



2nd Freiberg Leather Days: Leather up to date and 116th SLTC conference



Prof. Dr Michael Stoll, Director FILK GmbH, at the opening session of 2nd Freiberg Leather Days.

The VGCT conference in co-operation with and organised by FILK was held in Sinsheim, Germany 25th and 26th April 2013. VGCT (The Association for Chemistry and Technology in Tanning), was founded in 1949 in order to facilitate scientific and technical research, exchange professional experience and promote young talents. FILK - The Research Institute of Leather and Plastic Sheeting - is a non-university research organisation working on a non-profit basis for those industries once founded as the first German Tanning School in 1889, but now a modern and versatile organisation.

The presentations were diverse ranging from a marketing approach for the leather sector, the performance of leather in automobile instrument panels, restoration of leathers in vintage cars, and biocide regulations and their implications for the leather sector. Other practical presentations included new developments in the transport, handling and packaging of leather within manufacture, the performance of high-performance blades in shaving and the damage that can be created without due care in this operation, practical findings relating to the production of biogas and energy, and the versatility of polymers within leather manufacture.

The event was very comprehensive with more than 140 people in attendance from 15 different countries. 68 companies were represented from a wide range of leather and leather related interests. In particular, the structure of the overall programme and the reception and dinner within the adjacent Auto and Technik Museum Sinsheim enabled a considerable level of networking to take place between the different delegates. The 3rd Freiberg Leather Days event is scheduled to take place 2nd and 3rd June 2014 in Freiberg, Germany. ☺

116th Annual conference of the Society of Leather Technologists and Chemists (SLTC)

The meeting was held at the University of Northampton on 27th April 2013, with more than 80 delegates in attendance. The Atkin Memorial Lecture was presented by Hugh Gilmour being entitled "Life in the leather industry need not be in the pits" where he described his career within the leather industry, and reviewed the leather industry as it now exists within the UK with 22 leather making factories. The needs of the present industry are complex, and the business and technical requirements for success were outlined, with particular regard for those who are now entering the leather industry.

Eight more papers were presented, the topic range covering biocide regulations and their implications for the leather industry, the latest progress with oxidative unhairing, the development and use of enzymes in leather making and the latest development of REACH. The presentation "Leather Industry in the 21st Century" addressed the needs of the leather industry to better respond to negative campaigns which have an anti-leather interest. In particular attention was drawn to the size of the industry – greater value than the meat, sugar, tea, coffee and rubber industries put together – the environmental responsibilities that are accepted by tanners, and examples of corporate and social responsibilities that are found in practice.

Prof Yoko Nishimura and Mr Kashiwa were Japanese guests, respectively presenting a paper entitled "A social history of leather workers: a study of Japanese and British tanners", a film on traditional methods used to produce white leathers tanned using rice husks and vegetable oil, with examples brought to the meeting of traditional leather goods and footballs made from these leathers. ☺



Hugh Gilmour, Managing Director of W J & W Lang, presenting the Atkin Memorial Lecture at 116th Conference of SLTC.



Awards of prizes and certificates, The University of Northampton, Institute for Creative Leather Technologies (ICLT)



Mr Matthew Pellereau, The Master of The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, with recipients of awards at ICLT, The University of Northampton.

The presentation of awards on 30 April 2013 was preceded by a lecture on “An anthropological study of Japanese tanners”, being presented by Prof Yuko Nishimura. The focus was on the development of part of the Japanese leather industry as a craft industry commencing some 1300 years ago. This sector specialised in skilled leather making and centred on the Ichikawa River near to the castle town of Himeji. Specialised white leathers were made where the tannage was mainly based on salt and rape seed oil manually pummelled into dehaired skins, then softened after air drying by perching over a blade. Comparisons were made between the craftsmen who were untouchables in Japan, and the comparative different status in the UK which developed under strong Guild influences.

In the awards ceremony, 25 awards were presented by the Master of The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, Mr Matthew Pellereau. These include Mark Gilmour who received the award for outstanding performance and contribution in respect of Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Leather Technology, from The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers; Eric Salo for outstanding performance and contribution in respect of the MSc Degree in Leather Technology, awarded by *World Leather*. 🌐



Mr Eric Salo, being presented with the World Leather award for outstanding performance and contribution in respect of the MSc Degree in Leather Technology by Mr Simon Yarwood, publisher of World Leather.



The 32nd Congress of the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists (IULTCS)



The 32nd Congress of the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists (IULTCS) was held in Istanbul, Turkey on 29-31 May 2013, organised by the Turkish Member Society DETEK.

For the first time two Merit awards were presented, the candidates being:

Dr Eleanor Brown. Lead Scientist at the Eastern Regional Research Center of the United States Department of Agriculture. Since 1971 she has studied protein structure and investigated the relationships between structure and biological or technological functions, and has led projects designed to reduce the environmental impact of leather production.

Professor Guenter Reich, following a distinguished 37-year career at the German Leather Institute in Freiberg (FILK), the last 26 years as head of the Institute before his retirement in 1993. Since that time he has continued to be active in the leather industry, publishing regularly on leather related subjects and scientific reviews in German leather journals.

The Heidemann Lecture was entitled "Collagen materials-collagen processing. Technical freedom and scientific challenges when transforming collagen into final materials". The authors were M. Meyer and M. Schropfer (FILK) and the lecture was presented by Michael Meyer.

More than 70 papers were presented over the three-day period; the duration of each of the papers was 15 minutes in sessions covering six distinct categories:

Dr Volcan Candar, President of the IULTCS, addressing the Congress with the welcome message during the opening of the event.

- Fundamental research in leather technology
- New developments in chemical products for the tanning industry
- Clean innovative technologies in leather making
- Waste products and by-products
- Use of advanced techniques for leather analysis
- Future of leather technologies and the environment

Between the sessions a series of visual displays in the form of posters were presented that provided further technical content within the categories, with the opportunity for the delegates to discuss the content of these presentations with the authors.

The 10th Asian International Conference on Leather Science and Technology (AICLST), the regional conference of IULTCS, will be held from 23rd to 26th November 2014 in Okayama, Japan (www.aiclst2014.jp).

The 33rd IULTCS Congress will be held 24th to 27th November 2015 in Novo Hamburgo, Brazil (www.iultcs2015.org)



Beast to Beauty conference a success

The fourth Beast to Beauty conference took place in Northampton on June 13. More than 60 delegates attended, representing tanning groups, major retailers, automotive and luxury brands, leather chemicals manufacturers and a wide range of fashion-focused university and college departments from different parts of the UK.

Students from these colleges had funding to attend the conference from the Leathersellers' Company in the City of London.

Speakers included Kevin Sefton, one of the co-founders of Glasgow-based handmade footwear brand Govan Originals, colour trends expert Laura Perryman and Rachel Garwood and Jane Mills from the University of Northampton who talked about the role of leather in design education at the university.

Later, James Lang, marketing director of the Scottish Leather Group, gave a presentation on the work the group has done to reduce its carbon footprint, with the tannery waste-to-energy treatment plant at its Bridge of Weir facility one of the best examples.

Reg Hankey, the chief executive of Pittards, also spoke, focusing his presentation on recent efforts in the global industry to counteract misleading anti-leather campaigns.

The conference closed with a discussion involving Gustavo González Quijano, secretary general of COTANCE, and Dr Gerhard Wolf, the head of the leather technical competence centre at chemicals manufacturer BASF. Both participants agreed that there are valid arguments for attributing 0% of the upstream carbon emissions of cows, sheep and goats to leather's carbon footprint. They expressed hope that the global industry might soon agree on a framework for calculating the carbon footprint of leather and, from there, be able to communicate its position to brands and consumers "with one voice".

They accepted that tanners might face opposition to 0% from finished product brands, but said this did not mean that what they called a flawed methodology of allocating a share of carbon footprint to "non-determining" by-products of the meat industry was any more valid. Nevertheless, they suggested it ought to be possible for the global leather industry to agree to a compromise on 0% to make discussions between tanners and their customers a bit easier.

Beast to Beauty 2013 was jointly organised by leather training consultancy LeatherVise and *World Leather* magazine, with the support of Pittards, the Scottish Leather Group, the University of Northampton and the Leathersellers' Company. 🌐



James Lang



Reg Hankey



Simon Yarwood



Stephen Tierney
and Dr Gerhard Wolf



Gustavo González Quijano