

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

14<sup>th</sup> May 2009

### 1. Over The Water

Yesterday, the Chamber visited our colleagues at the Calais Chamber of Commerce to discuss cooperation and cross-channel trading. The new Mayor of Calais, Natasha Bouchart, is keen to implement innovation. The slogan "Calais Change" is seen with increasing frequency around the town and port. This Chamber is anxious to take full advantage of the current favourable exchange rates so that our members can extend their markets overseas with reasonable margins. Our visit focused on practical measures to help our local companies. After the business of the day was concluded, it was suggested that an East Kent football team might wish to play a pre-season friendly match against Calais. We will certainly investigate the possibility. We should be aware that although Calais Racing Union Football Club may field an amateur team of teachers, dock workers and office clerks, in the year 2000 it was good enough to reach the final of the Coupe De France (the French equivalent of the FA Cup) losing to Nantes in a tense and controversial final by just two goals to one.

### 2. A Kent First

Richard Durrant of Chamber member, Boys & Maughan Solicitors, had more reason than most to celebrate last Friday when he became the first Legal Executive in Kent to be made a partner. The changes brought about by the Legal Services Act 2007 allow the creation of Legal Disciplinary Partnerships (LDPs) which had previously been exclusive to solicitors. Richard's success comes with the full approval of senior partner, Jonathan Austin, who stated that "there could be no more suitable candidate". Praise indeed. Boys & Maughan can be reached by telephone to 01843 595990. Legal advice is also available from the sponsors of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, Girlings Solicitors tel: 01843 220274, as well as from Chamber members Barnes Marsland, tel: 01843 221466; Bel Denning tel: 01843 262020; Brachers tel: 01622 690691 and Robinson & Allfree tel: 01843 592361

### 3. Planning

This Chamber is currently assisting one member who is poised to make a large investment in the area but had run into some difficulties with the planning department of Thanet District Council (TDC). After a preliminary investigation, this Chamber arranged for a meeting between the investor and the TDC planning department. This get together duly took place earlier this week. In the space of two hours, all the major problems were resolved and we are confident that construction of the inward investment project will begin within the next twelve months. Pre-application advice in some districts can be horrendously expensive. One department in London states its fees as: "£2,300 (excl VAT) for the first meeting and £800 for follow-up meetings." TDC makes no charge for pre-application planning advice. We welcome this support for the business community and look forward to working with other inward investors and TDC to resolve any planning difficulties before they become a problem.

### 4. Running For Cover

Independent Insurance Services is renown throughout East Kent for the quality of its insurance products and the marathon running exploits of its proprietor, Ray Johnson. In the last 10 years, Ray and his team have raised over £300,000 for the local community. Avid television viewers may have seen Ray complete the London Marathon a few weeks ago. Chamber members are invited to apply for a special offer. For commercial insurance risks, Insurance Services will give Chamber members a 10% discount when it arranges insurance. This amount is net of Insurance Premium Tax but will be in addition to any savings on your premium. For a £10,500 premium including Insurance Premium Tax, this would represent a saving of £1,000. For motor insurance, Chamber members can also claim free legal protection cover, worth around £25 per vehicle. Surely, there is no need to run for cover from this offer. For more details, give Ray a call, tel: 01303 221188, email to [ray@independentinsuranceservices.co.uk](mailto:ray@independentinsuranceservices.co.uk) or check the website at [www.independentinsuranceservices.co.uk](http://www.independentinsuranceservices.co.uk). This item would not be complete without mentioning some other Chamber members who are there to satisfy your insurance needs. Steven Davison of SVS Prestige Insurance Ltd in Cliftonville would welcome your call, tel: 01843 226921. Try also Penny Walker at Welham & Hodge of Dover who has the agency for NFU Mutual and would love to hear from you. Penny can be reached by telephone to 01304 827535.

### 5. Give Us Your Money

Earlier today, this Chamber was invited by the Academy For Chief Executives to attend a Networking For Network Conference near London. After marvelling at the great and good in attendance, see item 8 below, there was still some time left to receive some straightforward advice on issues such as how to raise capital for your business. Daniel Bastide, a partner at Thomas Eggar LLP of Crawley, listed some of the factors to consider when presenting a case to your local bank manager, finance house or venture capitalist. Scalability may not be the first issue that springs to mind, but your potential investor will be interested to know if your proposal can be easily expanded up or down the supply chain or sideways to include a greater range of products or services. Securing the ownership of the core intellectual property is also a key component in your bid as it reduces the opportunity for a competitor to cut and paste your ideas into their existing business. Your own track record as a manager or entrepreneur will also be in the minds of your financiers and it

is as well to have examples of your successes to hand and to be prepared to answer sometimes quite hostile questions as your potential backers seek to discover your true competence with their money.

## 6. East Kent Artists to the Front, Please

Forsaking the fancy galleries in Bond Street and Piccadilly, the famous French artist, Allain Renoux, will be visiting Broadstairs next Saturday to see the works of professional artists resident in East Kent with a view to inviting a select number to exhibit at the prestigious arts festival, the Biennale D'Art Figuratif, in Vaux-en-Beaujolais at the end of June 2010. Allain is the festival director. For the first time in the history of this biannual event, East Kent Artists will be represented and able to bring their work to the attention of an estimated 20,000 potential buyers who are expected to visit during the long weekend. The viewing has been arranged by the Chamber in close cooperation with Caroline Lovely of Lovely's Gallery of Cliftonville (tel: 01843 292757) and Michael Wheatley-Ward of the Sarah Thorne Theatre Club of Broadstairs (tel: 01843 580389). Readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider are invited to the viewing which will take place from 7.00 - 8.30 pm on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at the Memorial Theatre, Hilderstone College Adult Education Centre, St Peter's Road, Broadstairs CT10 2JW. There will be a bar open on site and the opportunity to meet the artists to discuss their works. It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet and East Kent.

## 7. It's Not Fair

This is the refrain of children throughout the ages when they confront an injustice or a perceived wrong. Fairness will be the order of the day on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 at the All Saints' Church Hall in Westbrook whegraeme.clarke@5-star.co.ukn the Thanet Fairtrade Initiative will be hosting a coffee break from 1030 to 1200 hrs. Bring and buy stalls will be available and there will be free drinks for children under 12 years old. Surely, that is only fair. For further details, contact Tammy Stewart-Jones, tel: 07891 038 733 or see the website at [www.thanetfairtrade.org.uk](http://www.thanetfairtrade.org.uk).

## 8. The Man Who Freed Mandela

FW de Klerk is indeed the man who freed Nelson Mandela and earlier today he gave a superb speech on the nature of leadership and how to respond to the challenges that businesses are facing in the current harsh trading regime. His central thesis was that we should be prepared to change. He said that animals succeed by adapting to their environment but, uniquely among species, humans approach life differently. "Our personal success depends on our ability to change our environment to meet our needs". He accepts that "resistance to change is deeply ingrained in us" but noted that constant and continual change is essential at all levels of society and business. Many people pay lip service to change but fail to the revise the underlying problems; "They think of brilliant ways of doing the wrong thing better". He admitted that the government of South Africa had been wrong about apartheid. "For years we fooled ourselves that we could reform apartheid". He acknowledged that communications skills are at a premium and emphasized the importance of getting your timing right. "It is foolish to be vociferously right at the wrong time". When he first told Nelson Mandela that he was going to free him from prison on 11 February 1990, Mandela said, "No, that is too soon". FW De Klerk replied that the issue was not for discussion. He would decide as President, but conceded that Nelson Mandela could chose the time and place. Frederik Wilhelm de Klerk abolished apartheid in South Africa and introduced democracy. He will go down in history as a great president and decisive leader worthy of his Nobel Peace Prize and the many honours that have been awarded to him since he left active politics just over ten years ago. Over lunch later, we discussed the challenges for the business community of East Kent. The great man held firm to his recipe for success and said that we should never flinch from unpalatable facts but should "confront the in-born fear of radical change". He confided also that he was an enthusiastic golfer who, like his fellow South African, Gary Player, was finding that his drives from the tee were getting so short that he now felt he could hear the ball land.



*Nobel Laureate and former President of South Africa FW de Klerk discusses East Kent business issues with the Chamber Chief Executive.*

## 9. Japan Again

Following the revelations about Japan and the world's thinnest wire in the edition of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, several members have contacted the Chamber to report their experiences of working with the world's second largest economy. What has emerged is the ferocious attention to detail by Japanese companies. Long-term planning is also much favoured in Tokyo and has been a revelation to some UK companies exporting to Japan and the Far East for the first time. Accusations that Japan buys up the raw materials of poorer countries,

adds value and sends them back at an enormous profit are not strictly justified in every case but perhaps underlie the anxiety behind this anecdote. A story frequently heard in Australia in the 1980s concerned a billionaire industrialist from Sydney who, having been diagnosed with a fatal disease, bought an insurance policy that specified that if he died within 5 years, his body would be literally put on ice ready to be resuscitated when the technology had progressed sufficiently to restore him to life. The sad but super rich Australian passed away officially in 1984. In the year 2025, he was revived and restored to health. Once he had full control of his faculties, he demanded to see the doctor. "What is the unemployment rate in Australia?" The doctor thought for a moment and replied: "We do not have any unemployed. All adults have a job if they want one." Scarcely able to believe such good news, our Australian friend continued: "What about production and quality standards and ...?" The doctor stopped him there and added: "They are on par with the best in the world. Our streets are clean without a speck of litter and there is a 100% literacy rate among school leavers". Enormously impressed, our revived Australian industrialist asked: "What is the average weekly wage?" and he received the reply: "Oh, it is around 200,000 yen per week." Nuff said.

## 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.***  
**For details of membership, email [admin@tekco.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekco.co.uk)**