

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

01793 615393

www.swindon-business.net

info@swindon-business.net



## The Business Show Swindon 2012

Full details and floor plan Pages 4 &amp; 5

### Plus three-page Education Review

Pages 8-10

## Next Month . . .

### Swindon's Top 100 Companies

Our indispensable ranking of the area's largest businesses

## News Brief

### Cut in R&D spending at Vectura

Vectura, the Chippenham-based specialist pharmaceutical group, is to cut £1m from its research and development budget. But the group, which specialises in developing inhaled therapies for the treatment of respiratory diseases, said despite the cut, which will take place over the next three months, it will invest £33m in R&D this year. Chief Executive Dr Chris Blackwell said the group had a strong pipeline of products with a number of commercial launches and clinical trials this year.

### Jelf shortlisted for more awards

Jelf Employee Benefits, the West-based firm with an office in Wootton Bassett, has been shortlisted for three awards in the Corporate Adviser Awards for 2012. The firm will be competing in the Healthcare Adviser of the Year, Group Risk Adviser of the Year, and Best Cashplan Solution categories of the awards on February 8 at London. Jelf Employee Benefits, part of the Jelf Group, provides companies and organisations with healthcare, pensions, financial planning and employee protection services.

### Satellite orders for SciSys

The space division of Chippenham-based hi-tech software group SciSys has landed orders worth £10.25m including work on the European Galileo satellite system. The contracts include work to support operations for the first two Galileo spacecraft, which were successfully launched at the end of October. The division has also recently started work on a European Space Operations Centre project to develop the Sentinel-2 and Sentinel-3 earth observation spacecraft operations simulators.

• *SciSys founder steps down, page 2*

### Next month . . .

February's Swindon Business News will include our unique Swindon Top 100 Report as well as a Focus on Marlborough and features highlighting data protection, branding and corporate hospitality.

South West's most active agent for the last 10 years

**alder king**

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

1911-2011 Property excellence for the last 100 years

## Civic pride brings jobs for Honda



*Driving ahead: Honda's Swindon plant is to take on 500 more employees as it starts production of its latest Civic. See back page for full story*

## Opportunity knocks for young people as Plan 500 relaunches

Plan 500, the innovative Swindon project to create work-related opportunities for young people, is to be re-launched this month at a high-profile event following its success in 2011.

Scores of businesses across Swindon have backed the scheme, one of the most ambitious of its kind in the UK, with many bosses giving up their time to act as mentors while also offering work placements, apprenticeships and other opportunities in their companies.

The ambitious target of 500 opportunities was reached within a year of Plan 500's original start and on January 20 it will enter its second year with a major launch event hosted by Nationwide at its Swindon headquarters.

The building society, with around 4,000 staff in Swindon, is one of the key backers of Plan 500. It has given a number of young people valuable

work experience and guidance under the scheme. Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls was briefed on its success during a recent visit to Nationwide while senior Government figures and civil servants have paid close attention to its ability to galvanise businesses into action in the face of spiraling youth unemployment.

Both Swindon MPs Robert Buckland and Justin Tomlinson are advocates of the project and have championed it in Parliament.

Underlining how Plan 500's success has been received, the guest speaker at the Year Two launch will be former CBI director-general and trade minister Lord Digby Jones.

He will share a platform with a number of Plan 500 participants, including some of the young people who have benefited and business people who have given up their time.

Also speaking at the event will be Dr John Chudley, the National

Apprenticeship Service's Southern division director, and Rob Angus, head of strategy and planning at Nationwide

Plan 500 chair Anne Carrigan, Nationwide's head of resourcing, and Ian Piper, chief executive of Forward Swindon, the town's economic regeneration company which originally launched Plan 500, will look back at its first year and brief the invited business audience on how they can get involved in its second year

As well as promoting apprenticeships to Swindon businesses, Plan 500 will seek work experience opportunities, work-based qualifications and diplomas along with mentoring of young people.

It is also developing an online talent pool which will allow local employers to find jobless young people to plug skills gaps in their organisations.

## Bargain hunters deliver Yuletide cheer to Swindon Designer Outlet

McArthurGlen's Swindon Designer Outlet retail centre achieved a 7 per cent year-on-year sales increase in December as Christmas shoppers went looking for bargains.

The number of visitors to the centre in Churchward, measured by footfall, rose by 13 per cent during the month.

Retail analysts said the figures showed the centre could continue to compete against online buying as it offered discounted brands in an attractive environment.

The centre, which has more than 90 stores, many offering up to 60 per cent discounts on designer and premium brands, also reported increases in sales and footfall in November – up by 4 per cent and 6 per cent – as shoppers started their Christmas spending early to spread the cost.

The figures were in marked contrast to some sections of the retail market, which reported a bleak Christmas. A number of major retailers, including camping equipment suppliers Blacks and lingerie firm La Senza, were forced into administration as consumers tightened their purse strings or shopped online.

The British Retail Consortium estimates that on a like-for-like basis, which strips out the impact of new store openings, total retail sales across the UK grew by 2.2 per cent during December compared to the same period in 2010.

The rise of online spending at Christmas had a larger impact on traditional high streets than previous years – with many shoppers hunting for bargains on the internet rather than visit their local shopping centre.

But retail analyst Nick Bubb said: "At a time when there is a lot of focus on the growth in online shopping, it is very good to see that a 'bricks and mortar' retailer like McArthurGlen is doing well by providing UK consumers with attractive brands and attractive bargains in an attractive shopping environment."

Swindon Designer Outlet manager Tina Cumpstey said: "Many brands ranging from fashion and footwear to homeware reported great sales during the festive shopping period."

FOR A HUGE SELECTION OF PROPERTIES TO RENT  
FURNISHED AND UNFURNISHED IN ALL AREAS OF SWINDON

CONTACT

**CHARLES HARDING LETTING AGENTS**

26 COMMERCIAL ROAD SWINDON SN1 5NS

TEL: 01793 430588

Email: mark@charles-harding.co.uk

www.charles-harding.co.uk

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

26 Wood Street, Swindon  
Wiltshire SN1 4AB

**Telephone:** 01793 615393

**Fax:** 01793 610553

**Email:** [info@swindon-business.net](mailto:info@swindon-business.net)

**Web:** [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)

*Editor*  
**Robert Buckland**



*Production Editor*  
**Owen Fishwick**



*Business Development Manager*  
**Anita Jaynes**



*Office Manager*  
**Jackie Hall**



*Sales Executive*  
**Claudia Carr**



Controlled circulation: In excess of  
8,000 copies per month

© Copyright 2011

Published by County Business Publishing Ltd.

Printed by Acorn Press

County Business Publishing also publishes a range of business newsletters: Swindon Business Newsletter; Bristol Business Newsletter; Bath Business Newsletter and Estates West Bulletin, a property deals newsletter. If you are interested in receiving a free sample please call 01793 615393.

County **Business** Publishing  
Swindon **Business** News  
Bristol **Business** News  
Bath **Business** News

## People

• SciSys founder **Mike Love** has formally stepped back from day-to-day control of the Chippenham-based specialist software company to become its non-executive chairman. The move was flagged up at the end of October and is part of a boardroom shake-up at SciSys, a leading developer of information and communications technology services, e-business and advanced technology solutions. David Jones has moved up from chief operations officer to group chief executive while Klaus Martin Heidrich has joined the board as COO as part of a long-term succession plan for SciSys which also has offices in Bristol, Reading and three locations in Germany.



*Mike Love*

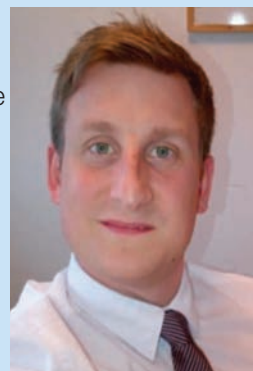
• **Camilla Atkins** of Monahans Financial Services has become a Fellow of the Personal Finance Society (FPFS), the highest accolade available to independent financial advisers. Fewer than 2 per cent of UK financial advisers have been



*Camilla Atkins*

awarded Fellowship status of the Personal Finance Society, the professional body for those working in the financial services industry and which is dedicated to promoting higher standards of competence and integrity of those individuals. Camilla joins a select group who have proved their expertise across a wide range of subjects by passing tough and demanding examinations. She has successfully completed exams in taxation, trusts, pensions, investments and business financial planning over a

• Exhibition specialists Access Displays have appointed **Paul Hughes** as internal sales manager. Paul joins the Swindon-based Access team from freight forwarding giants, D.B.Schenker, where he headed up new business development for its contract logistics division, and will bring his wealth of experience in growing business activity to increase the penetration of Access Displays products in the market. In addition to developing and implementing new strategies to increase sales revenue, the role will encompass coaching and monitoring of sales staff, to ensure the



*Paul Hughes*

continued high levels of expertise and customer service are maintained.

• Workplace relations advisers Acas has appointed **Tony Cooper** as its new director of the South West region. Mr Cooper has worked for Acas for 23 years, having had roles in every aspect of the organisation. He has also worked in the retail sector. He succeeds James Crass, who held the post for more than three years. Mr Crass has moved on to become an Acas director in London, a role which includes working with large companies with their headquarters in the capital and managing the services Acas is providing for the 2012 Olympics. Acas is an independent service helping businesses with practical advice on getting the best out of their management teams and employees, preventing disputes and settling strikes. It also offers free advice to employees on problems at work. Mr Cooper says Acas has a key role to play in helping businesses in Swindon through difficult economic times and in supporting Prime Minister David Cameron's campaign to help businesses big and small grow their way out of the downturn.



*Tony Cooper*

**For advertising contact**  
**Anita Jaynes**  
**on**  
**01793 615 393**

## Events

• The Real Business Club  
When: 10am – 12.30pm January 20  
Where: Wyvern Theatre Meeting Room  
Contact: 07708 864365

• Marlborough Profit Club  
When: January 25, 2pm  
Where: The Thorns, Marlborough  
Contact: Nigel Scott on 01672 512001

• The Business Show Swindon 2012  
When: February 1  
Where: STEAM, Swindon  
Contact: 01275 370849

• SSEP annual conference  
When: February 1, 8:30am-12:30pm  
Where: STEAM, Swindon  
Contact: 01275 370849

• Send your events to Swindon Business News to  
[info@swindon-business.net](mailto:info@swindon-business.net)

## Contacts

**Forward Swindon**  
01793 429250

**GWE Business West**  
08458 505066

**Business Link**  
0845 600 9966

**SSEP**  
01793 429259

**Fast Forward**  
0808 178 3657

**First Great Western**  
08457 000 125

**Bristol Airport**  
0871 334 4344

**Swindon Council**  
01793 445500

**Wiltshire Council**  
0300 456 0100

**The Khyber**  
Indian Restaurant

**Open All Day**  
From Noon 'til Midnight  
**Every Day**

**Book YOUR Xmas Event NOW**

**01793 523992**

**PARTIES WELCOME**

**5&6 Victoria Road, Swindon**

## SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

**Subscribe NOW and get the next edition delivered directly to your door.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

An annual subscription cost £25.00. Send a cheque for this amount made payable to Swindon Business News, together with this coupon to:

**Swindon Business News, 26 Wood Street,  
Swindon, SN1 4AB**

**Photography from as little as £99**

Photography is one task that many people are keen to undertake themselves in order to reduce their business spending. But the results can often be detrimental to their overall business image. From as little as £99 with photographs in digital format for business use, national award-winning photographer Ian Plested – Redhouse Photography will create images with style and punch with a quick turnaround also guaranteed. Ian has photographed just about everything from small businesses' websites to grand multi-national company award ceremonies to 25-plus weddings covered each year. Visit: [www.redhousephotography.co.uk](http://www.redhousephotography.co.uk)

# Wincanton secures new debt agreement

Wincanton, the Chippenham-based logistics group, has refinanced its debt through a £185m bank facility and a £75m term facility.

The new arrangements follow completion of the sale of its remaining loss-making European operations to German company Rhenus. The sale was announced last summer following the disposal of Wincanton's German road activities and businesses in central and eastern Europe to the Raben group and its logistics operations in Holland to JCL Transport und Logistik.

The £185m bank facility, which has a maturity date of November 2015, is being provided by Barclays, HSBC, RBS, WestLB and AIB. The £75m term facility is with M&G UK Companies Financing Fund and has a maturity date in November 2021.

Wincanton chief executive Eric Born said: "This is an important step in the overall repositioning of the group following the

withdrawal from Europe. It ensures that Wincanton has facilities in place with a maturity profile that allows the company to focus on delivering profitable growth in the solid UK and Ireland business and to generate positive cashflow in the future."

In November the group renewed its warehousing and distribution contracts with food giant Heinz, maintaining its position as one of the global brand's Golden Circle of preferred suppliers. It has transported around 92m cases of Heinz products a year for the past 15 years and the new contract is until 2015 while also extending a warehousing agreement for the next four years and also means Wincanton's order management team will handle customer orders across all temperature ranges for Heinz.

Wincanton made a £75.5m loss on turnover of £625.4m in the six months to September 30.

# Expanding Alliance Pharma acquires two skin treatments

Chippenham-based speciality pharmaceutical group Alliance Pharma has spent £1.5m acquiring two skin treatment brands to add to its growing portfolio of established dermatology medicines.

Acne treatment Quinoderm and Ceanel, a shampoo treatment for scalp psoriasis, which were bought from Ferndale Pharmaceuticals, had total sales of around £600,000 in the year to September 30, 2011.

Quinoderm complements Alliance Pharma's Rizuderm (isotretinoin) treatment for severe acne which it acquired last

September. The deal was the group's third acquisition of 2011.

Alliance Pharma chief executive John Dawson said the group expected the two new brands to be earnings enhancing in 2012 and added: "We continue to evaluate further opportunities to broaden our product portfolio".

The deal was funded by drawing a loan from a £20m revolving credit facility put in place in November 2010 to fund acquisitions. So far Alliance has used £6.5m of the facility.

# Gaining the business edge. Our new column will show how IT can be done

Information and Communications Technology (IT/ICT) is an essential asset to businesses – but all too often it fails to produce a measurable business advantage.

Beginning in Swindon Business News next month, experienced IT professional and journalist Ray Smyth of Swindon-based The IPstore will offer regular insight and leadership through a new column – Business Edge: IT simply applied.

The column will draw on Ray's extensive career in business and IT, offering insight into the best way to create business-aligned IT that enhances, not limits, business operations.

Ray said: "What used to be the preserve of large organisations is now available to the start-up.



Ray Smyth

led – and this requires the disciplines of business and IT to get much closer." For more information on The IPstore, go to [www.TheIPstore.co.uk](http://www.TheIPstore.co.uk)

"Business professionals must make informed decisions, but they don't have the time to become IT experts. Nevertheless, all IT estates must be efficient, secure, legal, and compliant. IT must be business-led – not technology-led – and this requires the disciplines of business and IT to get much closer." For more information on The IPstore, go to [www.TheIPstore.co.uk](http://www.TheIPstore.co.uk)

# Swindon & Wilts LEP appoints first chairman

The newly-formed Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has appointed businessman Paul Johnson as its first chairman.

Swindon-born Mr Johnson recently stepped down as chairman of Melksham-based railway engineering group Knorr-Bremse (UK). His appointment was ratified by an independent panel drawn from the local business community and chaired by the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, Robert Hiscox.

Mr Johnson will lead a 13-strong board with nine members having business backgrounds. The LEP intends to have the new board in place by the end of this month.

Mr Johnson said: "I'm delighted to have the opportunity to put something back into our community and use the expertise I have gained over my time in industry to support the growth and development of Swindon and Wiltshire's economies in these challenging and turbulent times.

"Although I have spent much of my career in Wiltshire, I was born and raised in Swindon so feel I know both parts of our partnership very well.

"My first job is to lead the recruitment of the board so that we can quickly get into our stride – identifying the opportunities, constraints and priorities to move our economy forward – supporting the creation of wealth, jobs and new business opportunities for the benefit of all those who live and work in Swindon & Wiltshire."

Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, one of the last in the country to gain ministerial approval, covers an area with a population of around 650,000 and more than 26,000 businesses.

The LEP, which has the support of Swindon and Wiltshire councils, plans to help create 10,000 jobs and safeguard a further 8,000 over



Paul Johnson

the next four years. Its priorities include increasing the coverage of super-fast broadband, regenerating and improving connectivity between the main population areas, supporting the tourism industry and helping to realise the potential of the growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing and engineering, information technology and logistics.

Swindon and Wiltshire had originally expected to be part of a larger LEP with Gloucestershire. But that idea fell apart when Gloucestershire decided to go in alone. Swindon then put in a bid to ministers for a solo LEP, only to be told the town was too small to support one of its own.

# Charity ball to be held at Menzies Hotel for Threshold Housing

The Menzies Swindon Hotel is hosting a ball next month to raise money for its chosen charity Threshold Housing, the group providing support and housing opportunities for homeless and vulnerable people.

The three-course meal and entertainment is being provided by the hotel and the evening is supported by Swindon commercial radio station More.

Hotel general manager Hiren Varvadekar said: "The evening is not just about asking for money but the need for skills and experience.

"Perhaps businesses in Swindon have a

particular skill that would greatly benefit this charity and you would be willing to 'gift' some hours of expertise in return of a place at this event?"

Places are limited for the ball, which takes place on February 25.

Businesses interested should contact Hiren or Charlie Murphy on 01793 528282.

## Professional Photography

From £99 Including edited images for your business use.

Vibrant, Diverse & Local.

Redhouse Photography 01793 768817  
[www.redhousephotography.co.uk](http://www.redhousephotography.co.uk)

## The PR and Marketing specialists

- PR and marketing campaigns
- Branding, advertising and design
- Marketing materials
- Promoting your business using digital media
- Media relations

[www.voxonline.co.uk](http://www.voxonline.co.uk)  
VOX Swindon: 01793 511990  
VOX Bristol: 0117 299 3301

technology simply applied

If you allow staff to access your data from mobile computing devices, there are three things you need to know.

Unless you already do... If not email or call for an IPstore Rapid Assessment

Advantage@TheIPstore.co.uk  
[www.TheIPstore.co.uk](http://www.TheIPstore.co.uk)  
01793 251 500

[carterjonas.co.uk](http://carterjonas.co.uk)

Commercial | Survey & Valuation  
Building Consultancy | Infrastructures

4 Little London Court, Old Town, Swindon SN1 3HY T: 01793 439300

# CARTER JONAS

The Property People



# In Profile: Mary-Anne McIntyre, Openwork

For someone who has been in business for around 25 years, it's surprising to find Mary-Anne McIntyre, the new chief executive officer of Swindon-based Openwork – the UK's largest multi-tie mortgage and financial advice network – pondering over whether so far she's just been practising.

New regulations RDR (Retail Distribution Review, the baby of the Financial Services Authority) are coming in which will completely overhaul the way many financial advisers operate and Mary-Anne's career to date could be considered as something of dress a rehearsal. "I think it will be the most challenging 18 months ahead with the RDR project," she said. "Everything I have done over the years has been significant change programmes, and this will be one of the biggest things yet for me. It feels as if I have been training everywhere else just to do the job now, in many ways."

RDR aims to bring greater transparency to the role of the financial adviser. Where once their income came from the financial product providers, they will no longer take a commission for selling a product, instead charging a fee for the advice they give to the consumer.

The change is having a huge impact on financial advisers and Zurich-backed Openwork alike. But Mary-Anne relishes the challenge: "It is important that RDR delivers better outcomes for consumers in terms of access to, and quality of, financial advice. I am a big supporter of the transparency it should bring."

In truth, Mary-Anne's career has been far more than just 'practice'. It's been one of a series of challenging roles; challenges which she has grasped with both hands.

Brought up in Kent, as a child she wanted to run her own business. "I had a brother who was very involved in business, who ended up running Johnson & Johnson and Eli Lilly, I remember him jetting off all over the world. I had a lot of respect for him and I would speak to him about his life and what he was doing."

After taking a degree in accountancy and law at Sterling University, Mary-Anne – still hoping one day to run her own business – took up a position in the City at Deloitte: "I remember turning up for my interview and saying 'I don't think I'll be here very long', but I ended up staying for 12 years!"

"At the time, Anita Roddick, with the Bodyshop, was very much in the news. What I loved about her – and also about Openwork – is the charitable side and giving back to the community, doing good and using your skills. The business we are involved in now is helping customers to understand their financial position, plan for future events – whether that be buying a house, or retirement – I see that as a hugely

beneficial service."

After her time at Deloitte – which included a two-year spell in Sydney – Mary-Anne moved to Perpetual, an investment management company, setting up their risk and governance, then heading up HR and customer services. After six years, she helped sell the business on for £1.2bn.

For the next three years she combined starting a family – she has two daughters – with a start-up business with a group of individuals. Called Nucleus, it was developed to provide a platform, or port-of-call, for all financial documentation.

Here, the challenge for Mary-Anne was finding funding. "We were working out of coffee shops trying to raise the funding to get it going, because it was a greenfield start-up, and because this was just after the dotcom bubble when a lot of VCs had got their fingers burnt."

Her next role was at Fidelity International, where she was Head of Customer Services & Strategic Alliances, responsible for operational and technology management of the group's key UK strategic business partners. She ran a team of 700 people based in the UK and India.

Then a new challenge arose; in autumn 2010, Mary-Anne moved to Openwork as chief operating officer, then applied for – and was given – the role of chief executive officer in June 2011.

She calls Openwork's network of financial advisers "the guys", but while they are predominantly men about 10 per cent are women.

Within Openwork's support centre and field-based teams, there are many high-ranking women and Mary-Anne herself has never felt any resentment towards her from men. "To be honest, I have worked in a completely male environment all the way through. I think it's the credentials that people look for."

Having moved very recently to Lambourn – the perfect setting, as she and the family are passionate about horse-racing, owning their own stud and racing yard – Mary-Anne's challenge at Openwork may be her most enjoyable yet. "In terms of running a financial services business, I don't think I've seen anything more challenging."

Our guys have been in the industry 20, 30 years, and have strong relationships with their clients – they are their trusted advisers – so they have more business than they can actually process at the moment. Our challenge is to make a complicated business easier to transact."

If Openwork has its challenges, Mary-Anne says we as a nation do too, with the issue of pension provision a "time bomb", which she is convinced can be diffused by people seeking – and following – sound financial advice. While working in Australia she learnt that, unlike the UK, people there make enforced pension contributions.

“The business we are involved in now is helping customers to understand their financial position, plan for future events – whether that be buying a house, or retirement – I see that as a hugely beneficial service”

## Swindon firms urged to enter UK's first Fairtrade Awards

Swindon businesses with a conscience are being urged to enter the UK's first Fairtrade business awards. The awards, staged in Bristol and sponsored by The Co-Operative, will highlight and promote efforts being made by firms across the West of England to incorporate Fairtrade into their business.

The Bristol Fairtrade Business Awards take place at Leigh Court, near Bristol, on March 9 and will be hosted by BBC newsreader and long-time Fairtrade supporter George Alagiah.

Every business that meets the criteria for a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award will receive a Fairtrade Business certificate at the ceremony, as well as an e-logo to use on all business communications.

The awards are in five categories:

1. Best Fairtrade Office, sponsored by law firm Burges Salmon
2. Best Fairtrade Retailer
3. Best Fairtrade Catering Outlet
4. Best Fairtrade Accommodation
5. A special award, at the discretion of the judges and sponsored by Bristol law firm Lyons Davidson, will be made for the Best Overall Fairtrade Business.

The awards are supported by Destination Bristol, Business West and Bristol City Council with Swindon Business News' sister website Bristol Business News as media partner.

Bristol Fairtrade coordinator Jenny Foster said: "By entering these awards and gaining a bronze, silver, or gold award, companies big and small across the West of England can demonstrate their commitment to fair and ethical business." Entries must be received by January 31.

For further information and to enter go to [www.bristolfairtrade.org.uk](http://www.bristolfairtrade.org.uk)

## Profits will be slimmer next year, warns National Milk Records

National Milk Records, the Chippenham-based company providing milk recording services to half of the UK's dairy farmers, made pre-tax profits of £408,000 on turnover up 3.9 per cent at £8.6m, its half-year figures to September 30 show.

But the firm warned that full-year profits are likely to be affected by significant investment in new projects and re-organisation costs linked to its new laboratory being built at in

Staffordshire. It said these costs would deliver additional revenue in the future and pointed out that new revenue streams apart from milk records were coming on stream.

These include a new joint venture in Ireland, which completed its operational set up phase and traded profitably over the summer, and the launch of new testing service through its National Milk Laboratories and used by Marks and Spencer, which

differentiates between saturated and unsaturated fat. This could be vital for dairy farmers if a 'fat tax' is introduced on milk.

Chairman Philip Kirkham said: "The outlook for NMR remains positive for future revenue and margin growth. NMR remains profitable and we continue to achieve increased turnover year on year, although we look forward to building upon this in the future."

## Poor October for hotels as room rates rise and occupancy falls

Hotels in Swindon experienced a disappointing October when compared to the same month in the previous year, according to the latest sector figures from PKF Hotel Consultancy Services.

While average room rates in Swindon rose by 4.5 per cent from £52.10 in October 2010 to £54.43, occupancy levels were badly affected, down 6.2 per cent from 69.2 per cent in October 2010 to 64.9 per cent. The combined impact meant that room

yields dropped 2 per cent from £36.03 to £35.33.

Taking a look at the UK-wide picture, even though occupancy was up 1.6 per cent from 73.6 per cent to 74.8 per cent, the average room rate fell 2.1 per cent from £62.07 to £60.78. This had a negative effect on room yields, which dropped 0.6 per cent from £45.72 to £45.45.

Neil Dimes, partner in charge of accountants PKF's South West office,

said: "Regional hotels usually rely on the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) market in the autumn, so these figures suggest that the corporate market remains stubbornly subdued. This is not the first time that the sector has faced unfavourable economic headwinds. Hoteliers know that they have a fight on their hands and the results we have seen so far suggest they have the right strategies in place to win the battle."

# How vulnerable is your business?

*In the third of its Business Life Cycle series, Withy King's team of Swindon-based commercial lawyers explores some of the key issues involved in protecting a business and highlight a few of the most common mistakes.*

When directors hear the word 'risk' they tend to sit up and take notice. Many think of risk just in terms of sales and their impact on the bottom line. But other significant risks often go ignored, with serious consequences for the businesses concerned.

In the third of its Business Life Cycle series, Withy King's team of Swindon-based commercial lawyers explore some of the key issues involved in protecting a business and highlight a few of the most common mistakes.

## Taking basis steps to protect your business

"It still intrigues me how many businesses are prepared to fly by the seat of their pants and fail to take even basic steps to protect themselves against risks from their competitors, suppliers, customers and even staff," said Alex Pyatt, a partner in Withy King's corporate commercial team. "We get to see the devastating impact on companies when they are confronted with unexpected and unwelcome scenarios and the realisation that they do not have adequate safeguards in place to protect themselves or limit the damage."

According to Withy King, some of the most frequently overlooked areas are:

- Not getting around to protecting and registering the company's brand, trademarks and other forms of intellectual property and not taking

steps to safeguard databases and other confidential information. This often enables others to copy what they may have spent years developing without having a clear remedy or means of preventing it

- Taking a DIY approach to contractual terms and conditions, leaving the business exposed – for example, around late payments, failed deliveries or bad debts. One common problem is copying a contract from another source. This has led to businesses using contracts designed for other countries (incorporating wording with no legal meaning in this country) or even using terms which were designed, when originally drafted, to protect the buyer when they really needed something to protect them as the seller.

- Failing to draw up shareholders' agreements with a robust restrictive covenant and without agreeing share transfer provisions. This could leave them vulnerable if an employee or shareholder left and set up in competition and potentially gives the remaining shareholders or employees no method of getting the shares out of the hands of the former employee.

- Adopting a 'one size fits all' attitude to employee contracts which often means that restrictions are inadequate or unenforceable.

## Minimising the impact of departing employees

Malcolm Gregory, head of Withy King's employment law team, said: "We try to protect employers by



Alex Pyatt



Malcolm Gregory



Chris Kane

helping them to take proactive steps which will safeguard their interests, now and in the future.

"One of the major headaches for businesses is when a valuable employee, who the company has nurtured and in many cases, who may have even grown up with the business, decides to leave – either to set up on their own or join a competitor. All too often, the relationship between the employer and employee has been such that contracts have not been updated for years and are no longer adequate – leaving the business in a vulnerable and sometimes precarious position.

"Restrictive covenants should be an essential part of employee contracts. They will help safeguard business interests and help to prevent employees from taking customers, databases, contacts and other members

of staff with them when they leave," said Malcolm. "Over the past few years, as economic conditions have worsened, we have seen a rise in entrepreneurial spirit with increasing numbers of employees choosing to go it alone. With so much valuable company information held electronically, it is all too easy and tempting for employees to transfer data – for example via personal email accounts or memory sticks. This further illustrates how vital it is to get employment contracts right."

## Surviving contractual disputes

"With New Year just started, now is as good a time as any to review internal and external contracts," said Chris Kane, a partner in the corporate dispute resolution team. "Directors

need to know their rights and obligations and be satisfied that their business will be able to continue to trade well if a supplier or customer renegades on their contract. Similarly, they should ensure that employee contracts and internal documents such as shareholders' agreements are accurate and fit for purpose."

To limit the impact of contractual disputes, Chris urges directors to pay particular attention to the following areas of their internal and external contracts and documentation:

- Termination provisions
- Limitation of liability
- Payment terms
- Exclusivity
- Restrictive Covenants

Directors are also advised to adopt robust credit control procedures to ensure unpaid invoices are not ignored.

Did you know insurance is available to protect your business from employment tribunal claims? This policy covers your legal fees and any compensation awarded. To find out more, please email: [malcolm.gregory@withyking.co.uk](mailto:malcolm.gregory@withyking.co.uk)

## PROFILE: ANGEL PUBLICITY

Specialist travel and ski PR business Angel Publicity has limited its exposure to risk by investing in bespoke employee and client contracts. The business has recently expanded, employing an office manager and a PR assistant on the back of several new client wins.

"The business had grown steadily in recent years but without formal agreements in place and I was starting to feel more and more exposed," said Emma Cripwell, founder and managing director of the Marlborough-based agency, which promotes a wide range of national and international ski, travel, hotel, spa and holiday companies.

"I felt I owed it to my team to provide them with professional contracts clearly setting out the terms of their employment as

well as ensuring our relationships with existing and new clients were put onto a more secure footing," said Emma. "In particular, I wanted to ensure clients signed up to a decent notice period, thereby minimising the impact of any unexpected parting of ways.

"Although it's tempting for companies, particularly small ones like mine, to cut corners and adopt a 'one size fits all' approach to contracts, ultimately I believe it's worth investing in expert advice and tailor made contracts which will stand up to any challenge. Our clients are extremely diverse and each one has its own quirks but Withy King listened carefully and did a fantastic job of creating a robust master contract which takes account of the anomalies." Angel Publicity is now taking advice on trade marking its logo.



Emma Cripwell, managing director of Angel Publicity



Swindon  
01793 536526

Bath  
01225 425731

Marlborough  
01672 514781



# THE BUSINESS SHOW SWINDON

## Gü founder to share secrets of success at Business Show

Excitement is building ahead of the Business Show Swindon 2012. The prestigious event, which is staged by GWE Business West at the STEAM museum, Churchward, on February 1, will act as a showcase for the cream of Swindon's firms and also as a unique opportunity for businesses outside of the town to promote themselves.

Some 80 exhibitors from across the region are booking stands at the show and more than 800 visitors are expected to attend.

The event, which is free to attend and takes place from 9am to 4pm, is sponsored by Team South West and Relays (Regional Educational Legacy in Art and Youth Sport) with Swindon Business News as official media partner.

Stands are selling fast with prices for GWE members ranging from £200 to £600 and for non-member from £300 to £900.

Keynote speaker is James Averdieck, founder of upmarket desserts company Gü.

James will share his secrets for success on how he started Gü in 2003 with £150,000, taking the company to sales of more than £30m before selling it in 2010.

He came up with the idea for a chocolate pudding brand when he was working in Belgium and fell in love with the local patisseries and their chocolate.

It is now estimated that a Gü pud is now eaten somewhere in the world every two seconds.

After the success of the LinkedIn Espresso Bar at last year's show, it will be extended to two sessions for the Business Show Swindon 2012.

The Business West LinkedIn group has doubled in size since the last show to more than 3,400 members, providing more opportunity to make new business contacts.

The sessions are from 11am to 12noon or 1.30pm to 2.30pm. Group members get a complimentary coffee on the mezzanine floor. To join the group go to [www.bwlinkedin.co.uk](http://www.bwlinkedin.co.uk)

Ian Larrard, director of The Initiative in Swindon and Wiltshire, GWE Business West, said: "The LinkedIn Espresso Bar is an innovative way to bring members together so that they can network face to face.

"This is an ideal way to create online discussions in real life and extend your business network."

HM Revenue & Customs will be exhibiting at the show at stand 36 with its specially-trained Business Education and Support Team will be on hand to help firms understand their tax responsibilities and give them the confidence to get it right first time.

The team's services are free and are designed for everyone in business, especially new businesses or new employers.

The team will also be able to explain more about Research and Development (R&D) Relief for



James Averdieck

Corporation Tax. The show also includes free speed networking sessions. They are fast, furious - and fun, and guaranteed to increase any business's network of contacts.

There are five sessions throughout the day with 20 spaces available at each.

The sessions are:

Session 1 9.15 - 10.15

Session 2 10.30 - 11.30

Session 3 11.30 - 12.30

Session 4 12.30 - 13.30

Session 5 14.00 - 15.00

Pre-booking is required.

Swindon-based communications and PR agency Soaring Worldwide is among the companies to have signed up to exhibit at the Business Show Swindon 2012.

The company, which has its offices at Kembrey Park and has doubled in size year-on-year since it was established in 2006, will be using the event to introduce the services it provides to companies in the Swindon area.

Managing director Adam Baggs said: "The event provides us with an opportunity to network with other Swindon-based companies and introduce the services we offer.

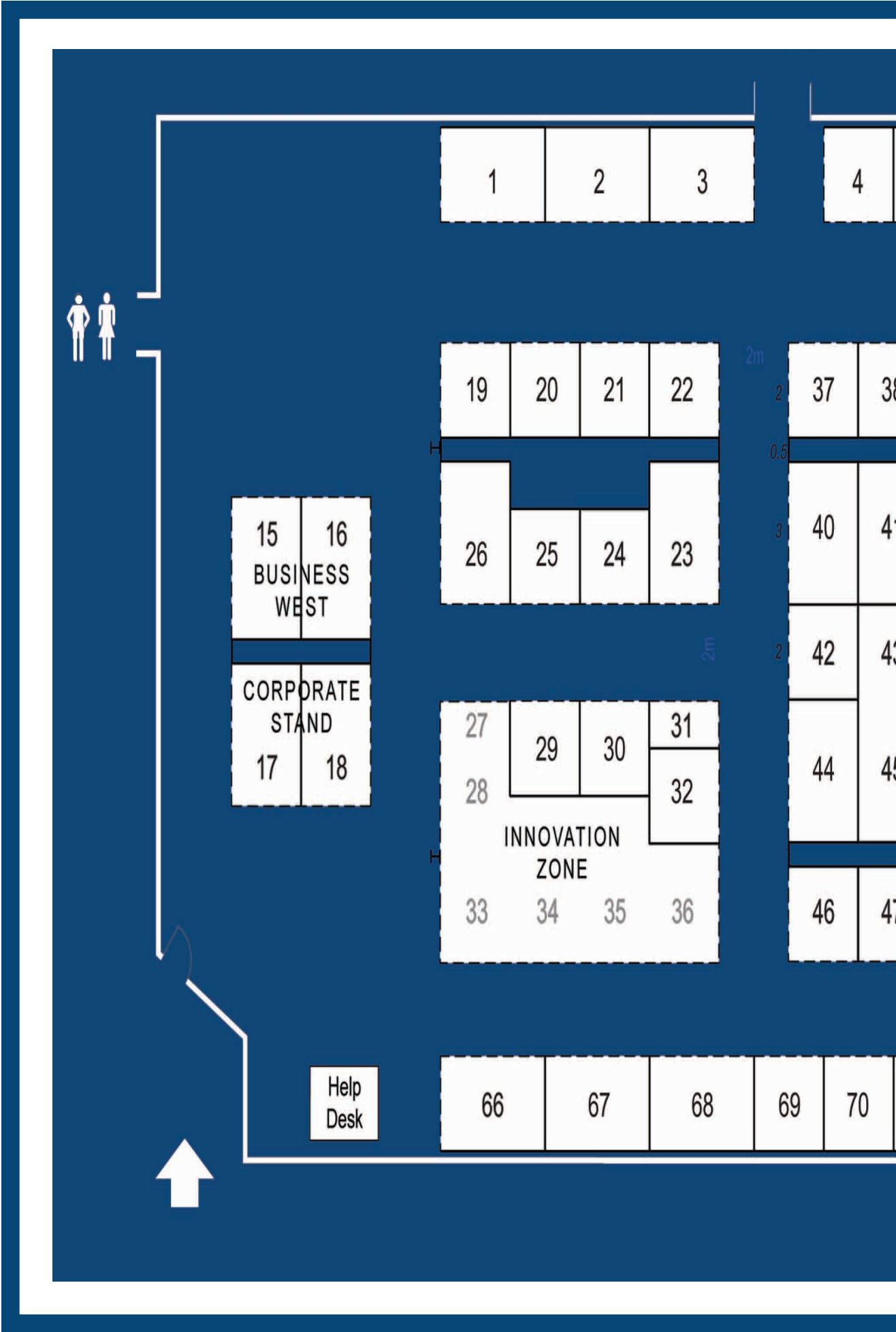
"Our extensive knowledge of strategic communications and PR helps companies focus on their core markets. By revealing needs, creating strategic solutions, developing brands and communicating messages we help businesses power reputations and grow by taking them on a communications journey.

"There are many great businesses in the town and we invite them to come and talk to us about how they can promote themselves effectively."

Soaring Worldwide is one of the UK's fastest-growing communications and PR agencies and has earned its reputation by delivering great results across all media.

The company works with a diverse range of national and international clients including Swindon-based Certification International, the Barbican in London and the Kyoto Convention Bureau in Japan.

To register to attend The Business Show Swindon, go to: [www.businessshowswindon.co.uk](http://www.businessshowswindon.co.uk)



Access Displays	26	Forward Swindon	23
Accord Office Supplies	1-3	Four Pillars Hotel Group	31
Arco	44	Grange Swindon	70
Basepoint Business Centre	46	Hewett Recruitment	42
Bath Tourism Plus	68,69	HM Revenue & Custom	36
Bluefin Insurance Services	73	Jury's Inn	76
Business Against Poverty	62	LM Hotfoil	10
Campanile Hotels	77	Marriott Hotels	5
Credit Safe Business Solutions	53	Morris Owen	74
Finger Check	49	Morus Total Business Solutions	67

Look to overseas markets for growth in 2012, urges GWE

As Swindon firms start what is expected to be another challenging year, business organisation GWE Business West is urging them to actively consider exporting as an effective way of attracting much-needed new customers.

Ian Larrard, director of the GWE Initiative In Swindon & Wiltshire, which is staging The Business Show Swindon, said: "The beginning of a New Year is a great time for any business to take stock, to review what is going well, to analyse things that could be improved and probably above all, to assess where new customers are to be found. One of the answers to the last question could well be overseas."

"I really would encourage any business, no matter what goods or services they provide, to at least consider the international market."

He said almost three quarters of businesses do not export with many claiming there would be no demand for their products in other countries.

"But I think many people would be pleasantly surprised if they looked into the possibilities. For a start they will find plenty of support," added Mr Larrard.

The Government is committed to doubling the number of small and medium-sized exporters assisted by UKTI – the Government's overseas trade body – to 50,000 by 2015 and the Prime Minister has personally supported new measures to help SMEs export to new markets.

Trade and investment minister Lord Green, who has stressed the vital role that exports play in securing economic growth, visits Bristol on



Ian Larrard

January 16 to re-affirm the clear message that the UK must excel in international trade.

"In early 2012 we will be making it easier to export by launching our new online interactive website – Acorn Interactive – which will provide a full range of international trade solutions at your fingertips, saving you time and money," said Mr Larrard.

"International trade has always been vital to the UK and our status as a leading industrial nation was built on the strength of our ability to export.

"In these days of global uncertainty it has never been more important for us to regain that reputation and virtually all of our Initiative in Swindon members could play a part in that process.

"Why not make it your New Year resolution to support our export drive and give doing business overseas some serious thought?"

SSEP to hold annual conference

Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (SSEP) stages its annual conference alongside the Business Show Swindon.

After a busy year, SSEP will provide an update on current activity including links with the newly formed Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

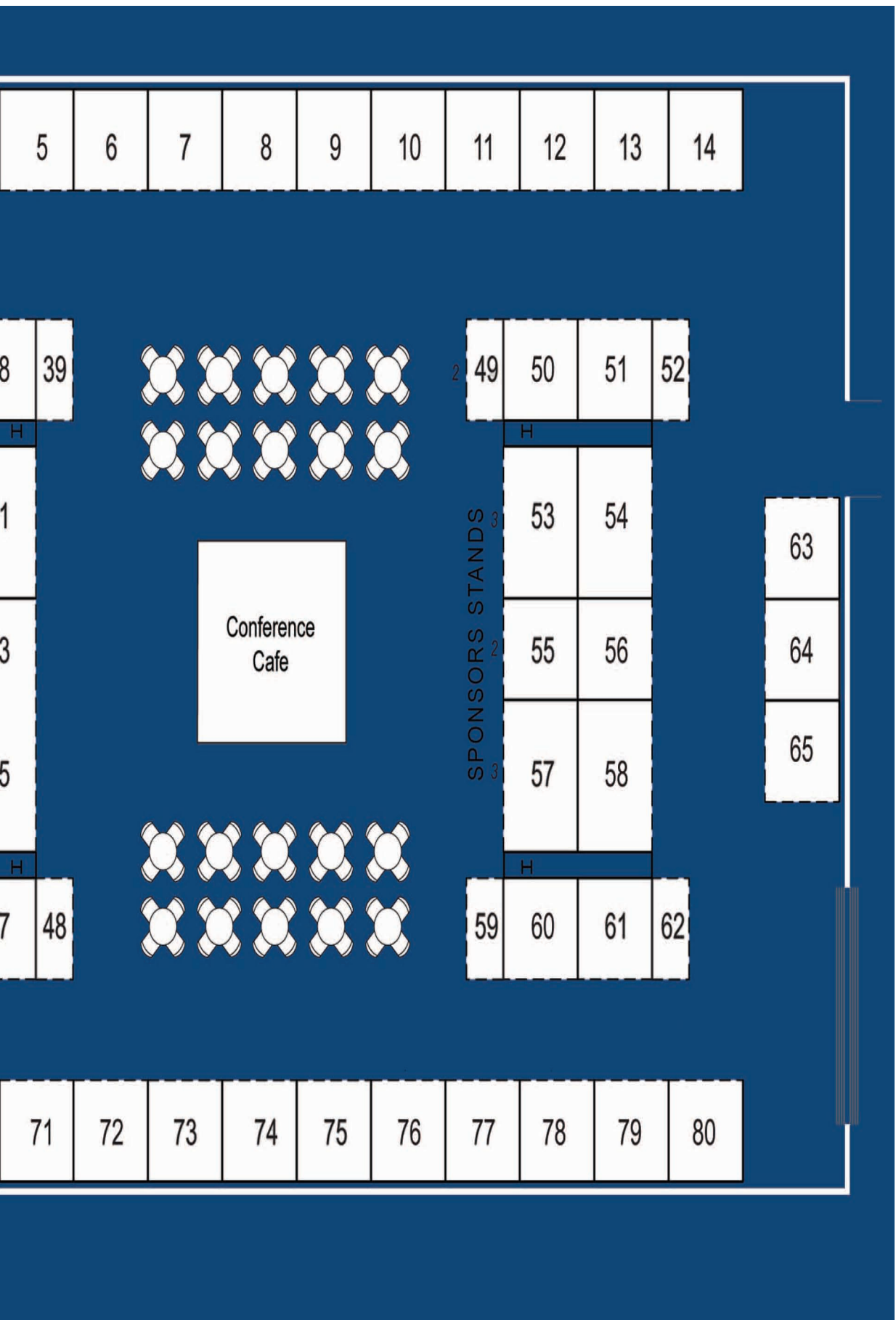
Newly-appointed LEP chair Paul Johnson will speak at the conference along with SSEP chair Nicky Alberry, who will explain how the SSEP sits with the LEP. There will also be an update in the work of Forward Swindon, the town's economic regeneration company, by its chief executive Ian Piper, and news on the re-launch of Plan 500, the employment opportunity group for young people, by its chair, Anne Carrigan. The conference will also hear from Nationwide Building Society's chief economist Robert Gardner.

Swindon Business News is media partner for the Business Show Swindon 2012 and has a wide range of innovative advertising and promotional packages for this high-profile event, offering exposure ahead of the show through its e-bulletin, its website and weekly e-bulletins, at the event itself, and afterwards in February's edition of Swindon Business News.

We can offer:

- Event Map with Floor Plan - To be handed out to entrants to the Business Show Swindon for free
- A special Web, Map and Print advertising deal
- Inserts in our special Goody Bag for all attendees

To be involved in any of these exciting opportunities or to find out more about how Swindon Business News can help you reach your target audience, contact Anita Jaynes on 01793 615393 or [anita@swindon-business.net](mailto:anita@swindon-business.net), or Claudia Carr on 01249 721193 or at [ccarrswindonbisnews@gmail.com](mailto:ccarrswindonbisnews@gmail.com)



Newbury Building Society	40	Soaring Worldwide	27
Nexus Business Centre	19	Swindon Business News	72
Outsource UK	41	Swindon College	9
Pertemps Recruitment	52	The Payrol Department	8
Phillips & Leigh	75	Unique Venues Of Bath	43-45
Planet Pursuits	13,14	University of the West of England	7
Redhouse Photography	39	VOX PR & Marketing	65
RSM Tenon	47	WORXiD	24
Saltbox Training and Events	59		
Shred-it	71		

# Teaching success at Dorcan Academy as school enjoys a boom in results

**D**orcan is a school that has undergone rapid change and improvement over the past few years.

Designated as the first specialist school in Swindon in 1999 as a technology college the school has specialised in technology as well as maths, science and computing. Courses in engineering and e-based media have proved highly successful with students helping them progress to further studies post-16. Ofsted's rating of the curriculum as outstanding, in 2009, reflected the choice and balance between academic and vocational qualifications and is seen in the numbers of students who stay in education or training; in 2011 100 per cent of students went onto either a college course of employment with some form of training.

Head teacher, Dr Scott Sissons, said: "After having achieved a massive increase in the results of 2010, the school was keen to build on these improvements in 2011 and we were delighted to see that this year's students have done even better, achieving a massive 81 per cent in the

top 5 good A\*-C grades and a rise to 54 per cent for the 5A\*-C grades with English and Maths."

These results are clear evidence of the quality of teaching and learning the school provides and the very high standard of support for individuals. Ofsted, in 2011, noted that the care, guidance and support for children is outstanding and that the school works hard to create a safe and secure atmosphere for learning.

The school focuses on young people as students becoming independent and confident learners, responsible for themselves, their environment, and others in their community.

"Our school strap line is 'All about learning' and while we recognize that high academic standards are important, we also know that broader employability skills are essential to equip all our students for life beyond school. We want success for every one of our students and understand that individuals have different learning needs," says Dr Sissons.

Dorcan Academy works closely with its partner primary schools to

ensure smooth and effective transition and also with a range of local, regional and international schools to raise standards and extend opportunities for its students. The school also works to build strong links with parents so that they can support and encourage the pupils through a very challenging and exciting time in their lives.

"We have many links with businesses and these are key to our future; we are always looking to extend already successful partnerships with both local and national companies.

"We are very excited about becoming a new academy in 2011 and, as Dorcan Academy, we look forward to continuing to improve and produce even better opportunities and results for all our young people. We are grateful to all those many people involved with the school for making it such a success story," Dr Sissons says.

To ensure the ongoing success of Dorcan Academy contact either Dr Scott Sissons head@dorcan.swindon.sch.uk or Mrs Chris Sanders csanders@dorcan.swindon.sch.uk.



*Bright Future: Pupils get a unique education experience at Hatherop*

## Hatherop Castle School is going International

Following on from The Every Child Matters Standards Award and Bronze Eco Schools Award that the school achieved in the summer term staff, pupils and parents have received the news that the school has also now achieved the International School Award.

Administered by the British Council the award is an accreditation scheme for curriculum-based international work in schools. The scheme provides recognition for teachers and their schools working to instil a global dimension into the learning experience of all children and young people.

At Hatherop Castle a week-long Theme Week working on different countries around the world and a Eurovision Song Contest in which all the pupils from Nursery to Prep 8 took part, were just two of the events which impressed the assessors. Feedback from them stated that "the school

clearly has an international ethos and the activities have had a positive impact on the staff and students, with the students in particular on the road to becoming more globally aware".

Hatherop Castle has links to the Ngwenya School in Swaziland, sending clothing and educational materials. Two teachers from the school visited Ngwenya in the October half term and we are expecting a reciprocal visit early next year.

As part of the geography curriculum the children are undertaking a comparative study between Africa and UK and links between the two schools will be embedded in the syllabus from January.

The next open morning at the school is on Saturday January 21 and Scholarship & Assessment day is on Saturday February 4. Call the registrar for further details on 01285 750206.



# DORCAN Academy

"All about learning"

St Paul's Drive, SWINDON SN3 5DA

Telephone: 01793 525231 • Fax: 01793 431461

Email: head@dorcan.Swindon.sch.uk • Website: www.dorcan.co.uk



- Dorcan has changed! - sustaining its specialist Technology College status and continuing to improve, working together to raise standards and offer better opportunities for all of our students
- Schools Curriculum is outstanding - Ofsted
- Teachers show readiness to "go the extra mile" to make teaching better - Ofsted
- Exceptional improvement in GCSE results over last 2 years, 5A\* - C up by 26% to 74% and 5A\* - C with English and Maths up 22% TO 52%
- Dorcan is "All about learning" with personalised learning for our students meeting all their different needs and broadening their learning skills equipping them for life beyond school
- Students say that they "enjoy their learning and take pride in their school and work well in a safe environment"
- Excellent primary induction

Come and see us in action. You are very welcome to tour the school in session by calling Mrs Tanner on 01793 544022 and meet senior staff and see lessons and the school in full flow.



Dr Scott Sissons Head Teacher

## Hatherop Castle School

Situated in Cirencester in acres of beautiful parkland, Hatherop School is a Nursery and Prep School offering a co-educational education to children aged 2 to 13. Boarding packages are available.

2011 achievements

British Council International Schools Award  
Every Child Matters Standards Award  
Bronze Eco Schools Award

Every day is an Open Day at Hatherop Castle School so if you are passing come in and see the school in action or put the following dates in your diary:

**Scholarship & Assessment Day**

Saturday 4th February 2012

**Open Morning**

Monday 7th May 2012

Please contact the Admissions Registrar on 01285 750206 for further details



Hatherop, Cirencester,  
Gloucestershire GL7 3NB  
01285 750206  
www.hatheropcastle.co.uk



# St Margaret's offers bursaries

St Margaret's is an IAPS independent day preparatory school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years, sharing a site with Mary's School, Calne. The children benefit from the excellent facilities including sports pitches, gymnasium, 25m indoor swimming pool, theatre, chapel and dining hall.

The St Margaret's curriculum comprises an extensive range of activities, designed to promote not only learning, but also personal growth and development. It is based upon the subjects of the National Curriculum which are delivered, in the main, by class teachers; all of whom are experts in the relevant ages. This is then enhanced, not only by specialist tuition in sport, music, Latin, ICT and modern foreign languages, but also the extensive extra-curricular programme, designed



to enrich every child's experience while at the school; this includes the 'hidden curriculum' – what the children learn from the way they are treated and how they are expected to

behave. Headmistress Mrs Cordon said: "We want our pupils to grow into positive, responsible adults who can work and co-operate with others, whilst at the same time developing their knowledge and skills in order to achieve their true potential." In order to extend their education opportunities to the wider community, the school will once again be offering means-tested Community Bursaries to support local children. Funding up to 100 per cent is available for children in years 3-6 who show academic promise but whose families have limited financial means.

The school is holding an Open Morning on Thursday March 8. Please contact 01249 857379 or email: [hughess@stmargaretsprep.org.uk](mailto:hughess@stmargaretsprep.org.uk) to register.

## Pinewood pupils in tune with recent success at Devizes Eisteddfod Festival

Musicians from Pinewood School, near Swindon enjoyed outstanding success at the recent Devizes Eisteddfod Festival, with pupils named as winners in the Ensemble, Woodwind and Individual String sections, and one pupil, Eleanor Tuckey, taking the prestigious Festival Junior Musician Winner title.

This represents a small part of the music curriculum at Pinewood which also sees pupils taking part in the National Youth Orchestra, National Wind and String Sinfonias and the National Youth Choir. Niki Bell, director of music, explains: "Children who show a high level of musicality and potential need to experience playing or singing with like-minded youngsters. The auditions are often a very nerve-racking time, but the experience and chance to perform at venues, like the Royal Albert Hall, make it worthwhile and lots of fun."

It's not all high end at Pinewood however; music is extremely inclusive, with more than 200 pupils



*A symphony in C-class: Pinewood pupils enjoy a music lesson*

learning an instrument and taking part in a range of events from school concerts, to music workshops and local festivals.

Rock band rehearsals and songs from the school play can often be heard drifting through the school as pupils practise together. Plans are also afoot to extend the Music School to include more space for ensemble rehearsals.

## Rose Hill Westonbirt pupils rise to the Challenge

In keeping with its pledge to concentrate on core academic subjects, the teaching of practical mathematics has been given a real boost this term at Rose Hill Westonbirt School.

Activities, including the regional maths challenge and a workshop with Explore Learning (who provide private learning centres located in Sainsbury's grocery stores across the UK) allowed pupils to develop problem solving and practical skills in real-life situations. Explore Learning held two interactive workshops for Years 3-4 and Years 5-6 and described our pupils as the most well-behaved and focused group they had visited.

In addition to the challenge and workshops, pupils were also put to the test with Rose Hill Westonbirt's very own maths challenge morning – where children were tasked with a specific brief to design and build a robot which met rigid criteria, including to be free-standing, to have a specific purpose, to be exactly 57cm tall, to include a variety of angles and a circle with a specific diameter. Congratulations to the winning team who built a wonderful 'Robot Waiter' with built-in storage facilities. The morning was rounded off by an exciting maths trail around the grounds of Westonbirt School and a Brain Stretchers activity. **OPEN MORNING AT ROSE HILL WESTONBIRT PREPARATORY SCHOOL** - Thursday, February 9 9:30am – 12:30pm. For further information contact our registrar on 01666 881375. [www.rhwestonbirt.co.uk](http://www.rhwestonbirt.co.uk)



*Encouraging ingenuity: Rose Hill pupils got to build robots as a part of the schools focus on practical mathematics and core academic subjects*



*Inspiring young minds*

### OPEN MORNINGS

Thursday 9th February 2012

Saturday 12th May 2012

09:30am – 12:30pm

T: 01666 881375

E: [rosehill@rhwestonbirt.co.uk](mailto:rosehill@rhwestonbirt.co.uk)

[www.rhwestonbirt.co.uk](http://www.rhwestonbirt.co.uk)



**ST MARGARET'S**  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL CALNE

**Open Morning**  
Thursday 8th March 2012


**Community Bursaries Assessment Day**  
Wednesday 9th May 2012

To register, please contact the school.




**Co-educational day school for boys and girls aged 3-11**  
T: 01249 857220 E: [office@stmargaretsprep.org.uk](mailto:office@stmargaretsprep.org.uk)  
W: [www.stmargaretsprep.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsprep.org.uk)


The school has charity status no. 309482 and exists for the education of children




enjoy




grow



perform



develop



**PINEWOOD**  
*Est. 1876*

Day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 3-13

Pinewood Bourton Shrivenham Wiltshire SN6 8HZ  
T: 01793 782205 (Office) E: [office@pinewoodschool.co.uk](mailto:office@pinewoodschool.co.uk)  
[www.pinewoodschool.co.uk](http://www.pinewoodschool.co.uk)

3 minibuses picking up from Marlborough, Ramsbury and South Cerney



**Impressive grounds:** The Royal High School Bath has been a specialist in girls' education for more than 100 years

## Inspiring its pupils to outstanding results at Royal High School Bath

The Royal High School Bath is fast becoming an independent school of choice for boarding and day girls aged 3 to 18. Recognised for outstanding results, we focus on individual care and value achievement beyond the classroom, inspiring girls to make the most of their unique talents and become the very best that they can be.

This all-through, all-round, all-girls education from Nursery to Sixth Form College, develops the confidence, capabilities and character needed to underpin success at university, throughout careers and in achieving aspirations in every aspect of life. "We have been specialists in girls' education since 1864 and we have a passionate belief in the pre-eminence of what we offer for girls and young women," says the Head, Rebecca Dougall. "This is



anchored not only in the outstanding examination results that our girls routinely achieve but also in the places

they take up with confidence at leading UK and overseas universities."

Culturally cosmopolitan and vibrant, Bath is the perfect place for girls to live, study, have fun, make friends, enjoy life and develop a global perspective in education. Belonging to the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) affords us excellent economies of scale and able to offer an exceptional value, independent education. Our academic standards are among the highest in the country and yet our fees are among the lowest.

Scholarships and bursaries are available at Years 7 and 12. If you would like to find out more please contact our Registrar. A warm welcome awaits you.

The Royal High School, Bath, Lansdown Road, Bath BA1 5SZ  
T: 01225 313877  
E: [royalhigh@bat.gdst.net](mailto:royalhigh@bat.gdst.net)  
W: [www.royalhighbath.gdst.net](http://www.royalhighbath.gdst.net)

TOP

100

Swindon Business News is publishing its annual feature on Swindon's Top 100 Companies. Are you on the list?

01793 615393

## Ex-pupil becomes principal at college

I became the 11th Principal of the Cheltenham Ladies' College in September 2011 having been educated in the sixth form at College some 20 years previously. After gaining a degree in Engineering Science from Cambridge, I worked as a Structural Engineer for a little while before following my heart into teaching. I began at Radley College, later moving to Epsom College in Surrey and most recently Blundell's School in Devon, where I was director of studies for six years.

College has been at the forefront of girls' education for nearly 160 years and is today a vibrant and dynamic community where the girls thrive on small classes taught by expert teachers. A strong focus on the pupil as an individual and outstanding pastoral care enable the girls to consistently achieve outstanding academic results at GCSE, A Level and the International Baccalaureate Diploma. In 2011, we topped local independent school A Level league tables and came in the top three schools in the UK offering the IB. More than 93 per cent of our 2011 leavers went to Russell group or 1994 group universities with 18 going to Oxbridge and more than 30 reading medicine, science or maths. We support a wide range of languages including Mandarin, and have thriving Young Enterprise companies, a world-class music department, and facilities for art and design which rival specialist arts colleges.

We recently opened an award-winning theatre (the Parabola Arts Centre) which has revitalised the performing arts and provided a wonderful venue for visiting productions. We intend to continue developing our buildings and premises with a new state-of-the-art



*Eve Jardine-Young  
Principal, The Cheltenham Ladies' College*

sports facility and new boarding accommodation in the near future.

I care deeply about the principles that underpin sustainability and I am delighted that College recently secured its status as an Eco-School, a tribute to the on-going hard work of our Environment Group. We have a strong commitment to the local community, which is best demonstrated by more than 200 girls who regularly volunteer at local schools and charities, providing help, support and fund raising.

We would be delighted to welcome you at one of our Open Days held throughout the year. Academic, art, music and sport scholarships are available for 2013 entry onwards and a Day Girl Award is also available at Sixth Form entry. Visit our website : [www.cheltladiescollege.org](http://www.cheltladiescollege.org) for more information.

"We work hard  
but it's **not** hard work,  
if that makes sense."

Holly. Aged 16.

## Open Days

4 February 2012  
3 March 2012  
24 March 2012  
26 May 2012  
16 June 2012

To book a place, please contact College on 01242 707070/1 or go online to [www.cheltladiescollege.org](http://www.cheltladiescollege.org)

THE  
Cheltenham  
Ladies'  
COLLEGE



## GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS

Our girls can be anything they want to be, because here they are free to be themselves. They are equally at home brandishing blow torches and rowing for gold, as they are re-living Shakespeare and unravelling algebraic equations. Our passionate belief in the pre-eminence of what we offer is rooted in the levels of courtesy, collegiality, confidence and an unselfconscious mantra of 'getting stuck in' that our girls demonstrate here, at university, throughout their careers and in achieving aspirations in every aspect of life.

We would love to see you at our Open Day.  
Saturday November 5th 10am - 12 noon.  
Please contact us to arrange a private visit.



**The Royal High School, Bath**  
Nursery • Junior School • Senior School • Sixth Form College



Lansdown Road, Bath BA1 5SZ t: 01225 313877  
e: [royalhigh@bat.gdst.net](mailto:royalhigh@bat.gdst.net) [www.royalhighbath.gdst.net](http://www.royalhighbath.gdst.net)

# Plan now for Olympics absenteeism, firms urged

With less than 200 days to go to the London Olympics and Paralympics, workplace expert Acas is advising Swindon employers to avoid any last-minute hurdles by planning for staff being away from work during the Games.

Bosses should start talking now to employees who will be acting as volunteers to manage their time off and minimise impact on workplace productivity.

They also need to handle requests from staff with tickets for the Games, or who simply want to watch on TV at home.

Acas estimates that thousands of people in the West will be asking for time off for the Olympics, which take place between July 25 to August 12 – at the height of the summer holiday season when most employees traditionally take annual leave.

Acas has answers to three typical issues firms are likely to face:

**Q** Three of my staff have got positions as volunteers at the Olympics. I can only let one go. What's the best way of handling this?

**A** The key to avoiding potential misunderstanding or conflict is to have a clear policy in advance and

communicate this to all staff – that way, everyone knows where they stand and you look after your business needs. Your policy need not be very complicated – a simple first come, first served process may be enough.

**Q** I have a member of staff who has got a place as a volunteer at the Olympics. Do they need to use their own holiday?

**A** Employees have no legal right to take time off for volunteering. You can decide to give paid or unpaid time off or, if not, the employee may wish to take annual leave. Many employers encourage their employees to

volunteer to help develop their skills and give employees an agreed quota of paid days leave per year to volunteer – typically, about two days a year.

**Q** I have a member of staff who has got a place as a volunteer at the Olympics. Am I expected to pay for them while they volunteer?

**A** There is no legal right to be paid for volunteering. Volunteering is something employees often do because of their own interest, but increasingly employers are recognising the business benefits of volunteering – in terms of developing

skills and supporting the local community. If your employee is taking special leave then it would be up to you to decide whether that will be paid or unpaid.

Acas regional director Tony Cooper said: "We're finally on the home straight to the 2012 Olympics and employers should have plans for managing employees' involvement whether volunteering or those watching the events."

Acas guidance on everything from flexible working to holidays, time off and managing attendance can be found at: [www.acas.org.uk/olympics](http://www.acas.org.uk/olympics)

## Swindon apprentices are the key to business success

Apprenticeships are increasingly popular among businesses, as both a great way to upskill existing staff members and a cost effective way to bring in new staff.

More than half of companies that already employ an apprentice believe that they offer greater value than hiring university graduates.

Apprenticeships have been shown

to increase productivity, improve competitiveness and provide a committed and competent work-force. Apprenticeships ensure the workforce has the practical skills and qualifications needed now and in the future.

Nine in ten employers view apprentices as key to the future success of their business over the next two years, as they fight their way out of recession.

New College Swindon offers a variety of apprenticeships with a proven track record. In 2010/11 the achievement rates of the college stand at 91 per cent, 14 per cent above the national average.

New College offers flexible training, and wherever possible training is provided in the workplace, working in partnership with the employer. The range of apprenticeships offered at New College includes Accountancy (AAT),

business and administration, childcare and young people's workforce, customer service, health and social care, management, team leading, supporting teaching and learning in schools, retail, warehousing/logistics, payroll, bookkeeping, hospitality, beauty therapy, laboratory technician, environmental conservation, business improvement technique, and facilities management.

Some of the newest apprenticeships on offer at New College are also the fastest growing and most popular apprenticeships in the country.

An increasing number of housing apprentices are being employed, leading into roles as housing assistants, to housing support officers and community support officers. Housing apprenticeships focus on both people and property, and train apprentices in assessing housing needs and dealing with associated problems.

Environmental Conservation is also one of the fastest growing apprenticeships with a range of relevant job roles from Recycling or Conservation Officer to Ecologist or Environmental Management Officer. It covers roles that deal with the protection of rural and urban landscapes, plants, animals and countryside. The scope of environmental conservation stretches from local issues (such as community recycling) to international ones (including global warming).

An increasingly popular apprenticeship is Payroll, which is suitable for a wide number of job roles varying from payroll assistant or payroll administrator, up to assistant payroll manager or team leader.

For more information about apprenticeships at New College, call Kate on 01793 732892 or email [apprenticeships@newcollege.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@newcollege.ac.uk).

### Good news for apprenticeships

The Government has announced that it is going to provide additional funding to support the growth of 16-24 apprenticeships, including providing at least 20,000 additional incentive payments to support employers in creating apprenticeship places. Each incentive payment is worth £1,500 to an employer.

These payments are targeting small-to-medium sized enterprises with up to 50 employees who are taking on their first apprentice. This announcement by the Government will double the number of incentive places available next year, taking the total to 40,000.

To find out more about the Government incentive placement for first apprentices, phone Business First on 01793 498404 or contact our Apprenticeships Team on 01793

498208 or email [apprenticeships@swindon-college.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@swindon-college.ac.uk)

This could be the answer to staffing shortfalls in the current economic climate and could strengthen workforces for the future.

Swindon College's new January-July 2012 Part-time Training Directory is now out in the community or can be viewed on the website [www.swindon-college.ac.uk](http://www.swindon-college.ac.uk). The college offers training opportunities for business managers and owners and their staff including electrical, complementary therapies, environmental management, business and communications as well as leisure courses from pottery to photography. Call in to collect a copy or phone 0800 731 2250 and one will be sent.

## apprenticeships AT NEW COLLEGE SWINDON

# 9 in 10

employers view their apprentices as key to the future success of their business over the next two years\*

find out how an apprentice can be a great investment in your company's future!

Call Kate on 0808 178 3859

or email [apprenticeships@newcollege.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@newcollege.ac.uk)

\*City & Guilds, Building Business Through Apprenticeships Report - February 2011

**New College**  
Swindon

**Business**  
...first for all your training needs!

**Swindon College**

**Apprenticeships delivered  
in the workplace...**

No matter how large or small your organisation, Apprenticeships give you the chance to develop the skilled staff you need for your business.

#### We offer the following Apprenticeships:

- **NEW** Customer Service
- **NEW** Team Leading
- **NEW** Logistics/Warehousing
- **NEW** ITQ
- **NEW** Payroll
- Accountancy
- Bricklaying
- Beauty
- Business Administration
- Carpentry
- Early Years/Care
- Engineering
- Electrical Installation
- Hairdressing
- Hospitality Services (Multi-skilled)
- Motor Vehicle
- Painting and Decorating
- Plumbing
- Professional Cookery
- Teaching Assistants
- Warehousing.

For further information please contact the  
**Business First Team** on (01793) 498404,  
e-mail [businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk](mailto:businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk)  
or visit [www.swindon-college.ac.uk](http://www.swindon-college.ac.uk).

Swindon College North Star Avenue,  
Swindon SN2 1DY

**You could qualify for a  
Government incentive**  
— call us now to find out more!

# New Year - new you . . .

Looking to make 2012 the year you improve your fitness and lose weight but can't afford a spa break? Anne Gorringer talks to Bristol personal fitness trainer and former England Rugby International David Rees for his top tips.

- Buy a heart rate monitor. This is a great investment, as it works as your own 'personal trainer' and helps you see how quickly you can improve.

Wear it when you exercise and keep your average beats per minute (bpm) above 125 on that walk or run. My clients have found the Polar ft 1 easy to use. Write down kcals burnt and watch your average heart rate lower over the weeks.

- If you don't know where to start, think back to an exercise or a recreation you used to enjoy but haven't had time for. Or join a club or find a neighbour who wants to get fit and 'compete' with each other.

- If finding time for exercise is difficult, and you don't need the car for work, how about cycling or walking to work? You'll be amazed at how many

kcals a week this will add up to - besides saving money.

- Preparation is the key. Avoid eating the wrong things when you're hungry and get in from work late. Instead have a big cook at the weekend - say a big bolognese, enough to feed a family of five, which you then put into individual containers and freeze for the week.

- Use good quality, low-fat meat. This is your protein base - then you can add delicious, nutritious bits to it, sweet potato blasted in the microwave for a quick, hot, hearty dish or loads of green vegetables and salad. Saves, time, money and calories.

- And you can't beat a hot soup at lunchtime. It will stop you snacking. Buy ready-prepared lentil-based soups if you have to - or, if you have time, boil a ham hock and vegetables. Any good quality protein helps when you're upping your exercise routine.

David Rees and colleagues set up the personal training company Oakfield Personal Training in Clifton, Bristol. [www.oakfieldspt.co.uk](http://www.oakfieldspt.co.uk)

## Check in for business at Campanile Swindon

Campanile Hotels group is well known for providing comfortable, well-priced and practical accommodation, but in a way which is more stylish than one may expect.

Located at Delta Business Park, West Swindon, the Campanile has become used increasingly by a number of major multinationals located nearby, and the total refurbishment, completed recently in distinctive Campanile style, is attracting more business use.

The hotel is designed and laid out for practical use, with reception, a lounge and the dining room all within the same open-plan area ideal for informal meetings.

The bar opens until late, and is ideal for business discussions or conference break-out sessions. Importantly, a fast free WiFi service is available throughout the hotel, free

car park and the flexible conference area accommodating a maximum of 80 people is easily accessible.

Campanile Hotels is now a member of the Hotel Booking Agents Association (HBAA), the trade association that represents the collective interest of the parties involved in the procurement and management of conference, meetings and accommodation in the UK and internationally.

The HBAA of approximately 80 booking agents and 280 venues and hotels and will give Campanile Hotels UK greater exposure in the market place and attract new booking agents and corporates to our properties.

For further information, call the Swindon Campanile on 01793 514777 or visit the web site at [www.campanile.com](http://www.campanile.com)





**Campanile Hotel Swindon is your corporate hospitality partner proposing a full range of solutions for all kind of businesses.**

- dedicated sales team
- corporate agreement solutions
- flexible accommodation packages

- conference rooms
- business lunches
- corporate events organisation



**Campanile Is Changing Along With Your Desires**

Delta business Park,  
Great Western Way Wiltshire,  
Swindon SN5 7XG

Telephone: +44 179 351 47 77  
Fax: +44 179 351 45 70

# Expert views from Morris Owen

**Rob Beale, partner at Morris Owen Chartered Accountants has been working with local property developers for many years. Here Rob gives us his views on where the market is heading in 2012.**



Rob Beale

Since 2007, the construction industry has probably suffered more than most sectors from the economic turmoil that we have been experiencing. In 2006 the housing gap was estimated at 250,000 and recently this was announced at 500,000 as the supply of new-build properties is at such a shortage when compared to anticipated demand.

In normal conditions this shortage would be good news, with the reduced supply impacting on price. But the reality is so different. The housing market hit the bottom many years ago and has bumped along since then.

We are all fully aware of the

shortage of mortgage lending and are told that it is due to lack of demand. But with job insecurity, high levels of required deposit and mortgage terms, a first-time buyer who can gain finance is a rare breed. Equally, investor mortgages aren't creating the American-style buy-to-let market that some have forecast. Government schemes have helped the Plcs to achieve sales but don't necessarily have the relevance for the local property developer.

At a time when sales are difficult,

financing property development companies has become more complex, with banks rebalancing their lending portfolios, resulting in property companies being hit from all sides, as well as the down-valuing of land. In the current market, we are seeing sales but it is painfully slow.

At Morris Owen, our time has been spent working with clients on financing their work-in-progress, looking at ways to realise at return from standing stock, while at the same time not triggering tax and VAT liabilities. In most cases, it is a difficult balancing act to structure the process properly. It has also been a time to be more inventive in looking at ways to get deals done, with landowner joint ventures used to assure maximum value.

2012 isn't going to be the year that the cork starts to come from the bottle. So margins that are sensible for businesses and their bankers can only be achieved by continually monitoring the spec, focusing on cost control and structuring transactions so that the VAT or tax doesn't become an overhead.

For further information or to discuss specific circumstances contact Rob Beale on 01793 603900 or email: [rob.beale@morrisowen.com](mailto:rob.beale@morrisowen.com)

**More is:**  
"Being fundamental  
in your business"

Get [more@morrisowen.com](mailto:more@morrisowen.com)  
Call for more: 01793 603900

**MorrisOwen**

chartered accountants, business advisers and more...

Registered to carry on audit work by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Registered with the Chartered Institute of Taxation as a firm of chartered tax advisers

## South West Built Environment Awards

Swindon construction firms can showcase their work in this year's South West Built Environment Awards.

The 11 categories span innovation, sustainability, health and safety and collaboration. There are also awards for achievers and the year's best project.

The deadline for entries to the awards, which are staged by Constructing Excellence South West, is February 29. Shortlisted entries will be published on April 20

with the awards presentation and gala dinner at the Bristol Marriot hotel on June 15.

The awards are free to enter and a great way to showcase the work of an organisation or team.

Regional winners automatically go forward to the national finals. Last year Taunton firm CS Williams won the national heritage award for its work on the Tyntesfield House Conservation project.

For more information go to

**[www.buildsw.org.uk/awards](http://www.buildsw.org.uk/awards)**

# Construction sector slowly improving brick by brick

The regional construction sector is in the grip of a perfect storm with public sector cuts biting into workloads at the same time as bank lending is putting private work under pressure while confidence levels remain fragile.

But building work has not stopped completely and workloads and order books for some businesses are as healthy as they have been since the downturn started three years ago.

The latest RICS construction market survey, in November last year, painted a picture of a flat market with little direction. But even this was an improvement on the previous quarter when a deterioration in workloads had been recorded.

Private commercial and private housing

sectors reported rising workloads but this was alongside sharp falls in public sector work, including schools and hospitals, which accounted for the biggest fall.

However, some areas are continuing to report growth and in Swindon the long-delayed – and much-needed – town centre regeneration is bringing some relief to the industry.

The £1.85m upgrade of Swindon railway station forecourt is underway. The nine-month programme of major improvements, with Britannia as main contractor, will give priority to pedestrians, safely separating them from traffic.

This comes as, just a stone's throw away, work on the Whale Bridge roundabout is also

underway, opening up the first phase of the 17-acre Union Square redevelopment, which will bring a new business heart of the town centre.

While some small construction firms are struggling, Swindon-based Beard is on track for a strong performance. For the eight months to August 2011, its Swindon office achieved a turnover of £15m, up 125 per cent on the previous year, and secured orders for new contracts worth more than £14m. Much of this is due to the firm's regional authority framework agreements across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire.

The firm's Swindon construction director Marc Bayley said: "Business remains difficult,

but the 10 framework agreements we are involved with puts us in a good position. Not surprisingly alterations, renovation and improvement works represent a larger proportion of the business at the moment and our property services team is particularly busy."

The sharp fall in commercial construction across the UK has impacted on firms supplying the sector – from plant hire to surveyors and equipment manufacturers. Devizes-based Latchways, which makes safety harnesses and other equipment for those working at height, reported flat revenues in the UK for sales of its safety products, while revenues from installation work fell by 6 per cent.

## Creating a sustainable industry for the South West



Paul Halfpenny

The construction industry in the South West is set to outperform the UK as a whole and grow this year by 2 per cent, according to latest research. This growth is primarily driven by the need for new homes, recently given momentum by the Government's new housing strategy. This will not only open up the housing market, it will help the whole construction industry get moving again.

The move is good news for Britannia, one of the region's largest construction groups whose civil engineering teams work alongside many housebuilders and developers across the region installing infrastructure works on both housing and commercial developments.

One such project is at one of the region's largest residential development sites, Quedgeley Urban Village in Gloucestershire, where 3,000 homes are set to be built over the next 10 years. The project that not only gives optimism for first-time buyers but also provides clear opportunities for the regional economy.

Despite the brake being applied to many Government spending projects, the economy in the region is still being boosted with public sector



investment in major regeneration projects.

Britannia is involved with two largescale schemes in the region.

Here in Swindon work is well underway on the construction of the new forecourt for Swindon railway station (pictured).

The £1m scheme, commissioned by Forward Swindon, the town's economic regeneration company, is designed to provide an impressive gateway to the station and a key public space for the town.

Britannia is taking part in another multi-million pound town centre, regeneration and improvement

scheme in Taunton where its teams are transforming a former car park into an area of public realm adjacent to the town's 12th century castle.

Britannia Construction managing director Paul Halfpenny said: "For us at Britannia, creating a sustainable business is all encompassing, from job creation and investment, through to responsible management of the supply chain and commitment to the environment.

"We take our responsibilities very seriously and are accredited under BS EN ISO 14001:2004.

"On all our projects, we do everything reasonably possible to ensure the impact on the environment is kept to a minimum, through the selection of sustainable materials, minimising waste, avoidance of air and noise pollution, to adjacent land/building occupiers and safe working practices. As part of the WRAP agreement, we have pledged to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill.

"Waste costs money, and this makes sound commercial sense, as well as being good for the environment."



## THE SPECIALISTS IN CONSTRUCTION & CIVIL ENGINEERING

With a record of fast track, innovative and sustainable delivery solutions, we have earned a reputation for quality and reliability backed up by long-term relationships with many clients and consultants. We have specialist skills and expertise across the retail, commercial, industrial, leisure and infrastructure sectors.

To view our current projects and previous experience visit:

[www.britanniaconstruction.co.uk](http://www.britanniaconstruction.co.uk) • tel: 01452 859880



# Office market struggles in tough year

The Swindon office take up in 2011 reflected the difficult and uncertain economic and financial climate affecting all economies. The take up was 97,325 sq ft which is the lowest level since 2003 and if you exclude an office which was taken for alternative use the figure falls to 85,334 sq ft. The figure is approximately 50 per cent lower than the last 10 year annual average and some 52 per cent lower than the last five year annual average.

Although the total figure is low the number of deals is on par with previous years at 40 deals compared to 48 in 2010 and only 32 in 2009 where total take up was close to 130,000 sq ft. It can therefore be concluded that the size of the individual lettings were much smaller and unlike most years there was not a 'major deal' which boosted the figures. As is the norm the out of town market dominated the take up which was split as follows :-

In town Out of town TOTAL  
26,942 sq ft  
70,383 sq ft  
97,325 sq ft  
The out of town take up represents 72 per cent which is roughly consistent with the figure over the last 5 years. As has been the case in the last two years, the take up in the 4th Quarter has been a particularly low percentage of the total annual take up which we would suggest is a reflection of the low level of

enquiries and activity that took place throughout the year. The uncertainty and 'a wait and see attitude' adopted by the SME's in 2010 continued throughout 2011. There were numerous tenants facing lease events such as expiries or break requiring action which resulted in a lot of posturing and abortive negotiations. Requirements came to the market, followed by viewings and requests for proposals only for these terms to be used as negotiating tactics to secure improved terms with existing landlords who are very reluctant to see tenants relocate and face voids. Whilst this is understandable from both tenants and landlords perspective, it does nothing to improve the quality of the built stock. If there is turnover generated by tenants relocating, landlords would be required to upgrade the specification of the vacated office space in order to remain competitive and for the space to meet occupiers expectations. (Current empty rates legislation however would penalise landlords who went down this route, which is why, there is so much opposition to this particular legislation).

As previously mentioned there was no dominant office deal in 2011, with the two largest out of town transactions being 6,250 sq ft at Shrivenham Hundred Business Park and 5,810 sq ft at Kembrey Park. Both of these completed during the first quarter and were therefore hangovers of enquires in 2010. In terms of numbers the most active scheme in 2011 was Pine Court at Kembrey Park which saw 5 lettings totalling 6100 sq ft.

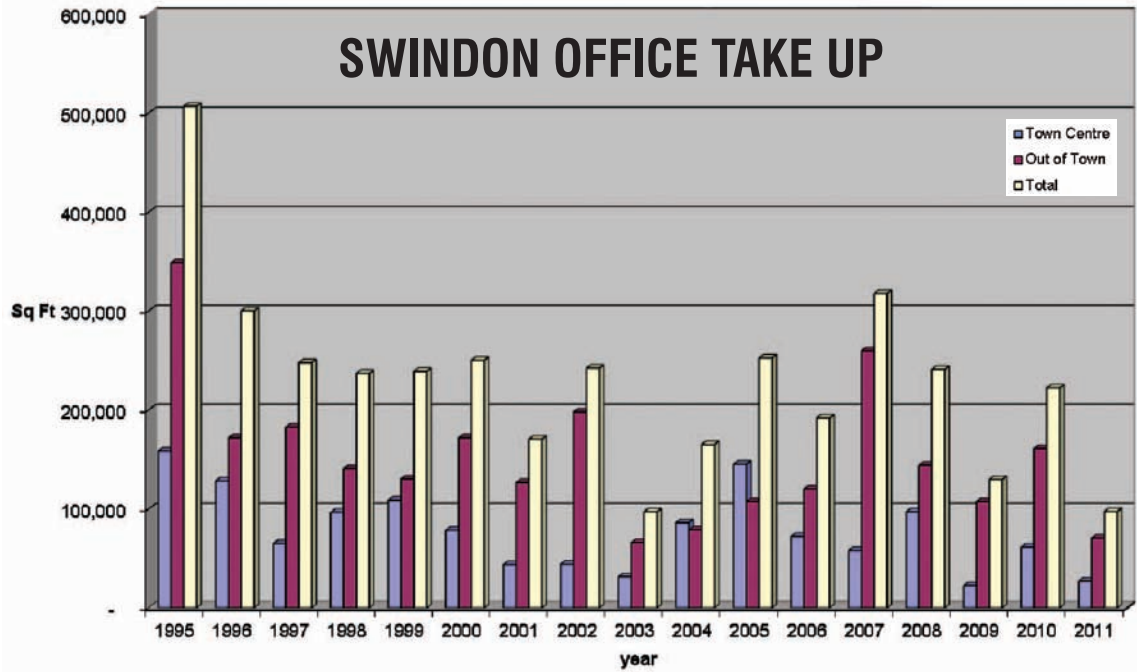
In Town, the largest transaction took place in Old Town during the last quarter when 7,375 sq ft was let to AWP NHS Trust following the expiry of the previous Swindon PCT lease. In the town centre itself, there



has been very little activity and limited take up. The recently refurbished Curtis Court building secured lettings on 3 suites totalling 5,670 sq ft.

In terms of rents, we have not seen a dramatic cut in quoting rents, although headline rents have fallen slightly, despite landlords trying to maintain them by offering significant incentives in the form of rent free periods and stepped rentals have been granted on the majority of the lettings that have taken place. Leases have also been granted with significant flexibility for tenants through the use of tenant break options.

As we enter 2012 there are several out of town properties under offer and in solicitors hands. If these transactions proceed to a successful conclusion during the first quarter, they will create some 37,000 sq ft of take up. Three of these potential lettings are for accommodation in the range 9-12,000 sq ft which given the size of the transactions in 2011 will be regarded as significant, and will give a much need boost to the Swindon office market.



Year	Town Centre	Out of Town	Total	Out of town as % of Total
2000	78,334	171,683	250,017	69
2001	43,727	126,666	170,393	74
2002	44,332	197,853	242,185	82
2003	31,229	65,743	96,972	68
2004	86,019	78,899	164,918	48
2005	145,047	107,325	252,372	43
2006	72,028	119,935	191,963	62
2007	57,813	259,788	317,601	82
2008	96,878	144,050	240,928	60
2009	22,452	107,283	129,735	83
2010	61,191	160,982	222,173	72
2011	26,942	70,383	97,325	72
Last 10 yr average	64,393	131,224	195,617	66
Last 5 yr average	53,005	148,197	201,552	74

Year	Town Centre	Out of Town	Total	Out of town as % of Total
2000	78,334	171,683	250,017	69
2001	43,727	126,666	170,393	74
2002	44,332	197,853	242,185	82
2003	31,229	65,743	96,972	68
2004	86,019	78,899	164,918	48
2005	145,047	107,325	252,372	43
2006	72,028	119,935	191,963	62
2007	57,813	259,788	317,601	82
2008	96,878	144,050	240,928	60
2009	22,452	107,283	129,735	83
2010	61,191	160,982	222,173	72
2011	26,942	70,383	97,325	72
Last 10 yr average	64,393	131,224	195,617	66
Last 5 yr average	53,005	148,197	201,552	74

loveday

FOR SALE

Former Sikh Temple, Deacon Street, Swindon, SN1 5NA

Class D1 (Non Residential Institution)

2,876 sq ft (267 sq m)

Market Centre, The Square, Dammas Lane, Old Town, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3EB

01793 423344

loveday.uk.com

Clanfield Industrial Complex almost fully let

Alder King, acting on behalf of private investors R Tincknell & Son, have found a string of tenants to take occupation of units of varying sizes at Clanfield.

The 13,500 sq ft premises was formally occupied by the agricultural engineers Chris Tallis and Son, and have been sub-divided into a complex of smaller business units. These are now home to a number of new local businesses including an online hat retailer, a carpenter and joiner, a yoga teacher and a local artist.

The premises have been renamed The Old Forgery and also offer container space. Contact Alison Williams of Alder King on 01793 615477 or awilliams@alderking.com

Highworth Road Swindon

Offices with D1 Planning Consent

FOR SALE

2,353 sq ft with on-site parking

Keningtons

01793 423 351

## What new advice body means for manufacturers

The Government this month officially launched its new Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) to bolster the UK's manufacturing sector.

One of the four partner organisations in the consortium behind the MAS is SWMAS Limited, which formerly provided help for manufacturers in Swindon and across the West of England.

Here its managing director Simon Howes offers his perspective on what MAS will mean for manufacturers in the area.

"Our company has delivered expert advice and practical, meaningful support to local small and medium-sized manufacturers for the past 10 years. We are delighted that as part of the Manufacturing Advisory Consortium (MAC) established to drive the new MAS we will be able to continue to provide these services via our network of local manufacturing advisors.

"Of the 13,000 manufacturers in the South West, 75 per cent have fewer than 10 employees and less than 500 are large businesses. Our emphasis will be on helping small and medium-sized businesses unlock their growth potential with continued focus on improving productivity and competitiveness.

"While manufacturers are understandably cautious about their prospects, the new MAS offers genuine reasons to be confident and bullish about the future. Nationally, it is estimated that it may help generate £1.5bn in economic growth, create 23,000 jobs and safeguard a further 50,000.

"There will be a focus on product development. This might include designing new products or adding additional features and improving the manufacturing efficiency or carbon



Simon Howes

performance of existing ones. We will emphasise how through innovation manufacturers can expand their product offering, moving into new sectors and growth markets.

"The new programme will also be highly collaborative involving partners and relevant third-party organisations to ensure the continued provision of services that make a tangible difference to profitability, sustainability and long-term prospects. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in Swindon & Wiltshire will play a key role in achieving this and we will work closely with them to encourage manufacturers to grow.

"There is a real drive to help the best placed manufacturers to build growing and sustainable businesses. We hope that this could lead them to export more, explore new markets and invest in the latest technologies. This is a challenging but exciting time with new funding available for ambitious Swindon businesses with real growth potential."

Companies interested in finding out more about the programme should visit [www.mymas.org](http://www.mymas.org) or call their local advisor on 0845 608 3838.

## Hopes pinned on innovation, exports and car sector growth

Government initiatives to promote innovation and exports to emerging markets coupled with growth sectors like the automotive industry provide real opportunities for Swindon manufacturers, according to accountants and business advisors BDO's regional office.

While recognising that uncertainty in key economies and markets and the lack of access to capital will make 2012 a challenging year for the majority of manufacturers, partner Jim Brown is optimistic.

"After 30 years of decline there is now widespread consensus that a strong and vibrant manufacturing sector is fundamental to the UK economy," he said.

"The task of rebuilding the manufacturing sector will not be easy and we must accept that it may take years. However, a renewed focus on manufacturing is vital for growth."

He called on the Government to develop a clearer and more explicit medium to long-term framework and strategy for the sector.

While 2011 was a relatively good year for manufacturing, the latest UK and global Purchasing Managers' Indices (PMI) show a significant deterioration in confidence.

But Mr Brown sees opportunities this year based on:

\* Innovation and government initiatives

In 2011, the Government announced a number of initiatives to



Jim Brown

spur innovation in the UK. These included the reform of the research and development (R&D) tax credit system, an increase in tax relief from £200 to £225 for each £100 of R&D activity, the new 'patent box' scheme reducing the rate of corporation tax on income derived from patents to 10 per cent, and a £125m fund to encourage growth in established UK advanced manufacturing supply sectors such as aerospace, automotive and chemicals.

"The key to unlocking the full potential of UK innovation in 2012 lies with helping manufacturers to understand and access the raft of initiatives," he said "In the shorter-term, we would urge companies to increase their awareness of new Government innovation initiatives and to use the various support schemes available to them."



*The SHA Wellness Clinic in Spain. The world's first macrobiotic wellness resort focuses its detox programme.. Health and Fitness Travel offers 7 nights at SHA Wellness Clinic from £2,790pp including the detox programme, return flights and transfers*

## Holiday trends 2012

Talk of a double dip recession plus the current Eurozone crisis isn't stopping people from jetting away in 2012. In fact, there is a determined desire to escape from it all, say travel firms with bookings on luxury breaks proving popular.

Research carried out by package trip specialist Jet2holidays on over 1,000 holiday-makers found that 28% of respondents felt a holiday is vital to their health and wellbeing.

And they say bookings on their luxury breaks range are going well, with double the amount of holidaymakers booking budget busting trips to 5 star luxury resorts than in previous years.

One example is their resort and spa holidays in Dalaman, Turkey. Trips there include a range of free activities from sauna to whirlpool and steam-room, gym, tennis, table tennis, squash, volleyball, basketball, aerobics, yoga and some watersports.

Their findings are backed up by independent tour operator Premier Holidays who are say bookings for 2012 are also strong and top destinations include Thailand, Indochina, and South Africa.

They've also just reported a huge increase in sales and – interestingly – high revenue bookings made in 2011.

Bookings on top-end holidays, at a value of £10k, were up a massive 54 % in the financial year 2011 compared to the same period in 2010.

Significantly, high-value bookings were up 19 % to the USA and 18 % to 'faraway' destinations, in a clear demonstration the British public is as keen as ever to invest in long-haul, high-end holidays.

Susan Papworth managing director, Premier Holidays, says, "We attribute a lot of this growth to a greater proliferation of special offers from luxury hotels, free nights and some reduced rates throughout the year. Aggressive air fares – particularly with regard to

business-class deals – has also encouraged travellers. We predict Indochina will come into its own this year – people are looking for a holiday with a difference, places they may not have visited before, that are now more accessible," she says, adding that sales to Canada too are increasing.

Meanwhile health and fitness travel specialists, Health and Fitness Travel, are forecasting the next big trend in this niche sector include 'bootcamps' for the soul, as well as the body.

"More holidays are offering a gentler approach in how to exercise with dedicated tailor-made wellness programmes and some much needed time for relaxation," explains company spokesman Paul Joseph.

His tip for one of the best ways to boost your immune system and beat the winter blues includes a luxury 7-day trip 'detox' trip to a secluded location at a Himalayan retreat.

"The programme begins with wellness and culinary consultations, a fitness test and a body composition analysis. A range of detoxifying baths, massages, showers, salt scrubs, aroma cocoons and a personalised yoga session will follow. You are also invited to participate in scheduled wellness activities, such as meditation, cooking demonstrations, workshops and lectures," says Paul.

For some of Paul's other predictions for top health and fitness breaks in 2012 visit [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)

For more information or to book a wellness holiday, visit [www.healthandfitnesstravel.com](http://www.healthandfitnesstravel.com) or call 0845 5441936 for more information on individual needs and programmes available. For information on jet2 holidays 5 \* resorts, see [www.jet2holidays.com/indulgent.aspx](http://www.jet2holidays.com/indulgent.aspx)

For more details about Premier Holidays see [www.premierholidays.co.uk](http://www.premierholidays.co.uk)





## MAN accelerates into 2012 with major order

Swindon-based MAN Truck & Bus has secured one of its largest orders in recent years – supplying 185 units to Ford Motor Company.

The vehicles will be leased to Ford for five years and will go into operation at the car maker's transport operations in Dagenham, Halewood, Bridgend and Southampton.

The German-built MAN TGX 26.440 BLS 6x2 tractor units will be used to move Ford engines, gearboxes and components to bases around the UK.

While Ford has been using MAN trucks at its German headquarters in Cologne for some time, Ford in the UK has traditionally used rival trucks for its logistics operations.

Under the deal a change of

equipment package has also been agreed meaning a further 185 units will be delivered next year to replace the fleet. In total, the order volume comprises 370 vehicles.

MAN Truck & Bus said it put together an attractive package that met Ford's requirements, adding that attention to detail and the service provided by MAN's sales team were factors in the decision along with positive feedback Ford received from its drivers who commented favourably on the handling and comfort of the MAN trucks.

Ford is the UK's vehicle sales leader with seven major facilities and more than 550 dealerships. It also manufactures vehicles, engines, gearboxes, parts and components at a number of UK plants.

## 500 new jobs at Honda as 2012 Civic production begins

Honda is to create 500 jobs at its Swindon plant as it begins production of the latest version of its Civic.

At a ceremony celebrating the start of production, Honda Motor Europe president Manabu Nishimae said the company remained committed to building cars in Swindon and forecasted increased production in 2012.

He added that Honda in Europe had turned a corner with a significant production increase expected in 2012.

Adding to the new Civic and the already successful Jazz, mass production will begin of the new European CR-V along with the introduction of a small diesel engine. Production volume of

cars for 2012 is forecast to double to 180,000.

Announcing the new jobs, Honda of the UK Manufacturing director Andy Piatek said that Car Plant 2 would return to a two-shift operation in the late Spring creating a need for the new jobs in addition to the current 3,000 employees – known by Honda as associates.

During his speech to Honda associates at the giant South Marston plant, Mr Nishimae acknowledged the workforce's resilience. "The last three years have been extremely difficult for all of Honda's European operations," he said.

"We have faced many challenges beginning with the economic downturn through to the two natural disasters in Japan and Thailand.

Throughout this period associates have remained committed and I am extremely proud of how they have responded to these challenges. We will build upon our new found strength and remain confident of our ability to achieve and succeed in the future."

In a statement released to coincide with the announcement of the new jobs, Prime Minister David Cameron said: "This is great news and a tremendous boost to the workforce, the car industry and UK manufacturing. Honda is contributing to a real renaissance in the UK automotive industry, we have a highly-skilled workforce and we continue to be at the forefront of new technology and development. Its success

is of great importance to our economy and we are committed to do all that we can to see this vital industry grow and thrive."

Business minister Mark Prisk added: "Today's announcement of the creation of 500 new jobs on the day that production started on the next generation of the Civic hatchback is a clear demonstration of Honda's continued commitment to the UK."

"It is a huge vote of confidence in the skills of the Swindon workforce and the current strength of the automotive sector. The decision reinforces the message that the UK remains a great place to manufacture high quality products."

## Arkell's makes it a double as it keeps pace with ever changing pub industry

Swindon brewer Arkell's has acquired two outlets from Enterprise Inns as the 168-year business continues to develop its estate.

The family firm has bought the Fox and Hounds in Haydon Wick and The King's Arms Hotel in Malmesbury, paying the market price for both and expanding its portfolio to 107 properties.

The Fox and Hounds opened around 1840 as a country pub but is now part of Swindon following the town's western expansion 30 years ago. However, it retains a rural feel and is well-supported by the local community, according to Arkell's.

The King's Arms is the brewery's first acquisition in Malmesbury. It has 12 letting rooms, two bars, a

restaurant and a function room for up to 120 people.

Chairman James Arkell said: "These new purchases fit our strategy of continual investment in pubs and small town hotels which have a thriving community around them."

He said breweries and pub companies had to continually develop to keep pace with changes in the licensed industry.

"We've always known this and adapt our estate of pubs accordingly," He said. "That's why we've been in business for more than 160 years, just like the majority of fellow family brewers across the country who understand the licensed trade better than anyone."

"People want more from pubs than just a great pint of beer and someone to chat to – although those are essential.

"Good food is important for all licensed premises and a small country town hotel should be friendly and cosy with room for a good party."

Over the past six years Arkell's has made a number of significant



**Bottoms Up!**  
Alex Arkell, Brendan Lee and George Arkell outside The Fox & Hounds, Haydon Wick

investments in pubs and hotels across the region.

In 2006 it bought The Bear Hotel in the centre of Wantage, significantly upgrading its bars and accommodation to make it a thriving town centre hotel.

The following year it acquired the 16th century 26-bedroom Lansdowne

Strand Hotel in Calne, and in 2008 bought the iconic Riverside Inn at Lechlade, next to the most up-stream marina on the Thames.

In 2009 it turned its attention back to pubs and bought The Mason's Arms at Meysey Hampton. Earlier this year it bought a closed Oxford pub reopening it as The Rickety Press. The

pub, in Jericho, is once again thriving.

Alongside new investment, Arkell's, which brews a range of beers including 2B, 3B and Kingsdown as well as seasonal ales, continually invests in its estate of pubs and earlier this year spent a six-figure sum upgrading The Bull Hotel, Fairford, which it has owned since 1973.



The King's Arms in Malmesbury