



*Pembroke Court, 22-28 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1RS*

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Re-inventing the Wheel**

## **Sustainable Technology and Discontinued Research**

Experienced researchers sometimes reminisce about worthwhile projects that they worked on decades ago that were abandoned for no good reason. This is an opportunity to do something about them.

If you worked on research projects or actual technologies that promised lower energy use and environmental impact, but were abandoned because at the time they did not look economic, or if you believe forgotten projects might be 're-invented' using techniques not available at that time, then we would like to hear from you.

Results from the Sustainable Technologies Initiative (STI), a recent collaborative research programme, indicate that many 'forgotten technologies' may have significant potential. The programme ended with a workshop on this theme at the Dana Centre in London that included contributions from Adam Hart-Davis (presenter of *What the Romans Taught Us* and *What the Victorians Taught Us*) and Trevor Bayliss, inventor of the Freeplay wind-up radio. Professor David Edgerton, Professor of History of Technology at Imperial College, contributed from his forthcoming book *The Shock of the Old*.

Projects funded by the programme included:

- hydraulic lime mortars, which have been largely replaced by ordinary Portland cement, yet offer potential for lower carbon emissions over the lifecycle and enable a variety of more sustainable building techniques
- textiles made from nettles, which have been historically used when other fibres were in short supply or very expensive (for example in Germany in the First World War).

Now Oakdene Hollins Ltd, the sustainability consultancy that co-ordinated the STI, is offering £4,000 in consultancy support for the best 'forgotten' idea that holds potential for environmental improvement.

Applicants should send a non-confidential title and a confidential description (maximum two pages of A4 including diagrams, minimum font size 10) describing the idea; the background to the previous work including when it took place and why it was not followed up; the application (new or existing); any improvement that is necessary; and the environmental benefits that should result. An application form is available on the company's website.

The deadline for receipt of applications is the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009, and the date for announcement of the results of the competition (which will be judged internally by Oakdene Hollins consultants) is 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009. Please note that although Oakdene Hollins agrees to hold these applications confidentially, it will not enter into individual confidentiality agreements.

Further information on the Sustainable Technologies Initiative can be found at [www.oakdenehollins.co.uk/sti-funded-projects.html](http://www.oakdenehollins.co.uk/sti-funded-projects.html) and the application form is available from the Oakdene Hollins home page or from [www.oakdenehollins.co.uk/sustainable-innovation.html](http://www.oakdenehollins.co.uk/sustainable-innovation.html).

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**Notes for editors:**

***Oakdene Hollins Ltd*** focuses on economic and business development in the sustainable technologies and waste sectors. We provide advice on the development of new and sustainable technologies and materials innovation through fostering industry-academic collaboration.

The company was started in 1994 by David Fitzsimons and Nicholas Morley. Over the past fourteen years the company has expanded its interests to include:

- policy analysis and impact assessment for public sector clients such as OECD, Defra and the Environment Agency
- acting as managers for R&D programmes in waste minimisation and sustainability
- advising businesses on emerging environmental markets and investment decisions
- assessing emerging technologies

- technical consulting in waste-related issues
- clean technology transfer facilitation.

We have built a strong reputation for integrity, reliability and excellence with public sector and private industry clients alike. For example, the company has recently been established as the key source of knowledge on remanufacturing and re-use in the UK and hosts the website [www.remanufacturing.org.uk](http://www.remanufacturing.org.uk).

***SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES INITIATIVE***

The STI was a programme of collaborative research and development aimed at improving the sustainability of UK business. The aim was to maintain high levels of economic growth and employment while protecting the environment, making better use of natural resources and working for the good of society as a whole. Companies were encouraged to work with the science base to develop and adopt new sustainable technologies.

The Programme was originally sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) - now the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

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**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**