



International exchange of experience on industry-connected accidents of the explosives industries

NEWSLETTER

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THEY LIKED AMSTERDAM!

XIV Congress a sell-out success.

SAFEX International's XIV Congress was held at Amsterdam between the 29th May and the 1st June 2002. This venue proved a great success and a great attraction to all SAFEX members. A record attendance of 120 delegates and 50 partners surpassed the previous best attendance, which was at Dublin in 1999.

This clearly shows the explosives industry's intense commitment to safety in every aspect of the manufacture, storage, transport and use of explosives. It is clear that this commitment is shared in the brotherhood of explosives throughout the world with delegates arriving from as far away as Japan, China (albeit belatedly), South Korea, Australia, and from all the main Continents of the World.

The attraction to the ladies was clear, with popular visits to the windmills of Holland, canal cruises and visits to Amsterdam's famous museums. The highlight of the social programme was the Gala Dinner held at the Maritime Museum and this was preceded by Cocktails on the replica of an 18th Century sailing ship, the "VOC Amsterdam".

The Diamond Cocktail

One of the clever devices used by the organisers in demonstrating the Dutch skill in diamond polishing was a "Diamond Cocktail". This was an occasion when all members present were offered a cocktail with a small stone at the bottom of the glass. Of all the stones offered, only four were genuine diamonds, the rest were zirconium imitations. Verification of the four real diamonds was given by one of the expert diamond cutters of Amsterdam.



Martin Held, one of the happy diamond winners, with his wife Dagmar.

XIV CONGRESS

At the Dublin Congress three years ago, for the first time, the Governing Committee of SAFEX International decided to run three workshops concurrently so that smaller groups could participate proactively in the discussions and lecture processes. These workshops followed the main themes discussed in plenary session at the Congress.

The themes were:

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|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Inherent Safety | Chairman: J E (Boet) Coetzee |
| 2 Human Behaviour | Chairman: Stephen Connelly |
| 3 Explosives Waste | Chairman: Jose Ayensa |

By breaking the delegates into smaller groups a greater level of reactive participation by audience was achieved and it is generally considered that the workshop approach helps the Congress considerably.

The report back to plenary sessions of the workshops is made the following day by the facilitators/chairmen, and the second day of the Congress is taken up fully in plenary session with accident reports.

On the occasion of the XIV Congress, SAFEX was extremely fortunate to obtain first class contributions from Ed de Jong of TNO on the Enschede accident and from Bernard Hueber of SNPE (NEF) on the Toulouse accident. Both of these accidents have had major impact on the explosives industry in Europe (and probably in the rest of the world) and it was extremely helpful to have first hand reporting of these events.



Jane Davies, "The Organiser" of the XIV Congress at her registration desk.

Pre-Congress Training Session

Another of the novel ideas being explored by the SAFEX Governing Committee is the introduction of training sessions. The first ever training session was held immediately prior to the XIV Congress at the Novotel in Amsterdam. On this occasion the training session was on "Accident Investigation" and the consultants used were The Kelvin Consultants, who have a special programme on accident investigation called the "TOP SET".

Again, in order to make the process as interactive as possible, Kelvin Consultants insisted that the number of places at the training session was limited to no more than 30 to allow a good instructor/pupil relationship.

This is a "cost free" service supplied by SAFEX in so far as the consultants and tutors were charged to SAFEX, although attendees were obliged to pay their own travel and hotel expenses.

This event was a great success with the maximum numbers of attendees being easily achieved, and consideration is being given by the Governing Committee with regard to future training sessions.

Suggestions for themes are welcomed from members of SAFEX.

Organisational Changes in SAFEX International



F M Murray
Retiring Sec. General



Boet Coetzee
Chairman Designate

Mr Frank Murray, currently the Secretary General of SAFEX International announced that he would be retiring from that position at the end of December 2002 after over forty years in the civil explosives industry. The Governing Committee of SAFEX International have announced that Mr Bernard Hueber, previously CEO of Nobel Explosifs France (an SNPE subsidiary) will take over as Secretary General on the 1st January 2003. Bernard Hueber was also previously Chairman of SAFEX International and consequently the Governing Committee appointed Mr J E (Boet) Coetzee to take over as Chairman of SAFEX from the same date.

Thus, the Secretary General's office will be moving from Scotland to Paris at the end of this year and Bernard's contact details will be circulated in due course.



Bernard Hueber
Secretary General Designate

SAFEX and Modern Technology.

In the past, SAFEX had a hard copy database since its inception in 1955. However, as a result of the wonders of modern computer technology, all of the accident reports recorded in SAFEX's database have now been transferred onto CDs and these were issued to all members attending the XIV Congress in Amsterdam. In addition, a new database with accident reports from 1999 to the present time was issued to members and this will be updated annually. Thus, with only two CDs, the whole of the SAFEX accident database can be retained by any one member with instant access and without reference to the Secretary General.

The publication of the Proceedings will take place as normal this year but, in addition, a CD recording the proceedings will be available on request.

SAFEX INTERNATIONAL – THE FUTURE

At every SAFEX International Congress nowadays a questionnaire is issued to all members asking for their views on the future organisation, content and structure of SAFEX International and its Congresses.

Most people are happy with a 1½ - 2 day conference (although there are always some who wish that the workshops could run consecutively rather than concurrently), but there seems to be a general feeling that a Congress every 3 years is hardly often enough. For that reason, the Governing Committee is giving consideration to holding these events at more frequent intervals. In addition, it is felt that SAFEX must strive to escape from its European origins and be truly international. For that reason, one of the venues suggested for the next Congress is the United States of America and, although no decision has at this time been made, the proposal being examined is that November 2004 in Orlando, Florida may well be the time and location of the XV Congress of SAFEX International.

This has still to be confirmed by the Governing Committee – watch this space!



The Scot and the Scandinavians

SAFEX International

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