**Open Space**

In the early 1980's the originator of Open Space Technology, Harrison Owen, was invited to organise an international conference for 250 participants. It took a full year to organise and at the end of the conference everyone agreed that although the whole event had been outstanding, the truly useful part had been the coffee breaks.

This revelation led Harrison Owen to explore the question: Was it possible to combine the level of energy and excitement present in a good coffee break with the substantive activity and results characteristic of a good meeting?

The outcome of his deliberations was the creation of a process known as Open Space Technology which although new to many people has been used all over the world.

It allows for any number of people to meet, discuss issues of heartfelt concern, pool their knowledge and make recommendations. There is no pre-set agenda to which ideas will be developed and what issues will be explored.

The only prerequisite for attendance is that people genuinely want to work together on issues of mutual interest. By the end of the day together, the following will have occurred:

* Every issue of concern to anybody will have been raised, if they took responsibility for doing that;
* Every idea and suggestion will have had the chance to be discussed and recorded, if responsibility was taken for doing that:

We were advised that Harrison Owen says that ”An Open Space event is a little like swimming, you can read all the books but it is only in the experience of doing that it all makes sense” Never has a truer word been said.