



UK Hydrous Kaolin Platform

In the United Kingdom Imerys' Kaolin operations are run by the UK Hydrous Kaolin Platform. These operations are centred on the mid Cornwall clay area to the north of St. Austell.

Above: Imerys Kaolin distribution centre, Fowey, Cornwall. U.K

This Platform, led by Pierre Daniellou, was established in April 2010. The Hydrous Kaolin Platform is an important part of the global network of Imerys operations, responding to the considerable change the industry has seen in recent years. The Hydrous Kaolin Platform has been designed to optimise the properties of Cornish Kaolins for the worldwide market in paper fillers, ceramics, both sanitaryware and tableware and specialities, including paints, rubber, plastics and pharmaceuticals. Much effort has been placed into designing low energy, cost effective plants which now sees the Platform well placed to continue servicing its wide customer base.

The platform consists of 6 key functional areas; Operations led by Reg Rowse, Product Management and Business Unit Coordination led by Dave Leaity, Business Development & Services led by Ashley Shopland, Finance led by Theresa Dennett, Minerals Technology led by Anthony Phillips and Human Resources led by Jeremy Barnard.

Pierre Daniellou kindly agreed to talk to Impact about the formation and activities of the Hydrous Kaolin Platform

Question: What is the UK Hydrous Kaolin Platform (UKHKP)?

PD: The UKHKP is the pooling together of all Imerys' kaolin activities in Cornwall and Devon with the exception of the Secondary Processing Assets (Parkandillick Calciner, Par Milling Centre, Opacilite Plant, Gothers and the Herreschoff Calciner). The UKHKP manages operational sites and non operational sites. It mines, refines and dries, within one single organisation, kaolins which are either transformed or sold directly by the PPE, PFME, Ceramics and Refractories Divisions.

Question: Why was it established?

PD: Imerys globally is structured such that production assets are aligned to a specific Division or Business Unit, which has proven to be very successful over the last 10 years. However our UK kaolin assets are somewhat unique since the deposits and



*Clockwise from left:
Internal view of Rocks Tubes,
Dry Mining Plant and Aerial view
of Karslake, St Austell, Cornwall. U.K*

the production assets can produce kaolins suitable for several markets: aligning one particular pit or one particular refinery to one division is quite often somewhat artificial. A Team made up of various Imerys experts in the fields of Mining, Mineral Processing, Finance, etc.. conducted an in-depth review in 2009 of our reserves base and industrial assets and unanimously reached the conclusion that those assets should be operated as one, to optimise kaolin recovery in the pit and in refineries, and ultimately reduce cost and improve the sustainability of the UK operations. This recommendation was fully supported by all divisions and then quickly implemented.

Question: Is the Platform only about kaolin production?

PD: Certainly not. When we compare ourselves to other kaolin producers it is obvious that we lack "non-kaolin" incomes. We have started a complete review of additional activities that could improve the profitability and sustainability of our

Platform. Also important is the management of our non operational sites and our important involvement in the Eco-Bos (Eco-town) Joint Venture. As the main organisation within Imerys Minerals Ltd (IML) we are also "Service Providers" to the rest of IML and sometimes even outside the UK.

Question: How do you see 2011 developing?

PD: 2011 will see significant investment in assessing our reserves base. We need to be sure we build the future based on a thorough understanding of the very substance of our activity, our kaolin reserves. You will see in 2011 a lot of activity by the newly created Geology team and in our laboratories, testing and evaluating samples. Our footprint in Cornwall is now much smaller than it was a few years ago. Exciting new Business Development opportunities are emerging and we are also working hard at generating new activities and revenues from our large landbank. Waste management and renewable energies are

amongst the most promising opportunities we are investigating. By creating additional revenue, those new activities will increase our competitiveness in the market and enhance the sustainability of the platform.

We are living in a very unstable environment, this is the one thing we can be sure of. Today our platform is well positioned to face difficult markets. Thanks to the platform operational structure, thanks to our commitment to developing new businesses and most importantly thanks to the continued commitment of all our employees to this organisation, we look at the future with renewed confidence.