

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

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1. A Question of Image

The official Chamber photographic Agency, Anton Images of Sandwich, has a range of photographs available from a selection of Chamber events during the past twelve months including the recent Business Breakfast with Laura Sandys MP and the Thanet Business Exhibition of last month. To view the collection, see the website at <http://www.photoboxgallery.com/ddcc> and be prepared to wait a few moments for the "Image Not Available" badges to disappear. Visitors to the site can order simple photographic prints from as little as £0.05 each or have their favourite images printed on cards, stationery, T-shirts, mugs, calendars, glass, bags and cushions. This raises the possibility that with some judicious purchases you could wake up in the morning and see yourself on your shaving mirror, check the date on a calendar that features your physiognomy and have breakfast sitting down on top of your own image drinking your coffee from a mug with your face on it. On the other hand, you could just buy the prints to send to your mum.

2. Coastal Tourism

Tourism to British seaside resorts is definitely on the increase. "We can offer a unique product that will keep people coming" is the verdict of Professor Steve Fothergill of Sheffield Hallam's Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CSESR) which has just produced the report *The Seaside Tourist Industry in England and Wales*. Our seaside industry in England is claimed to be "larger than the motor industry, aerospace, pharmaceuticals or steel". The authors of the report are keen to dispel the myth that our seaside resorts are in terminal decline and they use historic employment data to justify the optimism that attends their conclusions. Their figures are based on "additional jobs in seaside resorts that are attributable to tourism." Around 210,000 employees owe their jobs directly to seaside tourism at 121 resorts in England and Wales. Indirect employment tourism contributes even more. Blackpool is the undoubted star with 19,000 posts attributable directly to seaside tourism. Some resorts have targeted tourism as being the main driver of regeneration. The Thanet & East Kent Insider's own research reveals that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council was given £25 million by the government of the day to spend on improving the built environment and promises "Big changes for a Better Southend", see http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200130/better_southend. The funding is dependent on the money being spent before March next year which should not create too many problems. Southend attracts six million day trippers per year who bring in over £270 million into the local economy, according to the council. The CSESR figure for revenue direct from tourism for Southend in 2007 is a more modest £67 million. Thanet is recorded as receiving an annual injection of £100 million and Whitstable/Herne Bay £22 million. Although Southend can boast the world's longest pier, it does not have the concentration of blue-flag beaches enjoyed by visitors to Thanet. Peter Hampson, director of the British Resorts and Destinations Association, welcomed the publication of the CSESR report with enthusiasm. Speaking to the BBC's Phil Lavelle at the end of June, he said: "People who follow the fortunes of the British seaside tourist industry have always known it is a myth that the industry is in terminal decline, but we have not had the comprehensive and convincing evidence to prove otherwise until now." It shouldn't need a Professor in Sheffield to highlight the charms of the East Kent coast. But, perhaps after all we should leave the last word to Steve Fothergill who surely qualifies for free ice-creams and his own stick of rock on his next visit as he declared to national television, "Who needs the Med when we have Margate? In 2010, the British seaside is the place to be."

3. NIC Deadline

Jon Cleverdon Chartered Accountants, tel: 01843 866599, has written to the chamber with a reminder about Class 1A National Insurance payments for the pay periods 6th April 2010 to 5th July 2010. This Broadstairs-based accountancy firm looks after the books of many small and medium enterprises in the area. Their advice is: "As a small employer with income tax, national insurance and student loan deductions of less than £1,500 a month you are required to make payment to HMRC of the income tax, national insurance and student loan deductions on a quarterly basis. Where the payment is made electronically the deadline for receipt of payment is 22nd July 2010." Penalties may apply for late payment.

4. Enterprise In School

Ramsgate was the scene for the Big Green Business Pitch, a Dragon's Den series of presentations by students of Chatham House Grammar School organized by Jane Owen and her team at Chamber member, Connexions Kent & Medway, tel: 01795 439397 and 01843 593395. Joining the Chamber on the judging panel was Johnny Lewis who hosts the radio show *Breakfast For Thanet* each weekday morning on KMFM. Non-techies who have difficulty with a photocopier were not much in evidence as the four pseudo-companies put forward their ideas under the branding of Woodlock, Step Change, Keep Safe Industries and Shift respectively. The consummate ease with which the students handled their PowerPoint projections and promoted their Internet marketing plans would have undoubtedly impressed Messrs Bannatyne, Caan, Jones, Meaden and Paphitis who headline the popular BBC series. In a close contest, the winning Woodlock team just managed to finish ahead of its rivals with its proposal to produce custom-made guitars from recyclable timber. A distinguishing feature of the company's plans was the attention given to existing competitors and a careful study of the targeted buyers. Chatham House is proud of

its motto, Floreat Domus Chathamensis, which it translates as “May Chatham House Flourish”. Many former students have blossomed. It will be interesting to track the progress of the winning team to see if any of them can flourish to the same extent as Edward Heath, Prime Minister 1970-74, Sean Kerly, Olympic gold medallist, Frank Muir, author and humourist and a long list of distinguished senior figures in the armed services. If any locals on holiday in Buenos Aires get sick from too much corned beef and wish to repent for their sin, the current Bishop of Argentina, the Most Reverend Gregory James Venables, is an alumnus of Chatham House Grammar School and would doubtlessly wish to absolve you in return for the latest news on traffic flows at Westwood Cross.

5. Boost For East Kent

The World Cup will not be coming home to England this year, denying the Football Association considerable sums in sponsorship and image rights. By contrast, despite the efforts of some journalists and broadcasters, the English language in Britain remains the envy of the world and accounts for £1.5 billion in annual earnings from activities related to non-native speakers wishing to learn how to speak like we do. East Kent receives more than its fair share of revenue from teaching English to non-native speakers in public and private establishments. An extraordinary decision by the then Home Secretary banned non-EC students from studying English in the UK unless they had a level of English equivalent to B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which is defined as “Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics”. Banks often hear criticism along the lines of “You only lend money to people who do not need it”, but to impose a condition on foreign students that they can only come to the UK to study English if they already speak it well is almost beyond logic. It seriously imperilled export revenue of £600 million, a proportion of which finds its way every year to host families in East Kent and a wide selection of traders supplying services such as coach travel, entertainment and facilities management. Fortunately, the new ruling which came into effect on 3rd March this year has been overturned in the High Court. In a Press Release by English UK earlier today, the organisation that represents British Council accredited English schools stated: “This judgement upholds our basic case that the Home Secretary was wrong to introduce a substantive change in the entry criteria”. Hero of the hour is undoubtedly Tony Millns, the Chief Executive of English UK who brought the case to the High Court “as a last resort”. He makes the point that border controls should prevent illegal entry and not bona fide students. He makes the offer to: “help formulate a more sensible policy which our members can support and which will contribute to immigration control”. The shops, businesses, state schools and independent schools that welcome foreign learners to East Kent give you their thanks, Tony. Your Herculean efforts in uniting the public and private sector providers in 2004 has given English UK a voice in the corridors of power which will now save jobs here and bring a steady stream of revenue to East Kent retailers throughout the summer months.

6. Golf

Requests for places at the Chamber Golf Day at Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club scheduled for Friday, 8th October 2010 have already exceeded the number playing last year. Members are reminded that teams of four are invited to take part in playing this prestigious venue which has hosted two Open Championships and been much appreciated in the past by great players such as Jack Nicklaus and Harry Vardon. Royal patronage dates back to 1910 and is continued today by Prince Andrew who in June 2009 took the trouble to attend the centenary of the first Open Championship by flying into Deal by helicopter from Windsor. The Chamber Golf Day has become East Kent’s premier corporate Golf Day. The prizes available to teams from the Thanet & East Kent and Dover Chambers of Commerce will include a new car and tickets for travel overseas. For details, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line “Chamber Golf Day”.

7. Ronnie Corbett & Stonelees

Ronnie Corbett will be returning to Stonelees Golf Centre tomorrow to open the new clubhouse extension, fifteen years after inaugurating the first clubhouse. A report will be featured in next week’s edition of Thanet & East Kent Insider. Following his first visit to Stonelees after performing at the Winter Gardens Margate, Ronnie Corbett has been a firm friend of this enterprising golf club and will be as keen as the locals to see the wide range of golfing goods now on offer in the enlarged shop. Renown for his self-deprecating humour, Ronnie Corbett often refers to his short stature. In fact he measures, 5 ft 1½ in, which for readers born after 1970 is 1m 56cm. Read next week’s edition to see if he does indeed refer to his height in his speech.

8. Health Screening

Chamber member The Spencer Wing offers a health screening service providing comprehensive medical checks for senior executives and middle managers as well as those staff working in potentially hazardous surroundings. The Spencer Wing is experienced in tailoring a course of specific health and safety sessions as an integral part of a company’s occupational health programme. For details, telephone 01843 234555.

9. Our Heart Is Like An Engine, Or Is It?

Perhaps thinking of the valuable services offered by the Spencer Wing, Thanet’s own private hospital, one member has contacted the Thanet & East Kent Chamber with this account of a meeting between a surgeon at the hospital and a garage mechanic. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to you to judge. The Thanet-based heart surgeon took his top of the range Lexus to his local garage for its six-monthly service. Admiring its sleek lines and luxurious interior, the garage mechanic cast his eyes towards the back wall of the workshop behind which his battered Ford Escort was parked, diplomatically hidden from public view. Peaked by the obvious disparity in wealth and noting the soft hands and expensive suit

of his customer, he plucked up the courage to say: "Me and you, we are the same basically." "Oh, yes," said the heart surgeon, adjusting his gold cufflinks to show just the regulation two fingers of cuff below his expensively tailored jacket. "I guess so", said the mechanic. "What I do is, I check how it's running, open it up, adjust the valves and then put it all back together just like new. Now that's what you do, isn't it?" "Well almost, I suppose it is in a way", replied the surgeon. "Well, if that's so", continued the mechanic warming to his theme: "How come I am getting paid 10% of what you get. I have my tools. You have your instruments. I do the same as you do". "Ah yes," said the surgeon, "But you try doing it all with the engine running".

10. Our Sponsors

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 Inn 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. CARISS design, install and support education and business computing systems as East Kent's leading specialist company in Open Source Software. To lower your carbon footprint, reduce your power consumption and adopt a thin client system, call CARISS, tel: 01843 823724. Mach Associates are the high-fliers in providing Internet technologies and specialist software solutions with a particular expertise in servicing the travel industry. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and with ISO9001 accreditation, Mach Associates also offers reduces telecom operating cost through VOIP/PBX phone systems. tel: 0870 321 9986. Sota Connect offers a comprehensive IT service covering best-value voice, data and Internet services for companies of all sizes as well as public sector organisations. The company operates two state-of-the-art data centres of over 10,000sq ft. Sota Connect owns and operates a unique 200km fibre network from London to Ramsgate with high bandwidth Internet access giving superfast Internet connections, tel: 0800 072 2420.

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