

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

14<sup>th</sup> August 2010 Issue No.: 120

### 1. How Are We Doing?

This edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider has a few numbers in it. With many of our members away on holiday and with more muted email correspondence than at other times of the year, we turn our attention to bringing you some hard facts. There is some heartening news on unemployment. Data from the ever excellent team at KCC's Research & Intelligence Unit reveals that for the second successive month, the year-on-year unemployment figures for Thanet show more wards in the black than in the red; 15 wards show annual falls against just 7 with a rise. A modest annual decrease in unemployment across the district of 1.4% will represent for some a bright light at the end of the tunnel. Residents in Shepway may feel that the light is from a train coming towards them as Folkestone and the surrounding district is again the only area in Kent to show an increase in unemployment in July 2010 compared to the same month last year. Residents of Tunbridge Wells will be polishing their Jaguars with renewed vigour as the district records a massive 18.3% fall in the numbers claiming unemployment benefit, closely followed unsurprisingly by Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling. The unemployment rate for Kent of 3.0% sits exactly halfway between that for the South East at 2.4% and Great Britain as a whole at 3.6%.

### 2. Unemployment Data For East Kent

Thanet wards with more than 150 registered unemployed are listed first.

	July 2010		Change since July 2009	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Central Harbour	381	7.9%	66	+21.0%
Cliftonville West	652	13.5%	86	+15.2%
Dane Valley	313	6.3%	-32	-9.3%
Eastcliff	352	7.8%	-15	-4.1%
Margate Central	376	12.7%	-6	-1.6%
Newington	203	6.7%	-3	-1.5%
Westgate-on-Sea	172	4.5%	-2	-1.1%
Ashford	1,734	2.4%	-131	-7.0%
Canterbury	2,073	2.1%	-208	-9.1%
Dover	2,045	3.2%	-91	-4.3%
Maidstone	2,181	2.3%	-216	-9.0%
Shepway	2,397	3.9%	107	+4.7%
Thanet	3,915	5.0%	0.1%	-1.4%
Kent	31,599	3.0%	-2,558	-7.5%
South East	132,042	2.4%	-21,514	-14.0%
Great Britain	1,383,990	3.6%	-137,719	-9.1%

### 3. Save Energy

News has reached the Thanet & East Kent Chamber of an impending energy reduction device which has been designed to reduce resistance in cables and therefore minimize heat loss and boost power. To be marketed in the UK as "BlueCarbon", this product will interest members with a professional interest in electrical wiring or the reduction of energy costs. For more details, Chamber members are invited to email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Bluecarbon" and we will respond promptly with contact information.

## 4. Please Play On The Grass

Residents of East Kent with young children will be delighted to learn that as a permanent memorial to the Queen in her diamond jubilee year, more playing fields will be created throughout the UK. Spearheading the project is Prince William who is widely reported in the national press, highlighted in the Daily Mail, as saying that he “could not think of a more fitting tribute to my grandmother’s 60 glorious years on the throne”. The final total of playing fields to be ready in 2012 is precisely 2,012. Cynics will undoubtedly point out that more than 6,000 playing fields have been lost to the nation since 1992. The charity Fields in Trust, formerly known as the National Playing Fields Association, has already selected 550 sites and is now asking local authorities to nominate plots of at least half an acre, 0.2 hectare, which can be included in the scheme. Fields In Trust seeks to protect playing fields “in perpetuity for future generations” and has made the conscious decision to link the jubilee celebrations with the 2012 Summer Olympics. With an available budget of just £7 million, success will be dependent on donations, sponsorship and cooperation from local authorities. The charity currently looks after 1,271 sites, but many of these are either too small or designated for specific uses which exclude them from the open access criteria required for inclusion in the Queen Elizabeth II Fields project. The trust is therefore looking for 1,512 sites which would benefit from the enhanced protection on offer. Like the campaign for a National War Memorial in East Kent, objections to this initiative have been notable by their absence. In an email to the Chamber, one senior and well respected local politician even admitted generously “I don't normally agree with the Daily Mail but...” Anyone with a suggestion for a possible site is invited to contact their local authority. More details on this splendid scheme and a short video voiced by Prince William are available at <http://www.qe2fields.com>. He asks: “The question is, where will our sporting stars of the future come from if we continue to lose access to these important grass roots facilities?” Well said, sir. Viewers to the site can make up their own mind as to whether the Prince’s burgundy tie goes with the light blue stripes of his shirt.

## 5. International Trade

Moving things from one country to another is the most fundamental aspect of international trade. If the logistics improve, trade tends to increase. If the logistics deteriorate, so does the exchange of goods. Making it easier and cheaper for your customer to receive the goods they want can depend on a wide variety of factors outside the control of the seller. Of course, it helps if there is an accompanying payments system that ensures you are paid for what you export. The Thanet & East Kent Insider will report on international payments in a later edition. This week we look at the transfer of goods and a comparative study which considers which countries are good at it and in which countries there is room for improvement. The World Bank is generally considered to be a reliable source of international data. It has released its rankings based on the performance of 155 countries listed in the 2010 Logistics Performance Index. Countries are judged in six categories: Customs, Infrastructure, International Shipments, Logistics Competence, Tracking & Tracing and Timeliness. Germany moves into first place in the list replacing Singapore which drops one place from its position as head of the class in 2007. The UK is posted in a creditable 8<sup>th</sup> position tied with Germany in International Shipments but let down rather badly by Infrastructure and Customs; East Kent companies have longed campaigned for better road access to our ports of entry. Companies trading with Switzerland will be pleased to note its top score for Tracking and Tracing. For many companies knowing where your goods are and why may be more important than a few hours gained in transit through customs. Of the top 10 countries, 8 are in Europe; Japan and Singapore being the only intruders. Newcomers in the premier league are Luxemburg, Belgium, and Norway. Austria, Hong Kong/SAR China and Canada all drop out of the top 10 this year. The US fell one place to 15<sup>th</sup>, doing rather well for Track and Trace as 5<sup>th</sup> best and for Logistics Infrastructure where it came 7<sup>th</sup>, but suffering badly at 36<sup>th</sup> for International Shipment Ease. The top countries among the “Upper Middle Income Countries” were South Africa 28<sup>th</sup>, Malaysia 29<sup>th</sup> and Poland 30<sup>th</sup>. China watchers will note that 27<sup>th</sup> is a respectable position for what is officially classified as a “Lower Middle Income

country” and represents a high position on a per capita basis. Seasoned travellers will know that this fails to take into account the large economic disparity in incomes among the population. Somalia is at the very bottom of the list with the lowest score of all for Tracking and Tracing.

## 6. Who Can Help With Shipments?

The following Chamber members have the experience and expertise to supply or advise on the international movement of goods. Ferry Management Services Limited of Faversham tel: 01795 520268; Fox’s Removals & Transport of Margate tel: 01843 294422; Kent International Airport tel: 01843 820059; Manston Express Transport of Manston tel: 01843 823030; Minters of Deal/Geoff Fisher Transport of Sandwich tel: 01304 615331 and White’s Transport of Minster tel: 01843 821377.

## 7. World Bank Rankings

The top ten on the World Bank’s 2010 Logistics Performance Index are as follows:

LPI Rank	Country	LPI	Customs	Infrastructure	International shipments	Logistics competence	Tracking & tracing	Timeliness
1	Germany	4.11	4.00	4.34	3.66	4.14	4.18	4.48
2	Singapore	4.09	4.02	4.22	3.86	4.12	4.15	4.23
3	Sweden	4.08	3.88	4.03	3.83	4.22	4.22	4.32
4	Netherlands	4.07	3.98	4.25	3.61	4.15	4.12	4.41
5	Luxembourg	3.98	4.04	4.06	3.67	3.67	3.92	4.58
6	Switzerland	3.97	3.73	4.17	3.32	4.32	4.27	4.20
7	Japan	3.97	3.79	4.19	3.55	4.00	4.13	4.26
8	UK	3.95	3.74	3.95	3.66	3.92	4.13	4.37
9	Belgium	3.94	3.83	4.01	3.31	4.13	4.22	4.29
10	Norway	3.93	3.86	4.22	3.35	3.85	4.10	4.35

## 8. Inflated Ideas

Readers who have persevered with the previous items in East Kent’s number one weekly business bulletin will note that we have made no mention of the current rate of inflation. One member in the construction industry, suspecting quite rightly that this week’s edition may feature economic data, has sent us the following account which has inflation at its heart. We have our serious doubts about its factual accuracy; but we leave it for readers to judge. “Members of the Chamber may be interested in my experiences with an innovative project to build a school a few years ago. As a money-saving measure under the Building Schools For Inflation initiative, my company was asked to build an inflatable school. We had made some inflatable buildings before but nothing on this scale. However, always pleased to take on a new challenge, we completed the project on time and at 10% of the cost of a conventional edifice. Unfortunately, a few days after the official opening, a naughty school boy destroyed the whole building with the injudicious use of a pin. Before expelling the offender officially, the head summoned him and his parents to the site bearing the sad remains of this once, for a short time, proud school. Addressing himself directly to the 12 year-old culprit, the head said sternly, “You let me down, you certainly let yourself down, but most of all you let the whole school down.”

## 9. Our Sponsors

Girlings Solicitors has been 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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