



ROBOTICS INITIATIVE is well worth a look

Membership feedback suggests a significant number of manufacturers are considering investment, but skills shortages remain a major handicap.

I know from my experiences in the East Midlands, just how much good work is being done to address this issue, by the sector skills council, SEMTA, the National Apprenticeship Service and other organisations. However, if people solutions are not the answer, then automation may be.

I've been impressed over the years by the work of the British Automation and Robot Association (BARA), most recently by its Automating Manufacturing Programme, which it operates on behalf of the government.

The basic concept is to increase the level of automation used in our manufacturing sector; to drive out waste, and to increase both productivity and - most importantly - profits.

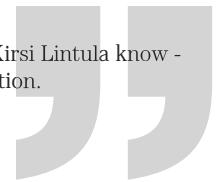
It's not complex. Companies are visited so an independent and unbiased overview of their automation needs can be prepared, a strategic review identifies opportunities and a recommendation report suggests priorities.

BARA has £600,000 of guaranteed funding to use before the end of the 2012-2013 financial year, and although the initiative is primarily targeted at SMEs, some larger concerns can be assisted.

We look at what BARA and SEMTA offer in this month's CBM News, Views & Reviews, where you'll also find news of several other courses tailored for CBM members. Also, a 'must' date for your diary is Subcon 2012, at the NEC, from June 12th to the 14th.

As always, if there are other initiatives, organisations or events which you think should be featured, please do let Kirsi Lintula know - via e-mail kirsi.lintula@britishmetalforming.com or on the phone 0121 601 6350. Don't forget, this is **your** publication.

Dennis Kent
CBM Chief Executive



Gain the benefits of Apprenticeships without the pain

Sector Skills Council Semta has launched a new service to help employers gain the benefits of apprenticeships.

High quality Apprenticeships are a great way to develop new recruits and upskill the existing workforce. "Growing your own talent" will be the smart alternative to hiring experienced workers who become rare and expensive as skills shortages bite.

The new Semta Apprenticeship Service is free and helps employers:

- recruit suitable apprentices
- design apprenticeship programmes to meet company needs
- source high-quality providers to train the apprentices
- manage and monitor the quality of all aspects of the programme
- access public funding

Philip Whiteman, Chief Executive of Semta, said: "Training apprentices can be more cost-effective than taking on skilled people because for apprentices aged 16-18 all training costs are funded so you only need to pay wages. For those aged 19 and over funding covers part of the training costs."

John Tildesley, managing director of West Midlands forging company W.H. Tildesley Ltd is convinced of the benefits of apprentice training. "We're getting formal engineering qualifications where we haven't had them before and people with better key skills who are more receptive to other forms of training that we need to do as a business for our own bespoke purposes."

To find out more about Semta Apprenticeship Service visit www.semta.org.uk or contact Semta Customer Services on 0845 643 9001.



Calling all Manufacturers!

The British Automation and Robot Association (BARA) would like to hear from all manufacturers that wish to take advantage of the latest government funding to improve efficiencies and drive growth in UK manufacturing. The initiative called Automating Manufacturing is available to all

sizes and types of manufacturers, but mainly small and medium sized enterprises, aims to improve competitiveness, raise productivity and ultimately create more jobs through growth.

The Government is providing, through the PPMA Group, up to £600,000 of funding to promote automation in UK manufacturing. The programme involves the Government paying for an independent Automation Consultant to visit factory premises, carry out a confidential detailed assessment and write a report.

Mike Wilson Chairman of BARA said "The recently launched government funded Automating Manufacturing Programme will provide great assistance to companies looking to use automation to improve competitiveness and drive growth. We at BARA are aware that there are many companies that would qualify and benefit." He concluded: "Together we could help make British manufacturing some of the best in the world and would urge any companies interested in having a free independent review to act fast before the allocation of government cash runs out."

It takes 5 minutes to apply for the government funded Automating Manufacturing review and will result in a totally independent Automation Consultant carrying out an initial assessment, visiting premises to conduct a confidential detailed review and provide a report. To apply please contact grant.collier@ppma.co.uk or for further information call Grant Collier on 020 8773 8111.

EAMA analysis spots 'good omen'

Companies in the mechanical engineering sector are feeling more bullish about finance issues, according to EAMA's latest Business Monitor.

Its membership data for November, released just before Christmas, shows that the number of firms reporting difficulty in accessing finance has fallen to its lowest since April 2011.

EAMA chairman, Martin Walder, said: "There are even quite a few saying that things are getting better. We don't know whether the absence of comment is simply because companies, wearied of trying, have given up, or whether we really are beginning to turn a corner.

"With well over a quarter of firms indicating they are developing investment plans, ease of access to finance will remain a determining priority for ambitious companies. These figures could be a good omen for 2012."

Other findings are mixed; with 55% of companies saying business is up compared with November 2010, against 31% reporting lower revenue, although there are wider variations in different sub-sectors.

The gap between those employers looking to recruit, and those admitting they expect to announce redundancies, is also down - at just plus 4%.

However, although the percentage of companies reporting falling exports remains a concern, almost two-thirds said that overseas inquiries had changed little, month-on-month, whilst domestic inquiries remained positive - at plus 12%.



Alstom tracks growth with £42m train order

Engineering group Alstom has won an order worth £42m to supply train company Porterbrook with new rolling stock.

Alstom, which employs more than 5,000 in the Midlands, will supply a fleet of 36 five-car suburban trains to run on South West Trains routes.

The contract is designed to alleviate capacity of London commuter routes and the new trains will enable around 8,000 extra peak-time passengers to travel into London's Waterloo station every morning.

Part of the work, which will be carried out by Rugby-based Alstom Transport, will see eight-car trains lengthened to run in 10-car formation on certain routes.



The contract win will enable Alstom to develop its existing UK train team. The company is recruiting around 12 engineers to create a team of 25 employees, based predominantly in the Midlands, who will deliver the conversion project.

Additional support will be provided by the company's parts and supply chain management site in Preston.

Known as Class 458/5, the contract will see the conversion of two existing Alstom-built fleets; the Class 458s, used by South West Trains and Class 460s, formerly used on the Gatwick Express route. Up to 92% of the material content of the project will be sourced from the UK supply chain, with planned modifications including cabs, couplers, gangways and the conversion of baggage areas into passenger saloon areas.

Terence Watson, managing director of Alstom Transport in the UK and Ireland, said: "We look forward to bringing Alstom's local expertise to the fore in this key project that shows how industry partners can work well together to provide innovative, value for money proposals to meet rolling stock requirements."

The new vehicles will be brought into service in the spring of 2013, with the final train scheduled for delivery in spring 2014.

Source: *The Businessdesk.com* - January 2012

Resistance welding training courses for CBM members

In the current busy climate with sheet and pressed metal companies we appear to have lost the basic skills and expertise in the assembly joining process making quality spot welds using the correct settings and machines.

After a successful training programme with a CBM member company, resistance welding expert Bauomat have put together a training course syllabus to suit technicians and operators.

These training programmes can be completed at your company or at the Bauomat Plant in Malvern. The choice is yours; if you send one person or a group of up to 5 personnel.

These will be a 1 day courses partly in the training room with course notes given followed by a practical session around a spot weld machine.

More detail will be given in our next 'Metal Matters' Magazine.

If you are interested in participating please call
Adrian Nicklin on 07774 260126
or email: adrian.nicklin@britishmetalforming.com.

2012

The first CRC trading year

All participants in the scheme are required to surrender allowances for their CRC emissions. One allowance is equivalent to one tonne of CO₂. Allowances will go on sale from April 2012 and the current proposal is for them to be sold at a fixed price of £12 per tonne of CO₂. However, the price of allowances may change as a result of the Budget, which will take place on 21st March, before the sale starts.

For the introductory phase, you will need to buy allowances based on your emissions for the previous year, so the allowances bought in April 2012 will be for emissions from April 2011 to March 2012.

For further information please contact Geraldine Bolton at the CBM offices on 0121 601 6350 or email geraldine.bolton@britishmetalforming.com.



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MARCH 1st 2012 FREE BREAKFAST WORKSHOP

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Despite containing the very best in powerful and productive Sheet Metal software (the system was developed under the watchful eye of Trumpf GmbH), **SpaceClaim Engineer** offers an incredible ease of use and cost of ownership that even the smallest business can accommodate.

Join us in March for a Breakfast Session to see why 20,000 Licences of SpaceClaim Engineer have already been sold in the first few years since its launch. Full details of SpaceClaim Engineer will appear in the next issue of the CBM magazine; the free workshop will be hosted at the **National Metalforming Centre** with a start time of **8.30am** when breakfast will be served.

For any queries please contact:

Adrian Williams
Managing Director
CPI Technologies Ltd

Mobile: +44(0)7810 836664,

Email: Adrian.williams@cpitech.co.uk.

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Apprentices are good for your business, making you more competitive and providing skilled staff for the future, they are also supported by Government funding.

So what's stopping you?

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It may be some or all of the above. Whatever those barriers are, Sementa's Apprenticeship Service can take the bureaucracy, and complexity out of recruiting and employing an apprentice, allowing you to realise the benefits without the headaches.

Industry faces huge skills shortages and hiring the right skills is becoming increasingly expensive, so apprentices are a smart option.

How can Sementa help?

Sementa provides a comprehensive management service covering apprenticeship schemes, access to public funding, recruitment, sourcing quality candidates and learner management and monitoring. This service is free for employers.

Sementa is the Sector Skills Council for Engineering, Manufacturing and Science and we are the experts in managing apprenticeships for these industries.

Contact us 0845 643 9001 www.semta.org.uk customerservices@semta.org.uk

Could tornado be the answer?



Metal thieves are a major problem for many CBM members, so we hope to meet West Midlands police shortly, to see if a regional anti-theft initiative could go nationwide.

Operation Tornado has been devised by police forces in the North-East, to catch crooked scrap dealers.

All dealers are asked to register with their local force, then told to examine a photo ID each time they buy scrap metal.

Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria forces are targeting the 240 registered dealers in their area until July.

The initiative is backed by BT, Network Rail, the Association of Chief Police Officers, British Transport Police, the Home Office, and the British Metals Recycling Association.

"We appreciate that it's only a pilot at this stage, but it would be good to hear that it is being monitored outside the North-East," said CBM chief executive Dennis Kent.

"West Midlands Police is the largest force outside London, and I think if they backed this approach that it would go a long way to seeing the scheme introduced nationwide."

For further information please contact Kirsi Lintula at the CBM offices on 0121 601 6350 or email: kirsi.lintula@britishmetalforming.com.

European Commission announce anti-dumping measures for stainless fasteners

On 4th January 2012, the European Commission published details of anti-dumping measures applicable to imports of various stainless steel fasteners originating in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. This follows the publication last October of the Commission's expiry review, relating to the original measures imposed in 2005.

The European Industrial Fasteners Institute is named as the agency requesting the expiry review, and hence the continuation of the tariff measures against imports of stainless bolts and screws from these two nations.

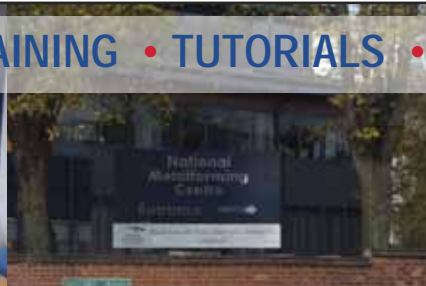
The measures imposed are a tariff of 27.4% for China and 23.6% for Taiwan, with lower rates for certain "co-operating" companies in both countries that were included in the Commission's original investigation. The lower rates range between 8.8% and 16.1%, and are similar to those published in Regulation (EC) No 1890 of 2005, as it applied to China and Taiwan.



The full details can be read in Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 2/2012.

For further information please contact CBM Fastener Specialist, John Newnham, at the CBM offices, on 0121 601 6350 or email: john.newnham@britishmetalforming.com.

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members news

Engineers designs on Wimbledon

A roof doesn't get much more complex than that created for Wimbledon's Centre Court, and Black Country engineering firm **Metsec** was part of the team that made it a reality. The design, from architects HOK, includes a retractable centre portion with an intricate and unusual fixed perimeter.

The challenge for those constructing the fixed roof lay in the requirement for cladding to be multi-faceted, creating a 'shadow gap' effect designed to produce an interesting pattern in shades of green when the roof is viewed by TV cameras from above.

Metsec's engineers rose to the challenge of producing the purlin framework to support the fixed roof, working in partnership with steel fabricators and consulting engineers.

'Getting the right design was complex in terms of the load bearing support details and wind analysis supplied to us,' recalls Roy Burns, divisional MD of Metsec's Lightweight Structural Systems.

It took Metsec just under two weeks to detail and manufacture the purlins and deliver to site, once the design had been agreed, tested and signed off.

The company has been designing and manufacturing cold roll formed steel products at its premises in Oldbury in the Midlands for over 75 years.



Source: Express & Star January 2012

CBM events diary

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

• IOSH Managing Safety - 22 February

'Managing Safety' is the nationally recognised H&S qualification for managers, supervisors and team leaders in any sector or organisation.

• CBM H, S & E Group Meeting 23 February

The CBM H,S&E Group meet quarterly to discuss relevant H&S issues. The recent Accident Reduction in Metalforming Sector (ARMS) initiative has embarked on a strategy to reduce the accidents in the sector and subsequently reduce insurance premia.

• IOSH Safety for Senior Executives 15 March

The IOSH Safety for Senior Executives course is a one day course aimed at Directors and Senior Executives (not managers).

• EAMA finance and export services event - 27 March

The aim of this event is to help EAMA (Engineering and Machinery Alliance) member firms investigate a variety of different sources of potential finance and funding for growth and export support without obligation.

• MACH 2012 - 16 April

MACH 2012 takes place 16-20 April at the NEC, Birmingham.

• Fastener Fair Hannover - 24 April

The exhibition runs from 24-26 April 2012.

• IOSH Managing Safety - 06 June

'Managing Safety' is the nationally recognised H&S qualification for managers, supervisors and team leaders in any sector or organisation.

• IOSH Safety for Senior Executives 07 June

The IOSH Safety for Senior Executives course is a one day course aimed at Directors and Senior Executives (not managers).

• Subcon 2012 - 12 June

The next Subcon will take on June 12-14, at the NEC, Birmingham.

• IOSH Safety for Senior Executives 06 September 2012

The IOSH Safety for Senior Executives course is a one day course aimed at Directors and Senior Executives (not managers).

• IOSH Managing Safety 12 September

'Managing Safety' is the nationally recognised H&S qualification for managers, supervisors and team leaders in any sector or organisation.

• IOSH Safety for Senior Executives 29 November 20

The IOSH Safety for Senior Executives course is a one day course aimed at Directors and Senior Executives (not managers).

For further information or to book a place please visit:
www.britishmetalforming.com

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Inspection surface table - size 2500 x 1250

For further information please contact:

Bernard Briggs, Quality Manager, Ash and Lacy Perforators

Tel: 0121 565 8026 Email: bbriggs@ashlacyperf.co.uk

• Metsec Plc have the following available:

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or any queries please contact:

David Leggett, Metsec

Tel: 0121 601 6031 Email: dleggett@metsec.com

• Genex UK Ltd is looking to employ the following:

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For any enquiries/applications please contact:

Stewart Beese, Genex UK

Tel: 01922 710 050 Email: stewartb@genexuk.co.uk

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St Helens manufacturer in court over crushed hand

Barry Kelleher lost his little finger and part of the palm on his right hand as a result of the incident at Crane Building Services and Utilities. The 47-year-old from Leigh also needed two skin grafting operations.

The owner of the factory, Crane Ltd, was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after an investigation found the machine could still be operated when a workers' hand was underneath the mould.

Knowsley Magistrates' Court in Huyton was told the machine had been installed at the factory on Delta Road in St Helens in 1967, but had not been upgraded to comply with modern health and safety laws.

The HSE investigation concluded that the most likely explanation is that he inadvertently pressed the foot pedal on the machine while his hand was under the mould.

Crane Ltd pleaded guilty to a breach of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 by failing to prevent workers from being able to access the dangerous parts of the machine while it was operating.

The company, of West Road in Ipswich, was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £4,560 in prosecution costs on 9 December 2011.

Barry Kelleher was off work for seven weeks as a result of his injuries, before returning to work initially for one day a week.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Sarah Wadham added: "It's vital that manufacturers using older machines keep them up to date with modern health and safety standards to protect their workers."

"Crane Ltd should have made sure adequate guarding was in place on its presses to prevent workers being put at risk. It simply shouldn't have been possible for an employee to start a machine while his hand was still under the mould. Manufacturing firms need to act now to prevent incidents like this happening again in the future."

Barry Kelleher was one of more than 3,800 workers who suffered a major injury while at work in the manufacturing industry in Great Britain in 2010/11. Another 27 lost their lives. Information of working safely with machinery is available at www.hse.gov.uk/manufacturing.

Source: HSE/NW/55Crane - 09/12/2011

Source: Express & Star