

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

2nd October 2009

1. Golf Day

Earlier today, the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club hosted the annual Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament which matched the Thanet & East Kent Chamber against its traditional rival the Dover District Chamber of Commerce. In the magnificent setting of the links course in Deal, Chamber members were able to follow in the footsteps of some of the sport's greatest ever players as they trod the fairways previously graced by Jack Nicklaus, Harry Vardon and the participants in two previous Open Championships. Anyone who thinks that golf is a game for toffs that has little to do with skill, physical fitness or management ability should try their hand at playing on a links course. Managing repeated downturns, unpredictable bounces and the occasional merriment of your competitors is all part of process of completing the 18 holes and requires skills of which any managing director could be proud. In many ways, our golf day shows our client companies at their competitive best, fighting any hostile natural elements with honest individual endeavour and an excellent team spirit.

2. What Happened Then?

This year we featured for the first time a charity Beat The Professional Contest at the 8th hole with the proceeds donated to the Dover Counselling Centre now celebrating its 22nd anniversary since its establishment in the wake of the Zeebrugge Ferry Disaster. This year is particularly special also as we added to the programme the Ray Haines Memorial Trophy competition to honour the distinguished late Chief Executive of the Dover District Chamber. Despite the difficult trading conditions in East Kent during the past twelve months, our sponsors were generous with their support and the prize table featured nearly £12,000 of rewards for winners. In addition, Adamsons of Deal offered a new Skoda car for the first hole-in-one at the short 8th hole. This remained unclaimed, although several shots were within a club length of the pin, almost giving a Chamber member the problem of how to drive home in two cars at the same time.

3. What About the Winners?

We would like to report that all those who took part were winners. Certainly early reports from sponsors are of strong interest from the 76 golfers in 19 teams that took part as well as from the many spectators who included visitors from overseas drawn by the increasing reputation of this annual event. The teams taking part were Walpole Bay Hotel, Vital Software, M&S Brickwork, East Kent Pubs, O.F.P. Homes (1), Country Carpets, O.F.P Homes (2), Amdell, Muraline, Ripplevale School, R.K. Graphics, Spencer Wing (QEQM), Smye-Rumsby, Urban Surveying & Design, A. C. Wellard, TCB Property Maintenance, Northwall Engineering, South East Surveys and Weights Room. A full list of winners will be published in next week's edition. The winner of the Ray Haines Memorial Trophy for the lowest gross round was Tom Jezzard who completed the course in a quite remarkable 68 strokes. For a young man of just 19 years old, this is almost unprecedented at a course that has hosted two majors. His gracious speech on accepting the trophy suggests that he might have the character to join Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods as a prodigy who can illuminate the professional ranks before too long. The Chamber Trophy competition was the closest in recent memory with just 4 points dividing the teams. After several recounts, the winner was announced as the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, due in no small part to the excellent round of 74 by Justin Bishop of the Walpole Bay Hotel.

4. Alright Then, Who Were The Sponsors?

Here is a list of the sponsors. Well, you did ask. A.C.Wellard, Adamsons, All Sign Solutions, Andrew Reynolds, Bookers Cash & Carry, Carol Peters Travel, Coastal Data Systems, East Kent Pubs, Go Kart, Golf Stream, H.S.B.C., Jacetts, M&S Brickwork, Manston Golf Centre, O.F.P Homes, P&O Ferries, Pharos Insurance Brokers, R.K. Graphics, Smye-Rumsby, Spencer Wing (QEQM), TCB Property Maintenance and Walpole Bay Hotel. All the afore-mentioned companies have a solid, established reputation and we are most grateful for their support. It is comforting to know that despite the gloomy news in some of the national papers, there are some established East Kent companies with confidence in the future and a strong client list to support their ambitions. Girlings Solicitors, Express By Holiday Inn and Adecco can be added to that list, as sponsors of this weekly bulletin.

5. Get The Money In

In our continuing coverage of the importance of getting your customers to pay, we have often featured the wise advice of Norman Gray of Engee Accountancy and Credit Management (tel: 01843 599179). In a series of sessions at the Chamber, Norman has outlined the basic principles of good cash flow management. His guidance provided the main input for this Chamber's much requested report "Credit Management Advice" which also featured contributions from the Institute of Credit Management and The Acorn Group. We are pleased to welcome into the Chamber Membership IGF Invoice Finance Ltd. Founded in 1997, this well established company is now one of the top commercial finance providers in the UK dealing with clients ranging from one-person start ups to companies with a turnover of £10m. If you are interested in bad debt protection, invoice discounting, factoring, payroll management and generally improving your cash flow, give Simon Culpepper a call, tel: 01732 849872.

6. Fraud

He found £400,000 for one company. He might be able to recover some money for you. Darren Jones is the founder and Director of Fraud Consultants UK Ltd. After 20 years in the Police, Darren is now able to use the skills he has learned in the special Fraud Investigation Unit for the direct benefit of companies and organisations in Kent. Darren has informed the Thanet & East Kent Chamber that on average only 20% of the money lost in fraud cases is recovered and that 40% of victims recover nothing at all. He notes that around 6% of turnover of British companies is lost to fraud. As well as investigating specific cases, Darren can also advise on how to reduce the risk of someone else taking your hard-earned cash and intellectual property. The Thanet & East Kent Insider is always preaching the virtues of Predict and Prevent and we are therefore delighted to welcome Darren into our membership. For more details and a discussion in complete confidence, contact Darren direct by email to darren.jones@fraudconsultant.co.uk or by telephone to 01843 600 960 or 07912 890 6100. You know it makes sense.

7. Consultancy Forum

Following discussions with one of the fastest growing sectors of the Chamber, we are pleased to confirm the first meeting of the Chamber Consultancy Forum which will now meet on Friday, 9th October 2009. The agenda will include short presentations from each delegate plus discussions targeted at raising the profile of Chamber consultants, organising an advice clinic and increasing turnover. For details, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Chamber Consultancy Forum".

8. International Business

The University of Kent is hosting an event on 29th October targeted at companies keen to export for the first time or interested in expanding their export markets. Speakers include Kevin Lynes, Cabinet member at Kent County Council for Regeneration & Economic Development, Frazer Thompson, Chief Executive of English Wines and Richard Stanbridge of the Commercial Service at the Embassy of the United States. For details, see <http://kent.gov.uk/business/international-business-event.htm>.

9. A Question Of Pride

This Chamber has always preferred to celebrate success rather than wallow in the criticism of failure. Thus, we are pleased to highlight the Pride In Thanet Awards which acknowledge exceptional standards of service from a receptionist, waitress, taxi driver, shop assistant or anybody you feel merits special attention as an example of best practice in serving the public. To nominate the person who made your day, visit the website at http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kentonline/features/celebrating_kent.aspx. Cllr Shirley Tomlinson, Cabinet member for Environmental Services at Thanet District Council, emphasizes the importance of good service to boosting tourism and explains why Visit Kent and Thanet District Council support the initiative. "These awards recognise the outstanding work of people working in our leisure, hospitality and tourism businesses. We all know what a difference it makes to a day or evening out when we are treated well and staff are helpful. We want to show our appreciation to those people who work so hard and make such a difference to the visitor experience in Thanet."

10. Advice From A Professional

As this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider mentions golf more than once, it is worth recollecting the editor's one and only experience of playing a round with a professional golfer. At the end of this exhibition of consummate skill by one and tortuous incompetence by the other, I turned to the professional and asked him what was wrong with my game. He thought for a moment and then said, "The problem is simple. You are standing too close to the ball" which was quite encouraging after such a disastrous round, until he added, "After you have hit it".

11. Our Sponsors

The Thanet & East Kent Insider is grateful for the support and sponsorship provided by Girlings, Express By Holiday Inn and Adecco. Girlings Solicitors has been managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. Express By Holiday took on the daunting task of restoring the former Prospect Inn at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of Oliver Hill's 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. Adecco is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, Adecco is represented in Thanet and Dover by its Broadstairs office, tel: 01843 609292.

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