

Championing UK manufacturing



A message from new CHTA Chairman, Richard Burslem

The Contract Heat Treatment Association exists to promote the activities of its members and to protect them from negative impact. The membership is diverse, ranging from the world's largest heat treater to some of the smallest.

CHTA members are involved with manufacturing at all levels, from simple security chains through production tooling to human body implants. Without manufacturing, we cannot exist as heat treaters: there would be nothing to heat treat!

On February 12th, I was honoured to be elected chairman of the CHTA. On the way home, I heard on the radio that Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln had both been born on that day. I began to ponder on the lives of these two great men.

Darwin, the observer, was reticent to publish his thoughts about evolution and, as a consequence, almost missed having his name associated with the theory. Lincoln, the doer, felt so strongly about the abolition of slavery that he was prepared to fight a civil war to achieve it and was assassinated for his beliefs. These are times for doing, not observing.

It is time for us to champion manufacturing in the UK as we never have done before. Our task is to convince not only govern-

ment at all levels, but everyone we talk to, that the UK needs a strong manufacturing base. Manufacturing provides real jobs for real people and products that can be used to sustain and improve life.

Over-regulation

As recent events have shown, we cannot exist as a country borrowing off the back of increasing house prices and the selling of finance. The collapse of household banking names proves this. We need to convince government that, while more regulation might be appropriate in some sectors (possibly the aforementioned!), over-regulation and the nanny state are at best unnecessary and, at worst, contribute to the decline of manufacturing and this country's economy.

When I was 14, I put a ball through a window at home. My Dad took the opportunity to show me how to measure up for a new piece of glass, sent me off to buy it and the putty required (I had to pay), showed me how to remove the old piece safely and put the new piece in. He also advised a small bunch of flowers for Mum! The problem was rectified quickly and cheaply and I learned new skills.

I can imagine the same scenario today. The 'blame culture' would have had me on the internet looking for the house builder or glass manufacturer to sue. Over-cautious safety regulations would stop me buying the glass. Social services would investigate possible child cruelty by my Dad and my Mum would have had two weeks off work with stress.

These are not new thoughts. In *Hotline 96* CHTA committee member Roger Bird put it this way: "The main obstacle to our future is government thinking. Its perception is that we no longer require a manufacturing industry". In *Hotline 99*,

then CHTA Chairman Roger Haw made the proud and, in my opinion, accurate statement that: "We are one of the industries helping to keep the world going." Manufacturing needs us as much as we need manufacturing.

Promoting, protecting, championing

CHTA promotes (with the website www.chta.co.uk, *Hotline*, datasheets, the *Buyers Guide*) and raises awareness of the benefits of outsourcing among manufacturers who have their own heat treatment.

CHTA protects, as evidenced by success in: reduction of energy tax (Climate Change Agreements); stopping unnecessary gas burner legislation; countering poorly-thought-out REACH definitions; and providing standard terms of trading for members. Here praise is due to our umbrella organisation, the Surface Engineering Association, for their work on our behalf; without their effort and critical mass, much of this success could not have been achieved.

Due to the nature of our business, CHTA members are observers like Darwin and doers like Lincoln. We have observed what has happened and now it is time to do something about it.

Government has woken up to the possibility that an economy based entirely on the service sector may not have been a good idea but, importantly, what are they now going to do about it?

For our own survival and for the benefit of the UK, support your CHTA, champion British manufacturing and speak out about all the silliness in regulation that you see. Your (volunteer) Management Committee will continue to promote and protect CHTA interests and I will try to be the Chairman that the CHTA deserves.



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Working capital and credit management / risk reduction

CHTA Publicity Subcommittee member
John Jervis
 (Bodycote Heat Treatments Ltd) offers some timely guidance.



CREDIT MANAGEMENT

Because, for most companies, write-offs over the past six or seven years have been very low (typically a fraction of one percent of sales), many organisations have not viewed credit risk management as an issue. They believed that the existing processes and policies were doing the job!

The reason write-offs have been low is that the economy has been strong for many years, particularly in Europe. Now a deep recession is leading to a flood of business failures; this is when a company finds out how good, or bad, its credit policies and procedures are.

Of course, by this time, for a company that has neglected credit risk management, it can be too late to repair the damage. Customers with inappropriate credit limits will be failing and the losses to the company will be much higher than they would have been if credit had been managed properly.

Evaluation of the credit risk for new and existing customers should be supported by:

- rating by credit organisations such as Dunn and Bradstreet;
- analysis of customer financial information;
- other information that can contribute to analysis of the situation, including

market information, local information, payment behaviour and market reputation.

It should be noted that, for small customers, the information available will be limited and, often, it may be no more than what the salesman knows about the company.

In order to set an "optimum" credit limit, we need to determine:

- what credit the customer needs to do business with the company;
- what level of credit the company is prepared to extend to a customer, depending upon the perceived risk.

Here, two definitions are helpful:

- **Necessary Credit Limit (NCL):** defined as the credit limit required by the customer in order to do business with your company, taking into account sales volume and payment terms: there are established calculations available.
- **Maximum Allowable Risk (MAR):** defined as the maximum amount of credit (risk) that your company is willing to extend to that customer or size of company.

Possible Outcomes of NCL / MAR comparisons and calculations

If the NCL is lower than the MAR, the NCL becomes the credit limit for that customer. If the NCL is higher than the MAR, then the situation needs to be escalated for consideration by the commercial manager or the general manager, as appropriate to your business. The outcome of the discussion could be:

- Maximum credit to be extended to the customer becomes the MAR.
- Commercial decision to accept the NCL with a higher risk. This should be justified by a clear strategic benefit such as increased profitability, future growth etc.
- Shorten the terms by negotiation which will reduce the NCL to meet the MAR. In this way, the customer will still be able to trade at the same level of business but the MAR will not be exceeded and, hence, risk reduced.

Credit limits must be reviewed periodically to ensure that customer accounts reflect an acceptable level of risk for the business unit (see accompanying table). As there are various factors influencing customer accounts continuously, it is important to monitor their impact on the credit limits.

A credit limit can be increased at any time if it is clearly in the company's interest and there is no significant risk to the company. The justification will usually arise from a period of favourable trading with a customer. This will result in an increase in the customer risk rating which, in turn, will lead to a higher credit limit on your MAR model.

A credit limit can be revoked, or reduced, for any or all of the following conditions:

- in case of bankruptcy or suspected imminent bankruptcy of the customer;
- customer inactive for more than six months;
- continuous failure to respect the payment terms;
- obvious degradation of the customer's financial situation.

Credit limit review

Segment number	Segment description	Frequency of review
2	Bad payers, large sales	6 months
1	Good payers, large sales	12 months
4	Bad payers, low sales	12 months
3	Good payers, low sales	24 months

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The Contract Heat Treatment Association

WORKING CAPITAL

Two more definitions:

- *Operational Working Capital = Cash + Stock + Accounts Receivable – Accounts Payable*

(Stock in our businesses tends to be minimal and so emphasis should be on receivables and payables).

- *Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) = Profit / Net Capital Employed*
(Net capital employed is made up of fixed assets and working capital).

Thus, by reducing your company's working capital balance, you can increase the ROCE without necessarily increasing prices or profit. Working capital is reduced in our business case simply by reducing the accounts receivable balance and increasing the accounts payable balance. Money generated can then be used for growing the business or reducing debt, bank interest etc.

By reducing debtor days, you are additionally reducing your risk alongside your credit control management system.

Receivables

In order to reduce working capital balances with receivables, we need to reduce debtor days and overdue debt by:

- agreeing and communicating existing or reduced standard terms;
- negotiating specific terms reduction exercises, focused on your top accounts and getting agreement;
- implementing a focused proactive collection procedure to ensure customers pay within their agreed payment terms. This should concentrate on the accounts which make the difference; i.e. your top 20% of customers which most likely make up your top 80+% of sales. Focus should especially be on those customers in the top 20% that are commonly overdue regularly (big bad payers).

Payables

It is good practice to negotiate good terms with suppliers - and then to pay them on time! There are two main areas that the project will concentrate on:

Compliance

- make sure we do not pay any suppliers early;
- make sure terms in the system match those negotiated with suppliers;
- make sure default terms in the system are set at your maximum terms;
- ensure favourable early payment discounts are being taken.

Terms

- are there opportunities to enhance terms with medium-size suppliers?
- segment suppliers and develop approach for different segments;

- look for opportunities to develop strategies to enhance terms with large suppliers;
- look for opportunities for supplier rationalisation;
- look for opportunities to link terms with supplier performance;
- look to move to one payment run at the end of month.

CUSTOMER TERMS

It will come as no surprise that we are not the only companies currently striving to improve their working capital position. As a result, we are likely to be faced with clients who are looking to increase their payment terms with us. Below are a list of common tactics used and some examples of how to oppose them:

End of Month terms

A common tactic companies are now using with their suppliers is to move to End of Month (EOM) terms so that 30 days NET becoming 30 days EOM extends the terms by on average 15 days. Anybody claiming they will now be conducting just one payment run per month, and therefore needing EOM terms, must have their term days reduced to compensate. Therefore somebody on 30 days NET moving to EOM must be reduced to 14 days EOM.

Challenge to performance (quality/time etc)

Just as we would use positive performance ourselves with any customer with whom we want to reduce terms, it is a legitimate tactic of our customers to use poor service against us. In this instance, it is vital firstly to check your own quality records. Then it is important to check your pricing history and the customer's position in any leverage matrix you may have established.

General mailing shots

Commonly, especially where you are not their key supplier, customers may attempt to extend their terms simply by writing and advising that terms will be changed. It is important, in all such instances, to contact them and inform that their revised terms are not acceptable – or alternatively using this to agree an increased pricing strategy.

Terms fall outside their company standard, enforced by their head office

A tactic, which we ourselves may use, is to attempt to advise that the terms held are outside their standards and can only be authorised by their head office. It is important to follow through on this as it will commonly just be a tactic to get longer terms. Assuming you have a good base position, it is always worth putting the challenge back on them to get any necessary approvals to continue doing business with us.

CHTA's new Chairman

Richard Burslem (*Wallwork Heat Treatment Ltd*) became Chairman of CHTA in February when Paul Handley completed his two-year maximum tenure in the role.

Born in Manchester in 1954, Richard became interested in metallurgy after listening to an inspiring lecture on the subject by Professor Ken Entwistle of Manchester University UMIST. After graduating from there, he joined the family firm as a manufacturer's agent selling steel and iron castings.



Paul Handley (right) congratulates Richard Burslem on succeeding him as CHTA Chairman.

After two years, Richard was tempted into engineering and material research with flow-control valve maker Peglers Ltd. Preferring to do rather than to observe, he joined Wallwork Heat Treatment Ltd in 1978, as a shift metallurgist, and rose to the position of Site Director at the Bury site in 2004.

Richard has been active in CHTA affairs for many years, both on the Publicity Subcommittee and, latterly, as a member of the Management Committee.

He has a long-suffering "heat-treater's" wife and grown-up daughter, both of whom provide endless support.

His interests away from work are baroque music, squash and cruising narrow boats on the inland waterways.

CHTA is sad to record that **Peter Hewitt**, the former Managing Director and, latterly, Chairman of Keighley Laboratories, passed away on 17 February at the age of 69. The company, which he purchased in 1988, will remain under the ownership of the Hewitt family, to whom we send our sincere condolences for their loss.



David Frost to speak at CHTA AGM

CHTA's 2009 AGM takes place at SEA's Birmingham headquarters on **May 21st** when our guest speaker will be David Frost, Director General, British Chambers of Commerce. David will discuss "The Future for British Manufacturing Industry". The event, details of which will be circulated in mid-April, will also provide a forum in which members will be able to update on CHTA activities and those of our affiliate SEA. A buffet lunch beforehand will provide a further opportunity for convivial networking.

David Frost has been Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce since January 2003. Prior to this, he was Chief Executive of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and Business Link.



The British Chambers of Commerce (www.britishchambers.org.uk) represents over 100,000 businesses through a network of 54 Accredited Chambers of Commerce. The role of the BCC is to promote the interests of British business and represent the interests of the Chambers of Commerce. A subsidiary company, BCC Enterprises, develops a range of commercial activities for the benefit of Chambers and their members.

David is Chairman of the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. He is a Board Member of Ufi/ Learn Direct and also a member of the National Employer Advisory Board for the Reserve Forces. In February 2008, he received an Honorary Doctorate from Birmingham City University.

Married with two teenage daughters, David lives in Sutton Coldfield. His interests are motorcycling, cycling and sailing. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a member of the Court of Assistants of the Worshipful Company of Loriners.

Please send your news items for *Hotline* 116 to mail@chta.co.uk
Deadline: May 29th

CCAs – Milestone Reporting

Another update from SEA's **Dave Elliott**.

Many thanks to all the members of the heat treatment climate change agreement for supplying the necessary data to enable the completion of the CCA10 reporting spreadsheet for Defra. The heat treatment sector spreadsheet requires the input of some 10,000 pieces of data, so you will understand my relief at completing the task.

The data are still being analysed and validated by Defra and their advisors, AEA Energy & Environment, but the initial results indicate that the sector has exceeded its target by 1.54%. On the face of it, this looks like a good result, but analysis of the figures shows a different story.

During the initial negotiations, in setting up the agreement, we managed to persuade Defra to allow us to use something called a "Novem Algorithm". This allows us to adjust the sector target to take into account the changes in production throughput of all of the facilities in the agreement. The total adjustment for this amounted to almost 9.5% of the target showing that, without this mechanism, we would not have met our target. So please raise your glasses to the Novem Algorithm!!

Quite a number of sites decided to ring-fence their over-achievements, rather than leave them in the sector pot. This accounted for some 13,605 tonnes of CO₂, which equates to almost 7% of our sector target.

CHTA PUBLICITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Can you fill the gaps?



Hotline is one of the responsibilities of CHTA's Publicity Subcommittee which is seeking new blood to help promote the case for contract heat treatment. Members willing to volunteer a representative for the Subcommittee, which meets quarterly at SEA's Birmingham headquarters, should contact CHTA's Secretariat.

In the current economic climate, it is to be expected that companies will try and save money where possible; but it should be remembered that, to sell or use any ring-fenced excesses, they have to be verified by a third party. This will cost anywhere between £500 and £1500 so, with the current price of CO₂ around the £3/tonne mark, you need to have at least 500 tonnes ring-fenced to make the verification worthwhile.

Defra will be getting in touch with all participants to confirm the targets for 2010. It is likely that this will be in March, but it could stretch into April.

Discussions will begin shortly on the future of climate change agreements following the Government's commitment to keep them until 2017 at least. The existing agreements have targets for 2010 only and then continue until the end of March 2013, without targets.

It is likely that the Government will want to introduce some form of 'claw-back' during this final period, so that companies have an incentive to continue to meet their targets. What form the new agreements will take is not known yet, but a meeting with Defra is scheduled for 3rd April this year to kick off the discussions regarding this. I will, of course, keep you all informed of any further developments.

Once again, many thanks for supplying the data and enabling me to complete the reports on time for Defra.

CHTA Secretariat

Items for inclusion in *Hotline* and enquiries about CHTA activities should be addressed to:

Contract Heat Treatment Association

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Fax: 0121 237 1124
E-mail: mail@chta.co.uk
Website: www.chta.co.uk

CHTA Secretary and *Hotline* Editor:
Alan J. Hick B.Sc., C. Eng., FIMMM

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CHTA is affiliated to the Surface Engineering Association

Member news

KEPSTON ACQUIRE "BRIGHT BRAZING" FROM BODYCOTE

In these very difficult economic times it is necessary to consider every aspect of business in a positive manner to ensure survival and future growth.

Kepston and Bodycote are two such companies who have taken up the gauntlet, thrown down by the global downturn. Both are long-established and have evolved through several such "recessions", remaining major players in their respective markets today.

Kepston Managing Director Brent Millage reports that Bodycote agreed terms in February for Kepston to acquire the majority of the plant, the order book and the name of the business formerly known as Bright Brazing Limited. Both companies are working hard to ensure a smooth transition for all customers.

The move further cements Kepston's commitment to the UK markets for mesh-belt-furnace brazing and annealing of both mild steel and stainless steel components. Kepston has recently invested in additional furnace capacity, as well as an extension the company's Wednesbury site, allowing for the new business recently gained. The deal will involve the transfer of plant from Bodycote to ensure that there will be adequate capacity for future growth.

WALLWORK INSTALLS NEW VACUUM FURNACE ...

Wallwork Heat Treatment (WHT) has invested more than £500,000 in a new vacuum furnace to process critical flying parts, such as landing-gear components and flying control items, at its Bury site.

The new furnace will take components with an envelope size of up to 1500mm by 900mm by 800mm, and a weight capacity of 1.6 tonne. This makes it suitable for a wide selection of aerospace parts, including turbine blades, engine rings, fuel injection components, and bulk critical treatments of fasteners. Both argon and nitrogen inert gas treatment and quench-

ing systems are available for titanium and other high alloys, including highly-stressed steels.

"This investment marks another major extension of our aerospace capacity" commented WHT Director Peter Carpenter. "It gives around a 30% gain in capacity here, and significantly extends our ability to process larger flying parts as 'single unitary' components."

WHT is now a substantial supplier in the aerospace engineering sector, with *Nadcap* approval for both high-performance coatings and many types of aerospace heat treatments. Other approvals include Airbus, BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, Hawker Beechcraft, and Goodrich Engine Control Systems.



Ian Griffin (left) and Simeon Collins in front of the new vacuum furnace at Wallwork.

... AND APPOINTS NEW DIRECTORS

Simeon Collins and Ian Griffin have both been promoted to director level at Wallwork Heat Treatment Ltd.

Simeon Collins, appointed as Sales Director, started at WHT in 1993, after graduating in engineering from the University of Salford. He joined the sales team in 1997 and was promoted to group sales manager in 2005. He was awarded an MBA from the University of Huddersfield in 2008.

Appointed as Production Director, Ian Griffin joined WHT in 1986 as an electrical engineer. After moving to production in 1995, he worked in a variety of departments, at the same time studying metallurgy. Ian was promoted to works manager in 2001, subsequently completing his qualifications as a metallurgist when he was awarded his HND at the University of Bradford in 2004.

Diary

March 26 2009

ADDITIVE LAYER MANUFACTURING: LASER TECHNIQUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
Bristol, England www.ailu.org.uk

April 22 2009

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www.equalearn.com/learncenter.asp?id=178409

May 18-20 2009

MSc HEAT TREATMENT: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
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www.namtec.co.uk/event/show/109

May 21 2009

CHTA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/ AGM*
Birmingham, England

June 9-11 2009

SUBCON 2009
Birmingham, England www.subconshow.co.uk

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NEW CHALLENGES IN HEAT TREATMENT AND SURFACE ENGINEERING
Dubrovnik, Croatia www.fsb.hr/hdtoip

June 10-11 2009

IMFAIR 2009
Cosford, England
Surface technology conference and exhibition aimed at the aerospace industry:
www.uk-finishing.org.uk/imf_events.htm

June 24-26 2009

A3TS 2009
Marseille, France
This 37th Congress on Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering combines a conference and an exhibition:
www.a3ts.org

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**Members wishing issues to be raised at CHTA meetings should notify CHTA's Secretary at mail@chta.co.uk*

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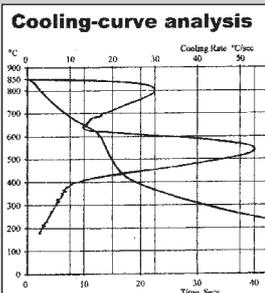
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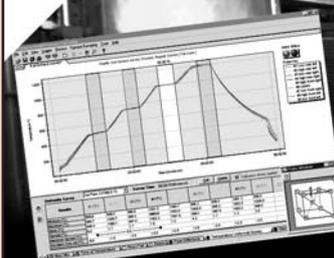
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Tom Bell Memorial Award

The heat treatment industry was shocked by the death of Tom Bell in April 2008, just over a month before his 67th birthday.

Tom's contributions to heat treatment enjoyed an international reputation as did, most notably in the current context, his role in the emergence of surface engineering as a multi-disciplinary concept in the early 1980s. Indeed, he has a strong claim to have invented the term "surface engineering".

In 1970, he established the Heat Treatment Research Group at the University of Liverpool and, following his elevation to a Professorship at the University of Birmingham, he established the world's first surface engineering research group, the Wolfson Institute for Surface Engineering (WISE) in 1973.

To UK industry, he provided a constant stream of innovative research papers, often based upon solving the problems brought to his attention whilst visiting factories.

Over the years, his national reputation grew to global status as he urged co-operation and collaboration between heat treaters around the world, under the auspices of his beloved International Federation for the Heat Treatment of Materials (IFHT), now the International Federation for Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering (IFHTSE). Prof. Bell is still the only person to have held the Presidency of the Federation on two occasions.

Tom was always willing to assist companies with their problems and, although he had been a consultant with Bodycote from the early 1970s, he was readily approachable and helped numerous other members of the Contract Heat Treatment Association.

In order to mark the outstanding contribution Professor Tom Bell made to Bodycote over many years, a new competition has been introduced by Bodycote plc for students who have undertaken placements at Bodycote facilities worldwide during their vacation or degree course.



Professor Tom Bell
1941 ~ 2008

Market Movements

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES RELATING TO 34 CHTA MEMBER SITES

"THIS QUARTER" =

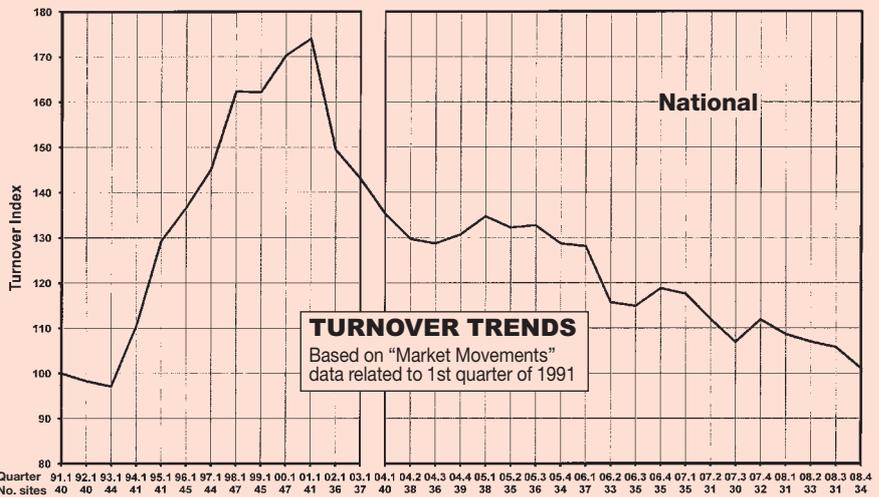
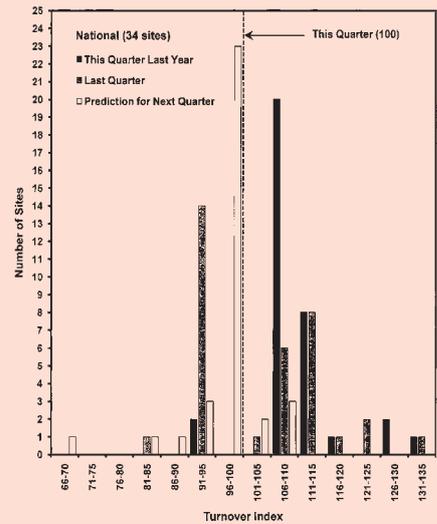
**1 OCTOBER –
31 DECEMBER
2008**

= **TURNOVER INDEX 100**

National

**OVERALL ANALYSIS
(34 SITES)**

	Mean index
This quarter last year	110.4
Last quarter	104.7
Predicted next quarter	96.8



Every year, Bodycote facilities around the world host a number of student placements, many of which are supported by Bodycote's Educational Foundation and others by colleges and universities, whilst some are a response to local initiatives. These projects range from industrially-based projects to PhDs.

In all cases, these placements are based on the student having a specific task to investigate. A significant output of such projects is the report completed by the student at the end of his/her placement, from which it is intended that the facility and the student should derive some benefit. Some of these project reports are truly exemplary; a culmination of hard work by the student and excellent guidance by facility staff.

In a tribute to the late Professor Tom Bell, whose lifetime of work in education and industry has helped to develop the world of surface engineering, Bodycote has created the Tom Bell Memorial Award. It will recognise the achievements of both the academic student and industrial facility in

the production of excellent projects and their resulting reports.

This award, additional to Bodycote's annual Prize Paper Competition, of which he was a judge, is a reflection of Tom's rare ability to bridge academia and industry and for his successful transfer of technology to commercial applications.

STATESIDE STATS

NORTH-AMERICAN HEAT TREAT SALES FALL AT YEAR END

Participating members in the Metal Treating Institute's Monthly Sales Statistics Program reported \$863.3million sales in 2008, a growth of 1.6% over 2007 when sales totalled \$849.6million.

However, December saw a 9.3% reduction in billings from the previous year. December 2008 reached \$56.5million, compared with \$62.3million in the same month in 2007. Reflective of the US recession, the latest figures for January indicate sales of \$55.6million, plummeting 22.9% from January 2008's \$72.2million.