

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

10th April 2010

1. Thanet Switches On

It began at 10 seconds before midday at the Marlowe Academy. The assembled group of directors, supporters and technicians was crowded into the hi-tech Studio 1 as the countdown began. At exactly 1200 hrs on 6th April 2010, station manager Pete Willson came on air for the launch of 107.8 Academy FM. In an uncharacteristically emotional voice, Pete welcomed listeners to Thanet's community radio station; the ultimate professional understandably betraying his relief and joy at finally coming on air. Since director David Atkey sketched out the first plans some six years previously, turning a good idea into a fully functioning reality has not been easy. There must have been times when the former BBC producer might have wished he was back behind the scenes at Live Aid coaxing performances out of Paul McCartney, Queen and Bob Geldof as the forces of officialdom almost strangled the station at birth. Difficulties in securing the right wavelength and recent delays in reaching agreement with authorities in France and Belgium were mercifully put aside as David reviewed the best wishes pouring into the studio from across East Kent. The first on-air telephone call to Pete Willson came from the Principal of the Marlowe Academy, Ian Johnson, who had interrupted his Easter holidays to join in the celebrations. Ian was quick to point out that 107.8 Academy FM was conceived as a community resource from which all residents and students in the area can benefit. As well as staff at the Marlowe Academy, former Thanet College Chairman of Governors, Paul Trumble, and parliamentary candidate Laura Sandys have contributed considerable time and advice. Many public and private individuals have also joined East Kent's greatest benefactor, Roger De Haan, to ensure that the station has the funds to operate until the end of the year. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is working closely with 107.8 Academy FM on a sustainable future for Thanet's newest media outlet and looks forward to representing the voice of business on its airways.

2. Who Will Listen to 107.8 Academy FM?

In the successful application to Ofcom of 14 November 2008, the mission statement of Academy FM was defined as aiming to "unite, support, involve and serve the Thanet community, to promote social gain and broaden listener choice". Later in the application we learn that "radio is a one to one medium, where we talk to our listeners, not at them" which might be news to Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand, but seems sensible enough to the rest of us. A lively mix of music, news, sport, phone-ins, discussions and 'in the armchair' interviews should ensure that locals receive an attractive blend of information and entertainment to keep them interested around the clock. Sure to tune in are the signatories to the original application. Joining the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and the aforementioned supporters in 2008 were names familiar to the East Kent coastal business community including Cllr Steve Ward of Ramsgate, Barry Coppock of Wantsum Savers, Keith Morris of Thanet Community Development Trust, Richard Samuel of Thanet District Council, Chief Inspector Mark Nottage and Sergeant Sue Groombridge of the local police, Penny Dadds of Margate Jobcentre, Roger Gale MP, Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, Sue Buss of Thanet College, Cllr Margaret Sheldrick of Birchington, Bernadette Whitlock of Thanet District Citizens Advice Bureau, Jan Askew of East Kent Coastal NHS, Frances Rehal of SureStart, Susan Priest of SEEDA and Andy Somers of Hartsdown College.

3. Hotels, Restaurants and The Open 2011

The Chamber Hotels & Restaurants Forum scheduled to take place on Wednesday 28th April 2010 at 1500 hrs at the Chamber HQ at the Kent Innovation Centre, Broadstairs will feature a short presentation from our associates at Dover District Council (DCC) on the opportunities for boosting business when the Open Championship returns to Sandwich in 2011. DDC has acquired an enviable reputation for supporting retailers in the district and its officers are keen to maximise the income for East Kent businesses from the moneyed visitors expected in July next year. Hotels and restaurants in the East Kent coastal business community can get ahead of the game by joining this informal gathering of like-minded professionals interested in sharing best practice and promoting business-to-business exchanges. Delegates will also be encouraged to promote business-to-business exchanges and find useful links to support their sales and marketing campaigns. Of interest to anyone with management responsibility in the hospitality sector, the forum is open to registered members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and the Dover District Chamber of Commerce and their associates. There is a nominal charge of £5.00 for Chamber members and £15.00 for non-members payable on arrival which covers room hire, tea, coffee, biscuits and administration. To register, please email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Chamber Hotel & Restaurants Form".

4. Thanet Business Exhibition

Businesses of all sizes are invited to attend the Thanet Business Exhibition on 11 June 2010 at G Casino Westwood Cross. Stands are available at prices from £160.00. Companies looking to boost their sales in East Kent are invited to contact organiser, Graham Rayner, tel: 078998 73535 for details. For booking forms email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Thanet Business Exhibition".

5. Port Privatisation Lunch

As noted in previous editions, the Port of Dover has presented privatisation proposals to the Secretary of State for Transport with a view to securing £400m of investment to build a new cruise terminal, a £30m marina and improvements to access roads. Around 14m passengers pass through the port each year as well as 100,000 coaches and 2.3m HGVs. The inadequacies of the road infrastructure bring misery to East Kent businesses and local residents every time severe weather or industrial action blocks the port. Operation Stack means No Operations for many businesses and unacceptable delays for all of us. With our associates at the

Dover District Chamber of Commerce we are working with the Port of Dover to find a solution, see page 13 of “Our Plan for the Next Generation; Ferry Terminal 2” at <http://www.doverport.co.uk/?page=PortDevelopment> We make no comment on the political aspects of privatisation, but we do agree that all serious traffic projections forecast increases in vehicles at the port and a remedy must be found. Keen to work with the two main business support organisations in the East Kent coastal business community, the Dover Harbour Board Chief Executive, Dr Bob Goldfield will be giving a briefing exclusively to Chamber members at lunchtime on Friday 30th April 2010. For details, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line “Dover Port Lunch”. For a free copy of this Chamber’s three-page submission to the Secretary of State, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line “Dover Privatisation Submission”.

6. Turner Contemporary Business Breakfast

Oh yes it has. Oh no it hasn't. The pantomime approach may have been a feature once of the Turner Contemporary gallery as locals wondered if this project was ever going to start. Understandably, a certain scepticism greeted the news that the funding had been secured and a world-class gallery was going to be built on terra firma in Margate, better known for its amusement arcades, Dreamland (see the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 27 March 2010) and tasty seafood at the end of the Harbour Arm. As Frankie Howerd used to say, ‘Titter ye not’. Not only is the David Chipperfield designed building a reality, but the builders are already securing the roof. Gross Max Landscape Architects and David Chipperfield Architects are now turning their attention to the design of the external landscape. The project is on course to open to the public in Spring 2011. On 11 May 2010, Paul Gray, the charismatic Head of Operations and Resources Operations at the Turner Contemporary, will be presenting the latest developments at a business breakfast arranged exclusively for the Thanet & East Kent Chamber but open to all. Of interest to every local business, Paul’s talk will outline the role of this iconic building in helping the East Kent coastal business community grow and flourish; he should know as he used to work at Kew Gardens.

7. Chamber Golf Day

The East Kent coastal business community’s biggest golf tournament will take place at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club on 8 October 2010. Originally featuring a team contest between the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and the Dover District Chambers of Commerce, the tournament has now grown to include eight competitions and is attracting interest from overseas companies. Tournament director, Justin Bishop, is confident that the growth of recent years will continue. Prizes on offer include a new car. Bookings are already ahead of last year and any companies wishing to enter a team of four players are asked to email as soon as possible our events team at manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line “Chamber Golf Day”.

8. Travel & Leisure Show

On Sunday 28th March the third KOS Media Travel & Leisure Show took place at Dover Cruise Terminal and attracted a steady stream of trade and private visitors. The recent boom in cruise holidays was reflected in the interest shown in cruise ships calling at Dover. The last annual report of the Port of Dover revealed a 9.1% increase in cruise ships but a 28.9% rise in revenue; a staggering increase in a recessionary trading environment. Retailers throughout East Kent would clearly benefit from attracting more independent cruise ship passengers to their sales counters. Visitors to the Travel & Leisure Show had to pass a beautifully presented brand new coach belonging to Carol Peters Travel which offers extended leg room and full facilities. Managing Director, Peter Howe, is keen to build on recent successes and, like many Thanet & East Kent Chamber members, has full confidence in the economic future of East Kent. Tight cost control and a heavy emphasis on customer service allow this company to compete on price and still invest nearly £250,000 in each new coach. An enterprising approach was also the order of the day from the Powell Cotton Museum, Quex House & Gardens, tel: 1843 842168, which provided a presentation featuring characters in full Victorian dress distributing own-brand potato crisps and an inspiring talk from a reincarnation of Major Percy Horace Gordon Powell-Cotton (1866-1940). The museum has a first-class reputation overseas and yet mysteriously there are still residents of East Kent who have never been there. Feeling guilty? Telephone 01843 842168 for details. Kent International Airport at Manston had one of the busiest stands as visitors queued for information on the new low cost Flybe flights to Edinburgh starting on 27 May this year. Booking well in advance at www.flybe.com secures the best prices. In summary, Liz Hare and her team at KOS Media made a great success of the third Travel & Leisure show which has now become a firm feature in the travel sector’s marketing calendar. If you have a crush on a cruise, give a call to Chamber member “That’s My Cruise”, tel: 0800 028 9754. Vincent or Sandra will be pleased to help.

9. Chamber Diary Dates

Wednesday, 28 th April 2010	Hotels & Restaurants Forum	Business to Business
Friday 30 th April 2010	Dover Port Privatisation Lunch	Dr Bob Goldfield
Tuesday, 11 th May 2010	Turner Contemporary Breakfast	Paul Gray
Friday, 11 th June 2010	Thanet Business Exhibition	East Kent Companies
Friday, 8 th October 2010	Chamber Golf Day	At Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club

It’s happening now, it’s happening in Thanet & East Kent.

10. We are Wonderful ...Yuk

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber receives many unsolicited corporate magazines from national companies in London and the big cities anxious to inform us how wonderful they are. Perhaps some of them are, but the text is often obscure and the images even more so. Pictures of one inebriated member of staff in evening dress at a Manchester hotel presenting another member of staff with an award does not make for the most riveting story nor necessarily inspire the reader to purchase the products or services being promoted. There is a threshold of acceptability regarding self-promotion which ends at the first line of text that states ‘We

are wonderful' or similar. Also, equanimity and mental health are not enhanced by a constant stream of advertising telling us that we are too fat, too unfashionable and do not smell right. How much more enlightening it is then for others to blow your trumpet so that you can just sit back and enjoy the music. Excessive modesty and an overriding duty to promote the corporate interests of our members prevents the Thanet & East Kent Chamber from singing its own praises, but we are happy for others to comment, as the selection of unsolicited correspondence at item 11 below shows.

11. Voice of Readers

'As ever a great newsletter' *Thanet District Council*; 'Fantastic weekly newsletter' *Royal Harbour Hotel*; 'Class as ever!' *Ramsgate Estates*; 'Always a good read' *Barclays Corporate*; 'Great newsletter as always. Not being a local yokel myself I haven't had the pleasure of meeting Elvis yet – I don't think!' *Big Solutions Ltd*; 'I always read with interest as I find them so informative of what is going on in Thanet and, as in this case, the UK' *Harrington Associates*; 'We have become avid readers of the TEKC updates, we must congratulate you on such a well written and informative newsletter. I read very little unless I have to, so this is a true accolade!' *Lavender Blue Media Ltd*. 'Excellent news. Really good!' *KM Group*; 'Excellent work' *CARISS*; 'An excellent mix of valuable information and amusing chat. Very readable. Well done and best wishes to you and your team.' *Start Anywhere*; 'Just a quick thank you for these informative - and often entertaining! – newsletters' *Canterbury Christ Church University*; 'First off, I just wanted to say how enjoyable I find your newsletter. I receive a number of Chamber newsletters around the Kent area weekly and monthly and by far, yours is the most informative, well-written and entertaining. The small snippets are easy to digest, to the point, and often make me chuckle and it is the only one I read in its entirety every week.' *5 Star Computer Systems Ltd*; 'It's great to have someone making connections.' *Margate Harbour Arm*; 'Just to say how much I enjoyed the presentation yesterday. Really well organised- great speakers and a great opportunity for the people of Thanet to 'grasp.' *Barclays Business Banking*; 'Congratulations on the Breakfast Meeting, I'm blown away by the quality of the last two Breakfast Meetings.' *Mach Associates*. The only official comment that the Chamber can make is that it is comforting to know that we are blessed with readers of such perspicacity and objective judgment.

12. That's Nothing

Item 10 refers to the perils of bragging to potential clients. There is always a risk in such instances that you expose your weaknesses so that a competitor will appear promoting a bigger, better, cheaper product. Of course, your competitor may not always be telling the truth. One Chamber member in the timber trade has sent us this anecdote. You must judge for yourself if it is entirely reliable. Three tree surgeons were sitting at a bar in Maidstone bragging about the prowess of their ancestors who had all been lumberjacks. One said, "My great grandfather lived in Sherwood Forest and could move an axe so fast that in one month he felled 250 trees." "That's nothing", said his fellow professional on the next bar stool, "My great, great grandfather lived in the Canadian wilderness and was so strong that in one month he felled 250 trees, chopped them up into bundles of firewood and delivered them to the homes of needy pensioners throughout British Columbia". The third tree surgeon, a slim 75 year-old, had sat on his bar stool in dignified silence throughout this but finally volunteered, "My great, great, great grandfather lived in the Sahara Forest and..." He got no further as he was interrupted with, "Surely you mean the Sahara Desert?" To which he replied, "Oh sure, it's called the Sahara Desert now."

13. Our Sponsors

The Thanet & East Kent Insider is grateful for the support and sponsorship provided by *Girlings*, *Express By Holiday Inn* and *Adecco*. *Girlings Solicitors* has been managing the managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. *Express By Holiday* took on the daunting task of restoring the former *Prospect Inn* at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of *Oliver Hill's* 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. *Adecco* is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, *Adecco* is represented in Thanet and Dover by its *Broadstairs* office, tel: 01843 609292.



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It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.
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