

24<sup>th</sup> April 2010

### 1. Petrol

East Kent readers who drive a car and buyers who watch company fuel prices will have noticed a sharp rise in petrol costs in recent months. At the time of writing, one litre of unleaded petrol at Asda Canterbury, Lakeside Service Station, Asda Tilbury and Shell Northfleet costs 117.9p. By contrast, a litre of unleaded from the pumps of Tesco Extra in Broadstairs costs 121.9p. Thus anyone filling a tank with 70 litres of fuel will find that it costs £2.80 more at Tesco Extra Broadstairs than at some of its competitors. In fairness to the “Every little helps” supermarket chain, enquiries by the Chamber reveal that the retailer receives very little of the selling price. The figures we have received show that a selling price of 119.9p a litre is divided as follows: duty 57.19p, product 39.85p, VAT 17.86p, retailer & delivery 5p. In case you are wondering, we have checked the addition twice and it did add up to 119.9p. Three times would have been tempting fate. It follows that if the 5p margin is raised to 7p, it produces a 40% increase to the retailer. On such small margins, it must be tempting to the petrol stations without a close competitor nearby to increase the retail price by a few extra pence. The cheapest petrol we have found in Thanet is at Ramsgate Service Station which asks for 119.9p for a litre of unleaded. At the risk of hearing readers murmur to themselves ‘grandmother’ and ‘suck eggs’, it clearly does not make sense to travel a long distance to fill up with fuel, but it probably does pay to refuel when you are going past one of the cheaper outlets.

### 2. News From Dover

Plans are moving ahead for the Cable Car linking Dover Seafront with Dover Castle. Following some positive meetings with the English Heritage Advisory Site Committee, the project has reached an advanced stage with the promise of significant benefits for retailers in the town. Dover District Council and Dover Town Council enjoy excellent relations with our sister Chamber at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce. Recent initiatives include the establishment of a Dover Business Support office in the town centre, plans for a Saturday market and support to inward investors. Both Dover District Council and Dover Town Council provide a first-class example of how local councils can work with the established Chamber of Commerce.

### 3. Blue Flags

Among the glories of Thanet are the beaches which stand comparison with any in the UK. Seven beaches received the Blue Flag in 2009, Minnis Bay, St. Mildred’s Bay Westgate, West Bay Westgate, Walpole Bay Margate, Botany Bay Broadstairs, Joss Bay Broadstairs and Ramsgate Main Sands. The Blue Flag system is administered in England by Keep Britain Tidy and in Europe by the Foundation for Environmental Education. It provides a powerful incentive to beach managers and councils. It is officially described as “a prestigious, international award scheme which acts as a guarantee to tourists that a beach or marina they are visiting is one of the best in the world”. A Blue Flag is given to “coastal destinations which have achieved the highest quality in water, facilities, safety, environmental education and management.” The 2010 winners are expected to be announced in May this year. The Thanet & East Kent Insider will keep readers informed of the results.

### 4. Reducing Costs

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber focuses much of our efforts on reducing operating costs for members. Sometimes this consists of helping to secure grants for new machinery, offering representation to minimize business rates or simply assisting members with cash flow issues such as unpaid invoices. We are always pleased to welcome initiatives that decrease expense and increase revenue. With this in mind, we welcome Auditel into our membership. This company offers a business health check using the resources of the largest cost management consultancy in the country. Manager, Jeremy Bailey, is keen not just to cut costs to produce a single cash input to your business, but to manage those costs in the long term. As he put it in a recent email to the Chamber, “I review their costs, profile their spending patterns against similar sized companies in the same verticals and provide them with a detailed report against which they can make informed decisions about how they can get the best value for money. All without any upfront costs. We work purely on a contingency basis and ask only to share in any savings that we actually deliver.” Seems too good to be true? Give Jeremy a call and see what he can do for you. Details from Jeremy Bailey, Auditel, Cost Management Consultant tel: 01843 588776 or 07990 561616.

## 5. Quex Adding Value

The Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens are home to some thriving local businesses including, Jungle Jims Family Entertainment Centre and the Hannah Dining Suite. Around 3000 tons of potatoes are grown on the estate and supplied to a local supermarket chain with obvious benefits in terms of cost and freshness. Quex is also now producing its own bottled rapeseed oil. Managing Director Anthony Curwen is particularly keen to serve the local market with home grown produce. Key to the growth of Quex's food products is the relationship with Thanet College catering department which has elected to use Quex Rapeseed Oil in its restaurants and in projects with students. This is another example of Thanet College using its international expertise for the benefit of local companies, justifying Quex Park's Karen Botha's claim of Thanet College as "a perfect partner". We need hardly add that both organisations are members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and maintain close ties with the East Kent coastal business community.

## 6. Events Summary

Booking is essential for the following Chamber events which have all been designed to help members increase turnover, reduce costs and provide friendly business-to-business networking opportunities :

<i>What</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Information &amp; Booking</i>
Hotels & Restaurants Forum	1500 hrs, 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2010	manager@tekco.uk
Dover Port Privatisation Lunch	1215 hrs, 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2010	manager@tekco.uk
Turner Contemporary Breakfast	0730 hrs, 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2010	manager@tekco.uk
Dover Business Exhibition	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	Graham Rayner tel: 07899 873535
Thanet Business Exhibition	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	Graham Rayner tel: 07899 873535
Thanet & Dover Golf Day	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2010	manager@tekco.uk

## 7. Slogans

Item 1 on petrol prices does raise the question of the value of slogans. In an article for the BBC a few years ago, Cobra Beer's Marketing Director, Simon Edwards, described Tesco's catchy phrase "Every little helps" as "It includes a promise but also gets across what the company is about and gives an indication of its character". Tesco may not be helping East Kent motorists much, but the City and shareholders have no reason to complain. Yesterday's share price of £4.51 shows a rise of 94p from this time last year when it stood at £3.57.

## 8. More About Catch Phrases

Where would Bruce Forsyth be without "Nice to see you, to see you nice", "Give us a twirl", "good game, good game" and more recently "You're my favourites". The comforting familiarity of brand recognition is a key factor in marketing and one that has been fully exploited by Carlsberg's "Probably the best .... in the world" slogan created by Saatchi and Saatchi in 1973. Does your business have a catch phrase? Some have embedded themselves in our national consciousness such as the British Army's "Be The Best" from 1994. McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" was launched in Germany in 2003 by Heye & Partner as "Ich Liebe Es" with a song added later for the UK version featuring Justin Timberlake. Some companies have succumbed to public pressure to change their slogans. In 2004, L'Oréal famously ditched "Because I'm worth it" for a less materialistic "Because you're worth it", neither of which seems to carry any great message for saving the planet. Lovelys Gallery in Cliftonville, tel 01843 292757, reminds visitors to its shop and website that it has won the award of "Art Retailer of the Year", a prestigious accolade that puts this quality establishment ahead of all its competitors which will be no surprise to any customers to its premises in Northdown Road. Silent Gliss, tel: 01843 863571, a truly world-class manufacturer in Broadstairs, introduced its unique system of panel glides earlier this year as "New Inspirations" and "Effortless Movement" which sum up its classy approach as the leading global supplier of motorised and manual curtain and blind systems to the high end market. Twin Towers Trading, tel: 01843 232346, knows a thing or two about the power of slogans to promote a product. With a worldwide client base, this company markets The World's Sharpest Knife, The Great Wok of China and, intriguingly, The Euro Chopper which is currently not available in New Zealand and nor should it be; western Europe is underpopulated as it is. Twin Towers trading has a remarkable range of skincare products jewellery and useful gadgets for the kitchen. Sometimes a simple descriptive phrase is enough. WW Martin, tel: 01843 591 584, is one of the South East's most successful construction companies. With an order book that includes a £1 million contract to build offices and welfare units for Thanet Offshore Windfarm, WW Martin has hundreds of satisfied customers throughout the private and public sectors which more than justifies its claim to be "Working in close partnership with clients to ensure high quality buildings on time and within budget". Doing what you promise to do is of course, the best advertisement there is, or as Ronseal first put it in 1994, "It does exactly what it says on the tin". Even Bruce Forsyth couldn't beat that one.

## 9. Fanatic

Next Wednesday's Hotel & Restaurants Forum will include a briefing on the opportunities for businesses arising from the Open Championship in July 2011. One Chamber member has contacted the Thanet & East Kent Insider with his own account of the fanatical devotion that some sports inspire. According to Mr X of Lakeside Business Park, a colleague of his was once stranded for eight years on a remote Pacific island with just sufficient food and water to sustain life: well, that's the way he tells it, anyway. No television, no family, no general election and no Bruce Forsyth. While strolling along the beach one morning, our latter-day Robinson Crusoe was surprised by an astoundingly beautiful woman emerging from the surf in a full wetsuit. As she removed her face mask, her lovely blond hair tumbled onto her rubber-clad shoulders. In a soft voice she said, "How long is it since you had a real drink?" "Eight years", our friend mumbled. The vision in black unzipped a pocket on the right of her wet suit and handed over a bottle of single malt whisky which he immediately opened and took a long gulp with supreme satisfaction. "And how long, is it", she continued, "since you had a good smoke?". "Eight years", our friend blurted out, almost completely mesmerised. The angel from the deep unzipped a pocket on the left of her wet suit and took out a perfectly preserved Cohiba Siglo VI Havana cigar from Hunters & Frankau which the island's sole resident accepted with grateful thanks. Then, with one hand on the zip that ran down the centre of her wet suit, the blond lovely said, "And have you had any fun at all on the island?" Our man could not contain himself any longer and shouted, "My God. I can't believe it. Don't tell me you've got some golf clubs in there as well?"

## 10. Our Sponsors

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***It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.***  
**For details of membership, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk)**

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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