



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

17th November 2013 Issue No.: 205

1. Town Centre Revival Business Breakfast 6th Dec 2013

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is organising a Chamber Business networking breakfast on Friday, 6th December 2013. The subject will be the revival of our town centres in the East Kent coastal business community and will be of interest to anyone keen to see more visitors in our shops, more revenue through our tills and more life in our High Streets. There will be plenty of 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@tekc.co.uk with the subject line: 'Town Centre Revival 6 December 2013'. There is a limited number of places for non-members at £16 each. Full details of the venue near Margate will follow with confirmation.

2. Business Rates Supplements for Large Stores

The Dover District Chamber of Commerce has been monitoring the economy of the district since 1850. In agreement with its sister body, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, the Dover Chamber very much welcomed the recent debate about supporting High Street shops in Dover, although the proposal put forward was counter-productive. Last month, Dover District Council quite rightly turned down a plan to oblige large out-of-town stores to pay an additional 8.5% in business rates. The idea behind the extra charge was to provide a fund to support small retailers. While backing a diversified High Street has an undoubted

appeal, imposing additional statutory costs on large stores to subsidise smaller shops will invoke the law of unintended consequences. It is the Chambers' contention that if an additional business rate levy is imposed on large supermarkets, this will accelerate a trend for the multiples to open more of their smaller convenience-style stores which will produce more competition for established shops in their immediate neighbourhood and not less. Furthermore, if a large store's ability to attract customers is rewarded by a council imposing supplementary taxes, then it would serve to penalise success and by extension subsidise failure. If Britain is indeed a nation of shopkeepers, it requires a nation of shoppers to visit them. This is not achieved by subsidies and distorting market forces through creating artificial barriers to trade. Ambitious shopkeepers will learn from the big stores where they can with imitative initiatives such as 'click and collect'. At the same time, they will provide what the big stores cannot, such as individual customer service and greater responsiveness to the needs of the local community.

3. What Is The Problem With a Business Rate Supplement?

The coastal towns of Dover, Folkestone, Deal, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Whitstable, Herne Bay and Dover need to be welcoming to potential employers; otherwise inward investors as well as shoppers and tourists will simply divert their attention to areas where their cash is more welcome. The Dover district has been particularly successful in reducing unemployment with almost every sector except retailing in recovery. The Claimant Count for 16-64 adults resident in the Dover District has fallen by a remarkable 22.0% since October 2012. This equates to 560 fewer people claiming the dole. Of all the districts in Kent, just two other areas, Swale and Maidstone, can claim to have more people leaving the unemployment register in the last year. The challenge for Dover, as it is for all retailers in our coastal towns, is how to make our shops more attractive, not how to deter investment through increasing business rates. Of course, we need to respect the heritage and environmental assets with which we are blessed so wonderfully, but we want to make East Kent the investment destination of choice. The Dover and Thanet Chambers are working with a number of financial bodies both in the UK and overseas to encourage them to spend their money here. As US President Calvin Coolidge remarked: "The wise and correct course to follow in taxation and in all other economic legislation is not to destroy those who have already secured success but to create conditions under which everyone will have a better chance to be successful." Now that's what we call a cool President.

4. Media Watch

'Flying the flag for East Kent' is how the BBC's Steve Ladner described the Chamber's efforts last week, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01k6d5c> and fast forward to 51:40; available for the next four days. The Chamber commented on the positive outlook for the East Kent economy, in broad agreement with the Governor of the Bank of England's assessment of 13th November 2013 that; 'For the first time in a long time, you don't have to be an optimist to see the glass as half full.' The Chamber welcomed the confirmation that the fast rail link to Sandwich will continue and noted the successes of companies in the East Kent coastal business community. Earlier, ITV Meridian had celebrated with the Chamber the exceptionally warm summer we all enjoyed this year. David Johns, ever the consummate television reporter, gave a seamless account of how improved weather this year has benefited Chamber members and Margate businesses. See <http://www.itv.com/news/meridian/story/2013-09-09/summer-washout/> and fast forward to 1:35: This was a positive and welcome news story from the South East's leading commercial

television station. The only problem was that there was relentless drizzle throughout the broadcast. The warm smiles were genuine but so were the cold toes.

5. Golf Day at Royal St George's Golf Club

There was some trepidation at the end of October that the Chamber's Golf Day at Royal St George's Golf Club would fall victim to severe weather conditions and the devastating high winds of the previous weekend. The course that has hosted 14 Open Championships is difficult enough without suffering the embarrassment of losing a ball on every hole. However, such fears proved groundless as the day dawned with still air and bright sunshine, perfect timing to warm the hearts of players, officials and those marketing directors who had sponsored what is now widely acknowledged to be East Kent's premier corporate Golf Day. In many ways, the day shows our client companies at their competitive best, fighting any hostile natural elements with honest individual endeavour and an excellent team spirit. This year we again featured a Beat The Professional Contest with the proceeds donated to our 2013 Chamber Charity, Pilgrims Hospice. We repeated the Ray Haines Memorial Trophy competition, named after the late distinguished Chief Executive of the Dover District Chamber of Commerce. A total of 28 company teams of four players each competed for the prizes that included KLM flights from Manston for two to any destination in Europe, a new Nissan Note from Dumpton Park Garage, a weekend for two with dinner at a top hotel from Shepherd Neame, return cross-channel ferry tickets from DFDS Seaways and a wide variety of awards. Full details are in the attached Chamber Golf Day 2013 Roll of Honour.

6. Beating Henry Cotton

Although all but one of the competitions are based on the handicap system giving an even chance to players of all abilities, the Ray Haines Memorial Trophy, as in the four Grand Slam events for professionals, is simply awarded to the golfer with the lowest score. Included in the field were consummate golfers such as Max Orrin, a rising star who topped the 2013 Titleist & Footjoy Order of Merit and earlier in the year had bagged first place in the South East of England Links Championship and the Lagonda Trophy as well as being part of the winning England squad at the European Teams Challenge in Denmark. Max returned a score of 74 strokes; almost impossible to match on the difficult links course. The great Henry Cotton recorded a final round of 79 when he beat the world to win his first Open Championship in Sandwich. Jonathan Whorlow beat this score by one stroke in a consummate 73 which would have delighted Ray Haines, the late Chief Executive of the Dover Chamber, after whom the trophy is named. The Corporate Team Championship was won by Vattenfall, with MCS Energy Systems and Spencer Hospitals filling the next two places. The worthy winner of the Individual Event was Mark Donovan who received his handsome prize personally from the UK Head of KLM, Warner Rootlieb. In second place was Dan Dowley followed by Jonathan Whorlow, D Chappell and Charlie Almond. Denis Farlex and Martin Lunn won the two longest drive competitions. Triumphant in the nearest the pin events were Maureen Reid, Malcolm Lockwood, Mick Fisher and Chris Catford. The Chamber of Commerce Challenge Cup was presented to Alastair Narraway, captain of the winning Thanet team.

7. Teams, Sponsors and Helpers

The teams participating in the 10th annual Chamber Golf Day were AEI Compounds, Barnes Marsland Solicitors, BayPoint Club, Bradstowe Chartered Surveyors 1, Bradstowe Chartered Surveyors 2, Country Carpets & Furnishings, DFDS Seaways Drivers, DFDS

Seaways Vikings, Discovery Park 1, Discovery Park 2, Drink Warehouse, East Kent College, Go Kart Electric, Hartman Marine, Kent Independent Security, KLM 1, KLM 2, McCabe Ford Williams, MCS Energy Systems, Morgan Jones Recruitment, NPS South East, OFF Timber Framed Homes 1, OFF Timber Framed Homes 2, Spencer Private Hospitals, St George's School, Vattenfall, Walpole Bay Hotel and WW Martin. Sponsoring the holes were KLM, Dumpton Park Garage, BayPoint Club, DFDS Seaways, Coastal Data Solutions, On-Line MBT and Sota Solutions. Other prizes were sponsored by KLM, DFDS Seaways, OFF Timber Framed Homes, Shepherd Neame, Royal St George's Professional Shop, Puls Global, Anton Images and Masala Gate Restaurant. The minibus was kindly provided by Carol Peters Travel. In thanking, the players, sponsors and staff of Royal St George's Golf Club at the end of the presentation ceremony, Chamber Chief Executive David Foley also gave fulsome praise to Justin Bishop of the Walpole Bay Hotel for his astute professional approach to the technical aspects of the tournament and to Roger Wildman, Nikki Curran and Jonathan Curran for assistance above and beyond the call of duty. The loudest cheer of the evening was reserved for the Chamber's Graham Rayner who for the 10th year in succession had succeeded in recruiting the sponsors, teams and administrators to ensure that the Chamber Golf Day remained an elite event in the commercial calendar of East Kent that every Chamber member can enjoy. In recognition of Graham's contribution to East Kent business life, from 2014 onwards the main team trophy will be named the Graham Rayner Chamber of Commerce Challenge Cup.

8. HSBC

We are grateful to our Chamber Co-President, Sir Roger Gale MP, for forwarding a letter from Barry Spicer, Area Commercial Director of HSBC, regarding finance to small and medium-sized businesses in the South East. HSBC acknowledges that along with other major banks HSBC has faced problems 'which may have damaged public trust and confidence in banking'. Barry continued that: 'We are taking a number of actions to ensure we carry out our business responsibly and to the highest ethical standards.' He writes that in the first six months of 2013, HSBC 'agreed in excess of £457 million gross new lending to over 13,300 small and medium sized businesses; agreed £1.18 billion in mortgages for 9,918 borrowers, which is equivalent to 54 every day; and agreed £212 million to help 1,814 first time buyers, which is equivalent to 70 first time buyers per week.' We particularly welcome the release of funding to local businesses, but note that Chamber members continue to report difficulties in communications with their local branches. Anyone who has tried to telephone direct the HSBC branch in Dover or Ramsgate or any branch in East Kent will be aware of this type of problem which is not confined to HSBC alone.

9. Chamber Diary

The 2014 Chamber Diary will be delivered personally to Chamber members in the course of the next few weeks. Beautifully bound with hand-stitching and brass corners, this prestigious publication is increasingly regarded as the commercial directory for the East Kent coastal business community. It contains the names and addresses of many of East Kent's most ambitious and successful companies which are listed in alphabetical order of company name as well as in a classified list by sector.

10. How Are We Doing?

The latest Claimant Count figures for East Kent give credence to the Governor of the Bank of England's belief that the economy has turned the corner. As regular readers will know, the Chamber monitors carefully the monthly data from the Office for National Statistics. If

our Chamber members are to make the most of the opportunities presented, then it is important that they are acquainted with the most recent evidence on which to base their decisions. The figures show sustained falls in unemployment. Of the 23 wards in Thanet, a mere 3 show any increases in unemployment and these amount to 15 people in total. The district as a whole has removed 511 from the unemployment benefit register, a 10.7% improvement since October last year. Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards, so often at the bottom of jobless figures for Kent in the past, continue the gains of the previous two months and show an annual increase of 7.1% and 9.7% respectively. The Dover district records some stellar gains, reflecting perhaps the impact of the Discovery Park which now has 1,400 people employed on site and 61 companies in residence. There is only one ward in the entire Dover District which records an increase in jobseekers claimants and that is Whitfield. Dover members will appreciate the irony that Whitfield is the home ward of the Dover District Chamber of Commerce. How many more people are registered as unemployed there than at this time 12 months ago? The answer is one person. All the other Dover district wards show a gain which averages at a 22.0% improvement, a higher rate than Kent and a higher rate than in Great Britain as a whole.

11. Give Us The Facts

Unemployment based on Claimant Count data supplied by ONS for resident adults aged 16 – 64.

	October 2013		Change since Oct 2012	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet District	4,276	5.3%	-511	-10.7%
Ashford	1,561	2.1%	-401	-20.4%
Canterbury District	1,891	1.9%	-412	-17.9%
Dover District	1,987	2.9%	-560	-22.0%
Maidstone	1,901	1.9%	-580	-23.4%
Shepway	2,136	3.2%	-503	-19.1%
Swale	2,732	3.2%	-584	-17.6%
Kent	22,661	2.5%	-5,425	-19.3%
South East	104,385	1.9%	-29,450	-22.0%
Great Britain	1,208,632	3.0%	-275,325	-18.6%

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12. What's All This About The Bank of England?

Last Friday, the Chamber was invited to the Bank of England for a confidential briefing on the background and implications of the latest BoE Inflation report. Published on 13th November 2013, the UK's central bank report provides the background data on which the Monetary Policy Committee can decide key issues that affect our business lives, notably the Interest Rate. The report also provides evidence to the government on issues of vital national importance to us all such as the bank's best judgments on the most likely forward paths for inflation, output and unemployment. We are free to quote from the published document.

13. What Did The Bank of England Ever Do For Us?

Despite the recession and severe shocks to our banking system, the UK has maintained its AAA Rating with Standard & Poor. This means that we can borrow money on international markets at low rates of interest. By contrast, France lost its triple A credit rating two years ago and earlier this month was downgraded further from AA+ to AA. This was described by the BBC's Robert Preston as: "S&P is very publicly criticising France for not doing more

to lift its economy out of the economic doldrums and cut persistently high unemployment”. The independent role of the Bank of England ensures that the UK government and our financial systems are well prepared to manage uncertainties with some of the nation’s best economic brains serving to benefit us all with lower mortgage payments, cheaper loans and well informed projections about our commercial prospects,

14. So, What Does The BoE Think Then?

In many respects, the BoE’s Inflation report reads like a weather forecast on our economy. It is full of meteorological terminology referring to ‘significant headwinds’ and ‘thawing of credit conditions’. Overall, the outlook is distinctly positive. CPI inflation has fallen from 2.9% in June 2013 to 2.2% in October. The bank has declared that it will not look at increasing the interest rate until the LFS unemployment rate falls to 7%. It currently stands at 7.7% in the three months to August 2013. The bank considers that there is a 3 in 5 chance of it reaching 7% by the end of 2015. This suggests that the interest rate will remain at 0.5% for well over a year. Even if unemployment falls more sharply, the bank will not necessarily increase the interest rate as many other factors need to be taken into consideration. LFS unemployment refers to the Labour Force Survey which the EU obliges the UK to submit to Eurostat every quarter. The Chamber prefers to measure our jobless figures by the monthly claimant count, described by the bank as ‘a more timely indicator’. The European Central Bank cut its interest rates to 0.25% on 7th November 2013, posing the question: ‘How low can you get?’ The answer is: ‘Not much more.’ Interest rates below 0% are not interesting. Chamber members who have followed the lamentations of our adopted Doncaster Rovers will understand the comments of one journalist who had seen this South Yorkshire team lose by five goals to nil and remarked afterwards, “Doncaster was lucky to get nil”.

15. What About Exports, Share Prices & Employment ?

We learn that in the last quarter: ‘Sterling appreciated by about 3%.’ This means that the UK is becoming increasingly attractive to foreign investors; but of course, it also means that our imports have become cheaper for us to buy and our exports more expensive for our foreign customers. The bank has registered a 2.4% rise in the FTSE All-Share Index in the last quarter which it ascribes to ‘increased investor optimism regarding the economic outlook’. Critics of the public sector will take comfort from the data showing a rise in hours worked. The bank states that: ‘This in part reflects the shift from public to private sector employment’. This could be interpreted as indicating that workers in the private sector are more inclined to stay behind at the end of the working day to get the goods to market. The number of people working part-time who would like to work full-time has doubled in the last six years suggesting that although the average number of hours worked per week will continue to rise, the higher demand for labour will feed through to the unemployment statistics just gradually as the pent-up demand from current workers is absorbed. Labour costs are not expected to rise significantly in the near term as companies replenish their coffers and seek to recover delayed profits from their previous investments.

16. What Does This Mean For East Kent?

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the bank is unequivocal in its statement that: ‘The recovery has finally taken hold’. It maintains that ‘The economy is growing robustly’ and that “The recent upswing in growth seems set to be sustained’. In the Chamber’s view, East Kent companies which retained their skilled staff during the recession through four-day week arrangements or simply plundering their reserves are now well placed to expand production

facilities, increase their marketing budgets and look to acquire an increased market share while competitors in the UK get their act together and before any potential competitors overseas realise the opportunities available here. Unless there is a dramatic threat to our local economy, property prices will rise. The age-old wisdom in the fatherly dictum: 'Put your money in land son, they ain't making it anymore' has perhaps never been more appropriate than now. Even if there is a sharp fall in land prices, it is unlikely to happen in the next nine months. In an expanding market, those who invest the soonest stand to receive the biggest gains. Registered Chamber members can receive the full Bank of England Inflation Report together with the BoE Governor's personal commentary by emailing admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line 'BoE Inflation Report Nov 2013'

17. Spitfire Museum

We are grateful to Melody Foreman, editor of the Manston Mirror Magazine, for sending the Chamber some interesting insights about the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum located next to Manston Airport. Apparently, this heritage centre began life as a home for the former gate guardian of RAF Manston, Spitfire TB752, which was restored in 1980. The great Bob Stanford-Tuck was one of the Battle of Britain pilots who gave his support to the venture. During its wartime service, Spitfire TB752 was flown by 15 pilots. Among them were Flying Officer 'Dick' Edwards, and Flying Officer Fred Town who returned to Manston to see their much loved Spitfire in its new home under cover. In 1988, Hawker Hurricane IIC LF751 was added to the collection, prompting visits from relatives of the Belgian pilots who flew the machine in World War Two. Dame Vera Lynn and Luftwaffe legend Adolf Galland are among those who have marvelled at the museum's exhibits and brought with them their own recollections of wartime service. Chairman of the Museum Trust is Ken Wills, a keen pilot himself and head of Summit Aviation at Manston, as well as a host of aviation related companies. Ken has raised over £1 million for charities at home and overseas. Under his benign guidance, the trust is reaching out with important messages to new generations who may not have the collective memory or appreciation of the significance of "The Few" who flew from our East Kent airfields in 1940 and did so much to preserve the freedoms that we accept so casually today. Trustee and former Ramsgate Mayor Sid Farmer is among those who do fully recognise Manston's role in the Battle of Britain and the crucial part played by the Spitfire and Hurricane in deciding the outcome. Sid said: 'The Spitfire and the Hurricane are legendary and they are much loved. We know this from the incredible amount of their fans we meet and greet each year, and we believe our museum is tremendously fortunate to play host to these rare aircraft. We believe the museum reaches out to the whole of the Thanet community. Today, as we look to the future we hope to strengthen the museum's presence even more by embracing our friends in the business and commercial world. We invite them all to be part of our anniversary events and of course to endorse our everlasting message to all to remember 'The Few' – those brave air crews who fought the enemies over our skies during the dark days of the 1939 – 1945 conflict.'

18. KCC Budget 2014

Kent County Council has opened a consultation on how it should reduce its spending by £273 million over the next three years. With an increasing demand for its services and a reduction in funding from central government. KCC would like your views on how to make the most of its annual spend of £1.43 billion. It takes a matter of a few minutes to state your views which will have a bearing on the KCC cabinet's priorities. For instance, do you think that street lighting is more important than the care of the elderly? Should repairing potholes

take precedence over looking after foster carers? Before 13th December 2013, click on www.kent.gov.uk/budget, answer the questions on the links to the right of the page and then you will be fully entitled to grumble in the bar to your heart's content about the way the county spends your money.

19. TransEuropa Aftermath

We are grateful to Dover Chamber Director Laraine Soliman for an update on the fate of the *Gardenia*, a vessel of 22,152 gross register tonnes that belonged to the ill-fated TransEuropa Ferries. As Managing Director of Seaspeed and an international maritime marketing specialist of some renown, Laraine knows her onions and her ferries. Long-standing members of the Chamber will recall that TransEuropa began freight services from Ramsgate to Ostend in 1998, adding a car and passenger service a few years later. The company went into receivership in April this year owing Thanet District Council an estimated £3.4 million in uncollected harbour fees. Named *European Enterprise* at its launch in 1978, for Townsend Thoreson, the ship was renamed *European Endeavour* in 1987 when P&O European Ferries took over ownership. It was moved to the Irish Sea operation in 1996. After a short period laid up in Dunkirk, the ship underwent a refit following its purchase by TransEuropa Ferries before starting its maiden voyage on the Ramsgate to Ostend route on 15th January 2003 as the *Gardenia*. Laraine tells us that the bunkering company Oilchart International has bought the vessel. Any Chamber member wishing to know the purchase price, the conditions of sale and the likely future use of the vessel should contact the Chamber in confidence by email to admin@tekco.uk with the subject line "*Gardenia*". We believe that its smaller sister ship, the 14,300 GRT *Larkspur*, is also being prepared for sale. This vessel was familiar to many locals as the *Viking 2* when in the ownership of Sally Line and subsequently Eurotravellers when plying its trade for Sally Direct.

20. London To Paris Twice A Day

Chamber member Comfret is happy to receive enquiries from companies seeking reliable express collections and deliveries throughout Europe. Specialising in 'just in time' deliveries for exhibitions and business shows, the company has a scheduled daily service from London to Paris in 18 tonne and 26 tonne vehicles; ideal for multi-drop destinations and point-to-point deliveries. In addition, a sister company services hotels in the Accor group throughout the UK and Ireland. Many chamber members will have stayed at an Accor hotel without realising that it is owned by the largest operator in Europe which has hotel properties in 92 countries worldwide. The brand names are perhaps more familiar to us: Sofitel, Pullman, Mgallery, Mercure, Novotel, Ibis, Thalassa, Adagio, Orbis and Sebel. The next time you stick out your hand in the hotel shower and find the soap is exactly where it should be, say a little 'thank you' to Tony Thomson and his team at Comfret and TTD Transport. Better still, give him a call on 01304 822673 to discuss your freight needs. Chamber members can expect a warm welcome and an understanding supplier of logistic services.

21. Design to Succeed

Angle Studios is one of many recent recruits to the Chamber. Distinguishing its design service from many of its competitors is a bespoke customer focus that offers "Big agency expertise. Small agency fees". Managing Director Ryan Grist joined McCann Erickson at the age of 19 and progressed to the stage where he was handling big accounts for large enterprises such as Vauxhall, Harley Davidson, Mitchell & Butlers and Sizzling Pubs Company. This inspired him to establish Angle Studios in 2003 and rapidly acquire a client

list that included Kent Police, Neighbourhood Watch, West Kent, Town & Country Housing Group and Greene King. Whether you seek wall-planners for a Formula One team or tea envelopes for the Savoy Hotel, Ryan and his team of design and marketing professionals promise: 'We are here to help your business grow'. To find out more, telephone Ryan on 01304 897330 or email info@anglestudios.co.uk. Anyone undaunted by the prospect of comparing their own website with that of a top design studio can find more information about Angle Studios in Sandwich and Tunbridge Wells on the website at <http://www.anglestudios.co.uk>.

22. Succession Planning

When Liam Byrne MP left a note for his successor as Chief Secretary to the Treasury stating: "Dear Chief Secretary, I'm afraid there is no money. Kind regards – and good luck! Liam." He was following in a long tradition of departing bosses giving unsolicited advice. Geoffrey Fisher served as the 99th Archbishop of Canterbury from 1945 to 1961. In advising Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on his successor as the 100th, he is reputed to have spoken firmly against the candidature of Michael Ramsey. Fisher had been in charge of Ramsey's school at Repton and allegedly advised Mcamillan that on no account should he allow Ramsey to be the next Archbishop of Canterbury saying: "I have known him all his life. I was his Headmaster at Repton." Macmillan is reputed to have thanked Fisher kindly for his advice before declaring firmly: "You may have been Doctor Ramsey's headmaster, but you were not mine." Michael Ramsey was duly appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury and is widely regarded today with warmth and affection In East Kent for his progressive views and occasional trips to the Olive Branch pub outside the Cathedral gates where he stood his round like a good 'un. By contrast Nikita Khrushchev was from a different school in every sense of the word. Despite his later retraction, Khrushchev was a loyal henchman to Stalin and an enthusiastic supporter of widespread purges of dissident thinkers. We have no idea if the following story about him is true or not, but we leave it to our wise and good-looking Chamber members to decide for themselves. When he was ousted as Russian leader in 1964, Khrushchev is said to have left two letters in his desk at the Kremlin for his successor with instructions to open the first letter at a time of personal crisis and it would save his bacon. Only if there was a second severe peril should he open the second. When he was about to be overwhelmed by events, Brezhnev did open the first letter and read the words: 'Blame everything on your predecessor'. The Soviet leader breathed a huge sigh of relief, followed the advice and survived with his full powers intact. Many years later, another major crisis developed and Brezhnev was at a complete loss what to do. Suddenly in desperation, he remembered the second letter in his desk. With trembling hands, he opened the ageing missive and read the words: "Sit down and prepare two letters".

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

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

Offices in Broadstairs, Sandwich and Dover.

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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