

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

8th May 2010

1. Get a share of £80 Million

Companies in Scotland compete for a share of the £80 million dividend that results from the activities of Glasgow Prestwick Airport and that must be one of the ambitions of companies near Kent International Airport at Manston. To find out about the opportunities for your business, book a place at the business breakfast, "Kent International Airport; The Future" scheduled for 0730 hrs on 20th May 2010 in the departure lounge at Manston. Airport owners, Infratil will be joined by Flybe to give a briefing on the opportunities for local businesses and the projected rise in passengers and freight numbers. Flybe's daily flights to Edinburgh begin exactly one week later. Booking is essential to secure your place at this popular event. Email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Airport Networking Breakfast".

2. What's All This About Infratil?

Infratil is the New Zealand-based company that owns Kent International Airport at Manston. There are many misconceptions about this company, due no doubt in part to a confusion with previous owners of the airport. For all its sterling support for British business and fair play, even the Daily Telegraph can get its facts wrong, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/7657908/Romney-Marsh-and-keeping-the-Lydd-on-aviation-pressures.html>. The latest Infratil company report states, "From its listing in April 1994 to 31 March 2009 Infratil's average after tax compound return to shareholders has been 18% per annum." In the opinion of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, the strength of the company stems from two factors. Firstly, it is fully committed to a long term view. As the Chairman and Chief Executive put it, "Long-term investments tend to offer the best returns because more distant and uncertain rewards are generally not factored into the entry price and there is the ability to deliver compound returns by investing in growth." But there is also the fact that the company has invested in a portfolio which encompasses renewable energy, the Australian energy market and urban mobility as well as air travel. Increasing demand in all these sectors suggests a solid basis for measured expansion as markets recover from the recession.

3. What's Glasgow Got To Do With Manston?

Infratil owns Glasgow Prestwick Airport. We know from a recent report by SQW Consulting that over half the companies consulted in Ayrshire consider that Glasgow Prestwick makes an important contribution to their business. Tourism from the airport boosted 29% of the firms in the survey. It is interesting to note that over one fifth of companies quoted make sales direct to the airport. We estimate that 580,000 passengers visited Scotland through Glasgow Prestwick in 2006/7 and their expenditure amounted to £173 million which is equivalent to 4% of the total tourism spend in Scotland. The local economy received £40 million. The total added value to Ayrshire is calculated at £48 million with the airport supporting 1,733 jobs in the county and a total of 2,941 jobs in Scotland. Unemployment in Thanet currently stands at 6% of the workforce. It is not necessary to be an economist to assess the benefits to the East Kent coastal business community from a successful airport in the heart of Thanet.

4. Why Flybe?

Flybe was founded in 1979 as Jersey European. Walkersteel Group, familiar to fans of Blackburn Rovers, took over the company in 1983. In 2000, the company started trading as British European before changing the name to Flybe in 2002. In 2007, Flybe acquired BA Connect. Through an employee share scheme, British Airways has a 15% shareholding. The winner of many awards such as Most Recommended UK Low Fares Airline 2003 from Holiday Which and Air Transport World Regional Airline of the Year 2009, Flybe has now grown to serve 38 UK airports, more than any other airline. There are major Flybe bases at Aberdeen, Birmingham, Belfast City, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Guernsey, Inverness, Isle of Man, Jersey, London Gatwick, Manchester, Newcastle and Southampton. This is a useful factor to consider if you are looking for connecting domestic or international flights. Flybe will begin daily services from Kent International Airport at Manston to Edinburgh on 27th May 2010. Anyone who is thinking of letting the train take the strain might like to take into account the strain of paying £158.50 for a train leaving Margate at 0644 hours which arrives in Edinburgh 7 hours later. Flybe can get you to Edinburgh from Manston in 80 minutes for £24.99, if you book sufficiently in advance. Even the Greek Minister of Finance would not find that a difficult choice to make.

5. Arts Festival

Dover Arts Festival is now hitting the headlines in regional and national papers. Lovers of fine art, music, wine and patisserie will find plenty to appreciate on 15th May 2010 at Dover College. Thanet & East Kent Chamber members Cloudberry and Lovelys Gallery are among the quality exhibitors. More information can be found at www.doverartsfestival.org.uk where you can click on the titles art, music, wine & food, war memorial and sponsors for details.

6. Comments on Core Data

Last week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider reported on unemployment. This week we feature some core data on the district of Thanet. Some people take great pleasure in reading statistics of this type. You can bet that some readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, in fact maybe even both of them, will be at this moment salivating at the prospect of discovering the latest figures on Median Gross Weekly Pay By Residence. Nevertheless, there is a serious point to all this. The difference in pay between those who live and work in Thanet and those who live in Thanet and work elsewhere can be interpreted in two ways. A company owner in Thanet might consider that he will pay his worker on average £48.50 less per week than his competitor outside the district. On the other hand, the average skilled worker might prefer the higher average wages available in the surrounding districts. Given the rise in unemployment in the private sector since 2008, the figure of 35.3% of the workforce in the public sector is likely to have risen considerably. It will be interesting to see what measures a new administration in Westminster takes to address this issue. With only 9.3% of the workforce involved in manufacturing, there is limited scope for the benefits of an advantageous exchange rate and the resulting boost to exports being reflected in a general uplift in the local economy. We must surely do more to support those companies who make things and those workers who get their hands dirty doing it.

7. Core Data on Thanet

Population	129,900	ONS, June 2008
Area	10,329 hectares	KCC, Dec 2008
Median Gross Weekly Pay By Workplace	£374.20	ONS 2009
Median Gross Weekly Pay By Residence	£422.70	ONS 2009
Public administration workers	35.3%	NOMIS 2008
Hotel, restaurant, distribution workers	27.7%	NOMIS 2008
Managers & senior officials	11.5%	NOMIS 2009
Manufacturing workers	9.3%	NOMIS 2008
Total companies	3,950	TEKC Estimate, May 2010
VAT registered businesses	2,835	NOMIS 2007
Companies fewer than 25 workers	92.5%	ONS 2007
Adults of working age with no qualifications	15.4%	NOMIS Dec 2008
Households with no working parent	23.4%	Thanet Works March 2009
Indices of deprivation	1 st in Kent	Out of 12: KCC, Jan 2008
Indices of highest level of deprivation	65 th in England	Out of 354: KCC, Jan 2008

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8. Fred Perry

The Thanet & East Kent Insider has learned of a burglary at the Helter Skelter Boutique in Margate Old Town. If any readers are approached with the offer, "Ere mate, want to buy some Fred Perry polo shirts what fell off a lorry, like?", please inform Margate police who will be pleased to hear from you. You might also like to keep an eye open at any boot sales you attend in the next few weeks.

9. Beautiful Pictures Shared

As part of our increasing cooperation with the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, delegates at the recent Chamber Hotels & Restaurants Forum have been captured by our joint official photographer whose images can be found at www.photoboxgallery.com/ddcc. The site also shows pictures of the presentation given to Chamber members by Bob Goldfield, Chief Executive of the Port of Dover.

10. Increase Your Turnover

Thanet Business Exhibition is receiving widespread support from companies wishing to promote their goods and services. Some companies have chosen to take advantage of a discount available for exhibiting in Dover on 10th June 2010 in Dover Town Hall and in Thanet the following day at G Casino. For details, contact our Membership and Marketing Officer, Graham Rayner, tel: 07899 873535.

11. Turner Contemporary

Delegates who have booked for the Chamber business networking breakfast and a presentation by Paul Gray, Head of Operations and Research at the Turner Contemporary Gallery, are reminded to present themselves at the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House & Gardens at 0730 hrs on 11th May 2010. We will learn about the benign effects of the gallery and the good news for local suppliers of products and services.

12. Painting It Green

Saturday 15th May 2010 will see creative works of the highest order at Dover Arts Festival, see www.doverartsfestival.org.uk but one Chamber member has related a story about a more mundane kind of painting. Whether the incident genuinely refers to his neighbour, we leave you to judge. But this is what he told us. His neighbours are apparently an odd lot. The husband works long hours in an office at the end of the road and seems to spend most of his weekends polishing his precious car. His wife is a volunteer for a local charity and is excessively house-proud. If you pick up an ornament on the mantelpiece, there is a cross underneath so that it can be returned to the exact same spot. Nothing is ever tidy enough or clean enough in her house. One morning last week, just as she was leaving for work, she was approached at the door by an odd-job man. "Need anything doing around the house, Ma'am?", he said cheerily. "Not really, no thank you", she replied, but then remembered that the garage and the rear door were beginning to look a little scruffy. "Well there is something," she added. "The porch at the back of the house needs painting and so does the garage door. There's some green paint and brushes and so on in the garage. It's not locked. If you can do the porch and doors by the time I get back at 3.30 pm, I'll give you £100 in cash when I return. Make sure you cover every inch." Knowing a good deal when he hears it, the odd-job man said, "No problem. Just leave it to me". Four hours later, the house proud neighbour returned to be met at front garden gate. "I did it all, green paint just as you ordered. Both jobs, beautiful. I even had some paint left over and so did two coats of Dulux gloss." As she was handing over the £100 in five crisp £20 notes, the odd-job man said, "I did just as you said, but there's one thing you should know. "Oh yes", said Mrs Houseproud, "and what is that?" The odd-job man said solemnly, "The Porsche you mentioned is not a Porsche at all. It is a Lexus."

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

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