

Safety, security, preparedness and wellbeing

BCGA 2019 Annual Conference review

By Joanna Sampson

Dangerous goods, the environmental energy scene vs Brexit and how gas can decarbonise transport were just some of the areas discussed at the British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA) 2019 Annual Conference.

More than 145 delegates from the compressed gases industry gathered at the Marriott Hotel and Country Club at Worsley Park in Manchester to be updated on the latest developments, current issues and association news – representing the biggest audience ever for a BCGA conference.

Tim Hulbert, BCGA President, officially opened the conference and welcomed delegates to Manchester.

Safety

Jake Lake, BCGA Technical Manager, then kicked off the event, summarising the BCGA's activity over the last 12 months and highlighting how it had been 'another successful year'.

He emphasised the association's mission – to promote safety in the use, storage, transportation and handling of industrial food and medical gases – and provided an overview of the key changes from the various technical and sub-technical committees and their important achievements.

Over the last 12 months, Lake said the BCGA had published 22 new or revised documents, taking the total in circulation to 99, with several more in the pipeline. He also said the BCGA website was getting more than 5,000 hits a month and the association could find out which pages were the most popular, helping to decide future work streams.

In a change to the planned agenda, and

as a result of the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, David Hopper, BCGA Chair of TSC5, took to the stage instead of Peter Henrys to discuss some important developments regarding REACH (Registration, Evaluation Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals in the European Union) and Brexit.

"We want to talk about the things you need to do because things are going to change," he told delegates, warning, "You may not bury your head in the sand, there are things to do."

Just the day prior, the EU and UK had agreed a further delay to Brexit until 31st October (2019). Hopper said with such political uncertainty, there was a very real risk of leaving the EU in a 'disorderly' fashion. He discussed the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), how current compliance to this would disappear overnight in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit, and what the industry needs to do to essentially ensure it is covered going forward – and that its products are not suddenly rendered illegal overnight.

Switching the attention to personal resilience and wellbeing, Colette Heneghan, Director and Founder of wellbeing consultancy Optimum Living, delivered a short, punchy and interactive talk, focusing on the key performance ingredients most people miss.

Heneghan, who is also an author and leading peak performance and wellbeing coach, explained the crucial aspects of nutrition, mindset and lifestyle factors that have the power to affect cognitive performance and energy levels directly.

Environment

Following a mid-morning refreshments break, the conference resumed with a

presentation from Royston Barksby, of biotechnology company DorsaVi, about a new approach using objective movement data to deliver real change.

Barksby explained DorsaVi develops wearable sensor technology that objectively measures human movement and muscle activity and turns this data into actionable insights. In the health and safety space, Barksby said DorsaVi's ViSafe and myViSafe products have been developed to track and measure how people move in real-time work situations so companies can assess high risk movements with objective data and then design fact-based solutions to create a safer work environment.

The environmental energy scene vs Brexit was then discussed by Julie Gartside, Head of Advisory Services at SRL Consulting. Gartside is also Chair of the Emissions Trading Group Domestic Measures working group, which is attended by government departments, the Environment Agency, trade associations and large companies, who discuss and debate changes in UK Energy and carbon policies. The carbon and energy reporting landscape has shifted again, and Gartside informed delegates on what the gases sector needs to know and how the industry needs to respond.

She highlighted two particular schemes, notably ESOS (Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme) and SECR (Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting), a new framework with a purpose to simplify carbon and energy reporting requirements for companies and ensure they have the information required to reduce emissions and energy costs.

How gas can help decarbonise transport was next up on the agenda, presented by

Mike Foster, CEO of Energy and Utilities Alliance, which runs the Natural Gas Vehicle Network. Foster, formerly an MP and Government Minister, spoke about the role of gas, especially for larger, more polluting vehicles such as HGV's, in helping to decarbonise the UK's transport sector. Foster explained that a rise in home deliveries has meant there has been a significant rise of diesel heavy goods vehicles since 1990. "I'll offer you a solution to that challenge: the switch from diesel in heavy goods vehicles to gas – natural gas or biomethane."

"Switching to natural gas in its gas form can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 18% compared to diesel. In its liquefied form, it can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 23% compared to diesel."

"But the better prize is with biomethane. It's an 84% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions on heavy goods vehicles compared with diesel."

Security

With the advent of smart technology ever more pervasive, are we at risk of our houses hacking us? That's a question Tony Gee, Associate Partner at penetration testing and security services firm Pen Test Partners, debated in his presentation about cyber security and how to hack a smart home.

Gee showed delegates how the Internet of Things is bringing attackers inside our homes, spying on our CCTV, hacking our kettles and stealing out stuff. He demonstrated how easy it is to hack common devices and noted that although his talk focused on devices typically used at home, the same flaws are in your smart devices, SCADA networks and corporate devices that industrial gas companies use to manage their sites.

Next up, on behalf of the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), Richard Preston and Jade Fitzgibbon from Greater Manchester Police highlighted the developing threats which may affect the industry sector and what the sector should be doing about them. An update from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Dangerous Goods Division was given by Roh Hathlia, Head



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of the division. He explained that the DfT works closely with the BCGA on both developing policy and improving compliance and discussed what impact Brexit could have on the dangerous good regime in the UK.

Rob Cockerill, *gasworld's* Global Managing Editor, explored the inescapable markets and megatrends shaping the industrial gases business of today and tomorrow, and some of the challenges and opportunities these could present in the years ahead.

"Some of the biggest talking points in the industry are around challenged supply chains, most notably the helium and CO₂ markets, both of which are based upon complex supply chains," Cockerill told delegates. "We've also got this huge backdrop of change going on in the form of digitisation. Automation of operations, Big Data, the Internet of Things, and e-commerce are all changing the traditional business models and cultures within our industry."

"Perhaps the most obvious megatrend is the societal and industrial movement that all of us in this room will no doubt be aware of – clean fuels. We have arguably never been greener or more conscious of the challenges in sustainability we face, as individuals, as a society, and as industries. There is a moral responsibility and a movement to match."

"What this also brings are major

opportunities for our industry in the areas of hydrogen, LNG, carbon capture, and biomethane, and almost a sense of responsibility where our industry's inherent knowledge of these gases or molecules is concerned."

Inspiration

Concluding the day's insights was a motivational talk from Claire Lomas MBE, who became a paraplegic as a result of a horse riding accident in 2007, and made worldwide headlines in 2012 when she completed the London Marathon in a pioneering robotic suit in 17 days.

Lomas later completed the Great North Run 2016 in five days whilst 16 weeks pregnant. She overcame adversity and turned her life around, showing what can be achieved with the right attitude and approach to life – essentially her inspirational message for what was a captivated audience.

BCGA President Tim Hulbert officially closed the conference and confirmed that next year's event will be held on Thursday 23rd April (2020) at the Marriott Hotel & Country Club at Worsley Park in Manchester. Hulbert also announced the news that Doug Thornton, Chief Executive of the BCGA, would be retiring mid-2020.

Speakers and delegates alike reconvened later that evening for the BCGA annual dinner. 