



Confederation of British Metalforming

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# Support available

## in these challenging times

3rd February 2009 - National Metalforming Centre

We recognise the difficulties many of our members are experiencing due to the current turmoil in world markets. In this time of change and regeneration the UK government and its various funded bodies can offer assistance to companies in different forms. The main sources of support are represented by Job Centre Plus (JCP), Employment Relations Service (ACAS), Learning Skills Council (LSC), and The Engineering Sector Skills Council (SEMTA). To help understand the array of support and assistance available we have convened a workshop which allows you to get some answers. The event is **free to attend**, subject to email registration. We have already received a number of registrations following our 1st call, sent out just before the Christmas break.

The following agenda has been set and we will adapt it to accommodate any further developments up to the day. Current government negotiations are likely to increase the funding available to support companies.

- 10.30 Registration
- 10.45 Introduction by John Houseman, CBM Director General
- 11.00 Business link - Opportunities for businesses
- 11.30 ACAS - Managing your circumstances, "Cautionary notes and Involving your workforce"
- 12.00 LSC - Training and Funding to underpin new opportunities
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.00 SEMTA - Sector issues and specific targeted support
- 13.30 JCP - Support for employers and employees facing redundancies
- 14.00 Q & A panel session
- 15.00 Close



To register for this event email your details to [alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com)



[britishmetalforming.com](http://britishmetalforming.com)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Fastener Engineering and  
Research Association  
[www.fera.org.uk](http://www.fera.org.uk)



Cold Rolled Sections Association  
[www.crsauk.com](http://www.crsauk.com)



International Institute of  
Forging Technology  
[www.iiftec.co.uk](http://www.iiftec.co.uk)

Confederation of British Metalforming Associated Bodies:

# Goodbye Wagon

Brownhills Plant

*As a former employee of Wagon for 35 years I was saddened at the news they were in the hands of the administrators.*

Established in the 50's the Wagon Brownhills Plant started life as Edward Rose Bham Ltd. A privately owned company with emphasis on rolled section glazed assembly products for the automotive industry.

Joining the company in 1972 I could see the company was progressive and a major player in the automotive industry.

The product range included:  
**Glazed opening quarter lights**  
**Division channels | Bright trim**  
**Door frames | Drip rails**

At the time a process that was key to the business was stretch forming rolled section. The provider of the tools and equipment was a small company in Coleford, Gloucester called Travers Metal Products.

In the late 80's Wagon entered into the bumper beam market making Ford Escort mild steel bumpers painted black and for the sports version a matching body colour.

This then led to Wagon acquiring the Wilmot Breedon Bumper business which was transferred to Brownhills.

Supplying bumper systems to Ford, Rover & Jaguar this then gave Wagon the confidence to design & develop crash systems. In 1995 Wagon developed the first European ultra high strength steel rolled profile bumper beam for the Ford Transit.

This opened the doors for development contracts won with Ford, JLR, Honda & Valeo.

In 2000 Wagon Automotive UK had 5 plants but the demise of the UK automotive industry the business was restructured with the Tyseley & Wantage plants being sold to Sonas. The land at Brownhills was sold and leased back which really was the writing on the wall regarding its future.

At the Brownhills plant was a committed and skilful work force that really deserved better. My former engineering team who remained until the end have a vast knowledge especially in the use of high strength steels and I have no issues in recommending them for new employment.

**Adrian Nicklin**,  
CBM Sheet Metal Specialist - Email:  
[adrian.nicklin@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:adrian.nicklin@britishmetalforming.com)

## Lighter & Stronger with UHSS

One of the most important initiatives in the metalforming industry is the development of lightweight multi-phase steel grades. This was developed by the steelmakers about 16 years ago.

Using hard and soft microstructure phases allows it to be formed at high level of strain hardening.

Using steel with material tensile strength of 600 to 1200 megapascals (MPa) multi - phase steel allows products to be designed using thinner gauge material saving weight without sacrificing the structural performance.

The use of multi-phase steel grades commonly known as UHSS (ultra high strength steel = 550 MPa or higher) has now long been used in the automotive body design in high volume production.

With development continuing to support the high requirement for vehicle crash performance & safety and the desire for lightweight construction, these require even higher grades combined with good ductility using a thinner gauge.

Running alongside is the desire to improve the metalforming capability, designing the product using forming simulation techniques ensuring the component is designed for manufacture.

For further information please contact **Adrian Nicklin**, CBM Sheet Metal Specialist, on **0121 601 6350** or email: [adrian.nicklin@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:adrian.nicklin@britishmetalforming.com)

## US Fastener Tech

Exhibition Scheduled for June 2009

The biennial fastener show, 'Fastener Tech', is scheduled to be held in Rosemont Illinois, near Chicago, from 8th to 10th June 2009, so if you are a fastener specialist, and are planning to be in the USA at that time, this event should be worth attending. As well as an exhibition of fasteners and fastener manufacturing, the show will offer various educational seminars and networking events.

It is planned to hold seminars on fastener heat treatment, quality, finishing, manufacturing, and distribution. Networking events tentatively planned are a reception, a working breakfast, and an exhibition dinner followed by a cruise, presumably on Lake Michigan.

The 2009 show will be the second such show at the same venue, which is in the heart of the US fastener manufacturing industry. The venue also offers a chance to see one of the world's great modern cities. Rosemont is the Chicago suburb that is closest to O'Hare International Airport, so it is also possible to visit the exhibition as a day trip from many other cities in the USA. Details of the seminar and event programme should be available in the first quarter of 2009.

For further information please contact **Dr John Newnham**, CBM Fastener Specialist, on **0121 601 6350** or email: [john.newnham@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:john.newnham@britishmetalforming.com)



# Companies in with a chance of a windfall

## Landmark legal cases have opened up a brief opportunity for new claims on VAT.

Hundreds of Midlands businesses could be sitting a significant VAT windfall, which could boost their bottom line at a critical time in the economic cycle, according to tax experts at PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Midlands.

This month the rules for making VAT claims for over or underpayments change following the publication of decisions by the House of Lords in two landmark cases, known as Fleming and Conde Nast.

The rulings led to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) announcing that VAT claims could be submitted for a specific range of business costs incurred between 1973 and 1997 and would be eligible for payment under the new rules as long as they are received on or before March 31.

Under the new rules, businesses have a window of opportunity to reclaim VAT payments for costs incurred in variety of specific areas.

For example, they can now reclaim VAT costs incurred between 1973 and 1997 as a result of hiring professional service support for corporate transactions or for staff expenses, mileage payments and even the staff Christmas party.

Companies that operate company car schemes and company pensions can also claim back VAT payments on costs associated with running them.

Stuart Wallace, tax partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Midlands,

said: 'Many businesses seem to have overlooked this opportunity to claim back VAT payments and they could be missing out on a significant cash boost to their bottom line as a result.'

'In our discussions with businesses about this VAT opportunity, we are finding that more than two thirds are either unaware of it or have overlooked it, believing the sums of money involved will not be large.'

***'In fact, seven figure VAT paybacks are not unusual and such sums could provide a lifeline businesses in the current economic conditions.'***

As well as submitting new claims for VAT payments incurred over the permitted 23-year period, businesses may also be able to resubmit claims that were originally declined during this time to see if they are now eligible for payment.

Stuart Wallace added: 'This is a major change that many companies in the region are still unaware of. We are advising businesses to seek advice before it is too late to estimate the value of their unclaimed VAT overpayments and to progress preparing claims as soon as possible.'

Source: Express & Star - 5 January 2009

## a new role for the unions?

### The CBI has warned that unions may take the opportunity of the current turmoil in the manufacturing sector, ie job losses, pay freezes etc to start a renewed recruitment campaign.

Union membership has declined from a high of 12 million at their height to less than 6.5m today, 58% of public sector employees are in a union compared to 16% in the private sector. If the unions are to survive the private sector has to be their recruiting ground, the last 12 years of prosperity has nurtured relative peace in industrial terms but the increasing militancy, shown by the number of days lost (breaking through the million days

lost for only the second time in a decade) has triggered alarm bells in many circles. The changes in the employment laws, minimum wage and easy access to employment tribunals has made the unions superfluous in many companies and they may well be looking for a role in the new business environment.

During the present climate of job losses, pay freezes etc. it will be vital to keep the retained workforce 'on board' by regular briefings and an open management style, this will avoid creating a vacuum the unions will both exploit and ultimately endeavour to fill!

Source: CBI HR Report - December 2008

# Meeting the challenges

## The CBM 2009 events programme

The range of events for 2009 includes technical, managerial, and procurement topics. CBM has a rolling programme and would be happy to add some further events. Please email your suggestions to [alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com).

With consideration of the current UK economic downturn CBM has convened a workshop on 'Short time working' for 3rd February. The workshop will be led by ACAS and Job Centre Plus (JCP) addressing the mechanisms for short time working, and current assistance available for companies and individuals. The government is unveiling a package of measures and initiatives supported by ACAS, JCP and other funded bodies. This event is free to attend for CBM members. Details are being emailed out to member companies as the agenda takes shape.

The planned heat treatment event for February has been rescheduled for 26th March. A full programme will be circulated to members in the coming weeks.

CBM has linked up with Metskill (part of SEMTA, our sector skills council) to convene three workshops. These will run if CBM can attract interest from members. The three workshops will examine 'Cash Management' (18 Feb), 'Stock control & Cash flow' (17 March), and 'Product development & Launch' (23 April). All workshops will be held at the National Metalforming Centre [NMC].

Companies looking to diversify may be attracted to the high value aerospace and defence sectors. To serve the specific requirements placed on their supply chain these two sectors have implemented SC21, which takes companies through pre-qualification. You can get guidance on SC21 by attending CBM event on 26th February. This event is being delivered by TEC Transnational, an accredited SC21 delivery body. The event will be at the NMC in West Bromwich.

CBM has teamed up with the British Stainless Steel Association (BSSA) to present a workshop on getting the best out of stainless steel. Specific requirements for handling and a guide to specification will be highlighted. To provide the best access this workshop is being run at the NMC on 5th March then repeated at the EEF headquarters in Sheffield on 11th March. Registration for both events can be made through the CBM or BSSA.

Topics under consideration for later in the year include "Non-contact technology", "Magnesium forging" (March 09), and technical sector specific workshops. CBM is also considering current practice in HR and Financial Management. Further details will be sent out and listed in CBM publications.

For further information please contact

**Dr Alan Arthur** at CBM on **0121 601 6350** or email: [alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com](mailto:alan.arthur@britishmetalforming.com)

# Diary Dates

2009

## January

13	10.30am	CBM H, S, & Environment Group Meeting
27	10.30am	CBM Sheet Metal Sector meeting - Hadley Industries

## February

3	10.30am	CBM Workshop: Support available in these challenging times
26		CBM Workshop: SC21 - Ready to supply the aerospace and defence sector?

## March

5		CBM/BSSA Workshop: Getting the best out of stainless steel
10-13		BLECH Russia
11		CBM/BSSA Workshop: Getting the best out of stainless steel - Sheffield
18	10.30am	Cold Rolled Sections Association [CRSA] Members' Meeting
26		CBM Workshop: Heat treatment relating to metalforming & tool steels

## April

6-8		The thirteenth SheMet - International Conference on Sheet Metal - Birmingham. For further information: <a href="http://www.shemet09.org.uk/">www.shemet09.org.uk/</a>
21	10.30am	CBM H, S, & Environment Group Meeting
22		CBM Workshop: Tooling design & emerging technology - University of Wolverhampton
28		CBM Workshop

## May

13		CBM Workshop
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## June

8-10		'Fastener Tech' show - nr Chicago, USA
9-11		Subcon Show 2009 - NEC, Birmingham
25		CBM Workshop

## September

17		CBM Workshop
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## October

8		CBM Workshop
14	10.30am	Cold Rolled Sections Association [CRSA] AGM & Members' Meeting
27-29		BLECH Polska

## November

4		CBM Workshop
18-20		BLECH India
25		CBM Workshop

## December

10		CBM Workshop
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All events are held at the CBM Headquarters, National Metalforming Centre, West Bromwich, B70 6PY, unless otherwise stated.

If any member is particularly interested in attending any of the above events, and is not sure of registration details, please contact CBM for further details on 0121 601 6350.