

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

24th July 2010 Issue No.: 117

1. Upon The Navy

East Kent welcomed the Royal Navy Presentation Team to our shores last Tuesday. Many of the great and good were in attendance such as Cllr Chris Wells, cabinet member of Thanet District Council, and Bernard Butcher, Chairman of Dover District Council. Commander Jason Scott led the presentation with assistance from Navy personnel of higher and lower rank. Among the key facts that punctuated this perfectly timed and beautifully organised presentation was the surprising revelation that 60% of the servicemen and women deployed on active duty in Afghanistan are from the Royal Navy. When you take into account that Afghanistan is a landlocked country, it puts a sharp focus on the wide range of tasks currently undertaken by our senior service. It may be obvious to anyone with a maritime background, but it was news to most of the audience to learn that "95% of our imports arrive by sea". Protecting our shipping lanes is clearly one of the major roles of the navy, especially in East Kent where we are surrounded by sea on three sides. Commander Scott asked his guests to consider how long the country could survive without replenishment from maritime trading. The answer was: "not very long". Like all institutions financed from the public purse, the Royal Navy understandably expects "a difficult year financially" as the government undertakes the first Strategic Defence Review since 1998. Head of the Royal Navy is the First Sea Lord who must not only carry the heavy cargo of tradition by sailing in the wake of illustrious figures such as Fisher, Beattie, Mountbatten and our own Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, the then Sir Michael Boyce, but he must also navigate the difficult passage through the turbulent waters of Whitehall. The current incumbent, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, provided a recorded message which amplified considerably the signal to shore about why we should be proud of the four main elements that constitute the service: the surface fleet, submarines, Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Marines. This combination gives Britain a seat of influence at the top table of international diplomacy. The presentation summarised the navy's work as "We protect. We intercept. We rescue. We deter. We engage." The value of these efforts was eloquently expressed by King Charles II over 300 years previously: "It is upon the Navy ... that our health, prosperity and peace do chiefly depend"; words that we look forward to hearing again in debate in the autumn spending review.

2. An Apprentice And £1,500

Thanet College has written to the Chamber with details of apprenticeship grants for employers. The UK is a net contributor to the EU. This is your opportunity to get some money back. The European Social Fund is providing grants to employers in the South East who are prepared to take onto their books an apprentice aged 16 – 24 years. A grant of £1,500 is available to companies with fewer than 250 workers. There are certain conditions attached of which the most important is that the window of opportunity closes in October 2010. To find out more, contact Training Solutions at Thanet College by email to training.solutions@thanet.ac.uk or by telephone to Johanna Horton, tel: 01843 605032. You might like to mention that you have been recommended by the Thanet & East Kent Chamber as it makes us feel important.

3. Ease Your Burden

Some people take enormous delight in completing complicated tax forms and filling in minute details with obscure reference codes. Most of us do not, which is why we turn to accountants and financial advisors. This Chamber is particularly well blessed with some firms which take great delight in reducing your statutory burdens and thus allowing you to get on with what you do best. If you would like to restore a kinder work/life balance or find a better way to manage your money, you might like to contact one or more of the following: Acorn Bowman Finance & Investment Management of Broadstairs tel: 01843 609365; Financial Milestones of Staplehurst tel: 01580 892874; J Cleverdon Chartered Accountants of Broadstairs 01843 866599; J W Accountancy Services of Shepherswell tel: 01304 830229; L & G Mortgage Solutions of Birchington tel: 01843 845600; Levicks Chartered Accountants of Broadstairs, Canterbury and Maidstone tel: 01843 862716; Michael Martin Partnership Ltd of Whitstable tel: 01227 770500 and Neville Weston Chartered Certified Accountants of Ramsgate tel: 01843 594571. Jon Cleverdon reminds readers that there is a necessary deadline for submitting form P46 to HMRC of 2nd August 2010 if and only if car or fuel benefits have changed during the quarter to 5th July 2010. He informs us that replacing one company car with another does not constitute a notifiable change.

4. EasyJet Praises Thanet

This Thanet & East Kent Chamber has a lively membership that is uniformly interested in actively promoting economic prosperity. We also have friends and associates who live outside the area but who take a close interest in our activities and often give us information, advice and encouragement to attract inward investors. One such associate has sent the Chamber a copy of the July 2010 edition of the EasyJet in-flight magazine which he was given on a recent flight from Portugal. In an article headlined "Castles in the Sand", reporter Bridget Stott describes the changes taking place in the East Kent coastal community which she labels as: "once the preserve of decrepit funfairs and blue-rinse grannies," She notes that: "British seaside resorts are now a hotbed of cool contemporary architecture". She answers her own question: "So who's leading this urban renaissance?" with the simple answer: "Local councils along the South coast are now working closely with innovative private individuals". One of the advantages of answering your own question is that you usually get the answer you want to hear. Nonetheless, it is illuminating to read about the first town listed. "Margate's a prime example of the switch to 'happening status'. The once shabby

resort started to pick up when Kent County Council and the Arts Council England funded a new art gallery project – the £17.4m Turner Contemporary.” After praising Margate Old Town, the author also writes: “Just along the coast, Folkestone is basking in the success of its arts-based programme of cultural regeneration”. Of course, one of the benefits of quoting long passages of text in The Thanet & East Kent Insider is that it saves the time and effort of writing one’s own. That is a fair point and must be considered seriously for future editions. However, of more significance is that the EasyJet in-house magazine will be read by passengers from 27 countries. Although in the six months to 31 March 2010, EasyJet recorded a loss of £78.7 million, the official company report states that it continues to trade “robustly” and claims that: “54% of EasyJet’s passengers now originate from outside the UK”. This means that in the peak season of July, all EasyJet passengers will have the opportunity to hear of the regeneration of East Kent. They might even be tempted to take a flight to Manston to see for themselves. As from 27 May 2010, that could be a Flybe flight from Edinburgh and from 6 September from Manchester as well.

5. Oh Dear, Computer Crash

If you have never lost data from a computer crash, you must be complimented on your dexterity with an abacus and your ability to locate a supplier for your quill pens. For the rest of us, office life is punctuated from time to time by the shouts of anguish that accompany the bitter realisation that the brilliant 12-page report you have spent a week preparing may be lost for ever. Of course, we all know that there are ways to recover data, but these can be hideously expensive and dependent on a geeky unwashed hippy with a Led Zeppelin t-shirt who charges more than a heart surgeon. Chamber sponsor Cariss might have the answer. Not only does this company flourish without any Led Zeppelin motifs anywhere on its premises, but it also promises an on-line back up service that reduces your risk of ever having a hippy near you again. Yeah, man peace to all. Director Chris Mafflin writes; “Online Backup is a unique service that allows you to back up and restore all data, files and emails held on your network. No more back up tapes. No more tape drives. Just a secure, fast and automated system that guarantees you 24/7 access to the data vital for your organisation. The Online Backup service automatically encrypts and sends your data over the internet to our secure data centres throughout the day and night. You can retrieve any individual files or restore the entire system, whatever the problem. If your server is down, you can switch to your back up files instantly, allowing all your employees to continue working without interruption. Unlike other back up systems, you can also send and receive new email while you fix your server.” Too good to be true? Give Chris a call and find out, telephone 01843 823 724.

6. Be A Beer Supporter

This Chamber’s campaign for more equitable treatment for the valuable community resource represented by our East Kent pubs has featured on television, radio and in the press and has been well-received by those with the best interests of our local economy at heart. The British Beer and Pub Association informs us that ten years ago 53% of alcohol sales were in supermarkets. That figure has now risen to 70%. We also learn that from 1998 to 2009 on-trade beer sales have declined by around 40% whereas the off-trade sales have grown by over a third. We read in the BBPA’s Statistical Handbook 2009 that UK sales by volume of beer in bottles and cans, known as ‘packaged sales’, have now overtaken draught sales. Beer tax has increased by 26 per cent since 2008. The government’s recent Big Society initiative formally recognizes the value to the community of pubs. What is needed now is an adjustment in the tax structure to recognize the difference between draught beer consumed under the watchful eye of a responsible landlord on licensed premises and under-priced packaged beer available on supermarket shelves that too often seems to find its way through to under-aged drinkers. A total of 2,365 UK pubs closed in 2009. Those that remain will be looking for a much fairer fiscal regime that rewards hard-working landlords who spend their revenue in the local community in preference to boosting the dividends paid to the remote shareholders of international supermarket chains.

7. Helping Others To Write Properly Like Wot You Does

Nor a brilliant headline perhaps, but at least you are reading this. Roger Gabriel of the Kent Economic Board has asked the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to publicise the work he is doing with the National Literacy Trust. We are happy to help our friends. As readers will be aware, illiteracy is the root cause of much social deprivation. Although some business figures have reached senior positions without ever mastering reading and writing, it is much easier if you do your own sums and author your own text. Roger writes: “We have been offered a free pilot to run in secondary schools in Thanet working with year 9 pupils, to help them to improve their speaking and listening skills. What I need are volunteers from the business sector who would like to get involved. You would be given 4 hours training, and would need to commit to 6 x 2hr sessions in your allocated school (with 7 other volunteers, not on your own!). If you are interested please contact roger.gabriel@kent.gov.uk.”

8. Elvis Is Alive And Well Living In Thanet

Regular readers of the Chambers weekly bulletins will know that the Venerable Elvis is Thanet’s own hermit who pronounces on matters of great moral interest for the edification of the nation. His hovel is located in the misty hinterland between the disused power station in Sandwich and the abandoned limestone quarry in Manston. As befits a contemplative life that focuses exclusively on spiritual reflection, his declarations are few but worth recording. Who can forget his words noted in the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 29th January 2009: “If you lend a man £50 and you never see him again, it is probably worth it” or his comments on underhand practices in sport: “If you can’t cheat fairly, don’t cheat at all”. His guidance of 5th November 2008 is particularly appropriate as we enjoy unseasonably hot weather: “When checking the depth of a swimming pool, do not use both feet”. The Thanet & East Kent Insider has the historical right of exclusive access to the great man. It was with profound respect and some trepidation that early one morning last week, our reporter negotiated the secret pathway to the Venerable Elvis’s simple dwelling and asked him for any words of guidance for our new Prime Minister. After stroking his long grey beard, the Venerable Elvis said in a low voice: “My advice is for him to learn from the mistakes of others, because he won’t have time to make them all himself”. We are indeed blessed to have such a wise man in our midst.

9. 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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