

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

6th November 2010 Issue No.: 131

1. Turner Contemporary: Ahead Of The Game

The Turner Contemporary is on course to dazzle visitors when it opens next spring. Chamber members will recall the presentation given at our business breakfast earlier this year when the inspirational Head of Operations, Paul Gray, gave an account of the building schedule, funding arrangements and exhibition timetable. Since then the Arts Council announced on 25th October 2010 a cut in funding to the Turner Contemporary of £34,328. How prescient it was therefore for the Turner Contemporary to go to Phillips de Pury & Company auction house on 13th October 2010 and offer for sale Tracey Emin's Neon Sign above Droit House and achieve a sale price of £48,000. Even after associated charges, this shows that the Turner Contemporary Art Trust is ahead of the game. Local businesses of all sizes and sectors will be watching eagerly on 15th November 2010 for the official announcement of the launch date and the first year's programme. Traditionalists who consider that Britain's most popular artist would have preferred to lend his name to a neo-classical building rather than the futuristic design by David Chipperfield Architects might like to consider that Turner himself was roundly criticized for not conforming to tradition. An article on his lectures which appeared in *The New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* of 1816, the year following the defeat at Waterloo of that dangerous upstart Napoleon, scorns Turner for his approach: "there is an embarrassment in his manner approaching almost to unintelligibility, and a vulgarity of pronunciation astonishing in an artist of his rank and respectability." Turner died in 1851, twenty-three years before the ground-breaking Impressionists Exhibition of 1874. He was ahead of the game alright, but Joseph Mallord William Turner was not a conformist which perhaps explains why he had so few friends and never married. The Turner Contemporary Gallery will have many friends and none keener than those local businesses looking forward with eager enthusiasm to the opening date and hordes of visitors to Margate.

2. Tourism and Retail

Following last week's article about retail and the advice received from a visitor to the Thanet & East Kent Chamber from the organisation with "the highest density retail sales in the world", we have been asked by Chamber members to supply some more detail. Here goes. We learned that the most successful factory outlets in Europe work in close harmony with the surrounding tourist attractions so that visitors and shoppers are presented with a series of opportunities to appeal to the interests of the whole family: the erudite, the curious, the day-trippers and the shopaholics. In brief, packaging a product in liaison with the neighbouring attractions maximises the retail spend and stimulates repeat visits. The East Kent coastal business community is blessed with stunning tourism potential by virtue of its inherited historical assets, strategic location and seaside benefits. The lesson we need to learn is how to work together to support our retailers, hotels, restaurants and golf courses so that our local economy benefits to the maximum. This will undoubtedly be one of the challenges faced by the recently announced Local Economic Partnership for Kent, Essex and East Sussex. The Thanet & East Chamber will be looking to play a full part in representing the local business community to the decision-makers who will be in a position to dispense their share of a £1.4bn Regional Growth Fund.

3. Quex At Christmas

The Hannah Dining Suite at Quex Park has written to the Thanet & East Kent Insider with details of "An African Experience at Quex Park this Christmas". On 3rd, 10th, 11th and 17th December 2010, the on-site restaurant at Quex will be offering "the vibrant spirit of Africa" to diners who will be offered African delicacies together with music and dance. Ticket prices from £24.95 per person suggest a lively response from anyone looking for a new experience for a pre-Christmas evening. If you are willing to "re-live the footsteps of Major Powell-Cotton and dine amongst the lions at Quex", give the venue a call; tel: 01843 482 004 or freephone 0900 142 2736.

4. Science, Jobs And More Than Just Tomatoes

Thanet continues to attract inward investment. As we celebrate the new daily flights from Manston to Edinburgh and Manchester which began earlier this year and look forward to the opening of the Turner Contemporary next spring, we must not forget the continuing success of the world-class hydroponics facility near Birchington, Thanet Earth the child of its parent parent company, the Fresca Group. On any one day, there may be 450 people working on site. Fresca Group has attracted investment from Holland from the Rainbow Growers group, Kaaij Greenhouses and A&A which each own one of the three completed greenhouses. The Rainbow Group building is the largest single pepper greenhouse in the UK, measuring 8.5 hectares.

Kaaij Greenhouses own and operate the UK's largest single unit greenhouse specialising in growing a range of 10 vine tomatoes which are increasingly popular in supermarkets and greengrocers. The A&A Partnership was formed by Addy Breugem and Arjen de Gier in 1999. Their innovative approach to growing cucumbers is paying dividends for consumers throughout the country. All three Thanet Earth growers were recently thoroughly tested in a demanding audit by Tesco Nurture. The result was a resounding success as each gained the prestigious Tesco Nurture Gold Award. At a time when schools, universities and governments are worried about the numbers of young people studying sciences, it is comforting to know that Thanet has within its borders such a leading facility. It is worth recalling that the Fresca Group Ltd is still privately owned and employs over 1,000 people. With a headquarters at Paddock Wood, it remains a valuable member of the Kent and Thanet business community.

5. Do You Speak Dutch?

Thanet Earth, see item 4 above, is looking to appoint a Dutch-speaking non-executive to a salaried post. Recommendations from readers of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be warmly welcomed at Thanet Earth.

6. Directors Wanted

Louise Askew, Economic Development Officer for Regeneration Services at Thanet District Council has contacted the Chamber with news of an Arms Length Management Organisation, ALMO, which has been formed to manage 18,000 council homes in East Kent hitherto under the management of Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, Shepway District Council and Canterbury City Council. The board of management is expected to consist of four tenants, four councillors and four independent members. Applications are invited from interested parties for the independent posts. Board posts will not be remunerated although reasonable expenses will be paid. Board meetings are expected to take place initially once a month at 6.00 pm on Monday or Tuesday evenings, but this will decrease to once every two months when the ALMO is fully established. The proposals have received widespread support from tenants in all four districts. More details are available at www.eastkenthomes.org.uk. Applications for board membership should be sent direct to East Kent HR Partnership, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ.

7. KCC & Home-Working

Kent County Council is anxious to receive advice on home-working. KCC has produced a Kent Survey and is asking "all home-working professionals and those who run a business from home" to answer the questions at www.workhubs.com/surveys so that informed policies can be developed. KCC is looking to understand how its reduced resources can best be used to support enterprise. Anyone reading this who works at home and fails to take part in the survey... well you only have yourself to blame if a home-working business support centre is built at the other end of the county and not near you.

8. The Corner Shop

Sycamore Stores is a small family business on the corner of Northwood Road, Broadstairs. The owners, Martin and Shelly, have steadily improved the premises and adapted their stock to meet the needs of their passing trade. With two superstores within a short walk of the shop, excellent service has been an important element in encouraging custom as there is limited opportunity to expand. The main market is firmly local. A cheery word and a friendly smile always greet customers. Any lost pedestrians or enquiring passing motorists are directed on their way with exquisite politeness and an enhanced view of what small shops can contribute to their local community. How shocking it is then when the unrestricted parking outside their shop is threatening their business and imperiling their livelihood. When Napoleon said that Britain is a nation of shopkeepers he did not have in mind motorists who selfishly park all day in front of Sycamore Stores. The solution? It's very simple and one that has been used successfully by councils throughout the UK: a 15-minute parking restriction on the road outside the shop would solve the problem at once. The Chamber will be contacting Thanet District Council on the issue and will report to our 2,500 readers on the results.

9. Philip Hammond In Thanet

At the invitation of Roger Gale MP and Laura Sandys MP, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber was represented last Friday at a lunch at Salmestone Grange, Margate to welcome the visit of the Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, the Secretary of State for Transport. Having just announced that morning the sale of a 30 year lease of the hi-speed rail link to Borealis Infrastructure and the Ontario Teachers' Pension fund, Philip Hammond could have been excused yet more media coverage. But, as viewers of ITV Meridian news that evening will recall, he spoke at length to camera outside the splendid 14th century venue, stressing the importance of key infrastructure in support of the private sector. The agreed protocol for such meetings with senior politicians of all persuasions is that the discussions remain confidential to the parties present. Members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber may be assured nonetheless that their voice was heard and that one of the key decision-makers in the cabinet is fully aware of many of the main concerns of the East Kent coastal business community.

10. More On Websites

Business Link has contacted the Thanet & East Kent Insider with news of 11 free ways to promote your website. Details are available at <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=5001695874&type=ONEOFFPAGE&site=210>

For quality help from experienced specialist IT professionals, look no further than the following experts: The Ardent Group of Whitstable tel: 01227 774850; Cariss of Margate tel: 01843 823724; Coastal Data Systems of Birchington tel: 01843 846935; IP Computer Consultants of Westgate-On-Sea tel: 07971316738; Mach Associates of Broadstairs tel: 0870 321 9986; Oast House Media of Great Mongeham tel: 01304 369440; Simtech Computer Services of Margate tel: 01843 230566 and Sota Solutions of Sittingbourne tel: 01795 413500.

11. The French Say Non To Channel Swimming

Why are the French against Channel Swimming? See

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00vsty4/Inside_Out_South_East_01_11_2010/. Perhaps it is because it was an Englishman, Matthew Webb, who first swam across the Channel that our French cousins have never been great enthusiasts for taking up the physical challenge of swimming between Dover and Calais. Starting from the French side has been banned for the last 11 years. Perhaps it is more a case of Gallic logic at its best. Why spend all day freezing to death in saltwater at a cost of around £4,000 when you can cross in comfort by ferry for around 1% of the price? They may have a point there. We have received a variety of suggestions from Chamber members as to how the French might be encouraged to join us in the Channel with the same harmony of purpose that they promise to bring to our aircraft carriers. One idea received is for Dover restaurants to include more garlic and snails in their dishes to make them more appetising to successful French swimmers. But, our favourite proposal is that Channel Swimming should be renamed Chanel Swimming. After all, we all know the power of a good brand name and perhaps it would encourage better fashion sense in the swimmers; the grease and goggles look just doesn't do it for the inventors of haute couture.

12. 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.



David Foley
Chief Executive, Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited
Industrial Professor, Thanet College
Fellow, Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce
Tel: +44 (0) 1843 609289
Fax: +44 (0) 1843 609291
Email: davidfoley@tekc.co.uk
Mobile: +44 (0) 7967 284850

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

For details of membership, email admin@tekc.co.uk

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited (TEKC) is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 4518138. Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited, Kent Innovation Centre, Thanet Reach Business Park, Millennium Way, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2QQ. Tel: 01843 609289 Fax: 01843 609291 TEKC is not VAT Registered. Important: This e-mail may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient it may be unlawful for you to read, copy, distribute, disclose or otherwise use the information used in this e-mail. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, please telephone, fax or e-mail us immediately. Errors and omissions may occur in the contents of this e-mail arising out of or in connection with data transmission, network malfunction or failure, machine or software error or malfunction, or operator error. TEKC accepts no responsibility for any such errors or omissions and you are advised to confirm the accuracy of the contents of this e-mail before relying on it for any purpose. All the information in this email is written in good faith and believed to be correct at the time of writing. TEKC cannot be held responsible for any agreements, financial transactions or liabilities incurred in relation to any of the companies, organisations or events mentioned in this email. You are advised to seek the appropriate professional advice before undertaking any financial transaction or incurring any liability of any description.