

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

20th November 2010 Issue No.: 133

1. Transport & Tourism Business Networking Breakfast

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is pleased to announce the date of its December business networking breakfast as Friday 10th December 2010 starting at 0730 hrs. Speakers include the Managing Director of Manston Airport, the Chairman of the Dover People's Port Trust Limited and representatives from the ferry and coach travel industries. In a change from the traditional Chamber breakfast format, each speaker will talk for five minutes each. Afterwards, there will follow a BBC Question-time style question and answer session. There will be ample time for delegates to promote their products and services to the many business organisations attending. The event will take place at the Walpole Bay Hotel, Cliftonville. The expansion of Manston Airport will create a huge boost to jobs and local firms. Its Managing Director will outline his plans for the future. The People's Port of Dover Trust Limited is aiming to take over the ownership of the UK's busiest passenger port with a brief to benefit local companies and organisations with a multi-million pound injection of cash. Details of the speakers from the ferry and coach industries will follow in a later edition. Booking is essential. Tickets cost £12.00 for Chamber members and £16.00 for non-members. To reserve your place, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Transport & Tourism Breakfast".

2. Destination History

Tourism was the theme of a series of presentations yesterday in the splendid surroundings of the new Saxon Suite facility next to the clubhouse at Chamber member Stonelees Golf Club at Ebbsfleet. Organised by Laura Sandys MP as part of the Destination History initiative, we learned that "Only last week, Thanet was recommended as one of the top 12 destinations in the world to visit by Frommer's Guide." The sessions featured presentations by Chamber members the Turner Contemporary and Quex Park who outlined their strategies for attracting visitors. A key element has been close cooperation with the local business community as well as with other operators and official bodies. Readers will recall that a recent visitor to the Chamber from the world's most successful retail outlet had made the very same point. Best practice dictates that to maximise footfall, retailers need to work closely with their neighbouring tourist attractions. The attractions themselves benefit considerably from positive reports from their local companies. This theme will be explored further at the Tourism & Transport Business Networking Breakfast on 10th December 2010, as listed at item 1 above. Visit Kent, the official body promoting tourism in our county, is keen to stress the importance of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens which falls on 7th February 2012. There will be commemorative events throughout the year. Visit Kent will be working with its usual highly professional and effective team to ensure that the undoubted worldwide affection for the UK's premier novelist translates itself into a dividend for the county which nourished him and provided him with some of his best stories. Also speaking to the gathering of tourism experts at Stonelees were representatives from Hornby and The Salutation. Hornby is looking to expand its toy museum. The Salutation kept us fully informed of its "Secret Gardens of Sandwich" which, bearing in mind the audience of experienced PR experts, will not be secret for much longer. Regular readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider will not need reminding of the report commissioned by Visit Britain and The Tourism Alliance that concluded that direct and indirect tourism generates 8.2% of the receipts to our UK economy. [The Economic Case for the Visitor Economy, Deloitte, September 2008].

3. Why go Overboard On Tourism?

Tourism is one of the strengths of the UK in world markets. When foreign tourists visit us, their contributions to our economy are essentially export sales which serve to reduce our tax burden and help pay for our essential public services. We would be in a sorry state as a nation without our bona fide overseas visitors. Also, East Kent is particularly well-placed to benefit from the economic impact of foreigners with bulging wallets and well-used credit cards. The Office for National Statistics [NOMIS] tells us that 8.9% of the private sector jobs in Thanet are in tourism related industries. It is not as much as we could achieve, but it is above the average for the South East and

Great Britain which is calculated at 8.2% by NOMIS and Deloitte. The Canterbury and Dover districts enjoy exactly the same premium at 8.9%. Swale follows behind at a below average 7.4%, still just above Maidstone and Ashford at 7.3%. Our Chamber member in Aberdeen, far from the ferry ports and London Heathrow, nevertheless can claim that 7.1% of the jobs in the city of Aberdeen would be under severe threat without the tourists. At a time when the public sector is being sharply restructured, boosting tourism in East Kent could prove to be a wise investment of public funds that might otherwise be spent on benefit payments. [All NOMIS Data is quoted from the latest available and reproduced under the terms of the TEKC Click-use License no. C2010000980. All rights reserved]

4. Health & Safety Advice

Chamber member Brachers LLP of Maidstone and London is offering a workshop in Rochester on Wednesday 24th November 2010 for directors and senior managers who are interested in “Managing health & safety to keep you and your business out of court”. This seems like a good idea and very much in keeping with this Chamber’s much quoted emphasis on Predict and Prevent rather than Find and Fix. Jan Mills of The Bradley Group and Andrew Clarke of Brachers will outline the legal duties of companies and practical measures to ensure that you do not inadvertently lose your shirt and be obliged to shiver in the cold winds of unemployment or bankruptcy. The sessions will include evidence from real accident claims and prosecutions with details of the horrendous costs that some companies have been asked to pay. The sum of £20 to attend the workshop seems particularly reasonable in comparison. For more details and to book direct, visit the website at <http://preventaccidentclaims.eventbrite.com>.

5. Plum Job For Paul

The multiple award-winning Chamber member TV One of Margate has announced the successful candidate for its prestigious post as Research & Development Manager. After a 25-year career that has included posts at the BBC, IBM Microelectronics, NEC and Petards EIMC, Paul Burfield is delighted to join one of Thanet’s most successful exporters. In an email to the Chamber from TV One’s Debbie Heath, we are informed that Paul recognizes that he has landed a big prize as he is quoted as saying: “I am delighted in becoming R&D manager for TV One, as the company is recognized for producing world leading Video Processing Equipment”. The company’s Managing Director, Steven Mattingly, is equally happy with the appointment. In welcoming Paul, he declares that he is looking forward to “the continuing development of exciting new products to add to the TV One brand in the coming years”. TV One is an outstanding company with an excellent record of innovation and success in overseas markets, proving once again the Thanet & East Kent Chamber’s contention that “It’s happening now, it’s happening in Thanet & East Kent”.

6. Thanet District Council

Yesterday, the leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr Bob Bayford, enjoyed a detailed discussion of over one hour with the Chief Executive of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber. Among the many topics discussed were measures to boost the incomes of local companies and the need to reduce the burden of regulations that inhibit growth and deter inward investors. As per the agreed convention following discussions with senior politicians of all parties, the details remain confidential; but it will be of no surprise to readers that the parking problems outside Sycamore Stores in Northdown Road were featured as were the future of properties and land owned by the council and the benefits of public bodies using local suppliers. The Chamber has always received strong support from Thanet District Council’s planning department and we look forward to that continuing in the future. Cllr Bayford has agreed to a series of regular meetings when the concerns and interests of Chamber members can be presented to the key decision-makers at the heart of local government in Thanet. A similar arrangement with Dover District Council has already been arranged. In liaison with our friends at The Invicta Chamber of Commerce, we look forward to extending the Thanet & East Kent Chamber’s sphere of influence further afield in East Kent.

7. News From Dover

The Dover People’s Port Trust Limited (DPPTL) has appointed Evolution Securities as financial advisors to the bid to buy and mutualise the Port of Dover. The backing of Sir Patrick Sheehy and Algy Cluff has strengthened the DPPTL

credibility in the City. The much publicised support of Dame Vera Lynn continues to boost the public relations profile in the national press. The DPPTL Chairman will be one of the speakers at the Chamber's Tourism and Transport Business Networking Breakfast on 10th December 2010. Opposed to the bid is the incumbent management of Dover Harbour Board. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be represented at a meeting next week with DHB's Chief Executive, Dr Bob Goldfield. Among the issues to be discussed will be the benefits to the East Kent coastal business community of Dr Goldfield's privatisation plans.

8. More On The Future Of Mobile

In last week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, readers were promised more details of a recent talk given at the Royal Society of Arts by Lee Epting, a director of Vodafone. Such has been the sharp growth in sales of mobile phones that Lee estimates that 2 out of 3 people in the world now have a mobile. Penetration in Europe is above 100% and the USA is not far behind at 91%. One in two Africans owns a mobile and one in three Asians. Lee stated that: "Mobiles do not have the same barriers to access as PCs." She credits mobiles as having beneficial effects on healthcare, environmental protection and, crucially for Chamber members, economic development. The UK government's Department for International Development has worked in Africa with the Vodafone subsidiary Safaricom to promote M-PESA, a branchless banking system which caters for financial transactions by mobile telephones. There are now 12 million users in Kenya and 7 million in Tanzania. The service was extended to South Africa two months ago where an estimated 13 million citizens have no bank account. The M in M-PESA stands for Mobile and the word PESA means money in Swahili. The system has been an astounding success. With an average transaction value of just £8, the use of mobiles for reliable buying and selling has transformed the economic prospects of small traders. An estimated 30,000 jobs have resulted from its use in Kenya. Last Wednesday, Reuters announced that Safaricom's profits from M-PESA show a growth of 63.9% in the half-year results. There's money in it. Could we persuade Vodafone to promote M-PESA in the East Kent coastal business community? It might be worth a try. This is one sector where Africa is ahead of Europe. Nearly two thousand years ago Pliny the Elder wrote: "semper aliquid novi Africam Adferre" which translates roughly as "Africa will always bring something new". He had a point that Pliny bloke. It is a shame that the eruption of Mt Vesuvius did for him. Otherwise, he might have had a few words for Thanet.

9. Royalty in Thanet?

The announcement of a Royal Wedding last week has inspired some economic commentators to predict a huge boost to the UK economy. The Daily Telegraph of 17th November 2010 devoted the first thirteen pages of the main section of the paper to a detailed analysis of the impending marriage of Prince William Arthur Philip Louis of Wales, KG, FRS to Catherine Elizabeth Middleton MA. Other articles ensure that over half of the news that day referred to the future marital status of the William who is the second in line of succession to the throne of 16 independent nations. We have not yet heard if the wedding will take place in one of the splendid venues available in Thanet. We understand that the Pegwell Bay Hotel is fully booked. Quex Park with its 250 acres may well be suitable. Both the aforementioned Chamber members are licensed for civil weddings. It is likely that the couple will prefer a Church wedding with the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding. Thanet has some enterprising ecclesiastical possibilities which undoubtedly include St Mark's Church in Pysons Road which places a particular emphasis on the long term benefits of passing through its portals. A notice displayed in a prominent position outside the church all last week bore the following advice:

"As you pass this lovely church
Be sure to pay a visit
So when at last you're carried in
God won't ask "Who is it?"

It strikes us at the Thanet & East Kent Chamber that the vicar of this church knows a thing or two about tourism. Visit Kent should sign him up quickly. It usually pays to have higher authority on your side.

12. Our Sponsors

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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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