



## HFMA UPDATE

by Steve Mann,  
HFMA Chair

# Reflections from the HFMA Chair

**T**his week, I attended my first HFMA annual meeting of members as Chair which, to everybody's great relief, we were able to hold face to face again after a couple of years of online AGMs.

I can't remember precisely when my involvement with the HFMA first began, but it must be more than 20 years ago now. Not so long in the grand scheme of things perhaps, and especially for an association whose heritage stretches back nearly 60 years. But I had no idea at that time where my involvement with the HFMA would lead, and that I would later find myself following in the footsteps of Robert Taylor, who did such a great job as the previous association Chair. To be part of that HFMA tradition, and to help us move forward into the future, is an absolute honour.

As you might imagine, the world has changed almost beyond recognition since the HFMA first came into being. But the rapidity and the extent of changes we've experienced recently has been something else entirely. In the space of just a couple of years, the world feels like a very different place to the one it was before – but the challenges show no sign of letting up. Reflecting on the last year or so, and despite having been in the role of Chair for only a short time, I can testify that it's certainly been an eventful few months. Covid restrictions began to lift, then came back, then lifted again. Ethylene oxide recalls spread across the EU. Supply chains were disrupted. Material costs rocketed. Brexit goalposts moved so frequently they may as well have been on wheels! And the world of politics has at times been nothing short of bizarre. Throughout all of that, however, the HFMA stood strong, supported our members and fought for our industry – and I firmly believe the association is stronger now than at any point during its illustrious history.

Reflections are all well and good,

of course, but the direction we need to travel in is forward, into a world which continues to change at an alarming rate. No doubt there are plenty of challenges ahead, but as we heard earlier this morning, the HFMA is evolving, becoming more flexible, dynamic, and reinforcing our foundations to ensure the association is ready for whatever lays ahead – enabling us to support the industry towards our 60th anniversary and well beyond. The HFMA would be nothing without its members, of course, and I would like to thank all of them for their support throughout these incredibly difficult times. It is always greatly valued, and absolutely never taken for granted.

The association could neither exist nor function without its dedicated secretariat, office team and advisors. So, I would like to offer my thanks to Graham Keen for his continued leadership, and to our President, Vice President and Treasurer for their never-ending commitment to our various causes. Further thanks also to our CLEAR CHECK and Secretariat, and to all of our advisors, be those technical, PR, political or scientific. Without all these extraordinary individuals, the HFMA would not be able to go from strength to strength, meeting the challenges of our sector head on and leading our industry into the future. It's simply not possible to put a value on individual efforts or our achievements together as a team, but it is greatly appreciated by everyone.

My thanks also to my fellow Council members – we are incredibly fortunate as an association to have such dedicated Council members, and to have so many of our previous Chairs around the Council table. I can only aspire to reach levels of dedication and high standards set by them all – but I look forward to the challenge of doing so wholeheartedly. You could say that the HFMA has already gone a long way – the association having flourished for the better part of 60 years. But the



journey isn't over. Far from it. We're starting a new leg, maybe several new legs, and writing new chapters in our association's history as we emerge from Brexit, emerge from the EU, emerge from Covid and the pandemic, and face a new set of challenges.

And whilst our association isn't necessarily about the individual, there is one extraordinary person who I was able to pay a special tribute to at our AGM. Gwyneth Massey needs no introduction to the HFMA's members, and she's not one to seek out plaudits or congratulations, but 2022 saw her reach an impressive personal milestone as she celebrated no less than 30 years with the HFMA!

Fortunately, the lifting of social distancing restrictions meant that we were able to celebrate Gwyneth's anniversary together as a team, and ignoring any protestations not to make a fuss, we were able to hold an anniversary lunch and to thank and congratulate Gwyneth, on behalf of all our members, for her many years of service to the industry. And in front of our members at the AGM, I was able to thank Gwyneth again and present her with some flowers and champagne in thanks for her

unparalleled dedication to the HFMA and our industry.

So, as we gradually emerge from the shadow of Covid, not only do we face one of the toughest trading environments we've ever experienced, but also a great many uncertainties and unknowns. One thing is for certain, however, we will be stronger together. The HFMA will be here to support you, setting the standards, navigating safe passage through regulatory waters and ensuring consumers have access to the products that now, more than ever, are so important in maintaining health and wellbeing. The tougher the challenges, the greater our resolve, and together we'll help ensure our industry has a bright future ahead of it, whatever that future may hold.

This is a great example of the work that we undertake at the HFMA on behalf of 140-plus member companies. If your company is not in membership and you would like to help us in our efforts to protect this great industry and benefit from the gold-standard services we provide, you should join the HFMA at the earliest opportunity. To learn more about our activities, please contact [graham@hfma.co.uk](mailto:graham@hfma.co.uk)

HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time contact [hfma@hfma.co.uk](mailto:hfma@hfma.co.uk) or call 020 8481 7100.

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