December 2020

PCC CHEM NEWS

Newsletter of the PCC Rokita Capital Group and affiliated companies

Merry Christmas and a healthy, peaceful and successful New Year!

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A NEW YEAR FILLED WITH PEACE, GOOD HEALTH
AND PROSPERITY.

Wiesław Klimkowski
PRESIDENT
OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD
PCC ROKITA

Rafał Zdon
VICE-PRESIDENT
OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD
PCC ROKITA

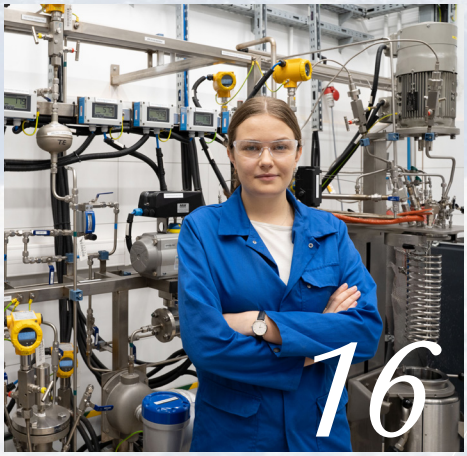
PCC CHEM NEWS
Editorial Team
contact details

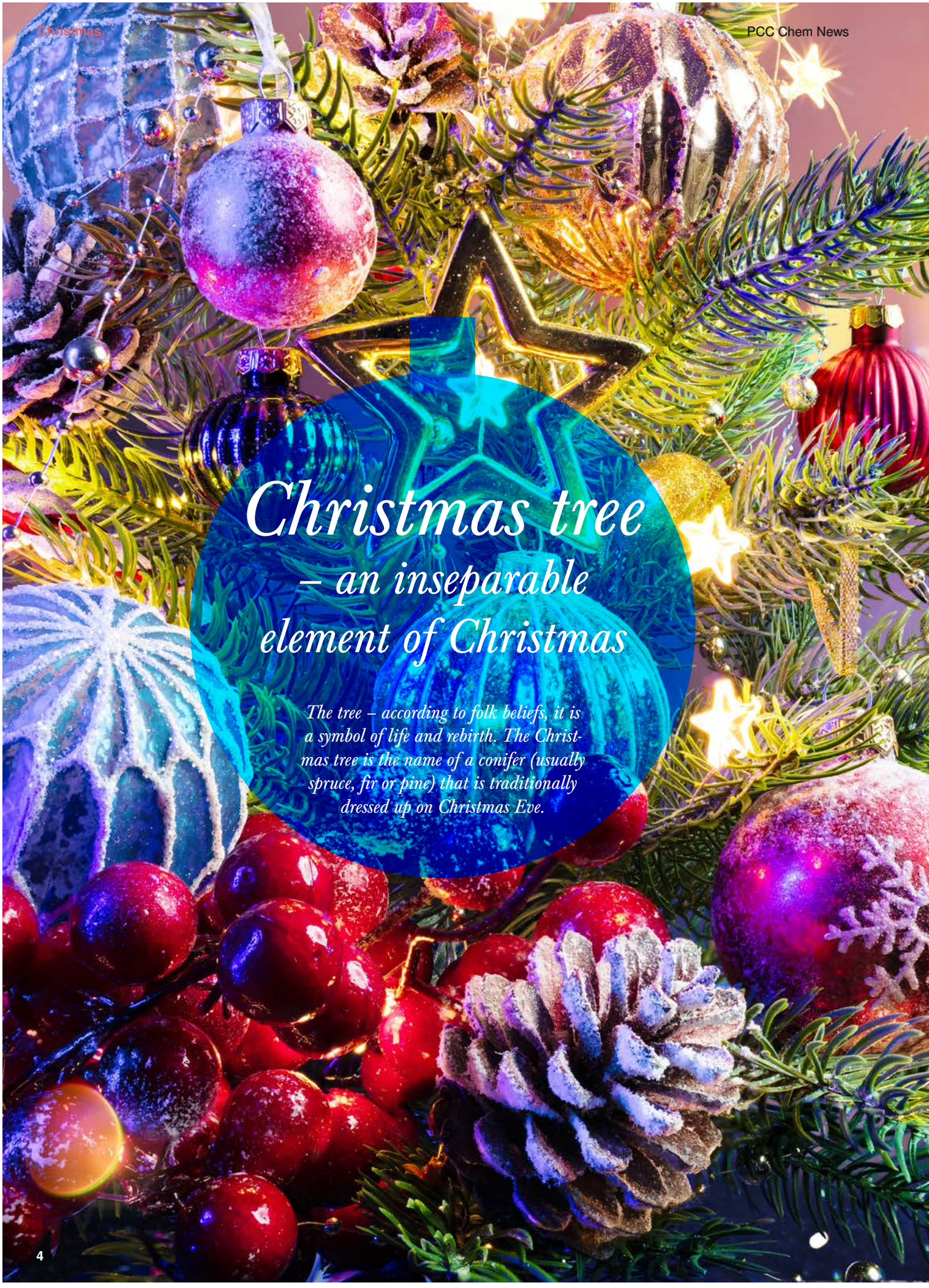
Editor:
Maciej Trubisz
phone 71 794 2448, e-mail: biuletyn@pcc.eu
ul. Sienkiewicza 4, 56-120 Brzeg Dolny

Typesetting:
Hiram Advertising Agency
www.hiram.pl

Publisher: PCC Rokita SA, seated at ul. Henryka Sienkiewicza 4, 56-120 Brzeg Dolny, entered into the Register of Entrepreneurs kept by the District Court for Wrocław – Fabryczna in Wrocław, 9th Commercial Division of the National Court Register (KRS) under number: 0000105885, Tax Identification Number (NIP): 9170000015, National Business Registry Number (REGON): 930613932, BDO 000052553, share capital PLN 19,853,300.00, paid in full.

Table of Contents/December 2020





Christmas tree – an inseparable element of Christmas

The tree – according to folk beliefs, it is a symbol of life and rebirth. The Christmas tree is the name of a conifer (usually spruce, fir or pine) that is traditionally dressed up on Christmas Eve.

Interestingly, the custom of decorating a Christmas tree wasn't received positively at first, but rather criticised. Today, however, it is a wonderful family moment that connotes Christmas.

The custom of decorating a Christmas tree was brought to Poland by German Protestants at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Initially, Christmas trees were dressed in cities, and later the custom was taken to the countryside. The way Christmas trees were decorated is quite interesting in itself – and it was pretty different then. The tree was decorated with various sweets (biscuits, gingerbreads) and dried fruit, but what's most important is that it was hung upside down from the ceiling. Candles were placed under the tree, and after being lighted, they dried the twigs, thus allowing the sweets to fall from the tree and be collected by the household.

Today, it is difficult to imagine any other form of a Christmas tree than a beautiful, spreading and fragrant tree set in the most representative spot. Before Christmas, many of us set off in search of that one most beautiful Christmas tree, often making a family trip out of it, so that the whole family can bring the Christmas tree home and dress it up together. At the very end, we put a Bethlehem star on the tip and, of course, when the time comes – gifts for the loved ones appear under it.

The tradition of decorating a Christmas tree is undoubtedly one of the most crucial activities during the holiday. The Christmas season is a special time for all of us. I wish you all a Christmas filled with peace, joy and kindness.

Maciej Trubisz
PCC Chem News Editor

Today, it is difficult to imagine any other form of a Christmas tree than a beautiful, spreading and fragrant tree set in the most representative spot.

Together
against the cold – and coronavirus

PCC supports homeless charity "Verein Gemeinsam gegen Kälte Duisburg e.V."

Ulrike Warnecke - Managing Director of PCC SE and Kurt Schreiber

Helping people in desperate need is something that Kurt Schreiber from Duisburg has been doing all his life. In his childhood in the post-war years, he helped his mother distribute food packages to poor families in his neighborhood. In the 1950s, he became a social worker – "back then, that was a truly modern profession," he recalls. Later, as head of department at Duisburg's municipal social welfare office, he made apartments available for homeless families. And for more than 20 years now, the "white-haired street worker", now 85, has been chairman of the homeless charity "Gemeinsam gegen Kälte Duisburg e.V.", which he founded together with a few colleagues in 1998.

This year, PCC is supporting the charity with a Christmas donation of 10,000 euros. The donation reflects PCC's continued social commitment to the communities close to the Group's Duisburg headquarters. This is the third year in a row that our donations will support Duisburg's homeless relief organization in its tireless efforts to help people who are homeless or threatened by homelessness and can no longer cope with their everyday lives on their own. "Since our association does not receive any public funds or other regular subsidies, we depend on donations, so naturally we are grateful to PCC for making another large donation," says Schreiber, the long-standing chairman. This year, the Corona pandemic poses a particular challenge for the association and its clientele: "We're not only fighting the cold, we're also fighting Covid-19. Due to the lockdown, people on the street need our help even more. At the same time, many of our volunteers belong to the age groups particularly at risk from Covid-19, so there are situations to which we cannot expose them," says Schreiber.

"We are very pleased to support "Gemeinsam gegen Kälte Duisburg" in its important work during these difficult times. "With its mobile approach, the association is able to support people who are out of reach of many other institutions – including governmental ones," says Ulrike Warnecke, Managing Director of PCC SE.

With two vehicles, the volunteers of "Gemeinsam gegen Kälte Duisburg" are on the road several days a week throughout

"We're not only fighting the cold, we're also fighting Covid-19. Due to the lockdown, people on the street need our help even more" says Schreiber.

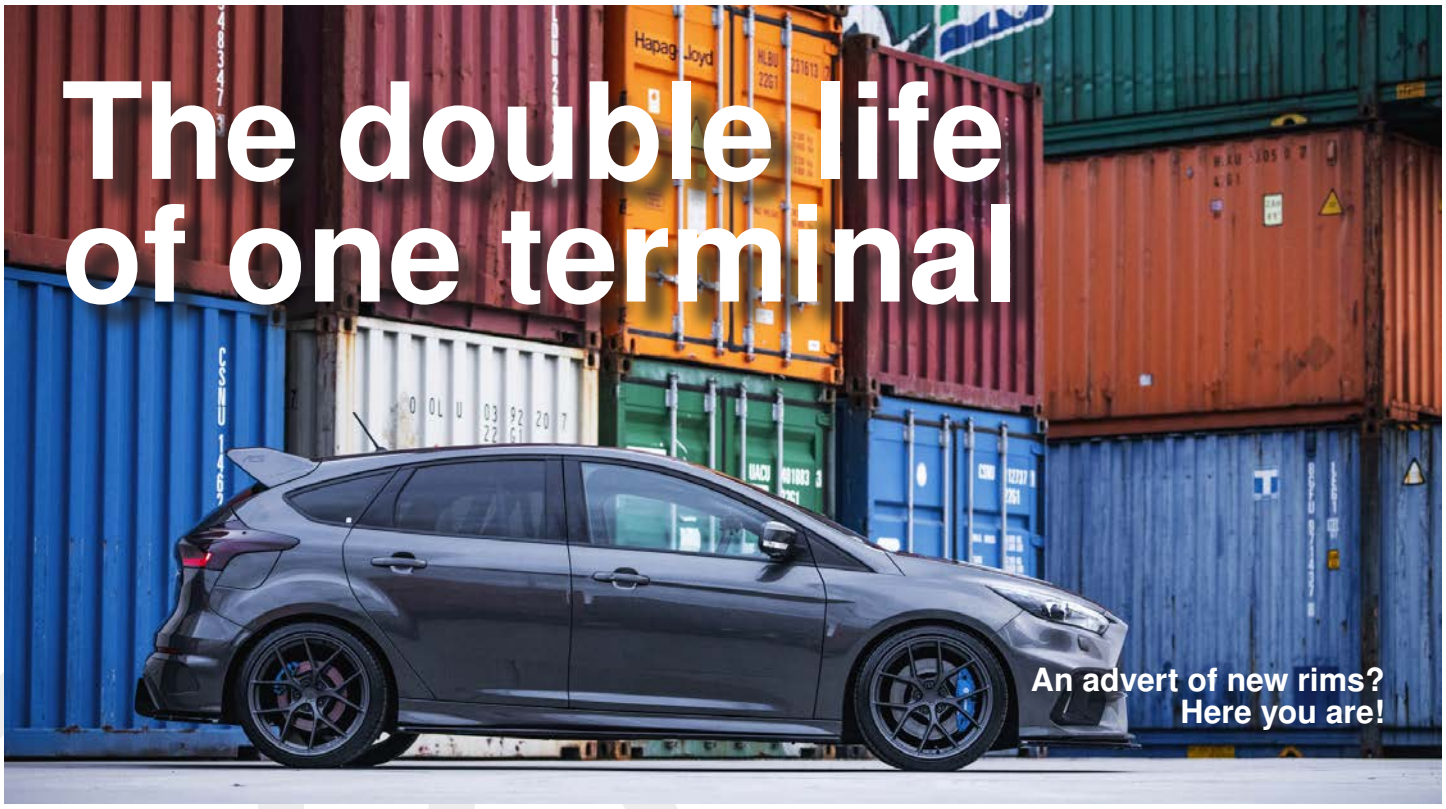
In 2018, Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier awarded Mr. Schreiber the Federal Cross of Merit for his commitment, which the modest man from Duisburg thought was almost too much of an honor when he first received the news. But later he was happy to accept the award, and he did so with pride – on behalf of the whole association and all its volunteers.

the year, providing advice and care for the needy. The "KälteBus" ("anti-cold van") mobile care unit provides homeless people with clothing, such as coats, gloves, caps, scarves, and shoes, as well as food. The van's staff provide advice with personal problems and help with matters regarding the authorities, and refer people in particular need to social and medical facilities and services run by the municipality or welfare organizations. The ambulance or "MediBus" is operated by a team of doctors and nurses, providing medical care to people on the street, which includes first aid with injuries, changing bandages, or replacing syringes. This care effort is aimed primarily at people who are not covered by health insurance or who, due to their outward appearance or addiction problems, have problems accessing medical practices or hospitals.

In 2018, Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier awarded Mr. Schreiber the Federal Cross of Merit for his commitment, which the modest man from Duisburg thought was almost too much of an honor when he first received the news. But later he was happy to accept the award, and he did so with pride – on behalf of the whole association and all its volunteers.

Stefan Biskamp
Marketing Specialist
PCC SE

The double life of one terminal



An advert of new rims? Here you are!

Loading, reloading, pickups, train car repairs, locomotive inspections... This is the everyday life at our terminals. But there is one terminal in the Silesia region that is occasionally transformed into... a film set. Hard to believe? Read on.

The hip-hop terminal

The oldest recording we managed to find is a music video from 2014. Even though we wouldn't use the exact words of the song, we too are ready for anything – we fear no task! We're scared of nothing and ready for anything. In a word, PCCI!

Nobody remembers how it all started... Most likely, with a phone call on a busy afternoon and a voice in the receiver asking if they could come and shoot a material there. Or maybe the beginning was completely different? One thing is certain – thanks to the visits of filmmakers, photographers and various artists, the Gliwice Terminal has gained some colour.

Fast and furious

PCCI is primarily fast locomotives, tractors and reach-stackers, but neither do we avoid machines of smaller calibre. We like good cars, or actually they like us!

What is the best place to present the personalised look of your machine? At the terminal, of course!

A labyrinth

A dark atmosphere, a labyrinth full of corners and dead-ends, and somewhat psychedelic visions – this is what the terminal looks like in INSIDE. The étude was co-produced with the Polish Film Institute.

Yes, there is a lot going on at our terminal. The arrival of film crews in Gliwice has given rise to a great initiative. In exchange for having the infrastructure available to them, filmmakers are asked to donate funds to a foundation of their choice. Well done Gliwice!

The Container Planet

Not only Gliwice can boast of participating in filmmaking – movie makers appeared also in our other locations. You can watch their work here (the link). And what film genres come to your mind when you think of our terminals?

Joanna Radziuk
Internal Communication Specialist
PCC Intermodal

thanks to the visits of filmmakers, photographers and various artists, the Gliwice Terminal has gained some colour

Welcome on board!

Monday 21st September 2020 marks the beginning of the 9th edition of the Scholarship Programme. That day, four scholarship holders – students of Wrocław University of Science and Technology and the Silesian University of Technology – embarked on an adventure with our company. Our scholarship holders have joined the ranks of teams in two companies: PCC Rokita and PCC Exol.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, this year's edition enjoyed a lot of interest among students. Out of 17 applications, through recruitment process, we selected the best four candidates!

At the end of September, we started the adaptation process of our new scholarship holders. On the first day, just like all new employees, our scholarship holders underwent OHS and HR training, signed their respective agreements and, in line with the annual tradition, met with the President of PCC Rokita, Mr Wiesław Klimkowski. During the meeting, they spoke about the subject matters they will focus on here, while the President presented the various opportunities for development in the company.

In the following days, our scholarship holders saw what our company really looks like, which was possible thanks to planned tours (around production and R&D departments as well as analytical labs) and the kindness of our employees, who agreed to play the role of guides. Thank you so much for that!

After three days of tours, it was time for training! More precisely, communication training! A full-day workshop conducted by employees of the HR department dispelled any doubts the students might have had about, for example, what a paraphrase is, what communication errors and barriers they might come across, or the communication standards that prevail in our Group – all based on interesting, real-life examples This intensive training day ended the introduction process developed by the HR department, so in the following days, our students underwent adaptation at their respective workplaces and met their new teams.

They are currently working on their Master's theses, while we're keeping our fingers crossed for them!

Karolina Ławecka
HR Specialist
PCC Group

40 years in the blink of an eye...

At the end of November, after over forty years of uninterrupted work at PCC Rokita, Ms Maria Czerniewicz – a lab technician by vocation and passion – has left us to enjoy a well-deserved retirement.

She graduated from the Technical Secondary School of Chemistry in Brzeg Dolny and started working in Wrocław in one of the local companies. She found her way to Zakłady Chemiczne Rokita thanks to her father, who brought her back to Brzeg Dolny as soon as an opportunity presented itself.

Maria took her first steps at the Central Laboratory for Quality Control, dealing with matters related to spectrophotometry and polarography. Next, she worked at the Organic Acid Production Plant (PK) in the quality control lab. In 1985, she joined the Research and Development Department of the polyol synthesis laboratory, where she worked until her retirement.

Maria did primarily classical analyses, which she has truly mastered. She was a source of substantive support to new employees as well as a big help to other laboratories when it comes to carrying out analyses – determining the hydroxyl number especially.

As she says, she's always been lucky in life and fortunate to meet wonderful, kind people along the way. It is the people from Rokita, with whom she had every-day contact, that she will miss the most.

"I really like my job, and the people who worked with me created a unique atmosphere. At first, working in chemistry wasn't my dream, but I grew to like it with time. After all those years even the smell of pyridine seems pleasant," says Maria, smiling.

When asked what else she will miss, she replied without thinking: "My beautiful lab no. 20, which kept growing and becoming more modern before my very eyes."

Maria, thank you very much for all those years of cooperation. We wish you a healthy and joyful retirement.

Julia Kita
Clerk
PCC Rokita

Meet our Scholarship Holders!

Along with the end of last September came the beginning of the 9th edition of our Scholarship Programme, and so four students set off on an adventure with our company.

Let's see what their interests are, where they're pursuing their Master's theses and what they think their professional futures will look like. We are pleased to have such ambitious people join our teams! We'll keep our fingers crossed for you, hoping that this experience will prove to be an interesting adventure for you as well as the beginning of a long career in our company. Good luck!

Karolina Ławecka
HR Specialist
PCC Group

Elżbieta Flaka
PCC Rokita, KF

Elżbieta's writing a thesis on: "The Influence of Flame Retardant Plasticisers on Flammability and Mechanical Properties of Polyvinyl Chloride at Low Temperatures."

She's decided to participate in the Scholarship Programme because, in her opinion, it's an amazing opportunity to gain experience and see many interesting things as well as experiene what working in a large chemical company is like. Additionally, it's an opportunity to write an interesting, extensive and practical Master's thesis that, rather than just lying somewhere on a shelf in the university archive, can be useful to the company in its future activities and further development, making use of the thesis results and all the effort put into it. Chemistry has always interested her. "It's still beautiful and remarkable to me," says Elżbieta. "It surrounds us, and everything in it just fits and works out." She's especially interested in polymers and plastics since they can be used to create a lot of useful every-day things with various properties.

Apart from chemistry, she also likes reading global news reports and cycling.

Professional goal: gaining a vast knowledge and extensive experience that will allow her to become a specialist in the field of plastic additives.

It gives me a chance to see how such a large chemical company operates, find out what the procedures and customs in the chemical industry look like, learn about the production process of a given substance.

Paweł Soroka

PCC Exol, ERT

Pawel's writing a thesis on: "Optimising the Process of Obtaining Sorbitan Esters in a Low-Temperature Process."

When asked why he decided to take part in the Scholarship Programme, he replied: "I decided to take part in the Scholarship Programme because it's a great opportunity for me to gain professional experience, but not only. It gives me a chance to see how such a large chemical company operates, find out what the procedures and customs in the chemical industry look like, learn about the production process of a given substance – from having an idea, all the way through research and production to obtaining the final product. Thanks to the Scholarship Programme, I have a possibility to conduct research that will have an actual impact on the production process. I feel that I'm doing something that the company may benefit from in the future. I have an opportunity to work with a team of specialists, who will surely help me learn many useful skills and improve the ones I already have – and I don't mean hard skills only, but also those soft ones, as working in a team requires intercommunication, working along with others. I believe that such skills are needed in every profession and it's worth working on them. I'm convinced that the opportunity to participate in the Scholarship Programme will gain me a lot of valuable experience, which is so important for young employees entering the labour market."

His passion for chemistry was instilled in him by a chemistry teacher in the secondary school he attended (Ms Danuta Mikulska). He believes that if it weren't for her, he wouldn't have followed a career path in chemistry. In the course of his studies of chemistry, chemicals and production processes, he has come into contact with many different substances, but it wasn't until lab classes at the end of his studies that he had the opportunity to work with surfactants. It is a very wide group of compounds, whose interesting structure, properties and wide range of possible applications attracted his attention. These compounds are used, for example, in personal care products and cleaning agents, and Paweł's of the opinion that it's worth knowing what you're using at home. He decided to do research and focus his BSc thesis on surfactants, and now he's also continuing the research and writing his Master's thesis about these compounds. In future, he intends to continue working with them. "I see myself being a member of a research team, a team leader next, and then maybe even a director. I'm also thinking of getting a PhD. I don't like to look far into the future, I rather try to focus on what is now, learn and work to be able to achieve a lot in the future."

Besides chemistry, he likes to play the guitar – he owns an acoustic guitar as well as an electric one and a ukulele. "I'm self-taught, and I've been playing for about seven years. Learning the guitar required a lot of time and, above all, persistence. It was hard at times, but in retrospect, I can say that learning to play the guitar is very developing and it's worth reaching for any instrument." Paweł also enjoys going to concerts and music festivals, which he considers amazing experiences and great fun. In addition to music, he's also interested in computer components and assembly – but not just computers, LEGO bricks too.

Klaudia Ładziak

PCC Exol, ERS

The topic of Klaudia's thesis is: "Cosmetic Formulations – Development of Emulsifying Systems based on Sorbitan Esters".

She applied for the Scholarship Programme because she's interested in working for a chemical company and wanted to get to know from the inside what working in such a large organisation looks like. "Right from the beginning of my studies, I've been an active student involved in the life of the University, and I want something more from those years of being a student, which is why I believe that this chance to work on a professional Master's thesis in a company such as PCC is a great development opportunity and an excellent beginning of my professional career."

While doing her undergraduate studies, she was interested in polymers as selective adsorbents and their applications in environmental protection. Over time, she's discovered that issues related to surfactants and development of new cosmetic formulations are equally interesting.

Apart from chemistry, she likes travelling – especially in the form of hitch-hitching – cycling and editing films. In winter, she enjoys snowboarding. Klaudia is also interested in online marketing, especially topics related to social media, analytics and content.

When asked what she thinks her professional future will look like, Klaudia replied: "I've always been interested in chemistry and I'd like my future to be somehow connected with it, but at the same time I'm very interested in marketing, which I'm constantly learning through participating in various courses as well as postgraduate studies in the field of Modern Marketing at the WSB University. It is my hope to combine these two areas in future."

I've been an active student involved in the life of the University, and I want something more from those years of being a student, which is why I believe that this chance to work on a professional Master's thesis in a company such as PCC is a great development opportunity and an excellent beginning of my professional career.

Tomasz Rębiś

PCC Rokita, GTS

Tomasz is working on a thesis entitled: "Research on the Impact of Generators on the Power Grid in Events of Disturbances on the Example of PCC Rokita SA."

What made him choose the PCC Group's Scholarship Programme? "I applied to participate in the Scholarship Programme because I'd like to not only gain professional experience, but also improve my practical skills. The support of experienced employees will allow me to deepen my knowledge and will have significant impact on my development in the areas of my interest. Participation in the Scholarship Programme at PCC Rokita is the perfect beginning to the electrical engineering career path that I've been planning to pursue."

Tomasz is studying electrical engineering, which is his main passion. The primary sources of his theoretical knowledge in this area are books and the internet. Apart from electrical engineering, he's interested in IT and automotive, and in his free time – cycling and DIY.

Tomasz would like his future career to be connected with electrical engineering mainly, for it is this field of study that he enjoys most.

In line with the trend of continuous growth of humanity's demand for electricity, Tomasz believes it to be a promising direction of development, one that offers many possibilities. He would like to connect his professional future with a workplace that offers many opportunities for personal development, which PCC Rokita SA undoubtedly does.

I applied to participate in the Scholarship Programme because I'd like to not only gain professional experience, but also improve my practical skills.

Former scholarship holders got started!

Last academic year, three students became PCC Rokita's scholarship holders and carried out research for their Master's theses in the company labs and facilities. The subject matters of their theses were closely related to the businesses and needs of individual company units. Despite the pandemic and the resulting significant limitations to performing research in the period from March to June, all our scholarship holders managed to complete their theses and defend them at the first possible date, that is, already in July.

The three were exceptions in the sense that usually students leave the research part for the second semester. Due to implementation of the scholarship programme, our scholarship holders started their research work much earlier (that is, in October), which is why they managed to complete a lot of research and obtain results that, when the pandemic hit, they could work on independently at home but with the support of their guardians over the phone.

We are pleased that all scholarship holders found their place at PCC and decided to accept the positions offered to them: Anna Karwowska became a junior specialist in the R&D department of the Polyols Complex, where she previously carried out research for her Master's thesis; Dominik Jurczak moved from the chlorobenzene plant to the investment department, joining the team of designers as a process designer assistant; and Joanna Brzezińska became a junior technical specialist for electrical matters at GTP. We would like to congratulate the scholarship holders that, despite the adversities resulting from the pandemic, they managed to complete and successfully defend their Master's theses. And what did the implementation of the scholarship programme and the first months of working as full-time PCC Rokita employees look like? Find out from the interviews with Ania, Dominik and Joanna below. We would also like to thank all the scholarship holders' supervisors, who provided substantive support and willingly shared their knowledge and experience – Grzegorz Sulowski from CTP-4, Michał Kacperski and Łukasz Szczykutowicz from GTP.

Izabela Dreja-Dulewska
HR Business Partner
PCC Group

Dominik Jurczak

Iza Dreja-Dulewska: how would you rate the scholarship programme? What did you like about it, what benefits of participating in it do you see?

Dominik Jurczak: PCC Rokita's scholarship programme is a great opportunity to gain valuable experience already at the time of writing your diploma thesis. Cooperation with specialists from the industry allows you to develop the practical importance of your research work. During my adventure with the scholarship programme, I did an internship at the chlorobenzene plant department, where I had a chance to get acquainted with the character of working in production in the chemical industry. The employees of the department provided me with invaluable knowledge and know-how in the field, answering numerous questions and explaining the operation of both the installation and individual devices. I would like to thank all CTP-4 employees for their patience, professional attitude and all the shared knowledge.

Anna Karwowska: The scholarship programme provides, above all, an opportunity to get into the specific character of work in the company and get to know the environment in which you will later start your career. In these particularly turbulent times, the greatest advantage of the scholarship programme lies in being offered a job right after graduation. A stable professional situation is my priority. Another thing I like about the scholarship programme is that it gives you a chance to work in a well-equipped lab and have a project of your own in the form of research for your thesis.

Joanna Brzozowiec: I'm pleased to have participated in the scholarship programme. It allowed me to see the objects and devices that I'd only learned about in real life. I've also met many people working in other fields than mine, which has certainly given me a different perspective on the production process than that from the electrical point of view. Moreover, it gave me a unique chance to write a Master's thesis related to the actual problems that specialists at PCC Rokita have to face.

How did you manage to defend your thesis in the scheduled time despite the pandemic? What conclusions does your Master's thesis end with? And what did the thesis defence look like?

Dominik: Despite the epidemic, I was able to finish writing my diploma thesis on time and defend it "on site." The defence was held in the "classic" way, before an examination board, but in accordance with the guidelines of the sanitary epidemiological service. My Master's thesis – entitled "Optimisation of the Working Conditions of the Monochlorobenzene Rectification System" – ends with recommendations regarding selected directions of system optimisation with an emphasis on the management of previously unused energy streams.

Anna: The defence was in the form of a remote exam, but it was still very stressful. The pandemic made it difficult to carry out lab research, but a large part of the results had been obtained before it broke out, thanks to which I was able to hand in my thesis on time. It was also possible to do a few tests and make some measurements in May and June. Here, too, the scholarship programme gave me an advantage, given that at that time all university labs were closed and most students couldn't continue with their work. In my Master's thesis, I modified the formulations of one-component assembly foams used as foam-adhesives or adhesives. I investigated the influence of the chemical structure of polyols on the properties of foams.

Joanna: The time of the pandemic was a time of great uncertainty. It was unclear whether defence exams would take place and if the Master's theses would still have to be handed in on the previously agreed dates. This had an impact on my motivation to write the thesis and thus significantly prolonged the writing process. Ultimately, I managed to finish my thesis ahead of schedule and defend it in mid-July. My Master's thesis concludes with a confirmation of there being a problem with higher harmonics in one of the switchgears I tested and the determination that among the measured higher harmonics, the rectifier harmonics, in particular the 13th, were characterised by a significant value. I chose the traditional form of thesis defence exam, so the entire procedure took place at Wrocław University of Science and Technology, under a strict sanitary regime. And it was definitely a nice change from online classes and a lack of real contact with teachers and other students.

What is your current position here at PCC?

Dominik: Process Industry Designer Assistant. The prospect of being employed in a design office was one of my main motivations when submitting my CV in the programme.

Anna: I'm now a junior specialist in the Research and Development Department of the Polyols Complex, working on synthesis of polyether polyols.

Joanna: I'm currently working as a Junior Technical (Electrical) Specialist. Interestingly, I'm the only woman in the Technical Specialists team.

What was difficult about this job at first?

Dominik: Getting used to getting up every morning for the train to Brzeg Dolny :). When I started working in the design office, it turned out that the scope of my duties largely coincided with the competences I'd acquired during my studies.

Anna: Learning how reactors work and operating in an environment with such a large number of available products. Perhaps it's not so much difficult as time-consuming. After two months, I'm still at the stage of acquiring knowledge and continuous learning.

Joanna: At the beginning, the most difficult part was the collision of my purely theoretical knowledge with actual, practical work. It turned out that I still have a lot to learn :). It was also difficult to learn the structure of the plant and the installations that I was to be dealing with. Fortunately, my colleagues were very nice about it and introduced me to everything.

What professional tasks are you facing now?

Dominik: Currently, my task is to support the designer. Designing is significantly different from the academic computational idyll, the design office is a completely different world, one of formalities, standards and directives. Today, based on several months of experience in my current position, working on investments carried out around the plant gives me a lot of satisfaction. I must admit that I am very much looking forward to the construction and start-up of the first installation in whose design I am involved.

Anna: Currently, in addition to learning the basic processes in the synthesis lab, I'm also preparing to start a project in cooperation with a sister company – PolyU. I'm also working on improving my English fluency, learning the industry jargon, and gaining theoretical knowledge in the field of obtaining and making products that I will synthesise as part of my cooperation with PolyU.

Joanna: Currently, my tasks are typically maintenance-related – selection and ordering of motors, switches and batteries for UPS. In the near future, I will also carry out tasks connected with the replacement of old cables and lighting in one of the production halls.

Joanna Brzozowiec

Christmas is upon us, and the editorial office is filled with Christmas cards!

The Christmas card competition for PCC Group's employees and their children, announced in the previous PCC Chem News issue, has come to an end. The editorial office received a total of 48 cards, and we decided to award all of them.

The amount of work put into the preparation of these cards by children (by themselves or with a little help from their parents or grandparents) as well as the works created by our employees made it impossible for us to choose just one of them as that most beautiful one. Each of them has its own charm, and each of them says to our readers: MERRY CHRISTMAS!

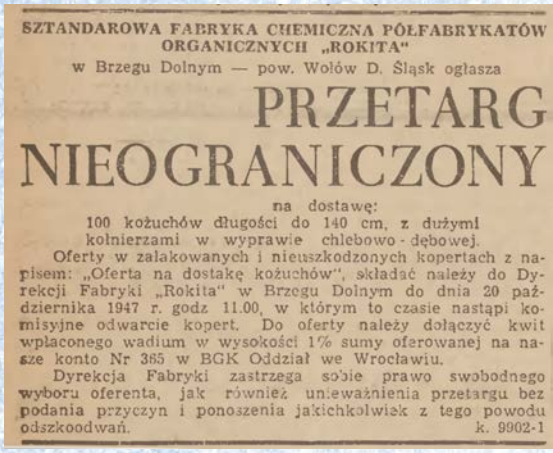
The prizes will be delivered via internal mail in the Christmas and New Year period.

Thank you for participating in the competition!

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team

Winter vs. production

The winter period is hard on both the installation and the crew. From the perspective of the production plant, the priority is to maintain the continuity of work, for production stoppage may lead to freezing of pipelines' content, and consequently irreparable damage.



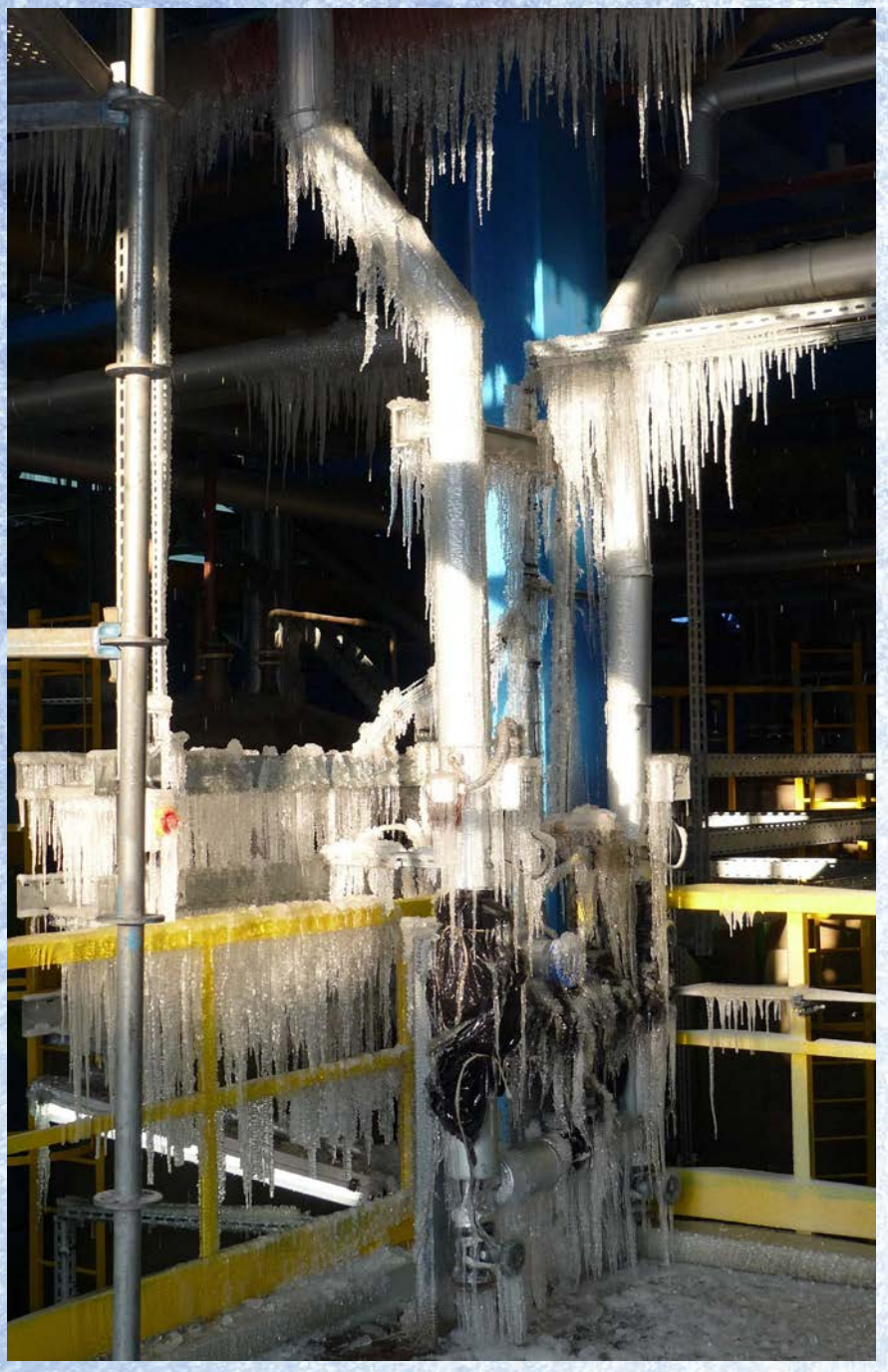
SZTANDAROWA FABRYKA CHEMICZNA PÓŁFABRYKATÓW ORGANICZNYCH „ROKITA"
w Brzegu Dolnym — pow. Wołów D. Śląsk ogłasza

PRZETARG NIEOGRANICZONY

na dostawę:
100 kożuchów długości do 140 cm, z dużymi kołnierzami w wyprawie chlebowo - dębowej.

Oferty w zalakowanych i nieuszkodzonych kopertach z napisem: „Oferta na dostakę kożuchów", składać należy do Dyrekcji Fabryki „Rokita" w Brzegu Dolnym do dnia 20 października 1947 r. godz 11.00, w którym to czasie nastąpi komisyjne odwarcie kopert. Do oferty należy dołączyć kwit wpłaconego wadium w wysokości 1% sumy oferowanej na nasze konto Nr 365 w BGK Oddział we Wrocławiu.

Dyrekcja Fabryki zastrzega sobie prawo swobodnego wyboru oferenta, jak również unieważnienia przetargu bez podania przyczyn i ponoszenia jakichkolwiek z tego powodu odszkoodwań. k. 9902-1



The crew, in turn, need to be equipped with appropriate working clothes. From the very beginning, the plant took care of the appropriate clothing for employees.

Rokita had to face exceptionally hard "winters of the century" at the turns of 1962/1963, 1978/1979 and 1986/1987. A truly memorable winter began on 31st December 1978. It was extremely snowy and rainy, and strong winds created high drifts. Some regions even introduced a state of natural disaster. There was a shortage of energy resources – switch-points were frozen and tracks cracked, and so, coal couldn't be delivered to the power plant, and even if the transport did somehow manage to reach the plant, the coal had to be defrosted first. Snow was removed using military equipment. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers removed snow from streets, roads, and railroads. Communication and supply-related struggles continued until March. Rokita managed to cope with this winter in part thanks to the reserves accumulated in its coal yard with the capacity of approx. 40,000 tonnes of coal built in the late 1960s at the EC-2 heat and power plant.

The winter of 1986/87 stuck in memory of the employees of the chlorobenzene plant. The oldest production installation in operation (like the newest ones) is largely an open-plan construction. Severe frost caused elements of the installation to freeze, so they had to be aided using hoses with heating steam. Some of the crew were seconded to the company's heat and power plant, where they helped unload the frozen coal off carriages.

In those years, process steam was produced in the no-longer existing EC-1

heat and power plant. It was located in the place of the current Innovation and Process Scaling Centre. In winter, technological problems intensified at air temperatures of minus 20-25°C, at which point fittings as well as drinking and industrial water pipelines froze.

Process steam and heating water were also produced at the EC-2 heat and power plant, next to which lies the coal storage yard. Coal was loaded onto talbot-type freight cars holding 60 tonnes each. Groups of 6-8 cars were directed to EC-1, where they were unloaded after lifting the side boards. If too much time passed between loading to unloading, the coal froze during internal transportation. At that time, there were several diesel locomotives available on the internal siding, but not always straight away. The situation improved after the decision of Dr Jan Przondo, Head of the Production Division, to ensure that a locomotive would always be ready to immediately take loaded carriages to EC-1. The use of antifreeze on the coal by the mines also helped with the situation.

However, the frozen coal had to be unloaded manually. The operation was carried out by a group of up to twenty people gathered ad hoc and coordinated by the plant dispatcher, engaging some of the employees of e.g. betanaphthol and chlorobenzene plants. "The departments also had a lot of work at that time, but we always managed to organise a group of people for the unloading," recalls Zygmunt Zamojski, Head of the Heat and Power Plant Department (ETIE).

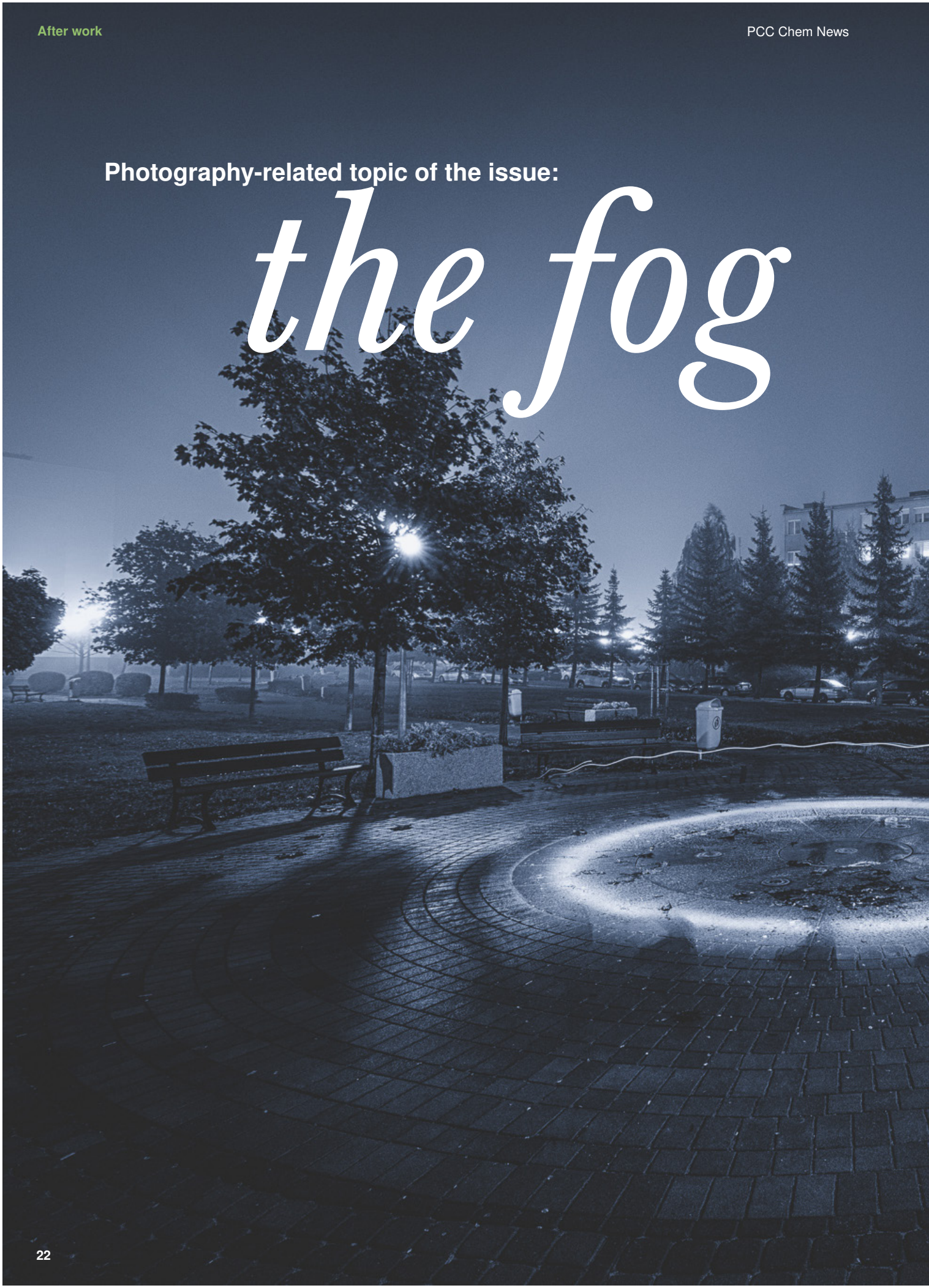
Problems arose also in later years and were related to the final phase of the membrane electrolysers investment, which coincided with the particularly long and severe winter of 2009/2010. The biggest concerns were the assembly, transportation and installation of cells in the electrolyser hall. Aware of the difficulties and the huge responsibility, LabMatic undertook to perform this task. Throughout the entire undertaking LabMatic was assisted by a group of employees from the mercury cell repair team of the Chlorine Complex (KC). The same winter, in January 2010, low temperatures resulted in the freezing of evaporated salt for electrolysis on tippers. Increased staffing of the salt warehouse was not enough to break the salt lumps and the help of our on-site fire-fighters was necessary. Even rock salt froze to the drain valves of the carriages. This significantly prolonged the unloading process. One of the railway carriages had to wait for the warmer, spring weather. For those who remember that salt is used in winter road maintenance, a little explanation: road salt is only fully effective down to a few degrees below zero. In severe frosts, even large brine reservoirs such as the Baltic Sea can freeze.

Global warming is a fact, and it might seem that the return of severe winters is not to be expected. In truth, the real challenge is still ahead as periods of change in nature are usually characterised by weather anomalies. Based on past experience, PCC Rokita has developed a variety of scenarios for such instances as a heat wave, great frost, strong winds or heavy rainfall resulting in flood risk. Both ad hoc actions and comprehensive preventive measures are taken. The ad hoc actions include, for example, two successful instances of defending the plants, and especially the sewage treatment plant, against the floods of 1997 and 2010. There have been several operations to identify and secure movable elements on all plants' premises carried out after receiving strong wind alerts from the Government Centre for Security. All these activities are aimed not only at securing the health of employees and city residents, but also ensuring safe continuity of production.

Marek Wielowski
Team Leader and Specialist
PCC Rokita

Photography-related topic of the issue:

the fog



In terms of photography, autumn is more than just a time of beautiful, colourful landscapes. It's not only a time when the light of the setting autumn sun falling into my camera image sensor paints the world in completely different colours than at any other time of the year. But it is a time I find particularly hard when it comes to going out to take photos, although I do know that such a jaunt can result in capturing the world around us in a completely different way, in different colours. The topic of this article shall be fog photography.

Let's start with when to photograph the fog? It is definitely best to do it when the fog is low. Also, the thicker it is, the better for us (usually in autumn and winter, but in other seasons of the year it can also be foggy). The time of the day doesn't matter – you can take very interesting photos during the light hours of the day just as well, with rays of sunshine breaking through the fog. You can take an interesting photo of the sun with its rays being effectively blocked by the fog, which acts as a grey filter, but during the day you can also take photos of places you know well but which will look completely different in black and white.

Still, for me, the true atmosphere of autumn fog is reflected in photos taken at night. There is really quite a lot of room to show off here – the light of lamps or lanterns will always look interesting in the frame you choose. Painting with light in the fog will too be very interesting! The photographed places will look dark and atmospheric, making your photos absolutely unique. And that's what it's all about!

What to take care of? Yourself, primarily. Fog reduces visibility, so remember about your safety whenever you're on a road, and do watch your step. Also, fog settles on both what you walk on, making it slippery, and on the equipment, which you need to always take care of so that it serves you as long as possible.

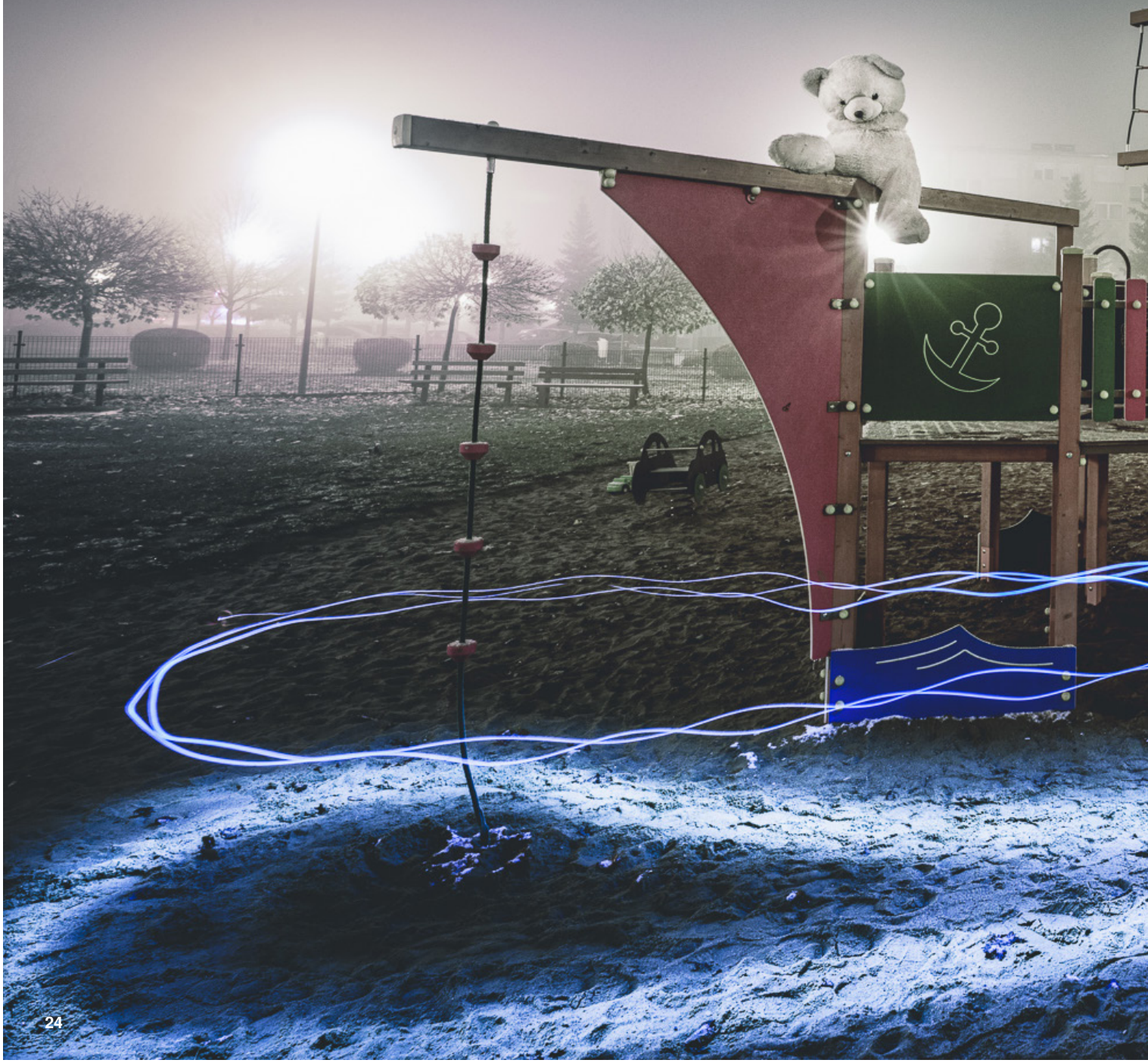
Regularly check your lens for drops of water and wipe them off with a dry cloth. Whenever I go out to take photos,

I have with me a piece of special material secured against moisture so that it doesn't absorb it while I'm outside and remains dry for when I need to use it to wipe the lens dry.

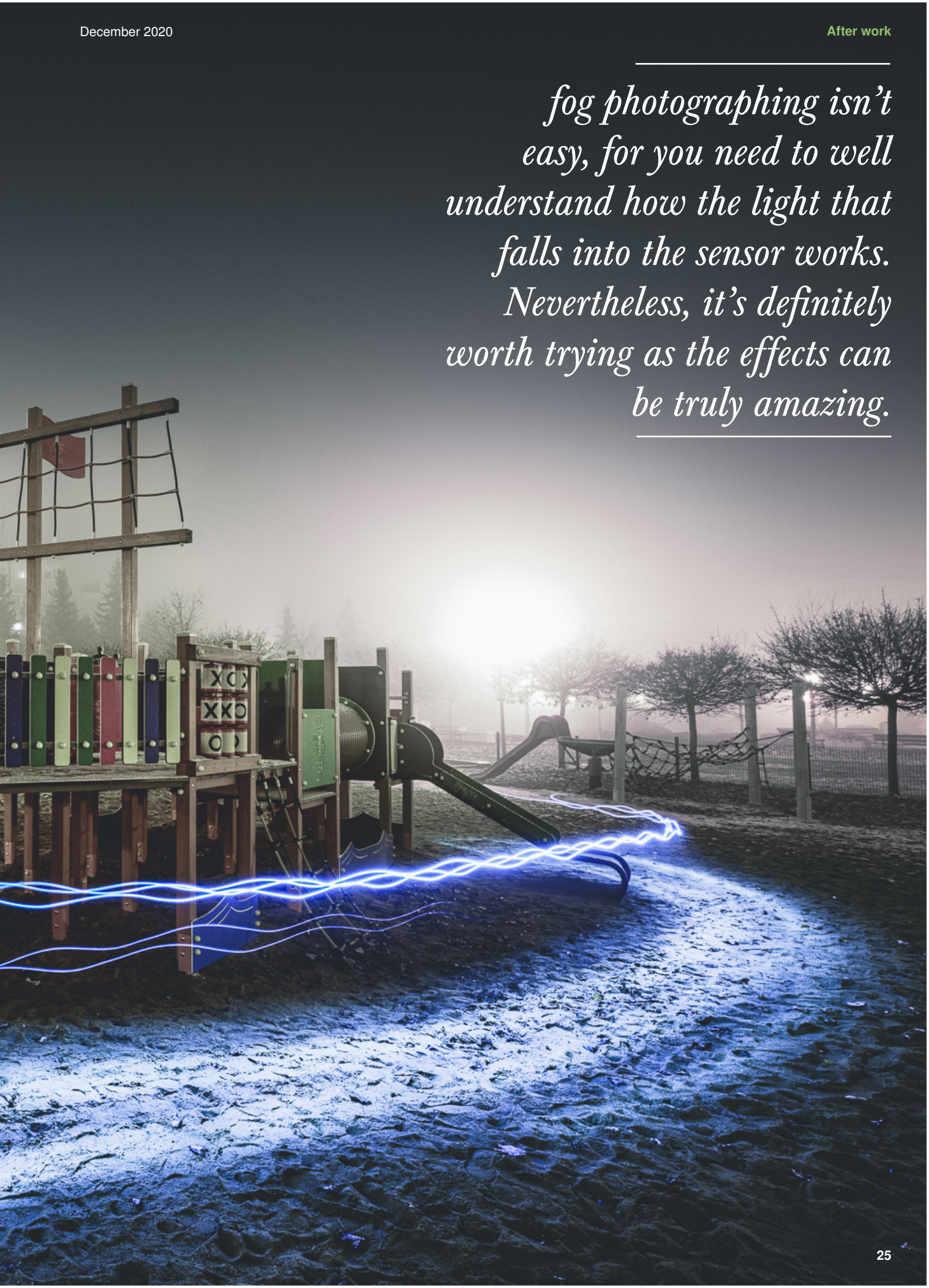
When you're out taking photos in high humidity conditions and low temperature for a long time, it's possible your entire camera will get covered with water droplets. Most modern cameras should in fact be immune to such conditions, please do bear in mind, however, that no equipment likes significant temperature shifts. If you are taking photos outside, where it is around 0^0 C, and the temperature inside your home is 22-23 degrees, your equipment may react quite strongly to such a sudden temperature change. Remember that it's not advisable to remove the lens from the camera body until the camera's temperature matches that in the room – otherwise the mirror of your camera will immediately get covered with steam, at which point you can basically start getting ready for sensor cleaning. After coming home, I leave my equipment in the backpack so that it heats up gradually along with the backpack, allowing it to heat up and dry up slowly. What to do with the memory card? Well, as a rule, memory cards should also get warmed up to room temperature after such a walk. But I must admit that I'm far from patient in this case – I take the card out of the camera the moment I come home and start developing photos straight away.

How to set the camera for such a photo session? There's no one straightforward answer in this case as it really depends on: the time of day, light conditions, what you're photographing and, of course, the effect you want to achieve, but for sure, the ISO value must be low, and exposure – below zero. One thing is certain, however – fog photographing isn't easy, for you need to well understand how the light that falls into the sensor works. Nevertheless, it's definitely worth trying as the effects can be truly amazing.

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team



fog photographing isn't easy, for you need to well understand how the light that falls into the sensor works. Nevertheless, it's definitely worth trying as the effects can be truly amazing.



Leading *the Bear!*

December is a time when most people are focused on Christmas, but amid all the preparations, some of us are also otherwise occupied... For two of our colleagues from Gliwice, Łukasz and Rafał Mikuła, December is when they start to prepare for something truly interesting and very rare in our country – an event called "Leading the Bear" (Polish: Wodzenie Niedźwiedzia).

Once widespread in the entire Slavic region, this carnival tradition is now cultivated in Upper Silesia only. The event takes place yearly on the last Saturday of the carnival, but the preparations begin already in December and often involve whole families. The family of our colleagues have been engaged in this tradition for over twenty years.

Long before the event, the first meetings, rehearsals and, above all, the preparation of costumes and souvenirs take place. The most time-consuming task consists in sewing a bear costume, which is made to measure as the person wearing it will have to spend the entire day in it. As befits a bear, he must be of large stature, which is why Łukasz puts on the costume for the day, thus maintaining the family tradition – a few years back, the role fell to his father. The costume is made of specially collected and prepared oat straw, hand-twisted into a straw rope and then sewn together using twine. It is an extremely labour-intensive process as everything is hand-made with great care and in a unique way. The craftsmanship and precision behind the bear costume has even been noticed by the Museum of the Polish Village, where you can now admire a handmade bear costume handed over by the guys. The preparations are accompanied by the music of the rehearsing orchestra, whose drinking songs brighten the day of all those involved. The tradition of Leading the Bear is so etched in the minds of the village's residents that they look forward to the event all year long and often invite their families for the day to have them see and participate in this extraordinary event. It all starts early in the morning. It is then that the bear is dressed and joined by the rest of the gang. A colourful procession of masqueraders goes from house to house around the village, leading the bear by a rope. Of course, the bear is led by the hunter, who watches over the safety of the inhabitants. The procession is composed of: the hag, the young couple, the stork, the Red Riding Hood, the chimney sweep, the nurse, the devil, the priest, the postman, the gypsy girl, the police officer, the orchestra, and the fire-fighter, who hauls a cart with all the necessary supplies. Rafał plays the role of the fire-fighter in the group, which also includes the sister of our two colleagues. The young couple have the task of inviting the hosts for a pre-Lent carnival party, the fire-fighter checks if the household is fire safe, the police officer keeps order, the nurse examines the household, the gypsy makes a card reading, the chimney sweep checks the chimney and the furnace, the stork lays eggs so that children are born, the hag collects gifts from the household members, the Lit-


After work

tle Red Riding Hood gives souvenirs, and the orchestra play music. The hostess of the visited house should dance with the bear and convey to him all the evil that has happened in the house, which bodes good fortune for the year, as well as pluck pieces of straw from the bear's costume to later put them in the nests of hens and geese to ensure an abundance of eggs and healthy livestock. The host, in turn, should treat the bear-leading group with vodka. If the hosts attempt not to fulfil these obligations, the devil or the chimney sweep are to smear their faces with soot. As a thank you for visiting, the hosts give free donations or offer sweets, which are later used for social purposes and organising an evening dance and a women's day. The bear-leading group often play small tricks, stop cars to give 'tickets' for non-existent road offenses, such as over-inflated tires, etc. The tickets are actually invitations to the bear's trial. Halfway along the route there is a lunch and rest break. The lunch is prepared by ladies who are connected with this tradition and who, not so long ago, participated in it themselves. The group visit every single house, even very distant ones, moving in a specially prepared colourful procession consisting of a tractor and a trailer lined with straw.

In the evening, there's a final pre-Lent carnival party and the trial of the bear held to end the day. The masqueraders meet with the village's residents at a carnival party, which includes the trial of the bear – an important element, given that the bear is the cause of all misfortune. By a joint decision of the residents, the bear has to be killed. The sentence is carried out by the hunter, and the bear falls dead to the floor with a loud roar. While it happens, wine – symbolising blood – is poured into a vessel next to the animal's head, which is then served to all the participants. The death must be certified by the doctor or the nurse of the party. Although the bear is dead, it turns out that he has a descendant – a small bear, which guarantees that the tradition will not die and that the bear will be led again in the next year's carnival.

Łukasz Mikuła
Railway Rolling Stock Auditor and Coordinator
Technical Division at the Gliwice Terminal
PCC Intermodal

That one stormy day

I was sitting at home browsing the web for latest news, when my eye was caught this headline: Baltic Sea to be hit by biggest storm in years. At 5 am the next day I was already sitting in the car headed to Kołobrzeg, to more than 500 km away from our plant.

I'd never seen a storm on the sea before, although it had always been my dream to see the joint powers of wind and water thrashing against Earth's surface.

I kept tracking weather forecasts all the way up to the Baltic Sea to make sure to be there when the wind is at its peak, as it was supposed to guarantee a successful photo shoot. Somewhere along the way, we had to start chasing the wind as the forecast changed and the storm was to hit at its strongest sometime between 11 am and noon. By that time, I was already there.

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team

The story behind a phone booth,

or "learning to fly"

photo 1 – eastern part of Pennan and the port

There are many fascinating architectural masterpieces in the world. That's a fact. There are also numerous architectural objects that, although less spectacular, have an interesting history. And finally, there are the so-called street furniture, which are no less interesting, and which sometimes fit into the landscape so well that they become a symbol, like the red telephone box of a characteristic shape that is strongly associated with Great Britain.

And basically, that's that when it comes to standard British phone booths, as this story is all about that one and only, special and most important red booth, the one that was to save the world. Maybe not the entire world, just a part of it, but a part that is very unusual and definitely worth visiting. Anyway, just imagine the unspoiled beauty of the North Scottish cliffs and a small fishing village in a small bay sandwiched between inaccessible rocks (photo 1). And there, in that small village made up of a line of little houses spread along the quay, stands this valiant booth – a dainty structure that resists the blows of strong north wind and stormy waves crashing against the shore. It was this booth that witnessed the dramatic events and secret conversations between Texas oil tycoons and their envoys, who – due to the perfect location of this beautiful place – wanted to turn it into a port and refinery.

The story begins in 1983, apparently, when young lobbyists sent from Texas arrive in Pennan (as the town the events happen in is called) and begin implementing their evil plan to convince the town's residents to sell their land and move out of there. These lobbyists were staying at the only hotel in town (as well as in the area) – the Pennan Inn, located in one of the largest buildings in Pennan (photo 2). The booth becomes a means of communication between the envoys and the boss on the other side of the world (for obviously, mobile phones weren't a thing yet). The booth devours coin after coin (for obviously, long-distance calls take up lots of money). And the booth doesn't seize up even once, doesn't fail even once (or maybe it does, but only when it's a good thing).

photo 3 – the author at the booth that saved Pennan

photo 2 – a panorama view of Pennan – the hotel is the fifth building from the left, and right behind it, there's the entrance road to the village

Twenty-seven years have passed since those events. Not wanting to wait until a round anniversary, last year I decided to see for myself if the booth was still there, so me and my better half went on a long and adventurous trip to Pennan. This meant taking a quick flight to Glasgow, and from there heading carefully, on the wrong side of the road, all the way across the Highlands up to the North Coast. A five-hour drive on a road where every single vehicle going in the opposite direction seems to be heading for a head-on collision is a torment, but the amazing views do make up for it.

Having arrived late at night, the next morning we set off on a reconnaissance mission to check if everything, including the Pennan Inn, is in the same place as in the film. Oh, it would seem I forgot to mention that this whole story comes from the "Local Hero" film, which was made those 27 years ago. The Polish version of the title is "Biznesmen i gwiazdy," which translates into English as "The Businessman and the Stars" and is probably the only case where the Polish title reflects the spirit of the film better than the original one. All the same, the film is great, and the excellent music by Mark Knopfler, featuring the immortal "Going Home" theme song perfectly complements it.

Going back to what's in place – the booth is there, although in a slightly different place than in the film, but it IS there! It stands in front of the hotel that the film's characters stay at. A nice feeling – being in the same place that the characters of your favourite film are and being able to experience the ambience of this beautiful corner of Scotland. Had there been "Going Home" playing in the background, pure happiness would've been achieved.

As for the hotel, it's hard to tell incredible stories about it. Unfortunately, the building isn't impressive, but the view from its windows definitely is. Inside, there are memorabilia of the film, a poster showing Peter Riegert (the lead actor) standing in water up to his ankles, and a bar well stocked with local "specialties." Despite its rather ordinary look, it's worth visiting (I mean the hotel, but the bar too, actually). Even if just to meet the hotel's introverted owner and chef in one person and try the local specialties he makes (perhaps that's a bit of an exaggeration, but he does cook quite well given the culinary traditions of this region).

Once you've eaten and regenerated with a glass of Scotch, you may allow yourself to be taken on a trip around the area. Unless your personal driver has been imbibing too. Well, all there is to do then is have a walk along the quayside and admire the site that was supposed to be turned into a refinery.

photo 4 – the Pennan Inn hotel – a view from the window

photo 5 – the hotel's interior – the poster from the "Local Hero" film, photo 6 – the Mill of Nethermill exit
photo 7 – the bay where the Mill of Nethermill stands, photo 8 – the bridge's 300th anniversary celebration to the sounds of "Learning to Fly"

But if you do have a chance to roam a bit around the region, it's worth going a few kilometres west of Pennan and, while driving along the main (only) road, stopping at a place called Mill of Nethermill Holidays – a charming guesthouse with a gift shop in an old but well-refurbished cottage. The entire complex of small buildings is located in another charming bay, this one much more accessible than the rocky cliffs of Pennan.

We get there and, failing to notice it at first, head for the beach. But then, I'm stopped in my tracks by the familiar music coming from the opposite direction, where a river flows, and where there's an old bridge hidden behind the buildings together with... some old greybeard bustling around with a trowel by the bridge and listening to what I would not expect there. "Learning to fly" by Pink Floyd. I say something like "let's walk up to him, he's listening to the Floyds, so he must be a good man, let's talk to him." The Pink Floyd-listening man by the bridge turned out to be a very interesting character – a retired Texan who decided to spend the fall of his life in Scotland. He managed to buy a piece of land and a dilapidated cottage, restore it, and in the meantime, become a local authority (it turned out that even inhabitants of a town 20 miles away from there know who he is) on restoring old buildings. When we met him, he was just finishing the renovation of this bridge by crowning the masterpiece with a stone plaque stating the date of its construction (photo). It also turned out that he's a devoted (Pink Floyd) fan of "Local Hero" and he renovates the booth in Pennan yearly, thanks to which it looks like the phone could ring any moment (like it did in the film) and thanks to which I had a chance to see the booth still standing.

The man made a huge impression on me, talking about all the things he's renovated as if they were his life's work. You could see how much he enjoys it. If you ever find yourself considering going to this rather cold place on holiday, you simply must visit the man, have a drink at his 'mill,' and if he feels like talking, listen to his stories. It's also worth renting a room there, although I'd always try to persuade you to stay at the Pennan Inn, which will forever remind me of the brilliant film, and from whose windows you will always see that most important booth in the world.

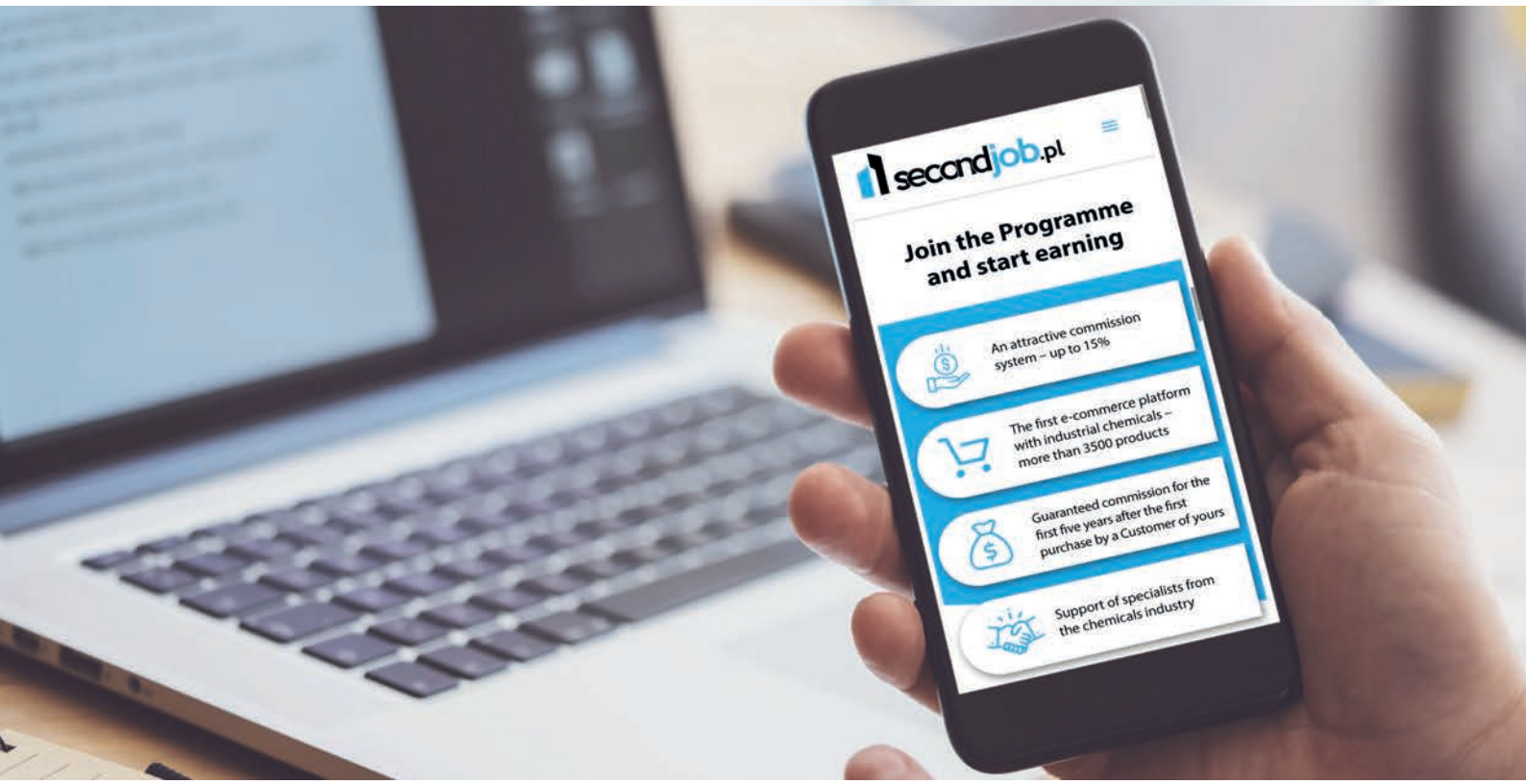
Bartosz Bańkowski
Chief New Technology Officer
PCC Rokita

distripark.com®

Join the

distripark.com

Partner Programme and start earning.



DEVELOPMENT

FLEXIBLE WORK APPROACH

HIGH COMMISSION

SATISFACTION

Learn more at **www.secondjob.pl**