

# Double Celebration at Catalyst!

There was cause for a double celebration at Catalyst, when friends and relatives of the famous Brunner family gathered to witness the naming of the Henry and John Brunner room in the Catalyst archives, and the presentation of two artefacts for permanent display in the museum.

Born and educated in Liverpool, Henry and John Brunner came to Widnes in 1861 to work for John Hutchinson whose offices were based in the very building that today houses Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum and where they later met Ludwig Mond with whom John subsequently formed the chemical company Brunner Mond and Co. in Northwich.

The Henry and John Brunner room was formally opened by George Windsor, Earl of St Andrews whose mother Katharine, Duchess of Kent is descended from the Brunner family, her mother was the granddaughter of Sir John Brunner. Also in attendance was Robert Mee the High Sheriff of Cheshire, Derek Twigg MP for Halton, Alex Cowan, one of the founders of Catalyst and descendants of both Henry and John Brunner.



George Windsor outside the Henry and John Brunner Room

Opening the room, The Earl of St Andrews said "I was delighted to be asked to open the Henry and John Brunner Room at the Catalyst Centre. Catalyst does fantastic work in showing young people (and not just young people) the fascination, excitement and importance, both today and in the past, of chemistry and the chemical industry, while not ignoring its negative aspects such as damage to both health and the environment. I wish you all success in your work. We need chemistry more than ever to meet the challenges of today's world, from clean and renewable energy to carbon capture and storage."

The two artefacts presented to Catalyst by Sir Hugo Brunner, Great Grandson of Sir John Brunner are family heirlooms and comprise a ceremonial key that was presented to Sir John Brunner when he opened the Transporter Bridge in 1905 and a silver table bell, also presented to Sir John Brunner on the re-opening of the Transporter Bridge in 1913 after its generator was replaced by mains power. These artefacts will be on permanent display at Catalyst. CEO of Catalyst, Martin Pearson commented "It has been a delight to host the extended Brunner family here at Catalyst. Their family is directly linked to our local heritage and their continued support to everything we do at Catalyst is very much appreciated. The gift of the Transporter bell and key will form a significant addition to our archive and one I'm sure our visitors will enjoy seeing and reading about the history of the Transporter bridge in our Brunner gallery."



Sir Hugo Brunner and Martin Pearson with the ceremonial key and the silver table bell that was presented to Catalyst

Chair of Catalyst Trustees, Dr Diana Leitch MBE said "Although we have named rooms after some of the greats of the early chemical industry world in Widnes – William Gossage, Henry Deacon and John Hutchinson, we have never had a named room commemorating the work of the brothers Henry and John Brunner. This was a great opportunity to do that in the presence of assembled descendants of both brothers – Henry the qualified and knowledgeable scientist who spoke German from his student days in Switzerland and John the gifted entrepreneurial clerical and financial person. Henry's work with German-speaking Ludwig Mond led to the first-ever adoption of Mond's sulphur recovery process at Hutchinson's Works where he went on to be Works Manager. In 1881 he was a founder member of the Society of Chemical Industry (SCI) which started in Widnes as the Lancashire Chemical Society. The room is a fitting tribute to these greats of the Victorian 'Northern Powerhouse' which Widnes was and is rising to be again. Catalyst is very proud to be part of that"

## Gexcon UK welcomes new energy transition technical lead

Gexcon UK has welcomed Dr Karina Almeida Leñero as Energy Transition Technical Lead & Business Development Manager to support its continued growth plans.

Karina will focus on helping companies entering the alternative energy value chain, from hydrogen production, transportation, storage, CCS, biogas and other bio-derived energy sources. A key part of the role will be working with customers wishing to transition from fossil to alternative fuels, through to research and development and demonstration projects.

With a strong scientific background and broad knowledge of process safety, Karina has worked with leading organisations and contributed research papers and presentations to the field of chemistry and process safety.

She has held positions as Senior Safety Design Engineer and Process Safety Technical Lead with TGE Gas Engineering and spent 14 years with Shell Global Solutions where she progressed from Research Chemist to Technical Safety Engineer.



Karina said: "What attracted me to Gexcon was its involvement with hydrogen projects and renewables, which is something I have wanted to revisit from my background with biofuels and energy efficiency.

"The oil and gas industry has learned process safety the hard way after many serious accidents costing many lives, injuries and environmental damage. We cannot afford for the same to happen with alternative energies. It is imperative that lessons learnt in other industries are applied.

"This is where Gexcon can have an impact, using its expertise and knowledge to ensure an appropriate process safety methodology is applied to all emerging energy technologies."

Karina, originally from Mexico, holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Amsterdam which has enabled her to apply knowledge to the development of energy-efficient processes including the extraction of second generation biofuels from marine algae.

Karina is also experienced in hazard identification, consequence modelling, dust explosions, functional safety as well as risk assessment and mitigation.