

• AGM lights fire under SLTC committee

SAF AFRICAN LEATHER

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
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SLTC plans to make convention the highlight of the industry's year again

We'll bounce back!



Speakers Jay Irkhede (DTI), Marcus Breulmann (Stahl), Karl Flowers (Authenticae), Ernest Heunis (SHALC), Jacques van As (Le Croc), Christine Powley-Williams (SATRA), and Louis van Alphen (Nucleo Technologies).

Nottingham Road, SA – By the usual measures, the 64th annual convention of the Society of Leather Technologists & Chemists (SA Section) last weekend would have been considered a flop:

- Just 37 delegates in total, and only 4 tanneries represented.
- Outgoing president **Lionel Hughes** was unable to attend, throwing incoming president **Quintin Marais** in at the deep end without any prepared speeches.
- Because of the lateness of the organisation of this convention, several normally reliable delegates had other commitments.
- **Tony Stottelaar**, the last of the 7 scheduled speakers, had to cancel the Thursday before the convention.
- On the first day of the convention, a DTI official informed treasurer **Warren Phipps** that CTFL chief director **Abisha Tembo** and footwear director **Jaywant Irkhede** could not stay at the conference hotel as it was not on a government-approved list, leaving the society with 2 rooms to pay for.

In the event, the papers were all well received, and the social side was every bit as lively as at previous conventions. The food and accommodation provided by the Brahman Hills Hotel were very good, and as secretary **Nicola Phipps** said, with some feeling, it was also her first convention when there were no complaints about those aspects.

What made members sit up and pay attention, however, was the fiery AGM that followed, starting at about 15.30 and lasting till after dark.

During the (normally routine) discussion about the society's finances, TST's **Thomas Schreiber** made an impassioned attack on the organisation of the event, declaring he would "not be back" next year.

There were several other calls from the floor for the society to change the way it operated. Specifically:

- Reduce the costs of the conventions;
- Market the conventions, especially to tannery managements;
- Arrange speakers earlier and promote their presentations.
- Build membership numbers.

Committees under attack often react defensively – this one did not.

By the end of the AGM, it had been agreed that:

- The 2017 convention will return to La Wiida, in Gauteng, because of its relatively lower rates, and to be closer to the biggest concentration of tanneries in the country.
- Discounts will be offered to students and for early booking.
- The committee is to draw up a questionnaire which Warren Phipps and BASF's **Ulf Oehl** will send to tannery managements, asking for input on what would draw them to the conventions.
- There is to be much more publicity about the convention and the SLTC through *S&V African Leather* and *S&V Weekly Newsletter*.

There were other suggestions to be followed up:

Guest speaker **Christine Powley-Williams**, a past president of the UK SLTC, said that organisation had rescued its annual convention by cutting expenses, moving from a country hotel to a central city location and a hotel which could provide a dinner. "It's very beautiful here," she said, "but that's essentially for the partners, not the delegates."

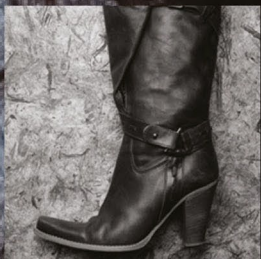
She will also ask the UK body to assist with sponsorship of the SA Section, and to reduce the cost of membership.

To page 5



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SLTC Convention

From page 3 Fellow speaker and former LIRI/ISTT staff member **Karl Flowers** suggested a return to the commercial element of earlier conventions, when LIRI, as well as chemical and machinery companies, used it as a marketing forum to a captive audience running in parallel with the presentations. “Some people were so busy selling they didn’t get to hear any of the papers,” he said. Along similar lines, Oehl proposed a mini fair of chemicals and machinery at the convention as a draw card for tanners.

Flowers said some American leather companies treated attendance to the American Leather Chemists Association annual convention as a tax-free bonus for staff. There has already been some follow-through. By the Monday after the convention, La Wiida had already been booked for May 26-28 next year, with the quote to follow.

It won’t all be plain sailing. Lanxess’ **Bjorn Jonsson**, who was designated – after the event – as the new vice president, said it was concerning that none of the committee members had more than 3 years’ experience on the committee, following the resignation of **Sam Wells**.

On that note, the AGM did vote on 2 more committee members, **Andrew Lang**, of Rolfes Chemicals, and **Jacques van As**, of Le Croc. The full committee is Quintin Marais (president), Bjorn Jonsson (vice president), Warren Phipps (treasurer), Nicola Phipps (secretary), Johan Yzelle, Ulf Oehl, Tony Dickson, Jacques Van As, and Andrew Lang.

At the end of the AGM, Schreiber was asked whether he’d heard enough to consider attending next year’s convention: “Last year I swore I wouldn’t come to this one,” he admitted, to considerable mirth. The odds are he will be there, with partner **Volker Gundert**, as paid-up members.



Alex Steyn, Warren Phipps, Naseer Ahmed, Nicola Phipps, Marcus Breulmann, Usman Bajwa, Karené and Detlef Wedekind.



Ernest Heunis and Abisha Tembo.



Benedict Platjies, Manie and Betsy Strydom, Ruben and Sunette Adams, Dirk Venter (back).



Gert Bosch won the raffle for an expensive bottle of whiskey, and shared it with a remarkably large number of people.



Proud dad: Granville Steyn with Gianni and Jeannot.



Johan Venter, Andrew Lang, Paul Oliaro, Quintin Marais, Ernest Heunis.



Jacques van As, Sonel and Andrew Lang, Quintin Marais, Tammy Green, Johan Venter, Ana and Paul Oliaro.



Ronald Clancy, Detlef Wedekind, Granville Steyn.



Petro van Tonder, Benedict Platjies, Karl Flowers, Stephan Heunis, Jacques van As.



Heleen and Grant Manley.



Dirk Venter, Gert Bosch, Benedict Platjies, Thomas Schreiber.

Mike Ing of the Ing Thing, who lives about 30 kms from the convention hotel, “popped in to say hi to the guys and blow a few cobwebs out of the Harley”.



During the presentation on a possible Leather Research Institute, Dr Clive Jackson-Moss of the ISTT contributed live via Skype. Listening to him are Warren Phipps, Quintin Marais and Karl Flowers.

THE PAPERS

Marcus Breulmann, Stahl: Reducing COD and BOD values – The effects of Catalix GSX and 150 on removing fatliquors from waste water.
Jaywant Irkhede, the DTI: The leather & footwear sector development strategic intent – a detailed look at past, present and future interventions by government in the leather, footwear and leather goods industries.

Karl Flowers, Authenticae: Can a Leather Research Institute help the South African leather industry? An introduction to the detailed consultation he will undertake in the industry.

Jacques van As, Le Croc: Report on the experiences of the 10 students attending the postgraduate M.Sc. course at the Institute for Creative Leather Technologies, University of Northampton.

Christine Powley-Williams, SATRA Technology: The alternative 5S’s – SATRA, Silt, South Africa, SLTC (and Sunshine, hopefully) – a detailed look at the services SATRA offers, as well as some feedback on the SLTC UK.

Louis van Alphen, Nucleo Technologies: The DigiTan Skin Management System.



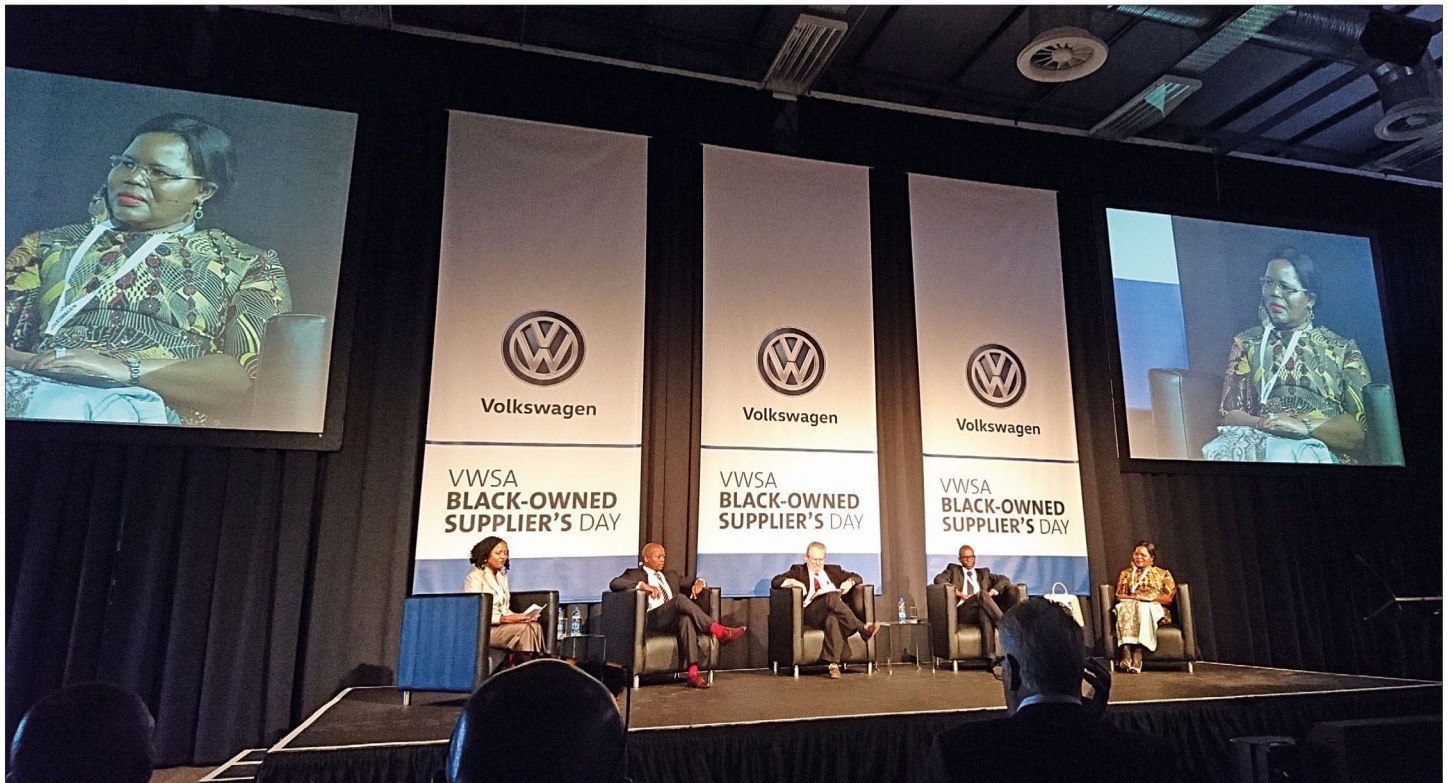
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VW 'black-owned suppliers project' a boost for Handel Street



Trade & Industry Minister Rob Davies (centre) leads a panel discussion on the project.

From Ashraf Ismail, marketing director, Handel Street Upholsterers

Roodepoort, SA – Handel Street was one of 45 black-owned companies – out of 430 applicants – which were selected by Volkswagen SA to exhibit their goods and services at VW's first 'black-owned suppliers' day in Uitenhage early in May.

Guests included the Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies, and MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism in the Eastern Cape, Sakhumzi Somyo, and the chief executives of Toyota, Ford and Mercedes in South Africa.

Handel Street's relevance to VW is that we form part of a team of elite black industrialist companies which provide specialist services in respect of each market segment.

Handel Street, being a leader at aftermarket level in terms of leather interiors, was selected partly based on the BBBEEE codes, partly on Handel Street's ability to provide products which meet VW standards.

VW also rated our supply and service to other manufacturers for whom we are already manufacturing, being Nissan SA, Toyota SA, Hyundai Kia Group, Chrysler Fiat Group, and other motor manufacturers whereby we have passed the necessary OEM standards in complying with various specifications and international manufacturing standards.

Currently most of our business with VW is at aftermarket level, but this new platform gave us access to specific people in the VW organization whereby we can develop our business further in becoming a line supplier to VW as well, working on specialist bespoke projects and component supply.

Opportunities presented are tremendous for us as a sewing house as the expertise needed to perform at OEM level is very different to the aftermarket. By working with DTI and VW as well as other motor manufacturers like Mercedes Benz, from whom we received a bursary for mentorship programmes a few months ago, will greatly help in developing a truly South African manufacturer of aftermarket and OEM leather interiors.

No other sewing companies of our size and nature exhibited.

Most of the other companies were engineering companies and new black industrialists looking to enter the automotive industry. – [+27 (0)11 766 3142, ashraf@handelstreet.co.za, www.handelstreet.co.za]



Handel Street marketing director Ashraf Ismail on his stand.



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Smaller herd, reduced meat demand balance out, but hide numbers will also drop

From Rudie Nieuwoudt, Midland Tannery

The drought it still having an effect. Higher-than-normal numbers of weaners are being offered to the market ahead of winter because of poor grazing conditions, and we expect that to continue for another month or 2.

Rain in badly affected areas now would be too late to affect the situation, because the growing season has past. For severely diminished fields it will take a couple of years to recover. Rain in our area, the northern Free State, has been below average, but reasonable.

All the big feedlots are fully stocked at the moment, but many of the smaller feedlots have closed until the situation improves, the reason being that they don't have the cash flow to feed at these high prices and sell at a continuous loss.

Since last year, the whole mechanism has been skewed against feedlots: their selling



Rudie Nieuwoudt.

prices are too low to compensate for high weaner prices and high feed costs.

The total number of breeding cattle in the country has decreased significantly because of the drought, and there will be fewer calves available next year for feeding. However, the demand for red meat has dropped as the prices continue to increase, so the market will stay more-or-less in equilibrium – from a meat perspective, anyway. The number of hides available has been dropping since the beginning of the year, and will continue to do so.

There will be a further reduction in heifers next year if there are good rains, as farmers will try to rebuild their breeding herd. This will lead to less feeding, reduced slaughters and inevitably fewer hides.

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Footwear & Leather goods

Midland predicts 'normal' orders from factories for the rest of the year

Wolwehoek, SA – Midland Tannery has seen orders from footwear manufacturers start to pick up, and expects to be busy until the end of the year, GM **Rudie Nieuwoudt** said. “That’s the normal pattern, and it doesn’t seem to be different this year. Our customers appear to have reasonable orders.”

He said orders over the first 4 months of the year had been a little up on the previous year, “but you have to remember this is, essentially, a new business, growing from a small beginning”.

He said Midland, like its predecessor, Gringo Leather, was known for its pigmented and suede splits, “but we’re doing more and more full grain leathers, for men’s and women’s footwear”.

On the women’s side, he said Midland was producing “very thin, soft leathers” for pumps – a new market for the tannery.

It also sells smaller quantities to handbag and belt manufacturers.

Gringo wasn’t linked to a source of hides, and battled to get good quality hides. Midland is part of the Midland Group, which includes feedlots, an abattoir and a wet blue tannery.

“The group as a whole has plenty of hides, and Midland Tannery, the finishing plant, doesn’t yet have the business or the capacity to use more than a small proportion of the hides. The majority are supplied as wet blues to the automotive industry or are exported.” – [+27 (0)82 316 3133, rudie@midlandleather.co.za, www.midlandleather.co.za]

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Clean processing technology and sustainable production in the tanning industry

Reducing Salt in Tannery Wastewater – Part 2

In the previous article, the processing of green hides was discussed, along with all the advantages and disadvantages that processing green hides brings. One of the major problems that the tanner has when buying green hides is that they need to be processed immediately, and this problem is made worse by the fact that there are weight variations within the hides that arrive at the tannery. This makes it difficult to process hides of similar weight ranges in one batch. One alternative to reducing salt usage in a tannery and provide medium to long term storage of unprocessed hides is the use of electron beam irradiation technology.

Electron beam irradiation preservation produces a hide with fresh hide characteristics combined with an extended shelf life. The process completely eliminates the use of salt and consequently the hides do not dehydrate during the preservation process. This hide preservation process has been patented by a company in Canada called Ionizing Energy and hides that have been preserved by this process are traded under the name “Evergreen” as they closely resemble green hides.

The irradiation preservation process is carried out as follows:

1. Fresh hides are washed with a biocide in a drum for one hour.
2. The hides are then sammed to remove excess water.
3. The hides are then folded down the backbone, and then folded again, resulting in 4 layers of skin.
4. After folding, the hides are placed in plastic bags which are partially evacuated and heat sealed.
5. The hides in the sealed bags are then irradiated. If the hides are very thick, they may require to be irradiated on both sides as the

interior may end up being under-dosed and this can jeopardize the preservation of the hide.

6. Experimental work that was carried out initially used an irradiation dose of 1.4 MRads.
7. After irradiation, the sealed samples were stored at room temperature.

The following results were obtained from the initial trial where the hides were stored at room temperature for 3 weeks after irradiation.

1. Three weeks after treatment, when the irradiated sides were removed from storage, they appeared as fresh and clean as they were just after flaying.
2. No consistent grain quality differences were observed between the Evergreen treated hides and conventional salted hides.
3. There was significantly less drawn grain in the Evergreen treated hides.
4. The main problem noted was a 5% decrease in the tensile strength of the Evergreen leather.

Additional trials were carried out to determine the effect of irradiation dosage on the strength of the leather and to determine the effect of storage at 4°C as opposed to room temperature. These trials produced the following results:

1. A combination of low temperature storage and irradiation even at a low level of 0.6MRad produced excellent preservation for up to 6 months.
2. There was no loss in physical strength of the leather even at higher dosages of up to 1.0 MRad.

Although irradiation has proved effective at eliminating the use of salt for preservation of hides and skins, there are obviously disadvantages:

- The cost of the irradiation equipment is very high and would be beyond the means of most tanneries. This would only be viable if there was a centralized irradiation facility that preserved hides for a number of different tanneries. This facility would need to be close to large abattoirs as the preserved hides could be transported once treated.
- The need to wrap each hide in plastic is a major problem as it is time-consuming, costly and creates its own solid waste disposal problem.
- If hides are not first treated with a biocide, the dosage of irradiation required to kill all the bacteria on the hide would be too high and this can cause strength and other quality problems in the leather produced.
- It has been found that it is necessary to samm the excess water out of the hides prior to irradiation. If high water-content hides are irradiated, this also leads to a reduction in the strength of the final leather.

If one reads this article carefully, one can see that this preservation method is actually a combination of methods, in that biocides and low temperature are used together with the irradiation. Although very effective, practically, it is not likely to ever be used commercially due to the high capital cost of the equipment.

In future articles, other salt-free preservation methods will be discussed, some of which are also combined with each other, as the combination is in most cases more effective than one individual method on its own. . – **Dr Clive Jackson-Moss** [+27 (0)46 622 7310, clive@tanschool.co.za, www.tanschool.co.za]

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Some hide and leather specifications

Compiled by the ISTT

Chemical Composition of Fresh Hide

Water	64%
Protein	33%
Fats	2%
Minerals	0.5%
Minor components	0.5%

Analysis of Salt Cured Hides

Ash	14% minimum
Water	45% maximum

Approximate Hide Weight Conversion Factors

Green hide weight = Wet salted hide weight x 1.2
 Green hide weight = Dry hide weight x 2.85
 Wet salted weight = Dry hide weight x 2.5

Shrinkage Temperatures

Wet blue	100°C
Wet white (aldehyde tannage)	85°C
Vegetable tannage	80°C
Raw skin	60°C

Wet Blue Specifications (approximate)

Cr ₂ O ₃ (%)	3 – 4%
FOG (%)	0.5 – 1.5%
Ash (%)	5 – 10%
pH	3.6 – 4.0

Area Conversion

To convert 1 ft² to dm², multiply by 9.29
 To convert dm² to ft², divide by 9.29

Buffer pH's

Acetic acid	pH 4.75
Formic acid	pH 3.75

Isoelectric Points of Various Different Tannages

Aldehyde	pH 2.5
Synton	pH 3.3
Vegetable	pH 4.0
Raw hide	pH 5.2
Chrome	pH 6 – 6.7
Aluminium	pH 7.2
Zirconium	pH 7.5

Automotive Upholstery Leather Test Specifications

Tensile Strength	120 – 260 N
Elongation	30 -70%
Stitch Tear Strength	50 – 60 N (min)
Taber Test cycles	400 – 500
Fogging	< 5 mg
Flex Endurance	100 000 @ 20°C
	5000 – 30 000
@ -10°C	
Wet Rubfastness (Veslic)	500
Dry Rubfastness (Veslic)	2000
Flammability (max)	100 mm / min
Water Vapour Permeability (min)	1 mg/cm ² /h

Shoe Upper Leather Test Specifications

Tensile strength	200 -250 N
Elongation	< 80%
Stitch Tear Strength	80 N (min)
Lastometer	7 mm (min)
Water Vapour Permeability	200 – 300 mg/cm ² /h

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Lanxess Aquacast: Innovative, water-based transfer coating

From Lanxess Germany

Cologne, Germany – Specialty chemicals company Lanxess offers an innovative water-based transfer coating process for finishing leather called Aquacast. Unlike most conventional processes, Aquacast requires no solvents. There are numerous advantages to be gained from the good physical properties of the treated leather, the versatility of surface design and the materials the coating can be applied to, as well as the simple and robust process itself. The more compact size of the machinery involved also helps to save space.

Sustainable and environment-friendly

“Increasingly strict environmental regulations are limiting the use of solvent-based coatings for a growing number of applications. This is what prompted Lanxess to develop the Aquacast system,” says **Dr. Marc Hombeck**, head of New Business for the Leather business unit at Lanxess. “This patented transfer coating technology uses water-based instead of solvent-based products.” The process involves the coating of a negative surface (release paper or mold) with several layers, which are then joined with the leather substrate by means of a thermal press. After removing the substrate from the mold the desired surface pattern becomes visible.

Superior quality

Coating is an important step in the leather production process, in which a special finish is applied to the fragile surface of the crust to protect it against external influences and to apply decorative finishes.

The exceptionally good physical characteristics of leathers that have been coated using the Aquacast system mean they can be used for numerous purposes – even under the strict requirements of the automotive sector.

The superior surface adhesion, the flexing values and the exceptional softness of these leathers are quite remarkable. Conventional technologies can only achieve such characteristics with the use of solvents in at least one of the layers of coating – often the adhesive layer.

Impressive versatility

Using Aquacast enhances the opportunities for use in respect of surface design and base material. High-throughput processes for standard surfaces using release paper are just as suitable as those that use laser-engraved molds for designing customized surfaces. One of Aquacast’s specialties is a patented, nubuck-effect surface structure that combines a velvety suede feel with outstanding physical properties. Furthermore, the process can be applied to a wide range of materials – from splits to highly buffed leather – and successful test results have already been achieved on further materials.

Intelligent process technology

“The Aquacast process offers notable benefits in terms of handling and the machines it uses,” explains Hombeck. “The machines can be far more compact than conventional coating machines that use solvent-based systems, which can often be quite important for tanneries with limited space.”

The Aquacast process is also simpler, more robust and more reliable. Its airless spray application requires less monitoring than blade systems, which tend to attract more dirt. The one-component system used for the adhesion coat also helps to simplify the handling procedure. Furthermore, avoiding the use of solvents means there is no need for costly waste air treatment.

Milestones

ISTT’s class of 2016



Grahamstown, SA – Students who completed the ISTT’s Advanced Certificate in Leather Technology – class of 2016. From left: Marshall Williams (Klein Karoo International), Petros Moloi (Seton Auto Leather (Pty) Ltd), Faniel Swartz (Klein Karoo International), Zandr  Smith (Cape Produce Co (Pty) Ltd), Wildr  Pretorius (Klein Karoo International), Dean Lewis (Klein Karoo International), Erwin Litthauer (Cape Produce Co (Pty) Ltd).

The Museum of Leathercraft in Northampton

Part of an ongoing series by our Northampton-based correspondent, who is involved in the unpacking and cataloguing of the collection.

Museum opening planned for late Autumn



4 photos of our mystery object. What we will tell you is that its purpose was to protect make-up.

Well, it looks like we will finally be on our way into a new home! Still a little bureaucratic nonsense to sort out, but we hope to start moving in this month, and have everything shifted by the end of the month.

We shall be moving into the Grosvenor Centre, just off the Market square in the centre of Northampton.

L&G, the owners of the centre have kindly offered us a peppercorn rental for the next 4 years, which should enable us to move in, get set up, and finally achieve **John Waterer's** dream of bringing this wonderful collection to the public.

We have the second and third floors, accessed from the market entrance, and we have already set up a design competition to design the interior of the museum to enable the public to best view the fantastic artefacts we have that have been locked away for the past 5 decades.

Hopefully we will be able to open the doors for the first time in late Autumn. Watch this space!!!!

Updates will be on a regular basis, and there is always the website to view (<http://www.museumofleathercraft.org/>), which is updated on a monthly basis. I really do urge you to take a look.....

there are some incredible objects to view!

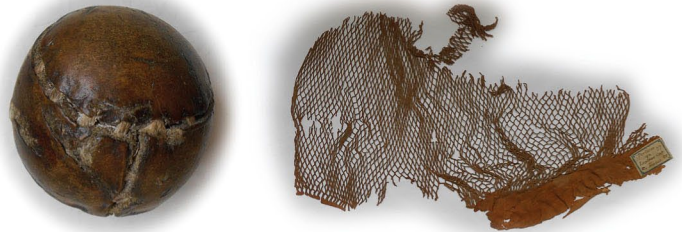
Just to whet your appetite, a few illustrations of what is to come!!

The first is a golf ball (!), hand sewn, the stitches being invisible on the surface; said to be filled with feathers "as many as would fill a top hat"; stated to date from 1848, and to be from St Andrews

The second is a portion of an Egyptian garment, c.1500 BC, of gazelle skin, cut, with fine slits, so as to form a "net". Garments of this kind are shown, in Egyptian murals, worn by sailors and other workmen, but their precise significance is unknown. Found at Thebes.

Thirdly is a pair of ladies full length "Mousquetaire" evening gloves.

You can always visit us on line at the following website: www.IMOLC.com. – A.T.



Objects this month include an early version of a golf ball, an Egyptian garment dating back to 1500 BC, and evening gloves.

1,500-year-old mummy 'appears to be wearing Adidas trainers'

April 13, 2016 | by Tom Hale

"Style is eternal," they say. In light of that wisdom, people have been pointing out the resemblance of this recently discovered ancient mummy's shoes to a pair of Adidas trainers, complete with their iconic stripes. Yes, it's even prompted numerous jokes of "time travel."

The mummified remains were found 2,803 meters (9,196 feet) up in Mongolia's Altai Mountains. The mummy, thought to be a native Turkic female, is estimated to be over 1,500 years old. Its discovery was prompted after local herdsman stumbled across the grave and alerted the Khovd Museum.

Unfortunately, and probably unsurprisingly, the researchers from the museum made no reference to the fresh pair of sneakers. However, they told the Siberian Times, "The finds show us that these people were very skilled craftsmen. Given that this was the grave of a simple person, we understand that craft skills were rather well developed."

They added, "This person was not from elite, and we believe it was likely a woman, because there is no bow in the tomb."

Aside from all the time travel nonsense, the researchers are more excited about what secrets this mummy can reveal about the ancient Turkic culture. Along with the shoes, the mummy's grave also contained a bundle of everyday objects, the remains of an entire horse, its saddle and four finely woven pieces of clothing. – [<http://www.iflscience.com/>]





NTE is a Tannin manufacturing company with factories at Piet Retief in Mpumalanga and Hermannsburg in KZN and Head Office in Pietermaritzburg. NTE processes wattle bark to extract Tannin for use in the Leather Tanning Industry.

Mimosa Extract Co, a subsidiary of NTE Company Limited is looking to appoint a suitable person to fill the position, in its Marketing & Customer Support Division, of:

LEATHER TANNING TECHNOLOGIST

The Main Purpose of the function is:

To provide technical support for agents and customers, facilitate new product development and improvement of current processes.

Key Roles:

Reporting to the Business Development Manager with a dotted line to the Technical Rep; the incumbent will:

- Provide technical support for agents and customers.
- Conduct trials at customers' facilities and write technical reports.
- Facilitate development of new leather products using Mimosa applications
- Develop new, review and improve current processes.
- Attend international leather affairs and participate in the internal technical meeting and activities
- Visit local and overseas / international markets

Minimum Essential Requirements:

- BSc Leather Technology or equivalent.
- 5 years leather experience, with at-least 3 Tannery Operations experience
- Good team player, with customer service aptitude.
- An analytical thinking self-starter.
- Good verbal and written communication skills
- Good knowledge of MS Office applications

Applications for this position must be made with a CV accompanied with supporting documents of qualifications to the HR Manager at NTE:

Fax: 033 – 342 2310 or e-mail: pxaba@nte.co.za

Closing Date: 31 May 2016