

Celebrating business improvement

Peter Bainbridge, a manufacturing engineer in the Vitrification Plant, has just become the hundredth candidate to complete an NVQ in Business Improvement techniques, at the same time becoming the first person in Cumbria to gain the award at level four – the most prestigious on offer.

Past and present NVQ candidates, representatives from GEN II - including Managing Director Mike Smith, Managing Director of Epoch2000, Ray Sheppard, and Sellafield Ltd's Director of Capability Jim Gibson were among those who attended a presentation ceremony held at Sellafield's Training and Development Centre on 12 February to watch Peter pick up his certificate.

Improvements Engineer and organiser of the event, Trevor Palmer, welcomed the group before inviting a number of key attendees to take to the stage to say a few words.

Managing Director of Sellafield Ltd, Barry Snelson, then presented Peter with his certificate. On picking up his certificate Peter said: "I am very proud to have achieved the NVQ level 4 in Business improvements, I feel the level 2 was laying the foundation, level 3 adding the building blocks and the level 4 has cemented it all together."

"I was lucky to have the support of both the Management and shop floor in the various improvement initiatives. The NVQ process gives Sellafield the chance to embed improvements from the shop floor up and I would advise all areas of the site to look at it as another tool to improve production."

Congratulating Peter, Barry said: "As a company we have put our efforts behind certificated training and one of its most important manifestations, for the long term future of Sellafield, is our NVQ in Business Improvement Techniques.

"I am proud that the site has responded so enthusiastically and it is with even greater pride that I congratulate Peter on his tremendous success in achieving level 4 in this topic which is so vital to our improvement target. I know and appreciate the work and effort he has expended and this award is a true testament to his abilities."

As well as Peter's certificate, two other awards were presented; one for best individual achievement over the last 12 months which was presented by Barry to Peter and one for best team achievement over the last 12 months which was presented by Jim Gibson to a trio based in a workshop in the Separation Area comprising Mike Bullock, Jimmy Rooney, Neil Corrie.

Trevor Palmer then closed the event by reminding everyone of the significance and importance of the business improvements NVQ: "We need a firm foundation to deliver improvements and tune into a workforce who can demonstrate change and this can be done with the help of the business improvement technique programme."

Other attendees at the event included Paul Clarke, Head of Business Improvement for Sellafield Ltd, Christina McMinn, Head of Manufacturing Improvements for Sellafield Ltd, and Head of High Level Waste Plants, Steve Bostock.

The NVQ's are delivered through the Business Improvement Group and are assessed by the Epoch2000 group with the certificates awarded from EMTA Awards Ltd – the awarding body through GEN II.

For further information on NVQ requirements or candidate enrolment please contact Trevor Palmer on X80792.



Photographed above: Barry Snelson (left) with Peter Bainbridge

End of an era for Pacific Teal

One of the Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited (PNTL) fleet of ships used for transporting nuclear fuel between the UK and Japan has been taken out of service and sent for recycling.

The Pacific Teal has been used to transport a range of nuclear materials between Europe and Japan since 1982. The Teal left the port at Barrow on Saturday 9 February and is being towed to the Netherlands where it will be cleaned, dismantled and then broken up for recycling.

John Clarke, Managing Director of International Nuclear Services, said: "The Pacific Teal has given more than 20 years of excellent service to the PNTL fleet, making a number of important journeys transporting a range of nuclear materials between Europe and Japan.

"PNTL has successfully completed over 170 shipments in the last 30 years, with the ships safely covering more than five million miles without a single incident resulting in the release of radioactivity, and the Pacific Teal has played a big part in this success. The ship will be replaced by the Pacific Heron."



Photographed left: The Teal in action on one of her many voyages

The decommissioning of the Teal is being undertaken safely and in the most environmentally friendly way possible – all of the steel from the vessel will be recycled.

The method that will be used satisfies all the internationally recognised regulations and guidelines for this kind of operation. These include the Basel Convention, the International Maritime Organisation's recommendations on ship recycling and the International Chamber of Shipping's code of practice. It also satisfies the UK Environment Agency's Waste Export Regulations.



The final voyage: the Teal leaves Barrow for the last time, bound for the Netherlands

Decommissioning looks to the future

The future looks bright for Sellafield Ltd employee Heather Moore, originally an engineering apprentice at GlaxoSmithKline, who has become a key player in formulating the future decommissioning strategies at Sellafield.

The New Year saw a giant step forward in the working relationship between Sellafield Ltd and the Dalton Institute of the University of Manchester (UoM), as Heather embarked on a UoM PhD degree in Decommissioning Modelling.

Heather, from the Decommissioning Technical team, will be undertaking research into a new type of decommissioning business model in support of future decommissioning and the overall Site strategy.

The evolution of current and future technologies used to decommission the facilities at Sellafield is being led by Dr Steve Hepworth, Manager of the Decommissioning Technical team. To achieve this successfully partnerships between Decommissioning, academia and the supply chain will be vital, and Heather's work will play a key role in their development.

The new business model Heather will be researching stems from an idea formulated by Professor Bernard Kelly, the Chair in Nuclear Decommissioning Engineering from the University of Manchester. The idea is to create a model which can be used for the entire decommissioning process on the Sellafield site. The process will generate outputs to show schedule, cost, resources required, waste etc.



From left to right: Dr Steve Hepworth, Professor Bernard Kelly, Heather Moore and Dr Paul Mort

Dr Paul Mort, Head of Decommissioning Support, further explained. He said: "A model of this kind is required to link together known and assumed decommissioning data in order to predict the downstream effects over time on such outputs as cost, waste volumes and resource requirements."

Nissan visit for directors

Sellafield's Directors and representatives from the Business Improvement Team recently visited the car manufacturing factory Nissan, in Sunderland, as part of a familiarisation visit of an industry that has successfully implemented 'Lean' manufacturing techniques.

'Lean manufacturing' is the production of goods using less of everything compared to mass production: less waste, less human effort, less manufacturing space, less investment in tools, and less engineering time to develop a new product. It evolved from its beginnings in the Toyota Production System (TPS) in Japan. Many of the most recognizable lean phrases are Japanese terms that have become standard terms in lean.

Managing Director Barry Snelson and his team of Executive Directors, Jon Seddon, Paul Foster, Steve Morgan, Jim Gibson, John Storer, Howard Cooper (in place of Dave Mason) were among those who visited the factory along with Paul Clarke and Andy Thornton from the Business Improvements Team.

The two day visit, which included a tour around the factory meeting the workers, also included a workshop which was led by John Chappell – senior engineering officer of the 31 squadron at RAF Marham, on how to implement lean techniques.

John has successfully implemented lean techniques in front-line Tornado GR4 maintenance at the 31 Squadron RAF Marham and also in Harrier fleet maintenance.

Speaking afterwards MD Barry Snelson said: "The Executive team visited the Nissan Plant at Sunderland and had an object lesson in the benefits of improvement. It was the day they announced 800 extra jobs due to the runaway success of their latest model. This success is built on years of relentless improvements, all simple, but far-reaching, and demonstrates that the British worker can take on and beat anyone. All the techniques we need to learn were in plentiful evidence. All we need to do is to embrace them."

At the heart of lean is customer value. Value is defined as an item or feature for which a customer is willing to pay. Lean is used as a tool to focus resources and energies on producing the value-added features while identifying and eliminating non value added activities. The goal of a lean organization is to be able to deliver the exact product in the exact quantity with the exact quality that the customer needs exactly when they need it thereby making the organisation more capable of producing goods at a lower cost.

Andy Thornton added: "It was a very valuable and worthwhile experience visiting Nissan - the most productive car manufacturing facility in Europe. It was striking to see how hard the people at Nissan work to improve their business; they were so energised. The experiences of John Chappell were invaluable in showing us how we can apply 'Lean' techniques simply and effectively in a safety critical environment at Sellafield."

Also this week... Sellafield's Chaplain Tom Luke has now arrived in South Africa and is hard at work, helping out at Lebone House. Tom is documenting his visit and has now produced three blogs which are available on the Sellafield Ltd website. To read all about his experiences please visit: www.sellafieldsites.com

Event Report

Investigations were launched following the discovery of damage to the stack of one of the three gas turbines at Fellside Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP).

These investigations revealed damage to one of the other stacks too. This led us to investigate the condition of all three stacks and consequently we put in place a number of measures to protect the workforce and buildings in the area.

We have removed the first damaged stack and aim to progress to the second today (Thursday 14 February). We will then be able to check the structural integrity of the third.

Working with the CHP's operator, our priorities are to make the plant safe whilst reducing the wider site's operational activities to recognise the reduced volume and reliability of the steam supply.

The CHP's auxiliary boiler continues to provide a source of steam to the site whilst supply from the three gas turbines is affected.

This involves prioritisation of supply and means some plants have run down whilst other buildings are running on reduced or no heating for a while. We hope to have normal levels restored as soon as possible.

We have kept, and will continue to keep, the NDA and our regulators informed of these changes and the precautions being taken.

The incident has been classified as Below Scale on the International Nuclear Event Scale.

VIP visits to Sellafield 6 February – 13 February 2008 included:

08/02/08 – London University

13/02/08 – Barry Davies, CPNI

13/02/08 – People Management CIPD

13/02/08 – Representatives of UK Embassies Overseas

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