Board and MRC find funding for personalized medicine**

The pair are to jointly invest over £3.7m in seven major new research projects that will help to place the UK ‘at the forefront’ of developments into personalised medicine.

The investment is the first to be made through the TSB-managed **Stratified Medicine Innovation Platform (SMIP)**, an initiative which will oversee an investment of ‘over £50m of government funding over five years’ in areas such as tumour profiling to improve cancer care and developing biomarkers for more effective drugs.

The seven projects will be lead by **AstraZeneca UK Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline (3 projects), Ig Innovations Ltd, Janssen UK and Randox Laboratories Ltd**. Including contributions from the project partners, the total value of the research and development will be over £7 million.

Four of the projects are in the area of inflammatory biomarkers for more effective drugs. The projects will develop the use of biomarkers to predict how groups of patients will respond to inflammation and immunology therapies. In this way, therapies could be given only to relevant patient sub-groups for better results in alleviating symptoms and side effects.

The other three projects relate to developing business models and value systems. The projects will try to determine the best ways to co-develop drugs and companion diagnostics, and the ways in which subsequent reimbursement can be distributed across the value chain. This should increase the number of stratified treatments that are developed, the speed of their development and their adoption by healthcare providers.

Contact: [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org) – [www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)

## **UNIVERSITY NEWS**

### **Oxford Photovoltaics win investment of £650,000 from MTI Partners**

The Oxford University spinout is developing solid-state dye sensitized solar cells for the Building Integrated Photovoltaic (BIPV) sector. The funding round will allow OPV to build on its highly experienced commercial team and scale up its ‘demonstrator’ product manufacturing.

The financing was led by MTI through the **UMIP Premier Fund (UPF)** alongside investment from **Parkwalk EIS Technology Fund 1, World Gold Council** and a number of angel investors.

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**David Ward**, Managing Partner at MTI, said “OPV is unusual in that it pairs world class science with a founder team that is very focused on execution and growing the business in a pragmatic way that gives the best chance of commercial success.”

**Kevin Arthur**, CEO of OPV said “The unique aesthetic benefits of our transparent glass based screen printable photovoltaic technology, and its inherent simplicity of production and low manufacturing cost, has the potential to deliver a paradigm-shift in the way that solar energy solutions are deployed in the future.”

OPV is commercializing new solar cell technology developed by **Dr Henry Snaith** and his team at **Oxford University’s Physics department**. These new solar cells are manufactured from inexpensive, abundant, non-toxic and non-corrosive materials and can be scaled to any volume.

**Paul Vickery** has been appointed chairman. MTI has been wary of ‘either big plays in generation that are at the whim of Governmental subsidy, or organic PV companies that continue to have headwinds in terms of a path to commercially viable flexible electronics manufacturing..

MTI is a leader in the field of technology venture capital, and one of the most successful and experienced technology fund managers in the UK. MTI has a sustained performance record across more than two decades and five venture funds. MTI’s latest fund, The UMIP Premier Fund, is Europe’s largest institutional fund to have a single university focus and works in partnership with the University of Manchester.

Contact: [www.oxfordpv.com](http://www.oxfordpv.com) – [www.mtifirms.com](http://www.mtifirms.com) – [www.gold.org](http://www.gold.org)

#### **And one million pounds goes to – Oxyntix Ltd, latest Oxford University spinout**

The new company has been spun out from the **Engineering Department** of the University of Oxford by **Isis Innovation Ltd**.

Scientists are proposing a new method of achieving ‘extreme intensity bubble collapse’. This technology has numerous potential applications, notably in nuclear fusion power generation and in sonochemistry, among others. Using state-of-the-art computational simulation techniques, descriptions of unprecedented detail and insight for into the collapse events have been achieved.

These have led to the discovery of processes and devices allowing for the control and intensification of the collapse. **Oxyntix Ltd** has been established to allow development and validation of the Oxford team’s existing research findings, which are already patent-protected. The financing was led by **IP Group plc**, alongside **Parkwalk Advisors** and a number of angel investors.

**Prof Yiannis Ventikos**, co-founder of the company, said: “The funding allows us to develop further this very ambitious research programme in a timely manner; especially given the stakes this work entails and the constraints in funding that research faces, in the UK but worldwide as well.”

Contact: [www.isis-innovation.com](http://www.isis-innovation.com) – [yiannis.ventikos@eng.ox.ac.uk](mailto:yiannis.ventikos@eng.ox.ac.uk)

#### **University of Warwick launches Anvil Semiconductors Ltd**

A new company which specialises in developing efficient power conductors has been unveiled at the University of Warwick.

**Anvil Semiconductors** was officially launched after receiving £150,000 of investment. Anvil, which was created by the University’s technology commercialisation company, **Warwick Ventures**, will develop smaller, more efficient power converters using Silicon Carbide (SiC) power semiconductor switches.

The company received an investment of £25,000 from Midlands investor **Midven’s Early Advantage**

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**Fund**, as well as £125,000 investment from private investors **Minerva**, the Midlands network of entrepreneurs, venturers and angels.

Since the investment, the company has also been awarded an R&D grant from the **Technology Strategy Board**. SiC devices are created to withstand higher voltages and currents and are ten times faster than traditional silicon devices.

Anvil builds on the impressive research track record of founders **Dr Phil Mawby** and **Dr Peter Ward**, recognised for their expertise in the fields of power devices, their modelling and applications (Mawby); and industrial R&D and manufacturing (Ward). They have published widely on these topics, and have excellent contacts with industry and other leading research institutions around the world.

Power semiconductors are fundamental to the efficient control and use of all the technologies being developed to meet these needs from solar and wind energy generation, through new transportation technologies – such as hybrid and electric cars, electric trains, aircraft and ships, to distribution via the Smart Grid.

The current power semiconductor market is dominated by silicon. But the superior material properties of **Silicon Carbide** (SiC) have been recognised as the way forward for the last 20 years and many announcements of breakthroughs have been made, yet to date the SiC transistors available perform poorly compared to their potential, and production costs are very high.

Anvil Semiconductor's ambition is to enable SiC to displace Silicon in the market range of \$1 billion to \$5 billion per annum mainly in electric vehicle, smart grid, photovoltaic and wind turbine inverter applications. Further, low cost SiC power devices must be regarded as a disruptive technology which will enable new applications to be realised and hence the final market size will be much greater than previously thought.

Contact: [www.anvil-semi.co.uk](http://www.anvil-semi.co.uk)

### **Squease Ltd designs special smart clothing for sufferers of Autism**

Back in December 2010 **Squease Ltd**, a company set up by four RCA design graduates under the guidance of **Design London**, won the 2010 **RCUK Business Plan Competition**.

Squease is an item of smart clothing especially developed for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) that helps its wearer cope with anxiety and thus be more able to deal with stressful situations. When feeling mounting tension, the wearer can use the garment to give a hug-like pressure – a squeeze – to themselves. This creates a calming effect, leading to reduced stress and anxiety and helps them to feel safe and protected.

More recently, Squease won first prize – £25,000 – in the **Research Councils UK (RCUK) Business Plan Competition**. While not being everyone's choice of winner – in fact a very odd decision indeed – this is the very first time an arts and humanities project had ever won the competition, with previous winners coming from science or medical backgrounds. Insiders say it was a move to help the much beleaguered and increasingly endangered **Arts and Humanities Research Council**.

Anyway, the four designers developed Squease as a special project during their MA in Innovation Design Engineering at the RCA. Adopting a people-centred design approach they worked directly with individuals with ASD.

**Sheraz Arif**, director of Squease Ltd said: "This year the judges have selected a design innovation rather than going down a more conventional science or biomedical route. It's yet more evidence of the increasing awareness of the value of design's role in innovation and enterprise." (A good try!)

Contact: [www.squeasewear.com](http://www.squeasewear.com)

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## LATE DATES FOR JULY 2011

### 28-30 July 2011 – NewSpace 2011 Conference

NASA Ames, Silicon Valley, USA.

The NewSpace 2011 conference is one of the most important commercial space conferences in the nation and will be held July 28-30 at NASA Ames in Silicon Valley. Lori Garver, Deputy NASA Administrator will present the opening keynote. This is the third year that the conference has been here in Silicon Valley and they are working to make this into the premier commercial space event in the world. The theme of this year's conference is 'The Next Big Thing'. The three day event will focus on the current, near term, and future potential and challenges of the emerging commercial space industry.

Contact: <http://newspace2011.spacefrontier.org>

## AND FINALLY...

>> We've already seen several breweries get funded by the crowds, so why shouldn't they tap the masses for a little product innovation, too? That, indeed, is just what **Leeds Brewery** is doing, with a new promotion whereby local beer-lovers will get to have a say in the creation of a new, special edition ale.

The closure of the long standing **Tetley Brewery** in Leeds, making the Leeds Brewery the largest in the city. To commemorate that fact, the Leeds Brewery next month will produce a range of beers and ask local consumers to "pick a pint." Specifically, it will invite beer fans to taste the various brews, vote for their favourite and help choose the new beer's name. A panel of local Leeds celebrities will taste-test an initial set of beers, narrowing it down to a final shortlist. Those final contenders will then be served up to the public at various pubs, where consumers will be able to sample and vote for them as well as help to pick a name. The more suggestions made, in fact, the cheaper the first pint will be when it's finally unveiled, the brewer says. That winning ale will be announced on June 10, at the start of a weekend beer festival hosted by the brewer.

Contact: [www.goodbyetetleys.co.uk](http://www.goodbyetetleys.co.uk) – [info@leedsbrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@leedsbrewery.co.uk)

>> One in six British businesses could be trading while 'technically insolvent', according to data recently released. The Business Distress Index compiled by insolvency trade body **R3** claimed that about 268,000 companies reported having difficulty paying their invoices on time. Some 54 per cent of firms have reported a decrease in profits over the past quarter, up 5 per cent on the previous period. The index also revealed a 4 per cent jump in the number of businesses making redundancies and a 3 per cent increase in those introducing pay cuts or freezes. R3 interviewed 500 SME businesses in order to compile the survey.

Contact: [www.r3.org.uk](http://www.r3.org.uk)

>> As the **phone hacking scandal** reaches its climax it is perhaps the right time to note that very few people now leave messages on mobile phones, preferring to call back later. And most of the phone hacking 'took place between 2000-2005', according to insiders. Similarly, few of the messages that are left are meaningful to anyone else, says phone content experts, with a great majority relating changes merely in travel plans, traffic jams and late trains.

In London, on Thursday and Friday evenings, the **Orange** mobile phone network is jammed with calls – and the network automatically throws the excess calls it can't deal with on to the answer service – much to the annoyance of customers.

Said one journalist: "Only if you are **Hugh Grant** and his girlfriend – splitting up – would you be likely to get any really juicy comments. They are not NOW speaking to each other."

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