

# The Ambassador

york-england.com bringing business to North Yorkshire



Full Nettle Jacket: non-food crops provide new materials such as this jacket made of nettle fibre shown against a background of hemp and calendula. Below: Food and Farming Minister, Lord Whitty launches the new national centre

## The seeds of change

THE CONVERSION of crops into everything from car parts to clothing is being promoted at a new national centre to be based in York.

York Science Park will be the home of the National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC), set up to raise awareness about the emerging non-food uses of crops among industry, scientists and farmers.

Hundreds of products – such as lubricants, beauty creams and shirts – can contain plant material, and a long list of others, including starch-based plastics, renewable construction materials and solvents free of toxic chemicals, are being developed.

The NNFCC will be run from York by CEO, Dr. Jeremy Tomkinson, and is backed with finance from the Department for Trade and Industry and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

It will provide a database for non-food crop products and technologies, uniting the experience of the farmers who produce them, the scientists who research their potential and businesses which generate demand for them.

The centre will also have a role in

disseminating scientific and technical information as widely as possible to raise the profile of non-food crops. It will also be expected to play a role in delivering the Government's overall strategy for non-food crops which is due to be published in 2004.

Development of the sector will benefit farmers looking for new markets in the wake of reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy.

Food and farming minister, Lord Whitty, said: "Non-food crops can generate new markets for mainstream crops and opportunities for new crops, many of which have barely begun to be developed.

"Capitalising on these potential markets is a major challenge which I believe farmers are ready and able to meet.

"We also have a

world-class science base to provide the underpinning research and develop new products and applications, as well as the industries to produce, transform and market the materials.

"Diversifying the range of crops grown is one of the keys to a sustainable future for farmers."

The development of non-food crops can, in many cases, contribute to a cleaner environment:

- They are renewable, so reduce the need to deplete fossil fuels.
- Through replacing petrochemicals in energy production, they can help reduce carbon emissions.
- Their use helps to reduce the volume of non-biodegradable waste going to landfill.

NNFCC chair, Peter Lillford said:

"There is a great deal of enthusiasm for the increased use of renewable raw materials in our daily lives.

"Now the issue is to turn good ideas and production capabilities into real ingredients that the industry can afford and products with real consumer appeal."

[www.nnfcc.co.uk](http://www.nnfcc.co.uk)



### New chief

Inward investment specialist york-england.com has a new chief executive to take the company forward and expand its influence across North Yorkshire in 2004.



Imelda Havers brings a wealth of experience to the role. She has a background in sales and marketing in a range of private sector companies, as well as having ten years' experience as a qualified management consultant, working with both public and private sector organisations. Most recently she was the project manager of St. John's Urban Village – a major regeneration initiative in Wolverhampton.

Starting her new role by speaking at the Governetz/Tenon Techlocate conference on UK public sector relocation, Imelda said, "We're keen to grow the existing government sector here in North Yorkshire, and are working to provide the targeted information which government departments and agencies need to make the right decisions about their location – in terms of workforce skills, communications and property.

"I'm confident that the high standards and quality of life that we enjoy in York and North Yorkshire will also make the region an attractive choice for relocation."

The company is funded by the City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Selby District Council and Yorkshire Forward to provide a free inward investment service for companies and organisations wanting to move their business to York and North Yorkshire.

### Season's greetings

york-england is not sending Christmas cards this year but has made a donation to Caroline's Rainbow Foundation in memory of backpacker Caroline Stuttle.

[www.carolinesrainbowfoundation.co.uk](http://www.carolinesrainbowfoundation.co.uk)

## TSYS expansion in Knaresborough

Millions of credit card customers will soon have their accounts processed through a new centre in North Yorkshire.

American company Total Systems Services is to locate its new European data centre at St James Business Park in Knaresborough, bringing new jobs to the region with it.

TSYS Europe, the largest processor of international credit card payments, chose the town as its base for expansion. Building work is already under way and it is expected that the centre will be up and running by late autumn 2004.

TSYS Europe has headquarters in York and has operated a data centre in nearby Harrogate for the past two years, where it currently employs 29 staff. The company expects to create up to 100 new jobs in Knaresborough.

TSYS Europe currently serves more than 12 million credit accounts in Europe and its customers include Bank One, Bank of Ireland, Principal Bank, Sears and Hewlett-Packard. The new centre will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Wall St. award for drug discovery work

Drug-discovery company, Xceleron Ltd, is runner-up in the biotech-medical category of the *Wall Street Journal* Europe Innovation Award.

Xceleron uses a 20-ton accelerator mass spectrometer based in North Yorkshire to detect micro-doses of new drugs.

Professor Colin Garner, chief executive, said: "This award recognises Xceleron's introduction of the novel enabling technology of accelerator mass spectrometry which speeds up clinical trials, reduces the use of animals in drug testing, especially primates, and makes clinical trials safer."

It could save the pharmaceutical industry worldwide up to \$10 billion.

[www.xceleron.co.uk](http://www.xceleron.co.uk)

## IT all happens here...

A hi-tech powerhouse built to help drive the region's IT industry forward has been opened in York by Dr David Potter, Chairman of Psion.

The £5.5 million IT Centre marks the final stage of York Science Park's Innovation Complex – a unique combination of centres in the IT, bioscience and knowledge fields.

The new 30,000 sq ft facility has been financed by a £4.2m investment from Highstone Estates and £1.35m from regional development agency Yorkshire Forward.

It is designed to house start-up and growth-stage IT companies that need a specialist infrastructure without

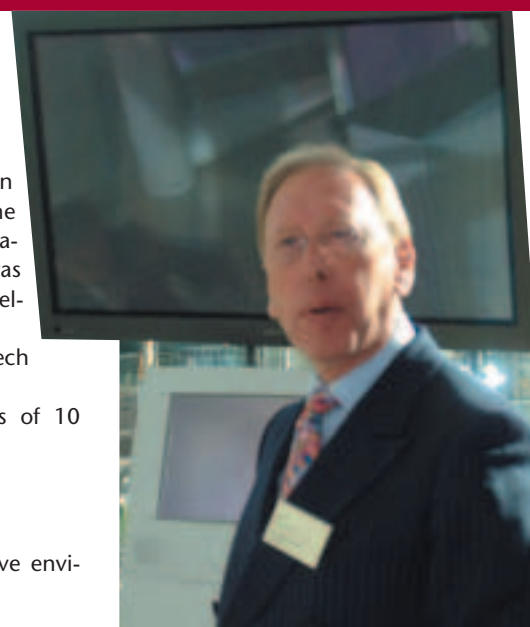
major capital outlay.

York Science Park chairman Professor Tony Robards said the site had a fast-spreading reputation for excellence and was becoming recognised as a development of national importance.

The IT Centre offers high-tech facilities including:

- internet connection speeds of 10 Mbps or more
- category 6 flood-wiring
- a highly-secure server room
- business support services
- an interactive and supportive environment.

[www.itcentreyork.com](http://www.itcentreyork.com)



## First class honours

Science teachers are to benefit from the Government's new £9 million flagship National Centre for Science Learning, which is to be based at the University of York.

The centre is designed to improve the way science is taught in schools, encouraging enthusiasm for the subject which is increasingly seen as vital to the regeneration of the UK's economy.

The centre will transform the quality of training and support for teachers and technicians in primary and secondary schools, and will boost their knowledge of cutting-edge science and technology.

A futuristic-looking building will bring together researchers and course leaders to provide training for teachers who will be able to benefit from continuing professional development. Teachers will also be able to try out prototype science equipment in a specialist workshop.

The budget for the initiative is £50m, funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the research charity, the Wellcome Trust. The centre will receive a further £13m over the first 10 years, with an additional

York has been named University of the Year in *The Sunday Times Good Universities Guide*. The newspaper highlights York's success in teaching and research



assessments, its good access and its 'sustained excellence' over a period of years. University vice chancellor, Professor Brian Cantor said: "The accolade reflects the university's consistently high performance in teaching and research quality and its welcoming and supportive approach to students. It is a very great credit to the hard-working and talented staff here."

[www.york.ac.uk](http://www.york.ac.uk)

contribution of £1m from regional development agency, Yorkshire Forward.

■ A new £2 million research centre at the University of York has been launched to provide a world-class facility into the study of how molecules change.

The York Centre for Laser Spectroscopy and Photochemistry will use ultra-short laser light to tear molecules apart by ripping-out electrons, helping scientists understand the structure and dynamics of liquids, proteins and even DNA.

Professor Klaus Müller-Dethlefs, who heads the centre, said: "The investment in this centre shows the university's determination to be pre-

eminent in internationally competitive research. We will have a world-class facility here which could yield some interesting surprises."

■ A new cancer research unit at the University of York has been officially opened by the Duke of York.

The unit's research team, led by Professor Norman Maitland, co-ordinates a European-wide research program into prostate cancer, the second most common cancer in men.

The unit forms part of the university's £25 million new Biosciences Building. Prof Maitland's team has won international acclaim for research work on human prostate cancer, human papillomavirus infections and cervical cancer.

## New units helping new businesses to flourish

A range of new workspace initiatives are boosting business start-ups across the region.

Over 50 new offices, light industrial units and craft workshops are opening up in Sherburn-in-Elmet, Hawes, Reeth and Scarborough.

The developments, backed by regional development agency Yorkshire Forward, will bring 100s of jobs to North Yorkshire.

■ The new networkcentre has opened at Yorkshire Forward's Sherburn Enterprise Park with 13 new business units.



The space is available to new and expanding companies on flexible terms.

■ The Upper Wensleydale Business Park has now opened in Hawes. It has seven office/light industrial workspaces. Work has also started on five craft manufacturing workshops at the Reeth Dales Centre. Both projects are designed to create jobs and attract businesses to help boost the local economy. The projects will be managed by Richmondshire District Council and have been funded by Yorkshire Forward and the European Regional Development Fund. The Hawes project has also

received funding from North Yorkshire County Council.

■ Hi-tech workshops are being built at Scarborough Business Park, creating space for around 30 businesses and 100 jobs. Yorkshire Forward has contributed £200,000 to the scheme which will be managed by Scarborough Enterprise Agency. As well as 20 office units there will be 20 external workshop units for businesses that require hi-tech workspace rather than offices.



Just opened by HRH The Duke of York, Alpha is the latest phase of development at Monks Cross North providing approximately 53,000 square feet of high-specification offices, which are for sale or to let on flexible terms. Alpha is close to the offices of the Department for Work and Pensions, Norwich Union Life, the Monks Cross shopping centre and various leisure facilities.



# Celebrating Japan links

His Excellency, the Ambassador of Japan, Masaki Orita, attended a series of public events in York as part of the Japan Day festival.

The festival was organised by York St John College, [york-england.com](http://york-england.com) and the National Railway Museum, in conjunction with the Embassy of Japan.

In addition, Yasujiro Uzo's *Floating Weeds* played at City Screen, while Japanese installation artist Haruo Ishii bathed Clifford's Tower in patterns of light and sound as part of the Sight-sonic Digital Arts Festival.

The ambassador met key business leaders as well as the Sheriff of York, Councillor Keith Orrell, and the Archbishop of York Dr David Hope.

Dave Taylor, marketing director of [york-england.com](http://york-england.com), said: "We've been promoting York's research reputation in Japan and building contacts with the Embassy and with Japanese business organisations."



"We were delighted that the Embassy chose York to be the base for this exposé of Japanese culture and we aim to expand those links in the future."

On the second day of his visit, the ambassador also visited Jorvik Viking Centre and York Science Park where he toured the research facilities at Pro-Cure Therapeutics Ltd.

## York company taking a global view

A newly-merged biopharmaceutical business development company is expanding its global reach with a move to new offices in York.

The Bridgehead Pharamlicensing Group was formed earlier this year by the merger of York-based Pharamlicensing and Bridgehead Technologies, based in Melton Mowbray and Switzerland. The new offices, at York Business Park, Nether Poppleton, provide the base for the group sales and marketing team and the home of Pharamlicensing.

The merged company is launching new services in publishing and powerful tools to help the international licensing and technology transfer community for medical and life sciences companies.

"We are delighted to be working together," said Steve Poile, founder and director of Pharamlicensing. "This expansion in York is a strategic move for the group as we expect to double turnover from this office next year. The move into new offices allows us to continue our expansion

in terms of providing services on a global scale to the biopharmaceutical and medical sector, but it also allows us to support the growing number of companies in the Yorkshire region."

David Alcraft, co-founder of Bridgehead Technologies and chief executive of the merged company added, "This merger was part of a strategy to develop a full service business, supplying the needs of biotech and pharma companies worldwide."

[www.pharamlicensing.com](http://www.pharamlicensing.com)  
[www.brideheadgroup.com](http://www.brideheadgroup.com)

## Nutraceuticals firm chooses Selby

World-leading health supplements specialist, Efamol Ltd, has moved its headquarters to Selby in North Yorkshire.

The move follows the acquisition of the company from Royal Numico NV by entrepreneurs Robert Jackson, Norma Jackson and Peter Clough.

They have chosen Brackenholme Business Park in Selby as the launch pad to build on the company's success.

"Efamol has almost 30 years' prominence in fatty acid research, product development and marketing and we aim to continue that work by bringing new products to market in the future," said Robert Jackson.

"Our primary objective for the next two years is to consolidate Efamol's presence in the 26 countries in which we are currently represented and to double our present turnover.

"Simultaneously, we shall be re-establishing the clinical research activities that form the basis of the product range."

## Forward march in Australia

A new drive to promote the region to Australian companies looking to invest in the UK has been launched by regional development agency Yorkshire Forward.

The agency, in partnership with its counterparts in the North East and North West of the UK, has employed one of the largest public relations firms in Australasia to encourage inward investment to the North of England.

Professional Public Relations, with headquarters in Sydney and offices across Australia and New Zealand, will work to inform Australasian companies about the opportunities in the North of England and how their European business can fare better located in the north than in London or the south east.

## Safety first

North Yorkshire is one of the safest places to live in the country according to a new safety index.

Prof. Roger Bowles' York Index for Public Safety (YIPS) provides estimates of how safe an area is in each Crime and Disorder Partnership in England and Wales.

The index examines both data on crime recorded by the police and from the British Crime Survey.

North and South Yorkshire score equal fourth in the index.

[www.york.ac.uk/criminaljustice/HTML/yips/yipsmain.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/criminaljustice/HTML/yips/yipsmain.htm)



A York-based software company has been nominated for three BAFTA awards for its latest computer game release. Revolution Software's game Broken Sword – The Sleeping Dragon is in the running in BAFTA's Adventure, Design and PC categories. The winners will be announced in February 2004. The game, the third in the company's best-selling Broken Sword series, has received rave reviews from industry experts and runs on PCs, PlayStation2, Game Cube and Xbox formats.

## Celebrating rail's past and future

A nine-day festival next year will celebrate the past, present and future of all rail transport.



Railfest 2004 marks the bi-centenary of the running of the world's first steam locomotive – Richard Trevithick's Penydarren locomotive. It is also 400 years since the first recorded horse-drawn tramway in Britain.

The event has the backing of the complete railway industry, from Heritage Railways to GNER.

Exhibits so far confirmed include Britain's oldest steamable narrow-gauge engine, Britain's last express passenger steam locomotive, and a brand new Pendolino 'tilting train'.

Railfest will take place in York from 29 May to 6 June 2004 on a specially prepared site adjacent to the award-winning National Railway Museum.

[www.nrm.org.uk](http://www.nrm.org.uk)

## YSJ College campus expansion



Three new buildings have opened for students and staff at York St John College.

The £17.3 million project includes Fountains Learning Centre, pictured above, which has provision for 500 PCs and houses the college's new-look library and conference centre.

The building has also provided the Yorkshire Film Archive with a new home. Some of the region's earliest and most historic films, including rare footage of Queen Victoria visiting Sheffield in 1897, are preserved with new, state of the art temperature and humidity control systems.

The other two buildings are named Foss and Skell. Foss Building houses a new performance area for the School of Sports Science & Psychology. Skell Building contains teaching space with top of the range facilities for the benefit of those learning and teaching.

Work across the whole college site has included updating teaching facilities, new conference facilities, CCTV installation and improved disabled access.

# Bioscience skills boost

A new skills programme has been launched to support the growing bioscience sector in North Yorkshire.

The Bioscience Skills Programme is aimed at start-up businesses, SMEs and multinationals working in the biotechnology field. The bioscience sector is booming in the Yorkshire region and currently accounts for the employment of over 10,000 people.

It will enable employers to obtain training support in management development, entrepreneurship, commercialisation, technology transfer, marketing, regulatory processes, laboratory skills,

IT and administration.

The programme was unveiled at the 3rd annual White Rose Bioscience Forum – organised by the White Rose University Consortium of Leeds, Sheffield and York, staged in York in November. The Forum attracted a record of 200-plus delegates, from as far away as Texas and Canada, and showcased over 30 of the region's bioscience companies.

The Learning and Skills Council awarded the £150,000 contract to run the skills programme to Science City York – a partnership between the City of York Council and the University of York.

Science City York manager, Anna Rooke said: "The Bioscience Skills Programme will provide fantastic new learning opportunities for the bioscience community. Science City York will work closely with employers to identify their existing and future skills needs so that we can then manage and deliver the most appropriate training.

"We are also working with local colleges and education providers to develop new training provision and can source highly specialised courses where necessary."

[www.sciencecityyork.org.uk](http://www.sciencecityyork.org.uk)

## Venture out to conference

Everything businesses need and more will be on hand at Venturefest York 2004.

Venturefest York is a free-entry one-day conference and exhibition in support of knowledge and technology-based entrepreneurs, business start-ups, business support professionals and financiers.

The event, on 5 February 2004 at York Racecourse, is organised by Venturefest York Ltd, owned by the York Professional Initiative. Main sponsors are the regional development agency Yorkshire Forward and Science City York.

Venturefest York sponsorship manager Di Johnson, said: "We want Venturefest York to develop into an annual



event that will provide access to information and resources for start-up businesses, entrepreneurs and inventors in the north of England, building on the region's reputation as an innovative centre of opportunity."

The conference provides an opportunity to win a business support package worth over £10,000. See website for details – [www.venturefestyork.net](http://www.venturefestyork.net)



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The Board Directors are drawn from the three funding partners, leading local businesses, the University of York and other regional agencies.

Published by [york-england.com](http://york-england.com),  
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