

# Spring 2020 Newsletter

Cumbria Members Group

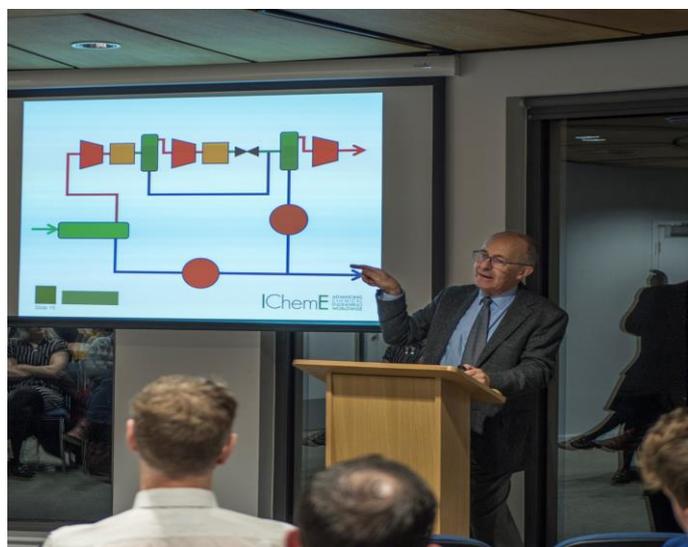
**IChemE** ADVANCING  
CHEMICAL  
ENGINEERING  
WORLDWIDE

*Welcome to the spring 2020 edition of the Cumbria Members Group newsletter. Our aim is to support the professional development of Chemical Engineers in our area, for all ages and levels of experience.*

## IChemE President Talk Review

In February, the Cumbria Members Group were fortunate to be visited by IChemE President, Stephen Richardson. Stephen delivered an excellent and thought-provoking talk on his vision for the future of IChemE, and his experience as an expert witness on the Piper Alpha and Ocean Odyssey inquiries.

On the future of IChemE, he said one of his main priorities was to ensure university courses taught more of what he called 'mastery', effectively more problem solving, abstract thinking and practical skills. For example, he was insistent that all graduates should be able to walk up to a distillation column on a plant and tell which end was which!



The second part of Stephen's talk was based upon his experience with the 1988 Piper Alpha Disaster, where 167 people died due to an accident on a North Sea oil rig.



He explained that it was impossible to determine the cause of the accident with 100% certainty, however an informed 'best guess' had to be made from the available evidence, which mainly consisted of testimony from surviving workers who were on the oil rig at the time. The investigation team then looked at the potential root causes; the causes requiring the least number of fault events to occur were most likely to have been the cause of the accident. The enquiry found that the most likely cause was that a standby condensate pump had been turned on, with its pressure safety valve removed for maintenance. A blind flange had been fitted in its place with a poor-fitting seal, which ruptured when there was an overpressure.

## AGM Review

In November, we were joined by Emma Porter, board member of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP), who gave us an engaging presentation on delivering Cumbria's Local Industry Strategy. The local strategy is based upon the government's national industrial strategy, which outlines plans to boost UK productivity.

Emma noted that Cumbria was unique in England and faced many challenges:

- Unusual 'polycentric' industrial structure
- Productivity is 11-13% below UK average, but has been improving recently
- Cumbria has good employment rates and good average household incomes
- However some communities have been left behind with high/persistent levels of deprivation and poor health
- Cumbria has lowest number of people with graduate level qualifications in England

The vision of the CLEP is to promote Cumbria as *the* place to live, work, visit and invest sustainably – where exceptional industry and innovations meets a breathtakingly beautiful productive landscape. A place marketing campaign is currently being deployed to encourage people to move to/work in Cumbria.



*Excellent turnout at our Inter-institute quiz in December*



*Two of our members promote IChemE and whynotchemeng at a local careers fair*



## Your Committee

Toby Cushion – Chair

Jenny Sykes – Secretary/Events

Phil Murphy – Treasurer

Dan Pocock – Communications

Harry Brook – STEM

Lee Marquis – Mentor coordination

## Upcoming Events

Carrs Flour Mill Tour

TBC April 2020

Silloth