

***** Welcome to the Thanet & East Kent Insider *****

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

15th January 2009

1. Ramsgate Week

The Royal Temple Yacht Club (RTYC) has announced the dates for Ramsgate Week; Monday 10th August – Saturday 15th August 2009. Founded in 1857, RTYC received a boost to its fortunes in 1897 with the award of a Royal Warrant and began its Ramsgate Week regatta the following year. Germany's last emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, was an early patron in his schooner "Meteor" until his attention was directed elsewhere in 1914. Following his victory in a bigger competition, George V, appeared regularly at Ramsgate Week until 1924 in his cutter named, as might be expected, "Britannia". More recently, Ramsgate week has gained a reputation as "the friendly regatta" and as a growing alternative to Cowes Week. The club brochure claims "the club boasts a higher number of visiting foreign yachts than any other in the country" and it is undoubtedly well situated to welcome yachting enthusiasts from the other side of the English Channel. Ramsgate Week Chairman, Paul Woodward, invites sailing enthusiasts of all ages and abilities to contact him or Sales Manager, Neil Duttson, for further details. Companies interested in raising their profile are invited to consider a wide range of sponsorship packages from simple display banner advertising to Platinum Partner Status giving maximum visibility in all prize-giving photographs and television programmes. For details, email Paul.Woodward@mikebeer.co.uk or neil@duttsonrocks.com or telephone 01843 591766. Much information is also available on the website at www.ramsgateweek.com.

2. Sebastian Coe and Adecco

Optimists looking for some bright signs in a dismal national picture can at least take some encouragement from the success of Chamber member and sponsor of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, Adecco. The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) has chosen Adecco as its "Official Recruitment Services Supplier". With Ramsgate competing as a venue for sailing events and the possibility of a full-sized swimming pool being built before 2012, there should be a new international focus on Thanet as well as the opportunity for some memorable jobs for locals. London 2012 Chairman, Sebastian Coe welcomed the announcement adding, "We will double in size this year and Adecco working in partnership with our own HR team will ensure that we have the right people in the right roles". We congratulate Mary Campbell and her team at Adecco and we are happy to sing the praises of all our HR companies in membership. Give them a call for all your employment needs: Mary Campbell, Adecco Recruitment tel: 01843 609292; Claire Topsom, Big Fish Recruitment 0845 0602 999; Lee-Ann Powell, HRGO tel: 01843 591798; Jonathan Clarke, Morgan Jones Recruitment Consultants tel: 01843 604890 and Helana Barnes, Office Angels tel: 01233 611780.

3. Ray Haines RIP

"Walk tall, walk straight and look the world right in the eye" are the words of a well-known Val Doonican song and they are applicable to the late Ray Haines. Earlier this afternoon, the East Kent business community bid a final farewell to Ray, the redoubtable 6ft 4" Chief Executive of Dover District Chamber of Commerce. At a simple ceremony at Thanet Crematorium in the presence of the Mayoress of Dover and Chamber Chief Executives past and present, Canon Peter Gausden paid tribute to Ray's contribution to the commercial success of companies in the Dover area. He related how Ray's service in the RAF, his sojourn in South Africa and his experience owning a furniture company had equipped him with a range of skills which he made freely available to Chamber members. A practical man above all, Ray was a serious DIY enthusiast who had transformed his house with the same fearless determination with which he addressed public bodies perceived to be working against the public interest. His Chamber members warmly appreciated Ray's many appearances on their behalf in the press and on television. Motorists enjoying the free flow of traffic along Dover seafront last year may not have been aware that it was Ray's campaigning that had persuaded government agencies not to make the seafront a one-way route during resurfacing work. In an exclusive interview with the Thanet & East Kent Insider, Karen Day, Site Director of Online MBT, formerly Mike Beer Transport, recalls the day last year when Ray Haines demonstrated the extent of the problems that would be caused by the proposed re-routing of all port-bound traffic. Ray's solution was just what was required and she remains grateful for his powerful advocacy on behalf of hauliers in Dover. Karen, one of an increasing number of successful female managers in the haulage industry, added, "Ray was a real gentleman". He walked tall and we shall miss him.

4. More about Pubs

Our friends at HSBC tell us that the Royal Bank of Scotland has decided to sell its pub estate and is joining Punch Taverns and Enterprise Inns in seeking buyers for its chain. Last Saturday's Financial Times told us that the pub market is saturated with more sellers than buyers. The issue of pub closures is also very much in focus in East Kent. The King's Head at Sarre is one of the most recent public houses for which opening hours no longer apply. The industry is reaching crisis point. With over five pubs a day closing in the UK, retailers are also suffering from the absence of purchases from its local. The average

pub spends £85,000 a year on buying products and services from its immediate area. The government itself is also losing tax revenues and National Insurance Contributions as pubs employ six times more staff per pint sold than supermarkets. Publicans in membership judge the main culprit to be the tax levied on a pint; 91p in a pub, 53p at a supermarket. Lowering the former and raising the latter would be a simple solution that would ultimately benefit all parties.

5. A Car Wash and Relativity

Sitting stationary in the car in a car wash earlier today, I had the sensation that the vehicle was moving. By focusing on the moving arm carrying the spraying water, I had the distinct impression of forward movement. The same visual trick can happen when looking out of the train window at another train passing slowly on the next line. Your mind tells you that the other train is stopped and you are moving. The definition of movement is of course relative. After all, isn't the world spinning around at over 1,000 mph? By the same token, relativity applies to our economy. On Monday of this week the government of Zimbabwe released "for your convenience" a new denomination of currency, the \$50,000,000,000 note. The largest note in common circulation in England is, of course, labelled £50. By comparison with Zimbabwe, our economy is phenomenally successful. Judgments on economic progress are relative. It all depends on where you are looking. Outside investors looking at Sandwich will not be encouraged by Pfizer's announcement of cuts in the workforce of between 5% and 8%, although the worst case scenario still leaves 3,000 employees in post. Outsiders with their gaze fixed on Thanet may certainly get the impression that the local economy is moving forward. The announcement of a new Ferry Service from Boulogne to Ramsgate next spring brings the prospect of French shoppers pouring into the area eager to take advantage of the relatively favourable exchange rates. The construction of Thanet Off-shore Windfarm begins next month with the promise of 40 years of maintenance work emanating from Ramsgate. The imminent Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate, the new Thanet College project for Broadstairs, the Thanet Earth complex now growing its first hydroponic crop near Monkton and the ambitious plans recently announced by Kent International Airport all point to a forward-moving Thanet taking full advantage of its strategic position close to the continent. A reassessment of China's relative trading position earlier this week means that it has now overtaken Germany as the world's third largest economy. Planning permission for Phase One of the China Gateway at Manston is secured and, whatever the final outcome, commercial expansion there looks assured as China still has a healthy trading surplus. It would be foolish to broadcast "green shoots of recovery", but it would be equally foolish to deny the relative benefits that Thanet enjoys. Finally, if all that fails to convince you, you can always sit on the beach. After all, Thanet has the highest concentration of blue flag beaches in the UK, relatively speaking.

6. The Things They Say

Some political commentators will regret the departure from the US Presidency of George W Bush. Barrack Obama will have a hard act to follow if he is to match some of the sayings attributed to his predecessors in and around the Oval Office. Former Vice-President Dan Quayle's gave us an insight into how the pressures of high office can distort common sense with his notorious correction of a high school student's spelling; he added an "e" to the end of "potato". On visiting South Carolina on 11th January 2000, George Bush reached new heights with his declaration that "Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?" Later that same year, Reuters reported the President as saying, ""It's clearly a budget. It's got a lot of numbers in it." It is difficult to argue with such assertions. His knowledge of modern history was open to question two years later in Tokyo when he allegedly said, "For a century and a half now, America and Japan have formed one of the great and enduring alliances of modern times." Some public figures in America have an especial talent for such statements. Sam Goldwyn displayed an imperfect knowledge of contract law in his famous affirmation that "An oral agreement is not worth the paper it is written on". But in such comparisons, sports people are invariably able to rise to the occasion, as the American baseball coach, Yogi Berra, did magnificently with his remark that "Baseball is 90% mental; the other half is physical." Obama has a lot to live up to.

7. Sponsors

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For details of membership, email admin@tekco.uk and be happy.