



**UK & Ireland Chapter**  
**News Update November 2002**  
**[www.sampe.org.uk](http://www.sampe.org.uk)**

*News and Events*

**1. Industry Visit to SP Systems and NEG Micon**



*Chapter chairman Roy McCarthy thanks NEG Micon's Ian Chatting for the excellent visit to NEG Micon's superb wind blade facility on the Isle of Wight. By the way that's a blade (just a 32 metres one) in the background!*

More than twenty members made the trip across to the Isle of Wight on 9 October 2002 for a combined visit to NEG Micon and SP Systems, two exciting companies, both leaders in their respective fields. NEG Micon (formerly Aerolaminates) are the UK's largest manufacturer of wind turbine blades and are now rapidly becoming one of the leading players in Europe. Ian Chatting, NEG Micon's Head of New Product Development gave a superb review of

how the wind energy business is growing and the tremendous potential for the use of carbon fibre in future large blades (up to 52 metres and beyond!). NEG Micon have increased their production five fold in just over a year and Ian says there is much more to come, all of which had the carbon fibre boys in the audience drooling into their laptops. A tour of the production facilities followed and it was evident to see how traditional GRP boat building skills are being combined with newer techniques such as resin infusion to generate some extremely impressive structures.

We then went on to SP Systems, just across the road, which is now part of the Swiss Gurit Materials Systems Group. SP Systems manufactures a range of advanced prepreg systems and adhesives and over the past several years has transformed from a small niche producer to a major specialist materials manufacturer, focussing particularly in the automotive, marine and wind energy markets. After a tour of the superb new offices and development labs (but understandably, with representatives from most of SP's competitors in the group, not into the heart of the production area) we were given an impressive practical demonstration of SP's SPRINT system. SPRINT allows high quality parts to be made "out-of-autoclave" and is now finding applications in a number of marine and automotive programmes.



## 2. Web site update

The UK & Ireland Chapter website has been revamped and is now up and running at [www.sampe.org.uk](http://www.sampe.org.uk). As well as providing details on how to join SAMPE and some useful background to the UK & Ireland chapter – events, history, development, organisation etc. it also has some great additional features of interest to browse through including:

- Dates for your diary
- Industry Commentary (great stuff from Bob Griffiths about the state of the industry and prospects for the future)
- The Chapter Newsletter
- Resources in Material and Process Engineering - a comprehensive series of links to more than 100 web sites for businesses and organisations in related fields.

## 3. Joint Meeting with NUCC - 'Advanced Composites Manufacturing'



*Andrew Mills*

The joint seminar with the Nottingham University Composites Club will take place on Wednesday, 11 December 2002 at Cranfield University. The subject is "Advanced Composites Manufacturing", The subject is "Advanced Composites Manufacturing", and organisers Andrew Mills at Cranfield and Francois Robotaille at Nottingham have successfully arranged five excellent speakers to cover a very interesting range of topics including:

### **Liquid Moulding of Thermoplastics Composites**

Conchur O'Bradaigh (*National University of Ireland, Galway*)

### **Rapid tools by spray forming**

Patrick Grant (*Oxford University*)

### **Application of Resin Infusion Techniques to Lightweight Automotive Components**

Andrew Mills (*Cranfield Centre for Lightweight Composites*)

### **Challenges for the application of Composites in Sports Cars**

Martin O'Connor (*AE Technologies*)

### **Quickstep - High Speed Advanced Composites Processing**

Bob Griffiths, (*ERG Ltd*)

There will also be an opportunity to tour the Cranfield laboratories and see something of the exciting work in automated manufacturing processes going on there.

## 4. UK & Ireland Chapter Research Students Seminar 2002

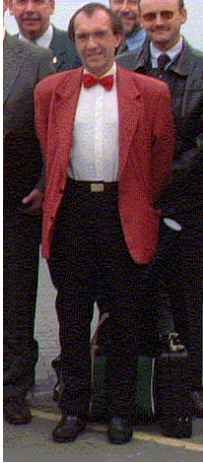
The UK & Ireland Chapter Research Students Seminar will take place, in collaboration with the IOM<sup>3</sup>, at IOM<sup>3</sup> headquarters in London on 26 November 2002. Seminar organiser Geoff Gould says: "The Seminar gives all postgraduate research students studying in the UK and Ireland the opportunity to show off their work and



the chance for the best two to win a funded trip to Paris in April 2003 to attend the SAMPE International Students Conference. The UK & Ireland Chapter has had two winners in the past four years so we have a great record to uphold.”

## 5. UK & Ireland Chapter Conference 2003

### *Marine Technology Conference*



*John Summerscales*

Arrangements are well in hand for next year's SAMPE UK & Ireland Chapter Conference on Marine Composites Technology, in collaboration with Plymouth ACMC, to be held at Plymouth University on 11 & 12 September 2003. The Conference co-ordinator, ACMC's John Summerscales, has come up with a great outline for the programme and is already generating substantial interest from a variety of specialists in each of the key topic areas:

- Materials and design
- Manufacture
- Mechanical performance
- Non-destructive testing
- environmental implications for composites and marine structures
- applications
  - ships - yachts - powerboats - multihulls
  - autonomous underwater vessels - submarines
  - signage masts - propellers - stern gear
  - stealth/radar/sonar - wave energy - tidal energy
  - offshore wind turbines

The event will be staged at the Sherwell Conference Centre, Plymouth – a special purpose auditorium and media centre with accommodation facilities nearby either in the University halls of residence or in a range of quality hotels.