



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

25th June 2013 Issue No.: 203

1. Get a Share of £1.5 million

Chamber members were invited to attend the recent “Get A Share of £1.5 Million” business breakfast to hear Cassie Ellins, the Principal of the Marlowe Academy explain her policy of buying products and services from Chamber members whenever possible. After a splendid breakfast served at table with professional expertise by Marlowe Academy students, Chamber members were delighted to hear that the Academy has such a strong commitment to the local business community. Flanked by her business manager Sam West, Vice Principal Will Pemberton and Corporate Business Director Caroline O’Conner, Cassie gave a fascinating account of the role of secondary schools today and how the Marlowe Academy is responding to the challenges. After a brief look at Robert Donat’s performance in the 1939 film Goodbye Mr Chips, Cassie asked her eager audience if they felt comfortable in answering a GCSE maths question. *Given the function $f(x) = 2x^2+3$, find the value of $f(x)$ when $x=0$ and find the value of $f(x)$ when $x=10$.* A resounding silence and some slightly embarrassed wriggling suggested that the comfortable seats in the splendid Marlowe Academy theatre were suddenly not quite so comfy. Some of the finance directors made a gesture towards their expensive technological aids before Cassie relieved the anxiety with the answers that her 15 and 16 year olds are expected to provide, 0 and 10. She then outlined the targets at GCSE level in speaking, listening, reading and writing. These are the measures against which Marlowe Academy pupils are judged.

2. Are Our Schools Businesses Then?

The Marlowe Academy receives around £5,000 for each pupil. With a neat simplicity of which any Managing Director of a large company would have been proud, Cassie summarised her “Controllables” which include staff selection, uniform and discretionary spending. The “Uncontrollables” include national pay and conditions, the composition of league tables, the expertise or otherwise of successive Education Ministers, selective education policies and the quality of the raw product. The Marlowe Academy is much more than a human factory that processes students. Cassie and her team have a steely determination to ensure that their charges “develop a moral code which ensures pride in selves and in the community”. Chamber members were pleased to hear the unambiguous aim that “youngsters are equipped with skills for employment”

3. What’s In It For Me?

Every Chamber company from A to Z has a commercial interest in recruiting the Marlowe Academy as a customer. From Ambassador Electrical Services, BP Drains South East, CPS Heating, Dave Mannings Painting to WW Martin, Your Toastmasters and Zero Trace Procurement, there are opportunities for Chamber members to make sales. As an integral part of a federation of academies, the Marlowe Academy manages directly just under a third of the annual turnover of £20 million but can bring its influence to bear as a satisfied customer in all purchasing decisions. When the head of this publicly funded organisation says: “We should purchase locally”, you can believe her.

4. Surely This Is Too Good To Be True?

Chamber members were told: “As part of the Chamber, we should support other Chamber members as we expect those Chamber members to support us”. There is clearly a benefit to the Marlowe Academy in establishing links with reputable local companies. But if ever there was a “win-win situation”, this is surely it. The whole of the East Kent coastal business community will find many advantages in working positively with their local schools and not just as a seller. Chamber members at the breakfast meeting were unanimous in wanting to support the Marlowe Academy through a range of initiatives including Work Experience placements, company visits and class initiatives. Rather than complain that schools no longer produce students with the skills for the workplace, employers at the Chamber breakfast meeting were keen to cooperate with Cassie Ellins and her team in working together to promote mutually supportive links between suppliers, customers and supporters. Chamber members and businesses can fly high if they work together as the new Marlowe Academy motto states: Alter Alatis Patent/The sky is open to those who have wings.

5. Chamber Business Networking Breakfast

The educational theme will be continued at our next Chamber business networking breakfast in Sandwich on Friday, 12th July 2013. Entitled “Their Education, Our Future”, Chamber members will hear from the key decision-makers at St George’s School Broadstairs, Charles Dickens School Ramsgate and Hartsdown Academy. There will be an opportunity to present your products and services and to learn how you can be a supplier to these East Kent educational establishments. There will be ample time for networking. Booking is essential. The price of £12 for Chamber members includes a full English breakfast with a vegetarian option. To reserve your place, email admin@tekco.uk with the

subject line "Their Education, Our Future". Full details will follow with confirmation. The event will start at 0730 hrs and finish at 0855 hrs.

6. 2013 Thanet Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair

Chamber members have been invited to take a free stand at the 2013 Thanet Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair scheduled to take place at the Winter Gardens in Margate on 2nd July 2013. Hosted by the Chamber Co-Presidents, Sir Roger Gale MP and Laura Sandys MP, the fair follows the successful format of last year which attracted over 3,000 visitors with 600 jobs on offer. The Minister of State for employment, Mark Hiban MP, will start proceedings at 1000 hrs and the doors will remain open until 1500 hrs. The Discovery Park, Flambeau Europlast, London Array and East Kent College will be joining the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and other Chamber members on the day. For more details, see <http://thanetjobsfair.telllaura.org.uk/whats-on.html>.

7. KLM Air France

The Chamber was the guest of KLM Air France at the Institute of Directors in London's Pall Mall this week at an evening reception for the popular KLM Air France Manager for the UK & Ireland, Henri Hourcade, who is returning to Paris shortly. A well-known figure among senior airline executives in the UK, Henri has sat alongside Angus Barclay of Cathay Pacific, Bob Schumacher of United, Sian Foster of Virgin Atlantic and Clive Wratten of Etihad on the board of BARUK, the Board of Airline Representatives in the UK. Henri will be much missed among transport professionals in this country. He was one of the key figures in bringing the KLM flights to Manston and deserves much credit for the success of the launch last April. His replacement will be Warner Rootliep, a graduate of Erasmus University Rotterdam and the prestigious IMD Business School in Lausanne which was this year ranked by the Financial Times as "the No. 1 in open programs worldwide". A confirmed dog lover, Warner spent five years as a General Manager in Germany and three years in India. Having been born in Dhaka, he has seen first-hand the vast changes and considerable commercial opportunities in the Indian sub-continent over the last 30 years. We wish Warner every success and look forward to continuing the strong links with KLM Air France, the largest employer in the Chamber membership with over 31,000 employees.

8. Manston Airport & A380

Although Infratil, the New Zealand-based owner of Manston and Glasgow Airports, confirmed "NZD62.4 million of costs and write downs associated with the two UK airports" in its company report of 14th May 2013, Manston is nevertheless becoming an airport of choice in the South East and not just for passengers wanting to take the morning KLM flights to Amsterdam. British Airways has confirmed that it will use East Kent's major airport for training sessions later this year for the B787 Dreamliner and the A380, an aircraft that is reputedly 50% quieter than a Boeing 747. The news represents a huge vote of confidence in the airport and a personal triumph for Manston Airport's Managing Director, Charles Buchanan. Airline enthusiasts will delight at the arrival of the A380, dubbed the European Superjumbo. With a maximum capacity of 853 passengers, this remarkable product of French, German, Spanish and British technology is the world's largest commercial aircraft flying today, offering 50% more floor surface than its nearest competitor. It's coming to an airport near you soon.

9. Training In Cert TESOL

Adam Wilton is the owner of English in Margate. As well as welcoming students from all over the world to his school, Adam now offers training to anyone contemplating teaching English to overseas students in the UK or abroad. Much prized by recent graduates looking to sustain themselves in foreign climates and for gap-year students, the four-week Trinity Cert TESOL course is one of only two teacher training courses recognised by the British Council as an entry qualification for a career teaching English to non-native speakers. The course content includes a detailed grounding in methodology, an outline of trends in language teaching and the opportunity to test new teaching skills on 'authentic' foreign students of varying ability levels during a timetabled programme. Training takes place at The Towers, 38 Hawley Square, Margate, the home of English in Margate, a language school for adults that has been in operation for 17 years. The year-round school is well-established and is usually full during the busy summer months. This will be the first time that this accredited course has been held in the area. Graduates of the course do not all go into classroom teaching. Some prefer to use their newly acquired skills in marketing, administration, arranging social programmes, inspection and language school management. For more information, see the website at www.traintoteachenglish.com. Chamber members may prefer to contact Adam direct by email to adam.wilton@leolanguages.com.

10. East Kent Business Advice Clinic

In liaison with our good friends at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber organises the East Kent Business Advice Clinic. Start-up companies as well as established firms of any size are invited to discuss their plans or ideas with a panel of experts on a completely confidential basis. The panellists are drawn from a select group of lawyers, chartered accountants, marketing specialists and business professionals who bring to you their collective experience of business. Delegates tend to find great comfort in hearing how the difficulties they are facing have been successfully mastered in the past. Formed following the demise of the Business Link regional advice service, EKBAC has welcomed 150 visitors to date, attracting widespread praise for this free service. For more details, email admin@tekco.uk with the subject line "EKBAC 2013".

11. How Are We Doing?

As regular readers of this bulletin will know, we often review the collective progress of the East Kent coastal business community. Of the three main economic indicators, the Exchange Rate, the Interest Rate and the Unemployment Rate, it is the latter alone which provides an authoritative guide to progress, even down to ward level. Ignoring monthly fluctuations, we usually look at the year-on-year changes to provide a useful snapshot of how we are faring. The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics give much encouragement to those seeking to invest or expand in the area. Rising employment throughout the districts of East Kent illustrate a positive picture of annual change. The jobless total for Cliftonville West has at last fallen below 1,000 to 966, showing a year-on-year reduction of 7.3%. A similar scene emerges from the wards in the Dover District which have registered a collective annual fall of 7.6%. Although Tower Hamlets has gained a few unemployed, up 5.4% to 295, the Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory figures tell us that an extra 6.5% of this ward's population have a reason to feel happier now than a year ago. The data on youth unemployment continues to give rise for concern, but not in Tunbridge Wells where just 2.2% of 18 to 24 year olds are registered as unemployed. Sharp differences between East Kent and the leafy lanes of mid Kent are reflected also in the figures for Sevenoaks, where just 3.2% of the district's youth are registered as unemployed. Before you ask why

Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells has so few youngsters on the dole, remember that someone has to polish Daddy's limousines and it can be so tiresome to go all the way to register at the Job Centre when the swimming pool in the garden is looking so inviting.

12. Give Us the Facts

Unemployment in East Kent districts

	May 2013		Change since May 2012	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet District	4,700	5.9%	-166	-3.4%
Ashford	1,905	2.6%	-122	-6.0%
Dover District	2,498	3.6%	-206	-7.6%
Canterbury District	2,249	2.3%	-206	-8.4%
Maidstone	2,406	2.4%	-75	-3.0%
Shepway	2,595	3.9%	-173	-6.3%
Swale	3,149	3.7%	-388	-11.0%
Kent	33,425	3.2%	-3,509	-9.5%
South East	126,806	2.3%	-14,154	-10.0%
Great Britain	1,432,607	3.6%	-96,391	-6.3%

13. B2B In Canterbury

Best Business Events reminds us that their Business-To-Business event will take place in Canterbury on 10th September 2013 in the splendid surroundings of Augustine House at Canterbury Christ Church University. Organised in cooperation with our good friends at Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, the day includes workshops, training, a host of speakers and an opportunity to market your products and services to the many visitors and companies expected to attend. Stands are available from £250.00. Lavender Blue Media is providing the video expertise and the event has received the official backing of the government's UKTI department. Aimed squarely at small to medium-sized businesses, Best Business Events promises "A fantastic opportunity for business leaders to meet, network and collaborate". For more details, see the website at www.kentb2b.co.uk and click on B2B East Kent or telephone 01732 758 530 to speak to a genuine human being. Best Business events is also encouraging Kent companies looking for capital investment to compete for the opportunity to pitch their investment idea to Ariadne Capital and Taylor Wessing, the international law firm. Full details of the Kent Business Pitch Competition 2013 are available on-line at www.thepitchingden.co.uk.

14. Hi-Speed Train

Chamber members with premises close to the High Speed Rail Link stations have a justifiable pride in their HSI journey times to London St Pancras. Southeastern Railway states on its website "Travelling at up to 140mph, the journey time from Ashford International to London is now just 37 minutes". In fact anyone travelling on the 08:13 train from Ashford can expect to arrive at London St Pancras at 08:49 which is a journey time of 36 minutes. Corporate understatement is not apparent with other stations in East Kent. Following widespread discussions with Chamber members, we measure the journey times on HSI from East Kent for trains arriving at London St Pancras on weekdays between 0800 hrs and 0900 hrs. This seems to be the most popular outward schedule, but it is also the most expensive. If bought on-line, a

standard day return ticket from Dover to London St Pancras currently costs £67.00 if leaving on the 07:58 train. However, if you spend a little longer at breakfast and leave on the 08:58, your ticket will cost just £37.00, a saving of £30 which is sufficient for a reasonable lunch and a drink on the way home. The same saving can be made if departing from Margate and proportionate reductions for later departures from other East Kent stations. If travelling by train, the message for local business people is surely to do your best to arrange for meetings anywhere in London to begin at or after 1130 hrs. You will certainly notice the difference in either your expense account or your waistline depending on what you spend the saving.

15. Fastest Weekday Journey Times On HSI

The times below are taken from the Southeastern Railway timetable for the period until 7th December 2013 and represent the fastest journey times on the High Speed rail link for trains arriving at London St Pancras on weekdays between 0800 hrs and 0900 hrs.

From	Mins	From	Mins	From	Mins
Ashford International	36	Deal	83	Margate	87
Birchington-on-Sea	87	Dover Priory	67	Ramsgate	75
Broadstairs	81	Faversham	63	Sandwich	89
Canterbury West	55	Herne Bay	78	Whitstable	72

16. Update On Thanet Earth

There may be political disputes in parliament about European cooperation, but no such worries have been allowed to impinge on the remarkably successful collaboration between the Fresca Group, Rainbow UK, A&A Growers and Kaaij UK. These are the investors in the latest addition to the greenhouses at Thanet Earth. This £17 million project was completed on time, on budget and on 20 acres of land near Birchington in East Kent, confirming Thanet Earth as the market leader in the sustainable production of tomatoes under glass. Named intriguingly Thanet Growers One or TGI for short, the newest greenhouse is in fact the fourth on site and is already producing crops of six speciality tomatoes as well as hosting secret trials of some new varieties. We do know that TGI will grow tomatoes for 52 weeks of the year and provide jobs for around 100 people, swelling the workforce to 600 employees. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs tells us in their Farming & Food bulletin for May 2013 that production in the UK agricultural industry in 2012 fell to its lowest level since 2004 and that the year-on-year decline “is the largest single year fall in total factor productivity since 1985.” A bleak future for UK food security is forecast in the statement that “The proportion of farms intending to make major investments in the next 12 months (22 per cent) is lower than investments made in the previous 12 months (43 per cent)”. In investing so consistently and so successfully in its East Kent glasshouse complex, Thanet Earth Marketing has shown that whatever the national trend, ambitious companies who understand the technologies required to assist them can thrive if the best managers are allowed to manage and the funding is made available. Thanet Earth Marketing’s Managing Director, Ian Craig, has pointed the way for local companies of all sizes. As a nation, we could all sleep a little more securely at night if we produced more of our own food.

17. Planning Success In Dover

In an email to the Chamber, the China Gateway Operations Director, Rob Prince, was delighted to confirm some good news. Dover District Council has approved the CGI planning application for Western Heights and Farthingloe. Subject to a few conditions and the usual final approval from the Secretary of State, this £200 million development is now poised to go ahead. Included in the scheme are a 130 bed hotel and conference centre, up to 40 residential units at the Western Heights, up to 521 residential units at Farthingloe, a 90 apartment retirement village, a health facility, a pub/restaurant, a shop, a farmhouse bed and breakfast and the provision of £5 million for improvements at the Drop Redoubt. Despite some limited local opposition, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr Fred Scales, “concluded that the economic and heritage benefits to Dover and East Kent outweighed other considerations that were raised regarding the application.” The leader of Dover District Council, Cllr Paul Watkins, labelled the decision as “a huge measure of confidence in Dover and East Kent”. Our sister organisation, the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, has supported this application from the beginning and in its most recent letter to the planning committee stated: “Not only will the construction of the buildings provide much needed employment, but the resultant dwellings will offer quality accommodation for skilled workers and do much to encourage further inward investment.” Dover District Council has shown exemplary leadership in supporting the local economy with this development. We can expect more good news as inward investors note how the business-friendly local government officers and councillors in office in the council buildings at White Cliffs Business Park can back their regeneration projects in the district.

18. More About Tomatoes

We have our doubts about the veracity of the following story sent by a Chamber member living near Birchington, but we leave it to our distinguished and good-looking readers to judge for themselves. “John was never a great student at school. He was always friendly enough to all those around him, but he knew in his heart of hearts that he would not find it easy to get a job. We used to make fun of him sometimes, because he was a little slow in class. We knew he would have a problem finding employment and indeed that proved to be the case. Remember that this was way back in 2005, before all the great changes at East Kent College and the new links some local schools have with local businesses. After leaving school when barely 17 years old, John suffered some six months of unemployment, but then managed to get an interview as a cleaner with a well-known national retailer. After faring rather well in a practical test with a mop and broom, he was brought before the store’s HR manager and made a positive impression with his good-natured replies. Finally, the manager said: ‘There are just a few more forms to be completed, but we can do this by email. As soon, as they are returned, you can begin work. Pay will be £3.00 an hour to start.’ John said: ‘Thank you very much. But I don’t have an email address. I don’t even have a computer’. At this the HR manager, said: ‘We have a strict policy here for all staff. No email, no job. Sorry and goodbye’. ‘But maybe if I could earn enough from the cleaning, I could buy a computer from your store,’ remonstrated John hopefully. ‘Nice idea, but no’, said the stony-faced manager. ‘As far as we are concerned, if you have no computer, you do not exist’. Stunned beyond measure by this blunt and irreversible rejection, John left the plush office and made his way to the exit. As he was about to leave the store, he remembered that he had a £5 note in his pocket. Thinking that he might as well spend his last pennies to complete the disastrous day, a big box of tomatoes caught his eye. Still on the vine, the tomatoes were priced at £5 exactly. ‘Why not, my mum loves tomatoes and so do I’, he thought and struggled to the checkout with his prize. On the way home, he encountered some friends and passers-by. They stopped to admire his lovely fresh tomatoes on the vine, an innovation at the time, and offered to buy some from him. Before he reached home, he discovered that he had made a profit of

over 100% and still had some tomatoes left to give to his mother for his lunch. For once in his life, he realized that he had won. With a Basil Fawlty-style screech of satisfaction, he returned to the store that afternoon and bought two more boxes. By the end of the week, he had bought his mother a new winter coat. By the end of the month, he was buying tomatoes direct from the supplier. By the end of the year, he was employing three staff. After 24 months of successful trading, his team consisted of 12 employees, including some of his former school mates who had left with much better qualifications than he had managed. I ran into John last week in the car park of a large shopping complex. A little thicker around the stomach than before and somewhat sterner in his demeanor, he nevertheless had the same cheerful smile on his face. After an exchange of greetings, I asked him where he was going. 'Oh, I'm off to buy some insurance for the new depot we are going to open next month'. 'You don't need to do that', I said, 'You should go on the Internet and compare the best prices. You will get a much better deal'. 'I prefer using local suppliers', said John. 'I find the service is much better. Anyway', he added ruefully, 'I don't own a computer'. Hardly able to believe my ears, I looked in my pocket for the keys to my 7 year-old Ford Fiesta and said to him brusquely: 'You might be a millionaire now, but think how much more successful you could have been if you did own a computer'" John paused for moment and then said: 'I know precisely where I would be now if I had a computer. I would be cleaning the floor of that store immediately behind you.' John then got into his Bentley and drove away. Makes you think, doesn't it?'

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It's happening now, it's happening in East Kent.
For details of membership, email admin@tekc.co.uk

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