

n e w s f r o m  
**BROTHERTON**

The community newsletter of Brotherton Speciality Products Limited

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# Future growth planned under new ownership

**M**arch saw a change of ownership for Brotherton, when its parent, Church & Dwight Co Inc, of New Jersey, USA, sold its shareholding to the Esseco Group of Italy.

The news came just two years after the formation of a joint venture between Brotherton and Esseco, which saw Brotherton become the biggest producer of sulphites in the UK.

Brotherton enjoyed a sustained period of growth after becoming part of Church & Dwight in 1985 and substantially developed its Calder Vale Road site.

Formed in 1921, the Esseco Group is privately owned and a world leader in the manufacture of sulphur-based chemicals.

## Profitable

The company's plant in Trecate, close to Milan, employs more

than 250 people and produces a range of materials for the chemical, food, imaging, oilfield, pulp & paper, agricultural and water treatment industries.

Esseco's philosophy is to identify highly profitable products and market niches and to invest in selected strategic areas.

The company's excellent financial results show an average 12% annual growth in the last 10 years.

Esseco products - now including those made by Brotherton - find their way into more than a billion homes worldwide.

In addition to its UK link with Brotherton, Esseco has established a similar operation in the USA and has a network of other subsidiaries working alongside some of the major wine producers in Asia, North and South America, South Africa and across Europe.

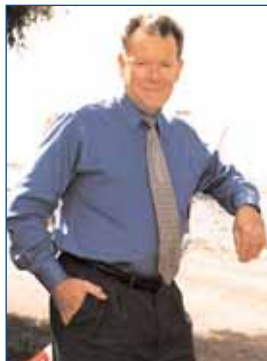


**Left: Esseco's new headquarters**

## ATS HELPS BEAT ACID RAIN: CENTRE PAGES

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**B**rotherton's newly-announced merger with the Esseco Group (see front page), is one of the most significant developments in the company's 130-year history.



Whilst acknowledging the progress we had under previous owners (American-based Church & Dwight Co Inc.), Esseco will provide a much better strategic fit. We share the same goals, our mainline activities have more in common and both companies have a broader range of operational similarities.

Like Brotherton, Esseco has a uniquely-experienced senior management team and several cross-company meetings have already taken place to put future growth plans in place.

Despite our different geographical locations - Esseco is based near Milan, in Trecate, Italy - we both speak the same working language.

Esseco is totally involved in the chemical manufacturing business, as are Brotherton.

We first began working together just over four years ago. The results of that partnership went on to exceed both parties' expectations. This paved the way for further collaboration, which has ultimately resulted in this acquisition.

Esseco was impressed with Brotherton's UK operation and is committed to helping us develop on a worldwide basis through its extensive overseas network.

It all points to an exciting future, with a parent company that even understands football... and doesn't call it soccer!

**Roger Perry**  
Managing Director



**ABOVE:** a picture of concentration as the pupils focus on a laboratory experiment conducted by Managing Director, Roger Perry.  
**BELOW:** temperature testing with Safety & Training Manager, Alan Tann.

# Horbury schoolchildren rise to the 'challenge'

**C**hildren from Horbury Bridge Junior & Infants School were among the recent visitors to Brotherton's Calder Vale Road site, as part of the 'Children Challenging Industry' education initiative.

Thirty youngsters, aged 9 & 10, enjoyed a guided tour of the plant, followed by a series of demonstrations and easy-to-understand 'experiments' to test their awareness and budding chemical skills.

These involved taking temperatures, testing pipe connections and turning a liquid solution into crystals.

The Children Challenging Industry project began in 1996 and aims to create enthusiasm for learning science amongst primary school children.

Classroom-based training is combined with liaison with local science-based manufacturing companies, enabling pupils to see how the science they learn at school is used in a 'real life' context.

"Children love the opportunity to do something completely different, and the

experiments are designed to test their problem solving capabilities." commented Brotherton's Safety & Training Manager, Alan Tann.

Brotherton are one of many companies across the north of England who host site visits every year. Working closely with advisory teachers, the company plans and conducts a stimulating, memorable and safe tour for primary children.

"The object is to give youngsters a bite-sized insight into how a company like ours operates and some of the everyday tasks we undertake," continued Alan, who added that this was the third such visit Brotherton had hosted in recent years.

As well as being educational, it's great fun too, as this summary from 10 year old Lizzie testifies: "We went to a chemical factory called Brotherton. We learnt how to connect pipes together, which I really liked. It was fun. I learnt that it's very enjoyable to be a scientist and that it is not all about doing experiments."



## Combating the acid rain threat to agriculture

**A** reduction in 'acid rain' levels - thanks to the increasingly environmentally-conscious way we live and work today - has ironically had an adverse effect on our agricultural industry. Cleaner air can lead to a reduction in soil fertility, as sulphur is one of the essential elements in soil that plants need to thrive.

One of the principal ways to combat this is by the addition of ammonium thiosulphate (ATS), which is increasingly being seen as a safe and effective way to aid high productivity.

Adding ATS to liquid fertilisers supplies sulphur to the soil to ensure maximum



crop potential - particularly for oil seed rape, which is in great demand to help produce the new generation of bio-fuels.

Brotherton manufacture several thousand tonnes of ATS per year, most of which is drilled directly into the ground, to improve the plant uptake of nitrogen and reducing contamination of surface water and ground water

ATS is also widely used as the most common component of photographic fixing agent, especially for rapid development. Other applications include:

- Extracting silver from ores - to convert silver compounds into soluble silver.

- For paper manufacture and dechlorination of water - thiosulphate removes chlorine from water or from solutions used to bleach paper pulp.

- As a whitening agent - some materials are weakened or yellowed when bleached. Thiosulphate solutions can be used to whiten cotton fabrics, bone, straw, and ivory.

# Life at the sharp end suits Frank just fine!

**F**rank Lockwood is used to working at the 'sharp end'... For almost 20 years before joining Brotherton he was part of the team that prepared new coal faces, working underground at three local former collieries: Nostell, Hemsworth and Frickley.

And now he's moved back above ground, Frank's retained his frontline status as one of Brotherton's two Gatehouse Security Officers - the first point of contact for anyone visiting the company's Calder Vale Road site.

A proud veteran of the miners' strike, back in the late 1980s, Frank told us he really misses the unique camaraderie that the job offered.

"They were great times but when the strike was over, I was ready for something different," he admitted.

After Frickley closed, Frank had a three-month stint at Asda, but couldn't settle. Then a friend of his who worked at Brotherton told him about a job opportunity and he went on to join the bicarbonates team.

That was 12 years ago, with Frank switching to take over in the gatehouse in 2004.

"I enjoyed my time in bicarb," said Frank, "but after so long underground, crawling about in seams often no more than a few feet high, my knees were shot and I opted for a change of role when it became available.

"I had to have some stainless steel replacement parts fitted, or I couldn't have walked, never mind worked," he explained. "I'm like the bionic man now!"

Most of his time is spent ensuring tanker drivers and contractors are aware of the regulations governing visitors to Brotherton. It's a complex task overseeing the movement of up to 20 heavy goods vehicles a day, but nothing passes in and out of the company's gates without Frank's approval.

## Friendly nature

"It's a job where you've got to be able to get on well with everyone," he outlined. "I've got a friendly nature and enjoy meeting people, so it's an ideal job for me," he enthused.

Describing himself as a "proud Yorkshireman", Frank's a big Rugby League fan and long-time supporter of Castleford Tigers, who won promotion to the Super League last season. He's also a keen fisherman, travelling as far as Cornwall and Scotland in search of something to hook.

Although he laments the passing of the mining industry, Frank confessed that many things have improved since the local pits closed. "The whole area is cleaner and overall everyone enjoys a better standard of living nowadays," he mused.

"Mining was just about the only option when I left school," he recalled. "There's more opportunity for youngsters today."

Speaking of youngsters, Frank gets a great deal of pleasure spending time with his grandson, Jared, who's seven. Frank's wife, Linda, is also well-known on site - regularly bringing in a mouth-watering selection of home-baked treats for the staff.

