

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

30th April 2009

1. Two For The Price of One

Thanet & East Kent Chamber is strengthening its partnership with the Channel Chamber of Commerce. From 1 May 2009, any company joining the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will receive free membership of the Channel Chamber of Commerce allowing members to benefit fully from an extended East Kent business community and internal market stretching from Thanet to Dungeness and including Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Sandwich, Deal, Folkestone, Hawkinge, Hythe, New Romney and Lydd. There has never been a better time to join your local Chamber. Any registered Chamber member who has not yet received a formal letter with notification of the free benefits, should receive one within the next week. For further details, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Membership Enquiry".

2. Special Offer

Kent Forklift Training is offering Chamber members a 10% discount on all courses booked between now and 31st July 2009. Director, Stuart Ainslie, is the latest to join this Chamber's Business-To-Business Discount Scheme. For details, contact Stuart direct by email to info@kentforklifttraining.co.uk or telephone 01843 823463. To add your offer to the scheme, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Chamber B2B Discount Scheme".

3. That Lot In Europe

On 30 April 2008, the interbank exchange rate produced 1.2698 Euros for one British pound. One year later, one pound buys 1.1139 Euros. Ignoring other factors for the moment, the net effect of this swing is that anything sourced from Kent that you wish to sell in the Eurozone is now 14% cheaper than a year ago. Conversely, that cheap bottle of wine in the Calais supermarket that you bought at Easter last year is now 14% more expensive. The good news for local companies is that your margin on sales to France has increased considerably. It may not have been worthwhile to sell your wares in Nord Pas De Calais 12 months ago. It might be now. Similarly, your prices for French, Belgium and Dutch visitors to your shop in East Kent are now 14% more attractive and it might now be in your interests to make your products or services known to our cousins on the other side of the Channel. With this in mind, this Chamber will be visiting officials in Calais in a few weeks to arrange a group visit later in the year when East Kent companies will have the opportunity to meet potential French clients in convivial surroundings and a pleasant atmosphere designed to encourage cross-channel trading. Read the Thanet & East Kent Insider for details.

4. Golf

The 2009 Chamber Golf Day will take place at the prestigious Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Deal on 2 October 2009. Twice the venue for the Open Championship, this course has been roundly praised by the greats of the game including Harry Vardon, Bobby Locke, Jack Nicklaus and Sergio Garcia. Our own Graham Rayner of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be seeking to repeat the administrative success of last year's tournament at the North Foreland Golf Club. A fourth trophy will be available this year, the Ray Haines Memorial Cup, which will be awarded to commemorate the late Chief Executive of the Dover District Chamber of Commerce who always gave this event his wholehearted support. Graham has the details and can be contacted by telephone to 078998 73535.

5. Free Entry for Some

Chamber member, the Powell-Cotton Museum, is offering residents of Birchington free entry on Monday 4 May from 1100 am to 5.00 pm. Locals are asked to produce proof of their address. Anyone who did not attend our Thanet Earth presentation at the museum last year may not be aware of the world class exhibits in Quex House and the quite amazing dioramas created by its founder, Major Percy Powell-Cotton and his descendants. The "Vale of Kashmir" diorama of 1896 is thought to be the first of its kind in the world. For details, telephone 01843 842168. If you are wondering "What on earth is a diorama and why is there an elephant in it?", have a look at the excellent website at www.quexmuseum.org and your worries will be over.

6. Art For Art's Sake – But It Helps To Sell A Painting From Time To Time

This Chamber supports the arts in East Kent and is arranging the visit here of Alain Renoux, famed French artist and Director of the Biennale D'Art Figuratif which, as the name suggests, is held every two years near Lyon, France. The festival promotes professional artists producing original representational work that sells in the price range £500 – £2,500. M. Renoux has accepted an invitation to visit Thanet to view the works of serious East Kent painters with a view to inviting a select number to exhibit at his festival in June 2010; an honour indeed and an opportunity to make lots of sales. The Chamber is grateful to Caroline Lovely of Lovely's Gallery, Art Retailer of the Year 2008, see www.lovelysgallery.co.uk, and Michael Wheatley-Ward of the Sarah Thorne Theatre Club, tel: 01843 580389, for their support and assistance. All readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider are welcome to meet Alain Renoux and view the works on display from 7.00 pm to 8.30 pm on Saturday 16th May 2009 at the Memorial Theatre, Hilderstone College, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2JW. Entry is free and a bar will be open for refreshments. Professional artists wishing to exhibit should email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Biennale D'Art Figuratif".

7. Formula 1 and Leadership

These columns have featured various comments on leadership from the hardline dictatorial approach of Brian Clough to the consensual sociability favoured by many recent MBA graduates. Two aspects have characterised all the managers depicted; they are inspirational and they are successful. It is interesting to note that after Jenson Button crossed the line ahead of his rivals at the Bahrain Grand Prix last Sunday, he was quick to praise his line manager, Ross Brawn. Jensen said tellingly; "He is a proper leader and he's turned the team into a tight unit, which is what you need in Formula One". It is not just in motor racing that proper leadership is required, but in all aspects of management if local companies are to survive and flourish in the current trying economic conditions. Of course, if you are heading for a hairpin bend at 180 mph it is comforting to have confidence in the man responsible for your braking system. It is also reassuring to know that the brake pads are not over-engineered making your car too heavy and therefore uncompetitive. That great innovator, Colin Chapman, the founder of Lotus, summed up the dilemma facing a Formula 1 team boss when he said: "Any car which holds together for more than one race is too heavy." Or to put it another way, "If your suspension arm breaks, you have made it too thin. If it does not break, you have made it too thick." Colin Chapman's doctrine of "adding lightness" made him a brilliant race engineer, but what brought him seven Formula One Constructors' titles, six Drivers' Championships, and the Indianapolis 500 crown were his drivers. He inspired them to drive. They drove for him and they were successful. Colin Chapman was a proper leader. So is Ross Brawn. We can learn much from them.

8. Thin & Hollow Stories

Rob Thrower, Director of Relocation at Thanet College, is entitled to a few moments of respite following his successful negotiations with government to keep the new Thanet College project on schedule and on budget. However, in an out-of-hours conversation with the Chamber, he highlighted the issue of different approaches to quality control. Rob recalled the story of a Japanese motor manufacturer asked to supply a European company with 1,000 gearbox components. The purchase order stipulated a permissible faulty parts quota of 0.3%. The 1,000 parts were duly delivered from Tokyo alongside a separate parcel containing 3 additional parts accompanied by a note along the lines of: "We are not quite sure why you wanted 3 faulty components but we have modified the enclosed parts accordingly and ask you to accept the extra ones with our compliments." Thanks for this, Rob. More of the same, very welcome. The Japanese are not the only ones to pride themselves on their quality control and engineering prowess. A story doing the rounds in Zurich in the 1970s concerned the visit of an Osaka watchmaker to La Chaux-de-Fonds. Before leaving, he presented his Swiss hosts with a small glass-fronted presentation case labelled, "The thinnest wire in the world". On a reciprocal visit two months later, the Swiss watchmakers returned the case with a new label, "The thinnest tube in the world". Now that's class.

9. Sponsors

We are grateful to Adecco Recruitment, tel: 01843 609292; Girlings Solicitors, tel: 01843 220274 and Express By Holiday Inn tel: 01843 820250 for sponsoring this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.



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