

British Compressed Gases Association 2008 Annual Conference

Safer working practices within the gases industry was the key theme throughout the day



Around 200 delegates from across the gases industry attended what turned out to be an enlightening and entertaining conference at Oulton Hall.

We would like to offer our congratulations to BCGA Director Doug Thornton, Outgoing Chair of the Conference organising committee Noor Ali of Cryo Service and their team for organising the event.

We would also like to thank Richard Gearing of BOC for all his hard work as BCGA Chairman and welcome Matthias Kuhn of Air Products who will succeed him as President.

The key theme of safer working practices within the gases industry is reflected in Gas Safe's strap line '*If you can't identify the hazards you can't assess the risks*'. We were delighted that our Gas Safety Workshops, e-Learning and Consultancy Services such as Risk Assessments were of great interest to fellow delegates.

Key safety & environmental issues that were presented included;

London Fire Brigade (LFB) Group Commander and present Head of LFB's Hazardous Material and Environmental Protection (HMEP) Group, Gary Gunyon addressed the disruption caused by acetylene cylinder incidents.

Having been responsible for the fire safety department's fire safety legislative enforcement and arson reduction for over nine years, Gary spoke of tackling such disruptive occurrences and mitigating the disturbance by acetylene cylinder incidents.

"One issue is to prevent these cylinder incidents from happening and the other issue is, if they do happen, how are we going to safely resolve these more readily and speedily without affecting the safety of anyone", he said.

In terms of how prevention can be achieved, a strong publicity campaign and technical training were cited as effective methods for combating this problem, while the help of the gases industry was also recognised as Gary said, "We prepared a publicity campaign, started initially in the London boroughs." Gary thanked the BCGA for helping him understand safe practices for dealing with acetylene cylinders.

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office's John Buckley addressed the emerging subject of terrorism and bottled gas. He underlined the potential threat posed to the gases industry and the need to raise greater awareness to this growing issue, including introducing control measures to tackle the problem over the next generation or 10 years.

He continued to explain, "It's a problem in some ways because we're the author of our own success, in that because we have been relatively successful in preventing terrorists from getting hold of other means of causing explosions, they're having to look elsewhere and one of the places that they've looked at is your industry."

Describing the type of present day terrorism that we all face as a country and around the world, he noted that we now face a brand of international terrorism geared towards mass casualties by any means possible. He highlighted the expected long-running nature of the issue and said, "It's been well documented by the government that the expectation is that this type of terrorism will be with us for a generation and that's really what we're looking at."

Julie Gartside, of Enviro Consulting, explained the effects of UK climate change policy on industry & business. She highlighted that if you can't measure your carbon footprint then you can't manage it - even if you are sceptical about global warming the fact remains that there are limited fuel resources & we should use them wisely.

She concluded "The last thing that I would seriously ask you to think about is, are you going to be affected by the carbon reduction commitment (CRC)? If you are, it might only be just over 15 months away, but this time next year anybody who's affected by it will need to be thinking about measuring their footprint and be thinking about capital implications, because there are huge financial implications if you're affected by the CRC."

**The BCGA 2009 Annual Conference will take place on 23rd April
at De Vere Staverton Park, Daventry**



Julie Broughton
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