

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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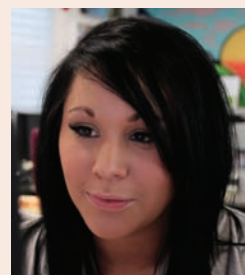
Pages 8 &amp; 9

**In the fast lane for growth  
How the M4 and superfast broadband are  
driving Chippenham's success**

Pages 12 &amp; 13

**Jobs for the boys  
(and girls)  
Plan 500 hits the  
halfway mark**

Page 5



## News in Brief

### Town's challenges discussed

The challenges facing Swindon's economic development were under discussion at a prestigious conference being held in the town. Staged by Barclays Corporate and supported by Swindon Business News, the Future of Swindon was due to hear from a range of top-level speakers on Swindon's prospects in the current challenging economic conditions, with the invited audience of local business figures encouraged to take part in the debate. Barclays Corporate director Chris Elias, who shaped the event, said Swindon had grasped opportunities from changes in the global economy in the past and could do so again. See [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net) for an update and next month's Swindon Business News for a full story on the event.

### 'Smarter Office' unveiled

Phone headset manufacturer Plantronics has unveiled what it calls its Simply Smarter Office at its Wootton Bassett headquarters, which it claims will help firms embrace more flexible working methods. Senior members of the US firm's management team led by managing director, EMEA, Philip Vanhoutte were linked by live webcast to explain how innovation and better use of technology can drive business workplace efficiency. Also at the high-profile event were Tim Oldman, CEO of Leesman Index, an independent specialist on workspace design, and Gita Katbamna, director of workplace change at GlaxoSmithKline. For full story go to [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)

### Coming up in July

July's edition of Swindon Business News will turn the spotlight on Swindon's thriving creative industries, from design and marketing to digital and film-making, as well as looking at its logistics, warehousing and distribution sector - traditionally one of the town's mainstays. We will also explain how businesses can safeguard their intellectual property and focus on Swindon and North Wiltshire's hotel and conference market.

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# Core Strategy criticised

Senior business figures are accusing Swindon Council of jeopardising the town's economic growth in its Draft Core Strategy, the blueprint that will shape the town's development for the next 15 years.

Critics of the strategy say it lacks ambition and could deter major firms moving to the town at a time when it urgently needs new jobs to be created. They also fear that it is too prescriptive in some aspects - although it continues the long-held view that Swindon should have a university, it only allows for one to be built at North Star.

A number of large employers are also warning the council that by adopting a 'low growth' agenda - in contrast to Swindon's traditional expansionist stance aimed at attracting largescale inward investment and population growth - it risks sending out a message that the town is closed for business.

Key to the frustration among some members of the business community, as well as developers and the town's property sector, is the decision by the council to use the government's 'localism' agenda to slash the number of new homes planned for the town by 2026 from 36,000 to 25,000.

They claim this could prevent new employers relocating to the town because of a lack new homes for staff to move into.

Some business figures are also questioning whether the figure of 52.5 hectares (130 acres) of development land agreed in the strategy is sufficient to meet demand.

"It shows a lack of ambition," said one. "What if another Honda or Intel decided to move to Swindon? They would look at this strategy, decide the town is closed for business and go somewhere else. In some ways the council isn't just adopting a 'low growth' strategy, it's 'no growth'."

One business leader at a recent meeting with council officials and members pointed out that Swindon had dropped in the UK GDP rankings from second to the mid-20s.

"Before, we were just behind London - now we are behind Berkshire and other such locations," he said. "Swindon never did low growth - so why now?"

James Gregory, partner at property agents Alder King and South West chair of RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) said of the development land allocation: "It sounds on the low side if we want to be seen as a serious player in the market looking to attract new inward investment or provide an existing occupier with significant expansion."

But Swindon Council believes the strategy creates the right balance for sustainable growth.

Describing it as "fit for Swindon", Cllr Peter Greenhalgh, portfolio holder for transformation, strategic planning and transport, disputed the housing figure was too low and said growth would come from newly-created jobs and employment opportunities.

"We are open for business. We want to encourage economic growth through inward investment rather than just build houses," he said.

Public consultation on the draft strategy ends of June 16.

Swindon Chamber of Commerce has drawn up its response to the strategy which it will unveil to members on June 13.

**Latest news on [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)  
Smiths News to buy rival Dawson for £20 million  
Synergy Health posts full-year profits rise of 17%  
Also follow us at @swindonbiz**

Shopping guru and recently-appointed government adviser on the high street, Mary Portas, has been invited to Swindon to see how the town's retail offering is poised for transformation.

The star of Mary Queen of Shops and Secret Shopper is due to present her findings in the autumn after being asked by David Cameron to investigate the decline of the UK's traditional shopping areas and the rise of so-called 'clone towns' dominated by chain stores.

North Swindon MP Justin Tomlinson has issued the invitation to Ms Portas to see for herself how the town's retail areas are undergoing change.

Although Swindon has slipped 10 places to 65th in the VenueScore national retail league table over the past three years, a number of schemes, including a regenerated Parade, are expected to lift it back up.

Mr Tomlinson, vice-chairman of the All-Party Group on Small Shops, said: "I'm keen to get Mary Portas here as I think she'll find Swindon interesting. Everybody associated with retail here is pulling together to improve the town and we're on the cusp of some new developments which will improve the retail heart."

The invite comes after another major retailer on the verge of opening a store in Swindon has pulled out, this time citing the high level of business rates in the town centre - an issue that Mr Tomlinson said urgently needed addressing to make it rates more flexible and avoid the number of empty units increasing.

The move by the national chain, with more than 50 outlets across the UK, follows a decision earlier this year by kitchenware retailer Lakeland not to move to Mannington. It blamed council planning regulations.

Meanwhile, lower charges in town centre and Old Town car parks introduced recently have been hailed a success by retailers.



*Special invite: Mary Queen of Shops*

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# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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## People

• Sean Kavanagh is the new man at the helm of the taxation department at Banks Chartered Accountants. With more than 30 years' experience, mainly in the area of personal taxation, Sean plans to expand the team and grow the department, focussing on both personal and corporate clients. The move to Banks Chartered Accountants – based in Devizes Road, in Swindon's Old Town – means Sean's career has come full circle.



Sean Kavanagh

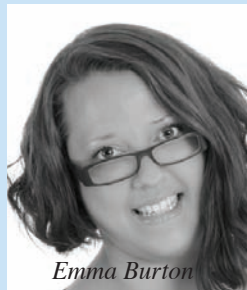
• Daniel Moon has been appointed by Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort (near Calne, Wiltshire) as its new executive chef. Daniel, aged 29, has started in his role at Bowood this week, arriving from Bath's Homewood Park Hotel & Restaurant where he has worked since April 2006. "With Bowood Hotel's Shelburne Restaurant already laying claim to two AA Rosettes and Daniel having gained a third AA Rosette at Homewood Park in September 2010, we have great hopes for the direction in which he will lead the hotel and the 64 seater restaurant, particularly," comments Ben Danielsen, General Manager of Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort. "We are really delighted to be welcoming Daniel to our team at Bowood." During his time at Homewood Park, Daniel was named 'Von Essen Chef of The Year' two years running in



Daniel Moon

2008 and 2009 and also ensured that it secured the 'Restaurant of the Year' accolade from Bath Life magazine in 2009.

• Juice Recruitment has appointed Emma Burton to the Juice team, responsible for recruiting sales, marketing, administration, accountancy and finance applicants in the Wiltshire area. Emma has over five years recruitment experience as a senior consultant where she worked for Huntress Recruitment. She has always demonstrated integrity, determination, has an excellent work ethic and thrives in a busy, dynamic and challenging working environment.



Emma Burton

• Lemon&Co Solicitors in Swindon has expanded its litigation department with the appointment of Calum Campbell to the team. Calum will help build and maintain client delivery across both individual and commercial litigation services and support Lemon&Co's ongoing commitment to mediation and alternative dispute resolution. Lemon&Co, which is based in Swindon's Regent Circus, is one of the largest in the region and has been a leading litigation practice in Wiltshire for nearly 100 years. The 38-year-old brings with him several years' experience, including working for Goughs Solicitors in Devizes and Withy King.



Calum Campbell

## Events

### • Seminar on How to Minimise your Businesses Tax Bill

When: **14 June**

Where: VILLAGE Hotel, Swindon

Contact:

[clare.way@monahans.co.uk](mailto:clare.way@monahans.co.uk)

### • Swindon Mindful Employer Network

When: 14 July from 2pm

Where: Thrings, Penny Lane, Swindon

Contact: [david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk](mailto:david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk)

### • Royal International Air Tattoo

When: **15-17 July**

Where: RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire

Contact: 0800 107 1940

### • Great Western Business Breakfast

When: **22 June, 7:30am-9am**

Where: Steam Museum, Kemble Drive

Contact: 01235 849997

Email:

[lisa.badger@aldermore.co.uk](mailto:lisa.badger@aldermore.co.uk)

### • Vox Academy - Making the Media Work for You and Social Media for Business seminars

When: **20 July, 9:30am-12:30pm and 2pm-5pm**

Where: 3 Little London Court, Swindon

Contact: 01793 511990

Email: [enquiries@voxonline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@voxonline.co.uk)

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# Mindful Employer Network gets backing

Forward Swindon, the town's economic development company, has given its backing to the successful Swindon Mindful Employer Network, which helps local businesses create healthier and more productive workplaces.

The network believes business performance and reputation can be influenced by a positive attitude towards mental health and wellbeing at work – an issue that Forward Swindon sees as helping make Swindon a dynamic and welcoming place to do business.

Forward Swindon's director of economic development Bill Cotton said: "The network has been an astonishing success and attracts a great deal of support and interest. We are delighted to formally support this initiative and look forward to working with the network in promoting Swindon as a great place to live and work".

Richmond Fellowship Wiltshire's David Latham, who manages the network in Swindon, welcomed Forward Swindon's support.

"To receive this boost is wonderful news. The wellbeing at work agenda is growing in importance and I believe it directly benefits Swindon to have a thriving Mindful Employer network," he said.

"Forward Swindon plays a vital role in the exciting regeneration of the town and we believe that all local business networks and employers should play their part in supporting this effort. We look forward to a long and fruitful association."

Established in April 2010, Forward Swindon focuses on business investment and growth, town centre development, cultural development and promoting Swindon.

# Prestigious pigeons perfect transport

In one of its more unusual deals, Swindon-based MAN Truck & Bus UK has supplied a 7.5-tonne vehicle to the British Barcelona Club, the home of long distance pigeon racing. The vehicle is fitted with a specially-designed body and trailer built to exacting standards by Salisbury-based Wessex Vehicle Services. The trailer includes an on-board drinking system for up to 3,500 birds, and a wireless temperature logger to allow continuous monitoring of temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide levels via remotely located sensors.

The TGL vehicle was subjected to extensive evaluation against competitor models before being selected by the club, which is now using it to transport racing pigeons to destinations in France and Spain in readiness for races back to the UK.

The birds are then released - or 'liberated' - and the winner is calculated on 'proper velocity' on return to its loft.

"It was everything we were looking for," said club president Nigel Rigiani. "We are lucky to have a committee member who is involved in haulage, so, with his input, we know we have the right tool for the job."

The winner of the Barcelona race, the longest and most prestigious race in the calendar, can be worth up to £250,000. Such a bird may then be bought and used for breeding the next



Caring carrier: MAN Truck & Bus UK supplies truck for British Barcelona Club

generation of champion homing pigeons. The truck provided is powered by an MAN Euro 5 D08 engine coupled to a six-speed MAN TipMatic automated gearbox. The 'LX' cab is a

long-haul specification boasting additional headroom over the 'L' cab option. A multi-function storage/additional temporary bunk is also provided.

# RTS boss on the secrets of effective communication

RTS Communications' Swindon operations manager Mike O'Sullivan continues the firm's monthly series of articles looking at effective communication.

"When you've been working hard to produce a spectacular event, the last thing you want to worry out is whether your equipment suppliers are going to let you down – particularly if that will leave you and your guests technically speechless.

"One way of ensuring confidence in your suppliers is by knowing their track record—have they delivered the services before? Is their work trusted by companies you hold in high regard? Do they have regular customers—a sure sign of reliability?"

RTS Communications can provide you and your company with a top quality audio visual hire equipment service that will dot every I and cross every T.

The company was established 15 years ago and has a number of high profile organisations that regularly look to them for audio-visual solutions.

One such organisation is international human rights charity Amnesty International. This year, Amnesty wanted to broadcast its AGM online,

allowing invited guests from across the world to participate in real time.

To enable this, RTS set up live realtime web streaming, combined with a custom-designed web page, and dedicated email and Twitter addresses to receive questions and comment.

With the global reach and interest in Amnesty it was important to reflect this in the conference support service we provided them.

"Live web streaming has to be right the first time – there's no option for a re-take – and the delivery network used has to be able to handle the traffic demand of a fluctuating number of viewers, otherwise you'll end up with a dead feed and remote viewers missing the vital action. For peace of mind, you need to bring in a company that is experienced and knowledgeable with these methods of distribution. In addition to all of the core audio and visual conference services we provide, RTS can deliver reliable web streaming for large and small events that can take away one of the headaches of organising events with wide-spread appeal."

For more information on RTS Communications visit [www.rtscommunications.com](http://www.rtscommunications.com) or call 01793 694470.

## Vox Academy

**Wednesday 20th July**  
At Vox, 3 Little London Court, Swindon.

**Session 1: 9.30am - 12.30pm**  
**Making the Media Work for You**

**Session 2: 2pm - 5pm**  
**Social Media for Business**

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## Charity golf day to be held

Clients of Banks Chartered Accountants will be teeing off for charity when the Swindon firm hosts a fundraising golf day.

The event, at Ogbourne Downs Golf Club on June 29, is the first in what the Old Town-based firm plans to make an annual event.

Clients and members will take part and all money raised through sponsorship, donations and a raffle - expected to be £500 to £600 - will go to Wiltshire Young Carers, part of the charity Youth Action Wiltshire.

Andy Barlow, who runs Banks' financial services arm, said: "We wanted to select a local charity to support, which doesn't have such a high profile and where even a relatively small amount of fundraising makes a big difference," he said. "We were also very impressed with the work they do to support young people who are carers, helping around 450 young people in Wiltshire."

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## Do you know when to invest in new product development?

**W**hy should you invest in new product development if your existing product is doing really well? Andrew Phillips, Manufacturing Specialist at the Manufacturing Advisory Service in the South West (MAS-SW), who works with Wiltshire businesses, explains why innovation is important – no matter what your business: Every product has a life cycle. Sooner or later, even the most successful product loses its edge and is superseded by something bigger or smaller, faster, cleverer or more cost-effective.



Andrew Phillips

The best companies recognise this and allocate time and resource to continuous improvement. Apple iPhone is a good example; iPhone 1 came out and there was a huge surge of interest. Then, iPhone 2, 3, and 4 followed in quick succession – while the buzz of the first product was still high.

When a product is doing really well, the overwhelming temptation is often to channel all your resources into managing its success.

But what happens when your product's popularity starts to wane and competitors begin to launch superior versions, a newcomer radically undercuts you, or consumers switch their allegiance?

If you aren't continually improving your products, developing new lines or exploring new markets, there is a real danger that today's success will become tomorrow's failure.

It's important that you assess where you are in your product's life cycle – and act accordingly. You can't afford to stop planning, even when you're experiencing rapid growth and your resources are stretched to the limit. MAS-SW works closely with management teams on their business strategy, helping them to keep one eye focused on the future at all times. MAS-SW is renowned for its hands-on, practical approach, not only helping you to devise effective ways of integrating planning and development into the fabric of the business, but also by helping to implement the changes at all levels.

If you would like advice on growing your business or developing your next product, contact 0845 608 3838 or email [info@swmas.co.uk](mailto:info@swmas.co.uk)

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**E-mail: [swindon@samaritans.org](mailto:swindon@samaritans.org)**

## Air Tattoo on its way

For one weekend every July the normally sleepy Cotswold village of Fairford becomes a mecca for aviation enthusiasts from around the globe as the Royal International Air Tattoo gets underway.

Taking place this year on July 16 and 17, the event is unrivaled for its sheer size and excitement.

Each year the Air Tattoo welcomes representatives from 25 nations, upwards of 250 aircraft, 5,000 corporate guests, celebrities and VIP' as well as more than 150,000 visitors.

The greenfield site is turned into a two-mile showground with hospitality chalets, hire vehicles, food and drink for staff and visitors brought in from both local and national suppliers – all providing a welcome boost to the local economy.

Each year the Air Tattoo boasts:

A team of around 3,000 volunteers – ranging from air traffic controllers and aircraft engineers to medics and firefighters

More than 15,000 packed meals for the volunteer staff

Catering staff of 380 against just four who work at the base

More than 3,000 bottles of champagne and wine drunk by attendees

100,000 individual pieces of crockery, cutlery and glassware which are brought in to cater for guests

More than four miles of fencing and barriers erected and 50kms of rope & stake put up

10,000 cones laid out on the airfield for routing vehicles and static aircraft



The Royal International Air Tattoo is an inspirational story in its own right.

In the autumn of 1971 two young air traffic controllers stepped forward to help stage an afternoon's flying for an RAF Charity. Forty years on and Tim Prince, one of those young volunteers, is now the chief executive of the Tattoo.

“It has been one helluva journey and I've enjoyed every single moment.....well most of them!” said Tim “To be staging our 40th show is real cause for celebration and excitement. I couldn't be more proud of what we have achieved, or the team that helped turn those early dreams into reality.”

## New apprenticeship courses now available

According to a recent poll of current A-Level students, just 47 per cent intend to apply to universities in 2011 with an even smaller percentage predicted for 2012.

The poll found that students are increasingly looking for work rather than continuing into higher education. Of those looking for work, 67 per cent stated they wouldn't be able to afford the fees following the announcement from OFA (Office of Fair Access) that universities in the UK would charge at least £6,000 per year from 2012, with almost 75 per cent of universities charging the maximum fees of £9,000. This further supports the call for employers to support their workforce to achieve qualifications in the workplace using apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships to formally recognise their skills.

Andrea Fitzgerald, Swindon College's Business First development manager said: With 55 per cent rises in university fees and reduced training budgets in this economic climate, apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships are a real alternative to university and graduate programmes for employers. Over the years, Swindon College has worked with employers, universities and industry specialists to ensure our range of apprenticeships reflect the real needs of businesses and industry.

Swindon College is now adding the following new apprenticeships to

their portfolio:

Level 4

Apprenticeship in Engineering

Apprenticeship in Business

Apprenticeship in Hospitality

Level 2

Apprenticeship in Team Leading

Apprenticeship in ITQ

For more information on how an apprenticeship can benefit your business or our new or existing apprenticeships contact Business First Team on 01793 498404 or [businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk](mailto:businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk)

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# Plan 500 hits 250

**P**lan 500, the public-private scheme set up to create 500 work-related opportunities for Swindon's young people, has hit the 250 mark.

The project was launched last year in the wake of a shock leap in youth unemployment in the town - between August 2008 and August 2009 the number of young people claiming Jobseekers Allowance shot up by 200 per cent.

A concerted effort by the organisations behind Plan 500 - including the Department for Work and Pensions, Forward Swindon, the town's economic development company, Swindon Council, GWE Business West and Nationwide Building Society - has since helped create 250 opportunities including work experience, mentoring and apprenticeships, with more than 100 of the town's forward-looking employers taking part.

Apprenticeships in Swindon have climbed by 65 per cent over the past

year and the town has the third-highest number of young people in the South West registered on the Apprenticeship Vacancies Online - five per cent higher than the national average.

Gavin Jones, chief executive of Swindon Council, said: "Plan 500, though its activity and partnership working, has added value to the achievements of our local schools, colleges and training providers in opening up and creating new opportunities for work experience and essentially, linking these experiences of work to the qualification pathways that are available to develop careers."

"The mentoring programme has been especially well received by the business community who have actively participated in the training and are currently giving their time to mentor young people to find or keep them in employment."

To celebrate hitting the 250 mark, a special breakfast event is being held at the STEAM museum on June 29

with Nick Hewer, Sir Alan Sugar's right hand man on The Apprentice. It will also hear from Steve Blore, chair of Plan 500, and Bill Cotton, director of economic development at Forward Swindon.

Ahead of the event, employment minister Chris Grayling praised Plan 500, saying it "ticks all the boxes to help young people get on the career ladder."

He added: "As well as matching young people with business mentors it offers them a real route into the workplace. In return local businesses get an apprentice with the right attitude to learn and who will care about their company."

More businesses are being sought to take part in Plan 500. For more information contact Lisa Smart at Forward Swindon on 01793 612276 or email:

lisasmart@forwardswindon.co.uk.

The breakfast event on June 29 is between 7.30am and 10am.

## Former nightclub becomes venue for corporate events

A former nightclub in Swindon town centre has been re-opened as a venue for corporate events.

Owner of The Venue, Wroughton-based the Quality Dining Group, says it has made a significant investment in totally refurbishing the former Apartments nightclub off the Brunel Plaza.

The Venue, which has three function rooms, has already held a number of events, including functions for Swindon-based building society Nationwide, as well as a wedding reception and several parties.

Sales and marketing director Mark Wylie said: "Our aim is to offer a unique and bespoke five-star service at an affordable cost. Where hotels have to keep the costs higher to support the other areas of their business, we don't."

The Venue's function rooms include the ground-floor Brunel Suite, which has its own bar and can cater for

up to 250 people.

Upstairs the Arkell's Suite has a boardroom set up, projector and TV screen. It can seat 30 round a table or 45 theatre-style. Also upstairs is the Club Room which has a bar and space for dancing, a DJ and live bands.

The Venue is the Quality Dining Group's third outlet - the other two are in Gloucester Docks and Cirencester.

Mark added: "Our background is more than 25 years in catering and we pride ourselves on the quality of food we can offer, be that for corporate breakfasts and lunches, or a whole wedding party. Where possible, it is locally sourced and is always freshly prepared by our award-winning chef."

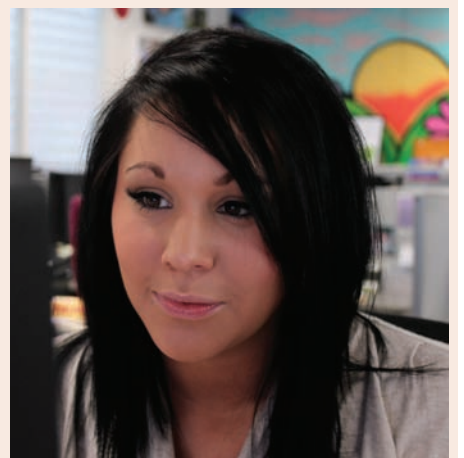
"We're able to cater for any requests and to meet any dietary needs. For example, at The Venue Cirencester we've provided a Persian banquet. We've also hosted Medieval banquets and, in fact, have one booked to be held here in Swindon."



### The employer:

Dion Alday, strategy and operations manager, corporate responsibility at Nationwide Building Society,

"When Hannah first came in she was bright and bubbly - but nervous. She soon settled in, though, and it's great to see the way she's developed. When her six-month placement was up we didn't want to lose her and fortunately had some maternity cover for six months. It's worked out really well and we're delighted to have helped her. We'd urge any employer to get involved in Plan 500 and help enthusiastic and talented young people like Hannah."



### The young person:

Hannah Millington-Rees, 22, had two placements with Nationwide Building Society through Plan 500. She is now working at Zurich Financial Services.

"I originally wanted to be hairdresser so didn't really study for exams at school properly. I left with two GCSEs but then realised it wasn't what I wanted to do. By then jobs were starting to get harder to find so I went to college and got to get better qualifications. I first went to Nationwide under the Future Jobs Fund for six months and really enjoyed. Every day was different. It's given me so much confidence."

## Vox sees 'sharp increase' in crisis management

Swindon's major PR and marketing consultancy, Vox, has seen a sharp increase in demand for crisis PR management advice in the wake of several national and international crises.

Director Sue Pycroft says that the emergence of the internet and social networking has meant that facts - and fiction - around accidents, errors of judgment and any other potentially damaging incidents now spread far faster than ever before.

"Damage to the reputation of your company or the goods you produce or services you provide can be devastating," says Sue.

"The way that Spanish farmers have suffered as a consequence of what seems to be an E-Coli outbreak in Germany is just one illustration of how we can all find ourselves at the mercy of a totally unrelated incident. Most intelligent companies have a business continuity plan which looks at how they will protect their data, IT systems and other equity, but it's important to include protection of reputation in that plan as well. The loss of reputation can be very damaging indeed, but with a little preparation companies can be well protected in case the unimaginable does ever happen."

For more information, call Vox on 01793 511990, go to [www.voxonline.co.uk](http://www.voxonline.co.uk) or email [sue.pycroft@voxonline.co.uk](mailto:sue.pycroft@voxonline.co.uk)

## Email service to help small firms

An email alert service has been launched to help Swindon-based small and medium-sized contractors cut through the confusion surrounding low carbon policy and take advantage of the business opportunities on offer.

The free alerts will count down to impending low carbon policy and legislation such as the Green Deal, Renewable Heat Incentives and the Green Investment Bank, signposting users to the skills and knowledge they need to respond and ultimately help them win new business.

The alerts are the latest development from the Cut the Carbon campaign.

For more information about Cut the Carbon campaign visit: [www.cskills.org/cutcarbon](http://www.cskills.org/cutcarbon)

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Incahoo is a new concept in the UK - a concept that is based on companies working better together. How are we better together? By using the power of group buying, Incahoo has negotiated the best value mobile phone, broadband and energy deals in the UK. As a start-up it was vitally important to Incahoo that every addition to the team brought a wealth of expertise and experience and would be committed to

contributing to the business's growth.

### NEIL GATHERUM, candidate

said about Juice: Lucy approached me about this role and her passionate review of Incahoo really sold it to me, I had been approached several times by recruitment companies but Lucy's enthusiasm really made me listen to what she had to say. I am glad I listened as I love working here.

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# Stand out from the crowd

**B**randing is a way of making a business stand out in the crowd. It clearly highlights what makes its product or service different to, and more attractive than, its competitors.

So why do so many businesses get branding – and rebranding – wrong?

Many businesses think branding is simply about creating an attractive logo and using it on the website, packaging and letterheads.

But an effective brand goes much deeper than this. According to Business Link, a brand “defines a set of associations that an existing or potential customer has of a company, product, service or individual”.

It adds: “Branding also reflects your customers’ experiences of your business and affects every interaction you have with your customers and suppliers.”

Long-established law firm Thrings took this to heart when it recently rebranded. It had grown through mergers and acquisitions over a number of years into Thring Townsend Lea & Pemberton with offices in Swindon, Bath, Bristol and London.

The rebranding process, which took eight months, enabled the firm to



take a hard look at everything it did. It also sought the views of clients and external opinion formers.

Swindon law firm Lemon & Co Solicitors coincided its rebranding last year with refurbishing its offices in Regent Circus. The 80-year-old firm used the exercise to promote what it called its “substantial experience with 21st Century innovation and practice” and differentiate itself in a crowded legal market.

Marketing and design agencies themselves need to rebrand when they

change and evolve and The Sound Marketing Group of Melksham is no different. It has recently undergone a comprehensive rebrand that coincides with internal restructuring following 14 years of organic growth through a number of ventures in marketing services.

Managing director Nicki Cooper said: “We feel that now is the time to bring our four businesses together under one banner. Synergy in our brands not only helps us carry out a first-class service but brings many benefits to our customers through enhanced communication and economies.”

The Sound Marketing group comprises Sign Marketing (a design and signage studio), Sound Marketing (an audio branding agency), Sound Networks (IT infrastructure, support and web development) and Embroidery UK Ltd (branded work wear.)

Even for a company that offers rebranding as a service things aren’t always straight forward – it had to maintain the high search engine ranking of its four incumbent websites while making the websites easy to navigate.

## Jazzbones wins web and content management contract for Forward Swindon’s online look

Jazzbones Creative, the Swindon-based graphic design, website design and brand identity specialist, is developing the online brand and creating the website and content management system for Forward Swindon, the economic and development arm of Swindon Borough Council.

The commission is the latest in a long line of successful branding exercises carried out by the Dorcan-based agency since it was launched six years ago.

Over that period it has worked with start ups like Response Healthcare Recruitment and Swindon School of English, small and medium-sized enterprises like Richard James Estate Agents and hauliers Young European as well as large corporates such as household appliance brand Miele and Smiths News, the Swindon-based newspaper and

magazine distributor.

Michelle Jones, marketing manager at Forward Swindon said: “Jazzbones clearly showed that they understood the requirements of Forward Swindon and how to translate our brand and goals onto the web. We are looking forward to working with them on future brand led projects.”

Jazzbones creative director Nathan Sandhu added: “Businesses large and small are realising that to gain competitive advantage they must have a unique and impactful brand identity and a clear set of USPs.”

To find out how Jazzbones can create the difference to your brand phone 01793 646950 or visit [www.jazzbones.co.uk](http://www.jazzbones.co.uk)

## Bag a great return on your brand promotion

Branded promotional items and corporate gifts come in an almost limitless range. Finding what grabs the attention most has been difficult to prove but a recent study has shown that promotional bags receive the highest number of views of all promotional items, only just beating jackets and closely followed by pens and calendars.

Ruth Jeffrey, director of Malmesbury-based corporate gift

distributor Mindvision which specialises in promoting brands across a range of media, explains: “Promotional products make a subconscious impression of the brand on everyone who sees them, plus the brand message is reinforced every time the item is used.

“There’s just no other form of media that provides a benefit so closely tied to a brand message. The gift itself should become part of the brand

message, rather than just carrying a logo.”

With the average lifespan of a promotional product standing at about five months, the cost per view has been calculated in a recent study as being less than any other printed media, at just 0.008p per view.

For your copy of the latest Mindvision corporate gift catalogue, contact [ruth@mindvision.co.uk](mailto:ruth@mindvision.co.uk) or call 01666 826226.

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# Melksham firm wins workplace health and wellbeing award

Melksham-based Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems' employee health programme has won a category in the Wiltshire Workplace Health and Wellbeing awards.

The programme, which is run under the well@work banner, includes a wide range of “real” health initiatives designed to support all employees in living a healthier lifestyle; from healthy eating options in its company restaurant, to health advice clinics and health checks for all, to sponsoring, supplying equipment for and supporting employee charity cycle rides.

Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems managing director Paul Goodhand said: “The well@work programme has

become a central and important initiative within the company and this award is not only great recognition for those who have created the programme and continue to drive it forward but also for our employees who have embraced it and made it such a success.”

The award ceremony took place at Salisbury City Hall and was attended by 200 guests from across Wiltshire who included John Bush, the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and John Glen, MP for Salisbury.

Competition in all categories was fierce with more than 200 nominations for the nine award categories. Nearly 80 different projects were considered by the judges.

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## Fast Forward to host 'Lean Green' business forum in July

**F**ast Forward is hosting a 'Lean Green Business Forum' on the July 4th, between 5.30-7.30pm at New College Swindon.

This is the second in a series of forums Fast Forward has hosted, and this event is supported by the BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Aligra Personnel and LSIS (the Learning and Skills Improvement Service).

The event will focus on two key areas to help local business continue to thrive in the recovering economic market – growing your own talent and reducing your carbon footprint.

**BEING LEAN:** The business forum will look into the efficiency and productivity benefits and recruitment savings when companies employ an apprentice. Key speakers will be Andy Rowlett and Daniel Knapp of Aligra Personnel, who will be able to discuss first-hand knowledge of expanding your workforce with apprentices, both from the employer and apprentice viewpoint.

**BEING GREEN:** Industry expert Mark O'Neill will be sharing best practice and top tips on practical ways to reduce costs and the carbon footprint of a business. Mark, in conjunction with the BCS, has been responsible for creating the first formally accredited training course for Green IT – the Foundation Certificate in Green IT ([www.bcs.org/greenit](http://www.bcs.org/greenit)).

New College is also paving the way in 'being green' and working in partnership with a consortium of colleges, including Exeter College and Weymouth College, on a

new 'Lean Green IT Machine' initiative, supported by LSIS. This new initiative aims to help Further Education colleges share their knowledge and expertise in Green IT with the local business community. Not only will this result in money saved on IT and related energy costs at a time when businesses are under pressure to cut back, but it will ensure that the impact of IT on the environment is minimised.

Delegates will be able to pose direct questions to Mark, Andy and Daniel. There will be the opportunity for delegates to network during refreshments, and information will be provided on key training and development solutions from Fast Forward. There will also be the opportunity for delegates to enter a competition to win £100 Green Rewards Voucher [www.greenrewards.co.uk](http://www.greenrewards.co.uk).

Sinclair Brown, business services manager at Fast Forward said: "We hope this event provides many local businesses with the ideas and information to grow their business, and continue to save money wherever possible. We're delighted that experts in their fields Mark, Andy and Daniel will be on hand during the evening and we hope this evening has something to offer everyone who attends, and will provide valuable networking alongside practical advice and information."

For more details on the event, or to book a place, please visit [Fastforward.newcollege.ac.uk/businessforum](http://Fastforward.newcollege.ac.uk/businessforum) or speak to Catherine on 01793 732893/ [Catherine.bozec@newcollege.ac.uk](mailto:Catherine.bozec@newcollege.ac.uk)



*Cllr Ray Ballman and Kim Trueman*

## Wedding boutique opens in Old Town

Additional space in its new shop is enabling established bridal store Trousseau's to offer customers a wider range of designer dresses and accessories from top designers while creating a relaxed atmosphere in which they can enjoy planning their wedding.

Having outgrown its previous retail space in Wood Street, Old Town, the business has moved across the road to the former Limmex hardware store.

The new site, which has 3,500 sq ft of space over three floors, has enabled Trousseau's to increase its offering, which includes shoes, jewellery and accessories, and cater for entire wedding parties and other major events. Trousseau's also sells top-of-the-range outfits for mothers of brides and bridesmaids, as well as prom nights and special occasions.

The additional space also enables larger dresses to be shown to their full splendour. Collections available at the boutique include dresses from designers such as Augusta Jones, Ian Stuart, Ronald Joyce, Sophia Tolly, Maggie Sottero and White Rose. Prices range from £500 to £3,500.

Owner Kim Trueman: "Trousseau's aims to offer something for every budget, with the best possible customer service provided regardless of spend."

More than 100 guests attended a launch party at the shop, which has officially opened by the Deputy Mayor of Swindon Ray Ballman.

Greg Callard from Swindon law firm Withy King, worked closely with Kim to secure the best deal on the new premises, which had been empty for more than two years.

## Love to Plan goes from strength to strength

In nearly four years Natalie Lovett of Love to Plan has gone from planning weddings her car during her lunch hour to a full-time role in the infinitely more comfortable surroundings of her own office.

"It's involved a lot of hard work and determination, but through my passion for planning, I feel like I'm here at last," she says.

As a 'people-person' and a perfectionist, the wedding industry is the ideal environment for her and planning weddings is a great privilege.

"During the last few years I've worked on many weddings and while the theme and the degree of my involvement varies considerably, each has the same essential element running through it: the application of a great deal of thorough work and organisation ensuring a completely enjoyable, memorable and stress free day for the bride and groom."

To find out more about Love to Plan's services and browse the decorative finishing touches, both for sale and hire, visit [www.lovetoplan.co.uk](http://www.lovetoplan.co.uk)

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For more information email: [catherine.bozec@newcollege.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.bozec@newcollege.ac.uk)  
or call on **01793 732893**. Places are limited for this free event, so act fast!



For more information visit:

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Fast Forward is the Business Services Division of New College Swindon



# Chippenham: A town on the move

The recent opening of its first Waitrose store was seen as an indication to many in Chippenham that the town had achieved a certain status.

While it had no shortage of food retailers - Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Tesco all have stores there - the Waitrose in Borough Parade was seen as a sign that the town was moving ahead.

Its attractive, pedestrianised High Street, like many others around the country, may have suffered when Woolworth's closed, but the arrival of Starbucks and Costa Coffee over the last few years have given it a vibrant feel.

It's a similar picture for the town's commercial property market. Chippenham's long-established prime industrial estate, Bumpers Farm, may not win any prizes for architectural excellence, but the 40-acre site has few empty buildings and developers County Estates is planning new offices on the edge of the park.

Newer business parks such as Greenways - a prestige development on the site of the town's former maternity hospital - and Methuen Park and the Turnpike Business Park off the Bath Road are also proving popular with office occupiers.

Wincanton relocated its head office in 2005 from Somerset to Chippenham where it now employs 400 people in a 50,000 sq ft building on Turnpike while office furniture designer Herman Miller sited its European headquarters nearby rather than develop its Bath base.

The last available site at Methuen Park, a 1.1-acre square of land, is being marketed as The Chorum by King Sturge and Alder King. It previously had planning consent for 35,000 sq ft of grade A office accommodation, but is now being promoted as suitable for a variety of other uses, subject to planning.

Alder King partner James Gregory said: "A company seeking a highly-visible position on one of Wiltshire's major thoroughfares need look no further."

According to Huw Thomas of King Sturge, Chippenham is more than capable of competing against bigger neighbours Swindon and Bath.

Thanks to its location on the M4 between Swindon and Bristol and its mainline rail link to London, Chippenham has become a thriving business centre. With a cluster of innovative firms in hi-tech, engineering and pharmaceuticals, the town's future success looks guaranteed. But there are some key issues to address to accommodate further growth.

"Its location means it's often on the wish list of businesses looking to move along the M4," he says. "It's been successful in attracting the head offices of some large businesses which previously would have probably gone to Swindon. But what we do lack here is land where we can develop large warehouses which, given its position on the M4, would make sense."

Future employment land is a thorny issue for Chippenham, especially as rapid housebuilding west and south of the town over recent decades has led to an increasing population.

The Crest Nicholson-owned Showell Farm 39-acre site south of the town was deemed too sensitive to develop - even though, according to those close to the matter, local food processing firm Hygrade had promised to move there. Hygrade later closed its plant in the town with the loss of 500 jobs.

Development of Showell Farm, along with the smaller Hunters Moon site also south of the town, are back on the agenda in the light of a report

commissioned by the then Wiltshire County Council from DTZ which showed an urgent need for employment land. According to local sources, two major local employers are growing so fast they will soon need larger buildings.

The original industrial heart of the town, Langley Park, could accommodate some of this expansion, according to site owners Ashtenne, which through its agents King Sturge is marketing 830,000 sq ft of warehouse, workshop and office accommodation with units ranging in size from 200 sq ft to 250,000 sq ft.

The area, which sits alongside the London-Bristol rail line, was once home to the Westinghouse group of engineering businesses which made brakes, signals and other railway equipment.

Today the site is still home to Invensys Rail and Westcode Semiconductors, originally parts of the former Westinghouse empire, along with Avon &

Wilts NHS Mental Health Partnership, Great Western Ambulance, Schneider Electric and RFL Communications.

With demand for housing continuing in the town, part of the site is likely to become residential. A retail element to the scheme is in the balance, however, after plans to build an Asda supermarket there have been refused twice.

More likely to get the go ahead is a long-awaited scheme on the Bath Road car park site in the town centre where ING has been awarded preferred developer status and is drawing up a scheme with six to eight units for smaller, boutique-style shops.

Chippenham's location has encouraged small clusters of hi-tech and pharmaceutical-related businesses to develop with Vectura and Alliance Pharma representing the latter growing in the town. Hi-tech firms include specialist software firm SciSys, whose clients range from broadcasters to defence firms.

The growth of these businesses is being helped

by the town's access to superfast broadband.

Exactly 170 years after Brunel's Great Western Railway connected Chippenham with London and opened up new markets for its agricultural businesses, broadband is doing the same for its newer businesses.

Bath-based HPH Commercial Property has built a portfolio of retail and office properties in the town, including the landmark Bewley House - the former North Wiltshire District Council headquarters close to the station.

Bewley House has attracted a number of hi-tech and business service tenants due to its superfast broadband and HPH managing director Lindsay Holdoway believes this is pushing Chippenham ahead of rival towns.

"It's the next stage in development of the town," he said. "First came the railway, then the motorway. Now broadband is putting Chippenham on the map. We get a lot of inquiries because we can offer this service."



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# Key facts

**Population:** 43,880 (2007)

**House prices:** Average  
£203,572 (2011)

**Key business parks:**

Bumpers Farm  
Methuen Park  
Greenways Business Park  
Turnpike Business Park

**Travel times:**

To airports  
- Heathrow 1hr 30mins  
- Gatwick, 2hrs  
- Bristol 50mins

London: by rail 1hr 25mins

Swindon: by rail 15mins

Bristol: by rail 25mins

**Major businesses:**

Wincanton (logistics)  
Invensys Rail (engineering)

Omnicare (clinical research)  
Wavin Plastics (manufacturing)  
Huber Technology (waste water controls)

Vectura (pharmaceutical)

Alliance Pharma

(pharmaceutical)

Herman Miller

(office furniture)

**Useful websites:**

Wiltshire Council Economic  
Development -

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

Vision for Chippenham -

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

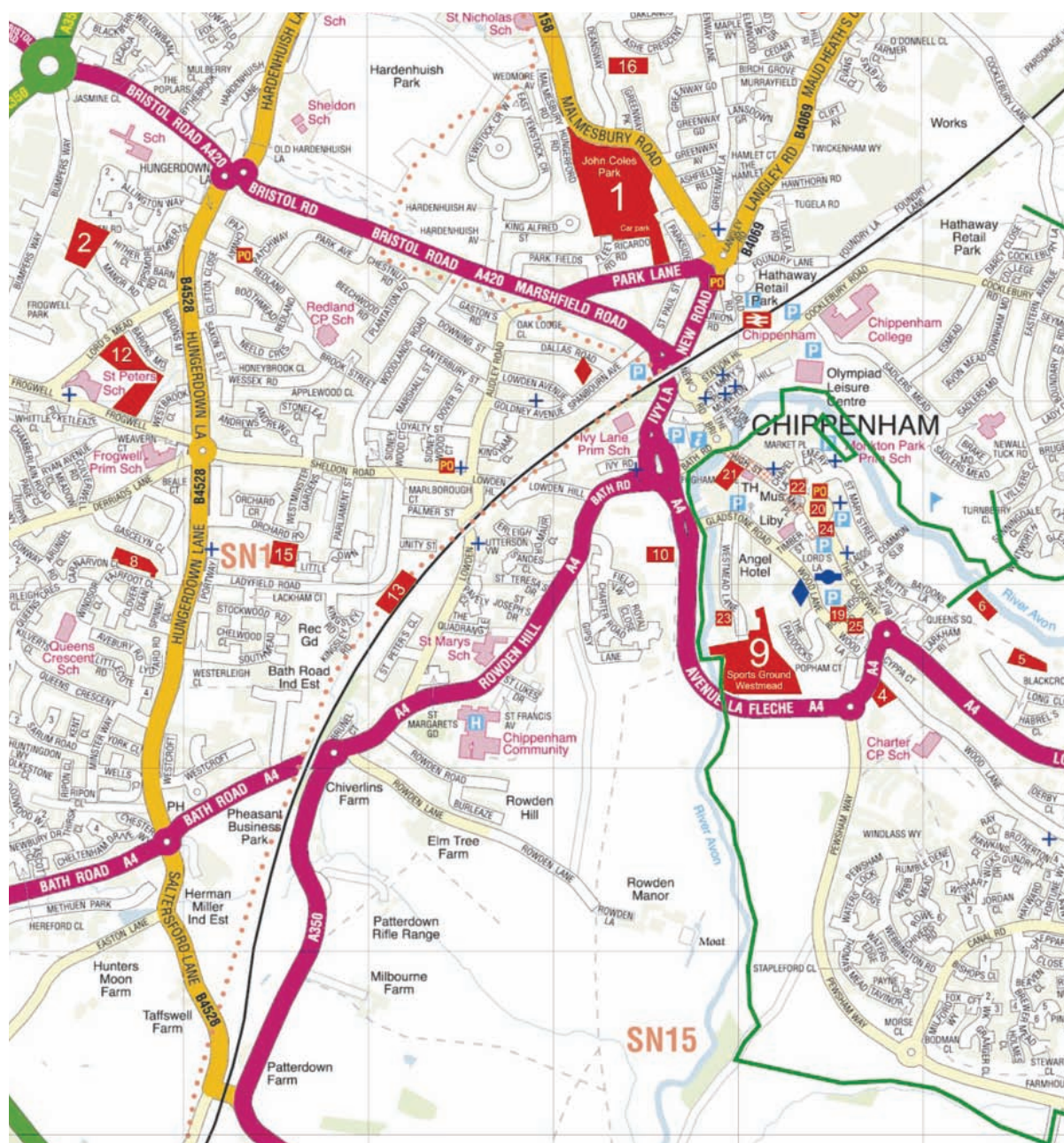
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[www.northwiltshire.com](http://www.northwiltshire.com)

Invest in Wiltshire -

[www.investinwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.investinwiltshire.org.uk)



## Scisys buys its Chippenham HQ to remove rent liability

SciSys, the Chippenham-based specialist software developer, has bought the freehold on its 44,000 sq ft, two-storey headquarters building at Methuen Park and has appointed Colliers International to market 11,000 sq ft of it.

A SciSys spokesman said: "The company considers that this acquisition will have an immediate positive impact on profitability by removing a substantial rent liability," SciSys said. "The property will be sublet on a long-term lease to its wholly-owned subsidiary company, SciSys UK Ltd, which is currently the

primary occupier. SciSys will also seek to install other tenants in the building to generate additional income."

The deal was funded partly from cash held by the company, partly from a commercial loan from a UK bank over a five-year term and partly through a three-year loan from founder and chairman Dr Mike Love.

James Preece of Colliers' Bristol office said: "As well as all the facilities you would expect from prime modern office space Number 2 Methuen Park includes an on site gym and café to ensure staff are well catered for."

## Only one floor remains at Bewley House

Alder King and Whitmarsh Lockhart have been appointed by HPH Ltd to market the last remaining floor within Chippenham's landmark office building, Bewley House, by owners HPH.

The suite comprises 4,300 sq ft and additional secure basement storage and separate meeting rooms can be made available.

Recently refurbished to a high standard and incorporating some of the latest money-saving devices\*, taking occupation of these offices will help reduce the occupier's costs as well as enhancing their green credentials.

Daniel Smethurst, partner at Whitmarsh Lockhart said: "We are delighted to have been appointed by HPH to promote such a well-known building which will appeal to both the local market and further afield. It is the most prominent building in the town centre with all the benefits of its central location with plenty of parking as well as its proximity to the M4 and the railway station which provides easy direct access to both London Paddington and Bristol."

James Gregory, partner at Alder King, continued: "Bewley House will save an occupier money over and above many other buildings in Chippenham because the owner has strived, and continues to strive, to provide the best possible services for the occupiers to keep their overheads to a minimum. And most importantly it is available to occupy now."

Chris Wordsworth, from HPH, added: "Bewley House is one of the first buildings in Chippenham to receive superfast broadband and we have just installed this facility into the building."

For further information, please contact the letting agents Alder King on 01793 615477 or Whitmarsh Lockhart on 01793 541000.



# Chippenham

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# B&Q centre completes ahead of schedule

Developer Gazeley has finished work on B&Q's massive £70 million logistics distribution centre on its G.Park Swindon scheme at South Marston six weeks ahead of schedule.

The 796,649 sq ft purpose-built warehouse – one of the largest in the South West – has been completed in just 32 weeks. It has been handed over to the DIY giant and will now be fitted out. When operational next year it will employ 550 people and supply all B&Q's DIY and home stores across the South of England.

The warehouse is the first on G.Park Swindon, which can also accommodate further bespoke buildings up to 40,400 sq m (435,000 sq ft). As part of the project, Gazeley has worked closely with Swindon Borough Council to



improve the local road network as well as contributing £150,000 for local art and £700,000 for the Great Western Community Forest.

Gazeley senior vice president Nigel Godfrey said: "This project has been a key development for Gazeley and to complete something of this size so far ahead of our commitment to our customer is a huge achievement. B&Q is naturally delighted and I believe this further cements our position as the industry's leading build-to-suit developments."

One of Swindon's most iconic office buildings has a new tenant following the relocation of the UK sales office of US micro-electronics firm Fairchild Semiconductor.

Fairchild has moved into a 3,792 sq ft office suite in Building 120 on Windmill Hill Business Park from its previous base on Wootton Bassett's Interface Business Park. Building 120, formerly known as Sigma, has been completely refurbished by site owner St Martins Property Corporation. The

eye-catching, tinted-windowed building – among the first to be constructed at Windmill Hill – was previously occupied by Alcatel-Lucent.

Fairchild has taken a new five year lease agreement on the office suite at a quoting rent of £16 per sq ft. Office accommodation in the building totals just over 11,000 sq ft in four suites over two floors.

Letting agents for the building were Hartnell Taylor Cook (HTC) and Whitmarsh Lockhart.



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## Tenant secured at former Indian restaurant

Acting on behalf of HPH, Alder King Property Consultants has let the former Agra restaurant in the centre of Chippenham to qualified chefs Stephen Smith and Christopher Bonsor.

The 1,081 sq ft retail unit at 8 New Road was let on a new ten year lease and has been fully refitted to provide impressive modern contemporary styling and is now trading as The Bridge Brasserie. The new restaurant brings a different type of dining experience to the locality and is already receiving some excellent reviews.

Alison Williams, senior surveyor at Alder King commented: "Unit 8 occupies a busy central location opposite the Brunel Pub with strong pedestrian footfall."

"This new restaurant offers something completely different to the town that is a welcomed facility to Chippenham and the surrounding area."

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44/45 Regent Street	110m <sup>2</sup> / 1185ft <sup>2</sup>
Office Units	
44/45 Regent Street	345m <sup>2</sup> / 3717ft <sup>2</sup>
Industrial Units / Sites	
6 Brindley Close (Site)	526m <sup>2</sup> / 5661ft <sup>2</sup>
9 Brindley Close (Site)	787m <sup>2</sup> / 8471ft <sup>2</sup>
12 Brindley Close (Site)	600m <sup>2</sup> / 6458ft <sup>2</sup>
County Road (Site)	4269m <sup>2</sup> / 45951ft <sup>2</sup>
13 Kendrick (Site)	501m <sup>2</sup> / 5393ft <sup>2</sup>
2 Seymour Road	567m <sup>2</sup> / 6103ft <sup>2</sup>
Other	
Morris Street Hall (DI)	187m <sup>2</sup> / 2012ft <sup>2</sup>
Turnpike Road, Highworth (Lock Up / Store)	35m <sup>2</sup> / 376 ft <sup>2</sup>

Further details available from:  
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## Deals ticking over at Ash & Birch

New tenants are continuing to be secured at the Ash & Birch Industrial Estate at Kembrey Park following the introduction of a new asset management programme by Caisson Investment Management, which acquired the estate nearly a year ago.

Joint agents Alder King, King Sturge and Loveday and Loveday recently let three units at Ash & Birch as a result of the changes.

Electricians G&W Contracting have moved into the 1,510 sq ft Unit 18b on a five-year lease, while England Carpentry has taken 2,276 sq ft Unit 3, also on a five-year lease.

Unit 20 Ash, which is 2,264 sq ft, has been let to Mortgage Protection and Finance Ltd, which trades as Mortgageforce, and specialist water pump firm D P Pumps, again on a five-year lease.

Remaining units on the market range from 1,000 sq ft to 14,125 sq ft.

Alder King senior surveyor Alison Williams said: "Caisson has a commitment to flexibility for new tenants and making it as easy as possible for tenants to relocate between units on the estate to allow them to expand their premises as their business grows."

Caisson bought the 169,000 sq ft estate last June with around a third of the space empty. The estate has a total of 42 industrial units. Tenants include Geodis Wilson, Cleeve Technology, Swindon College, Premier Watercoolers and AGI Media.

## Refurbished office seeks new tenant

**The former Premier House office building in Station Road, now renamed SN1, is seeking a new tenant following refurbishment.**

The landmark office block was previously occupied by Swindon Borough Council until April last year when it relocated 350 staff to its Wat Tyler House base in a cost-cutting measure. The 51,890 sq ft building, which is set over four floors and has 19 parking spaces, has since been completely refurbished.

Now Colliers International and Whitmarsh Lockhart are marketing SN1 - with an emphasis on its location directly opposite Swindon railway station and proximity to the town centre regeneration areas.

James Preece from Colliers' Bristol office said: "SN1 exemplifies the confidence of business activities in the area and will benefit from significant regeneration in the immediate vicinity. SN1 could not be better positioned for visitors, staff, a substantial customer base and all the facilities provided by Swindon town centre."

## Milton Road coming back to life

Swindon's Milton Road is undergoing a revival following six recent transactions, according to property consultants Alder King.

The firm has sold four properties in the street, which is on the edge of the town centre, on behalf of business advisers Grant Thornton to private developers.

Two of the buildings, numbers 6 and 10, are flats and will now be refurbished by the new owners. The other two, 8 and 19/20, are a mix of retail and residential and will be converted to provide purely residential accommodation.

These deals follow the letting by Alder King of 1,364 sq ft at 1 Milton Road to Swindon's two MPs on a new five-year lease for use as a joint office. Alder King is now marketing the ground and second floors of the property as open plan office suites with car parking.

Elsewhere in the street, number 15, a 5,000 sq ft property previously occupied by the Probation Service, has also recently been sold to a local developer.

## 'Green' firms move to Old Town

**Two businesses specialising in environmental planning and advice have moved into Little London Court in Old Town.**

Impact Planning Services and Environment Bank have taken the ground floor of Mayfair House, which was let to them by Alder King.

Impact is a specialist town planning and development consultancy led by managing director Robert Gillespie, an established consultant in Swindon, with associate Jeremy Flawn.

The practice, previously based in Stratton, covers Wiltshire, the South East and East Midlands. Its clients include Huntingdonshire District Council, Nottingham City Council, motor dealer group Dick Lovett, Partridge Homes and developers, architectural practices, private individuals, family trusts and estates.

Environment Bank is the only environmental consultancy specialising in the assessment and trading of Conservation Credits - a new mechanism for off-setting development impacts through the delivery of landscape scale receptor sites. Mr Gillespie and Professor David Hill formed the company three years ago have shaped this new approach.

# In Gear

## 'Italian Job' voted greatest car movie of all time

The Italian Job is the greatest car movie of all time, according to a survey carried out by Honda. The 1969 classic overtook other iconic automotive films including Bullit, Cannonball Run and The Blues Brothers to take pole position in a league of the UK's top 10 car films.

Honda's research was conducted to celebrate its Saturday Night at the Drive In events, staged at dealer showrooms up and down the country this summer to promote Honda's involvement in the British Touring Car Championship.

As well as highlighting the top 10 favourite car flicks, the nationwide survey revealed some of the key ingredients that make up a great car movie.

The Italian Job was by far the most popular film among men, with over a third of them picking the '60s crime caper featuring Minis. Meanwhile, it appears the ladies prefer their cars with a little more Greased Lightening. The 1971 musical Grease was first past the chequered flag among British women with around a third (27 per cent) of all the female votes.

Women argue that the key to a good car movie is not the plot but the actor behind the wheel that gets their engine revving, with one quarter of women polled rating a chiselled jaw and bulging muscles above all else.

Men, on the other hand, believe the key ingredient for an iconic car is down to the authenticity of the plot (26 per cent), rating it twice as important as the number of car stunts (13 per cent) or number of high speed chases (12 per cent).

Honda Racing: Saturday Night at the Drive In is a series of events held throughout the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) season, playing host to VIP screenings of the iconic films chosen by the public in the research.

## Dick Lovett launches service for small businesses

Dick Lovett has launched a new service for small Swindon businesses – the BMW/MINI Business Partnership.

Targeted at firms managing a fleet of fewer than 50 company cars, the service offers members benefits such as attractive contract hire rates, a range of exclusive product offerings and a dedicated business manager to advise on the most effective ways to run business cars.

Membership, which is free, also brings access to competitive contract hire rates, complimentary optional equipment upgrades on all vehicles, exclusive previews of new models ahead of their public launch and the reassurance that comes from using Dick Lovett Swindon as the local authorised BMW and MINI dealer.

Business manager Kim Williams said: "Thanks to BMW EfficientDynamics technologies, members may also find swapping their current vehicles for BMW Group vehicles not only helps to reduce their environmental impact, but reduces fuel costs as well, thanks to the class-

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## Samaritans providing valuable help

*Last year Swindon & District Samaritans received 28,000 calls – a staggering number for an organisation that relies almost completely on donations and volunteers.*

*The charity is seeking more people to give up their time to help – even if only for a few hours a week.*

*And it is also asking businesses in the area to support it through donations, staff fund-raising events or their corporate and social responsibility endeavours.*

*People who contact the Samaritans are of all ages and backgrounds.*

## Tony's story

It was just the calmness of the conversation with everything that was racing in me, being able to talk quietly and I thought If I can talk to somebody like this, why can't I do that at home?"

I'd had a situation, a relationship situation, that had been developing for some years in an extremely stressful way. At this particular stage, everything had come to a head. We were separating. My wife was moving away with the children. I'd just become redundant from a job and we were both planning to move house.

Married 13 years. I realised that I was starting to act slightly differently - I'd be up all night. I'd be out walking until five or six in the morning; I was getting no rest, no sleep. I just couldn't take what was happening.

It was then I sat down and just thought "There's no way out of it. I can't go through the amount of upset that the future holds. I could see no way through it." And that's when I thought I might as well kill myself.

It wasn't a dramatic thought at the time; there wasn't screaming or hysteria around me or anything at the time, it's just as simple as that. I thought I might as well finish it. There'd be less pain than I was experiencing then. My whole body was hurting more than it had ever hurt before.

I then sat down and wrote some letters, one to my daughter and one to my son and one to my wife and also to my parents. Telling them not to really grieve over me particularly. The way I looked at it, my children were going to be taken away from me anyway.

So I was going to lose a large part of their lives. I thought everybody would be better off without me. I decided to think it through one last time. Is this the right thing to be doing? Again I looked at the situation, saw no way out of it, just could not see a future of any kind. So, I rang Samaritans.

Nothing else would have changed things. It was just the calmness of the conversation with everything that was racing in me, able to talk quietly and I thought 'If I can talk to somebody like this, why can't I do that at home?'

I have spoken to them since. I have rung anonymously on perhaps half a dozen occasions since then, when things were getting to a pretty low ebb and I realised in myself that if I didn't talk to somebody at certain points in my life, I would perhaps get back into this situation again.

## Wiltshire firms finalists in West of England Business of the Year awards

Three Wiltshire firms are among the finalists in the prestigious West of England Business of the Year awards.

Avon Rubber and Smiths News line up against four other businesses in the large business category while Qualasept is competing against three firms in the smaller business category.

The awards, staged by accountants PwC, have been held for the past 23 years and have become widely acknowledged as the premier business accolades in the region. Previous winners read like a roll call of the region's most successful and innovation businesses and include Dyson, Bristol Airport, MITIE and Renishaw.

Smiths News, the Swindon-based newspaper and magazine wholesaler, and Avon Rubber, the Melksham-based specialist engineering group, were both finalists last year. They are up against Bristol-based insurance brokers Brightside Group, Bristol Airport, Exeter-based airline Flybe and Pittards, the Yeovil-based leather manufacturers in the category for businesses turning over more than £25 million.

David Charles, PwC partner and chairman of the judges for this category, said: "Our accomplished independent judging panel have undertaken the extremely difficult task of reviewing the entries and selecting our finalists from an impressive and vast number of nominations. This year's entrants have once again proven that the West of England is home to some of the best businesses in the UK."

"This group of finalists reflects the diversity of the economy of the West of England and is confirmation that, despite a still challenging economic backdrop, there is a continued strength in companies across the region."



Corsham-based pharmaceutical firm Qualasept lines up against Adey Professional Heating Solutions, based in Cheltenham, Bristol-based Magmatic and The Seafood Restaurant from Cornwall in the category for businesses with turnovers less than £25million or fewer than 100 employees.

Tracey Bentham, PwC partner and chairman of the judges for this category, said: "This has been an extremely strong year for this category with a truly impressive array of applications. So much so, that the judging panel were unable to shortlist only three companies to go through to the main competition, so this year will see four businesses from the South West go through to the final stage."

PwC regional chairman Rob Lewis added: "We have been delighted by the number of companies entering this year's awards and the quality of the finalists emphasises the standards that are being achieved by companies in the region, many of whom have international reputations for excellence. We should all be proud of the number of excellent businesses in our region, and their ability to stay ahead in the current climate should be celebrated"

The winners will be announced at a gala dinner on June 23 at Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel.

## John Lewis launches charity scheme

John Lewis At Home has launched its Community Matters charitable giving scheme at its Swindon outlet under which every three months a donation of £3,000 is split between three good causes in the town.

The community groups will be chosen by staff at the store on the Mannington Retail Park. The first three to benefit will be Drove Children's Centre, Swindon Therapy Centre for Multiple Sclerosis and Stonham's Canal House.

Customers at the store, one of four John Lewis At Home outlets in the UK, will decide how much each good cause gets by voting with a token they receive when they make a purchase. At the end of the three months, the tokens are counted and the £3,000 divided accordingly.

The Waitrose supermarket chain, also part of the John Lewis Partnership, has successfully run a Community Matters scheme for four years. Last year the John Lewis Partnership donated 2.59 per cent of its pre-tax profits to charities and community groups. In Swindon it donated £10,000 to Asthma Relief to buy nebuliser for patients to use at home.

## Great Western Business Breakfast

Nurturing success and creating the conditions in which companies - and individuals - can prosper will be among the issues addressed at the next Great Western Business Breakfast (GWBB) in Swindon.

Speaker Tony Nutley, director of training at the UK College of Personal Development, will draw on his 12 years involvement in personal development and training, working as a Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP) practitioner and coach.

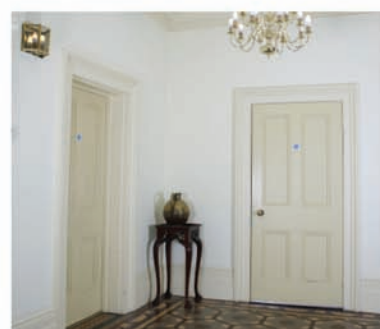
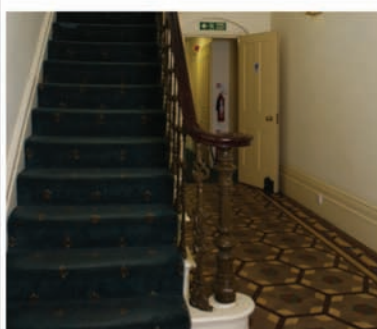
He will outline the seven success ingredients he feels all business people need to be aware of and which can be easily communicated and easily picked up.

"This will ensure that guests take as much as possible from the event, unlocking their potential and creating opportunities for growth," said Tony, who co-founded the UK College of Personal Development in 2006.

"I feel that success, and how to attain it, is a particularly relevant topic given the economic situation. It is important to encourage business people out of the doom and gloom and to focus on ways they can positively influence their own success."

The event, organised for Swindon businesses by Withy King Solicitors, Monahans Chartered Accountants, Aldermore Invoice Finance, the FD Centre and HSBC, will be held at the STEAM museum on June 22 from 7.30am to 9am. Early booking and payment is essential. Contact Lisa Badger at: lisa.badger@aldermore.co.uk.

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# Manufacturing sector continues to expand for sixth-straight quarter

Manufacturers in the South West have expanded output for six consecutive quarters on the back of export-led demand, it has emerged.

Not only have output and order balances held up well in the past three months but companies have continued to recruit more staff, according to the second quarter 2011 Manufacturing Outlook survey compiled by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, and accountants BDO.

The survey adds that alongside positive investment intentions there has been a further gradual improvement in confidence. Output and new order balances in the region were +48 per cent and +43 per cent respectively while recruitment intentions remained strong at +35 per cent, backing official data which last month showed a record for manufacturing vacancies.

But while 19 per cent of companies increased export prices in the past quarter there are signs emerging that the ability of manufacturers to pass on costs may have peaked. Optimism for

the next quarter is less positive, with balances of 17 per cent and 4 per cent of manufacturers expecting output and orders to fall respectively.

The survey suggests this could reflect the South West's relatively large share of aerospace and defence sectors which are more dependent upon longer term and public sector contracts. Over the past six months, when the economy as a whole stagnated, manufacturing grew by 2.3 per cent. Since the recovery began, despite only accounting for around 13 per cent of the economy, manufacturing has been responsible for one third of economic growth.

But EEF region director Terry Slater, warned: "Recent data appear to indicate that South West manufacturing may be heading for more turbulent times. However, our survey continues to show underlying strength in output and orders and providing buoyant demand from overseas markets holds firm, we should see growth maintained through the rest of the year."

Jim Brown, a partner at BDO's

Bristol office, added: "On the back of healthy output and order books, the intention to recruit among manufacturers has remained strong, with official data showing record levels of vacancies. However, the key issue is whether companies are able to meet their intentions and fill their vacancies with the highly-skilled workers they require."

"What we are witnessing among our client base is the willingness to recruit – but it's often very difficult for employers to find people with the adequate skills set to fit the role. We are faced with a short-term problem that can only be overcome by long-term solutions."

"To ensure the UK retains its competitive edge, the government must do more to emphasise education in engineering and manufacturing to guarantee its future workforce has the appropriate skills to deliver the sector's needs." EEF's forecast for national manufacturing growth, at 3.2 per cent this year, is down slightly from the previous quarter.



## Von Essen hotels put on the market

The Von Essen chain of country house hotels has been put up for sale for around £200m and is already attracting 'huge' interest, according to agents Christie & Co.

The firm has been appointed to sell the 27 prestige hotels either as a portfolio or as individual assets.

The hotels include two in Wiltshire – Bishopstrow, near Warminster, and Woolley Grange, near Bradford-on-Avon – as well as Bath's iconic Royal Crescent Hotel.

Bath-based Von Essen hotels went into administration in April after it failed to make interest payments on £250m of bank borrowings.

Chris Day, managing director of Christie & Co, said: "This collection of fine country house hotels offers a

unique opportunity as a whole group or in parts to be added to similar hotel estates.

"Given the history and international reputation of these hotels we anticipate considerable interest from potential buyers who have already been in contact to try and secure some or all of this famous collection of hotels."

The hotels have continued to trade since Von Essen went into administration as the individual companies holding the properties were not part of the administration.

A number of major UK and international hotel groups are understood to be interested in buying all or some of the hotels.

## Vectura to focus on cutting operating costs

A major focus on cost cutting, including moving work to its Chippenham headquarters, helped drug firm Vectura reduce its operating loss and increase revenues.

Financial results for the year to March 31 show the firm, which specialises in inhaled pharmaceuticals, grew sales by 7 per cent to £42.9m and reduced its operating loss by £2m to £13.3m.

It closed its base in Nottingham during the period, relocating the work to Chippenham, and also restructured its research and development activities – moves which contributed to an annual cost saving of nearly £6m. Cash generated during the year climbed by £10.3m to £74.4m while Vectura's new product pipeline was boosted by positive clinical data.

Programmes in late-stage development include novel, once-daily branded medicines as well as in the increasingly lucrative generic/branded generic respiratory market.

In April Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis announced positive phase III results for Vectura's NVA237 (gylcopyronium bromide) product, showing significantly improved lung function while demonstrating a good safety profile in patients with moderate-to-severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Novartis re-affirmed it expects to launch the product next year.

Chief executive Dr Chris Blackwell told shareholders: "Continuing the drive to increase revenues and reduce losses, Vectura has delivered another set of robust results."

"Over the course of the last 12 months, we and our partners have reported important clinical data, including the recent positive NVA237 Phase III data, underlining our confidence in our broad late-stage pipeline. With a reduced risk profile, strong balance sheet and multiple key catalysts expected in the short-term, Vectura continues to be innovative while moving closer to becoming a self-sustaining cash-generative company."



The Chippenham HQ for Vectura

# Nationwide not bidding for Northern Rock

MD says building society not interested in buying Northern Rock as it returns to the private sector

Swindon-based Nationwide, Britain's biggest building society, has ruled itself out of bidding for either Northern Rock or the 600 branches Lloyds Banking Group is selling.

Chief executive Graham Beale said Northern Rock, the nationalised bank being returned to the private sector, is too small with a branch network that overlaps Nationwide's.

The Lloyds sale, part of the terms of its government bail out, was described by Mr Beale as looking like "a very complex transaction which

carries a huge execution risk with it".

He was speaking as the building society shrugged off declines in the savings and mortgage markets to post strong financial results.

Pre-tax profits went down by 7 per cent to £317m which Nationwide blamed largely on accounting changes. A 30 per cent rise in underlying profits to £276m and a fall in bad loans by 35 per cent to £359m were described by chief executive Graham Beale as an "excellent" performance given the tougher economic environment.

## SciSys 'strong enough' to survive public cuts

Bosses at software firm SciSys believe the business is strong enough to ride out the public spending cuts which will hit some of its major customers in defence and other parts of the public sector.

In a statement issued ahead of its AGM, the Chippenham-based firm said it recognised "the continuing impact of the UK government's 2010 spending review on deferrals of potential projects and programmes in the UK public sector".

The statement added: "Nevertheless with over 50 per cent of its business derived from outside the UK and with a broad spread of customers in other markets, SciSys believes that it is sufficiently resilient to withstand any adverse conditions in the UK public sector."

SciSys supplies high-value software and IT support to customers in the media broadcast, space, environment and application support sectors as well as government and defence.

The firm said it had opened the year with a "comfortable" order book worth £26.5m while order intake so far this year is in line with expectations.

cashflows were healthy, reflecting a strong balance sheet, the firm said. While the firm is seeking further acquisitions, it will use some of its surplus cash to help buy the freehold on its 44,000 sq ft, two-storey headquarters building on Chippenham's Metheun Park.

Contracts have been exchanged and the purchase is expected to complete before the end of this month.

"The company considers that this acquisition will have an immediate positive impact on profitability by removing a substantial rent liability," SciSys said. "



SciSys founder and chairman, Dr Mike Love

## Environmental showcase for Swindon firms

Swindon businesses are being invited to the largest environmental trade event ever staged in the South West.

The show, to be held in Bristol, is being organised by Low Carbon South West and will include a technology demonstrator area and themed zones including sustainable transport, international trade and renewable energy.

The 2011 Environmental Trade Show UK (ETS UK) takes place on October 13 at the University of the West of England (UWE) exhibition centre and is expected to attract strong international interest and will underline the growing reputation of the South West as a world-class centre of excellence for sustainability.

Alan Bailey, chairman of Low Carbon South West, said: "ETS UK is of vital importance to the UK, especially since the coalition government has now agreed to legally binding carbon emissions cuts. The trade show will enable the UK to remain a leading provider of low carbon goods and services worldwide. The trade show and conference will become the place to do green business and I am sure it will be a leading annual event for the business calendar."

Low Carbon South West links businesses, academia, investors, local authorities, regional and national agencies promoting the growth of the environmental technologies and services sector in the region.

Jonathan Porritt, founder director of Forum for the Future, a non-profit organisation with a mission to promote sustainable development, added: "The South West is well established as a leader in the low carbon sector. From its abundant natural resources, to the innovative work of its universities and the drive and experience of its business sector, the region is brilliantly positioned to stand at the forefront of the emerging low carbon revolution, not only within the UK but worldwide."

"This trade show is exactly the kind of event we need to showcase the technologies and opportunities for this region, and Forum for the Future is delighted to support such a forward-thinking initiative."

A gala dinner will take place the evening prior to the event, on Wednesday, October 12.

For further information about ETS UK, contact Amy Robinson at Low Carbon South West on 0117 945 8730.



# Most private equity executives planning portfolio sales in next 12 months, according to Grant Thornton

Nearly 60 per cent of private equity executives are planning significant portfolio sales in the next 12 months, according to a survey carried out by chartered accountants Grant Thornton for their Private Equity Barometer.

Of 100 questioned, only 10 per cent do not plan to sell any portfolio companies against 57 per cent planning an exit.

It demonstrates the most positive exit environment in years and reflects the need for private equity firms to achieve returns from successful divestments in order to attract new investors and raise further capital, said Mark Naughton, corporate finance director at Grant Thornton in Bristol.

"We haven't seen such a surge in planned exits in years – more than half of UK private equity firms expect to sell more than a quarter of their portfolio," he added.

"They are encouraged by improving exit conditions, with strategic investors increasingly prepared to outbid private equity players. This was the case with Kiddicare, where we ran a highly competitive sales process and received around 20 initial offers from a mix of private equity

and trade players with Morrisons tabling the best offer.

"The surge in planned exits is also driven by the need of many private equity firms to demonstrate their ability to successfully cash in on investments before they hit the fundraising trail. It is remarkable that most funds are planning to attract so many new investors. Almost 60 per cent of respondents expect more than a quarter of limited partners in their next fund to be new to their funds."

In terms of sector preference, almost half the respondents (47 per cent) see business support services including infrastructure and logistics as a key investment focus over the coming 12 months.

Consumer, retail and food shared the accolade of second most coveted sector with high technology including software and IT.

Some 37 per cent of respondents expect to focus on both sector groups this year, compared to only 21 per cent who said they expected to be most active in the consumer sector when asked a year earlier.

## Managing cashflow – Top Tips

cashflow is essential for the survival of any business and the current economic situation is putting extreme pressure on many organisations.

*Peter Lugg of Monahans Corporate Finance lists his top tips for managing cashflow*

- Create a cashflow budget and regularly review it to identify problems early
- Invoice promptly and always chase outstanding payments vigorously
- Consider using confidential invoice discounting
- Ensure all of your customers understand your credit policy and enforce these policies diligently
- Consider negotiating a deposit or stage payment for larger orders to reduce your exposure
- Cut unnecessary overheads and negotiate discounts and longer credit periods from suppliers
- Constantly manage your stock levels to minimise working capital tied up
- Assess the impact on your cashflow before committing to any capital expenditure or increase in overheads
- Consider using leasing to finance capital asset purchases
- Watch out for mid-month cash troughs which may not show up using month end cashflow forecasts
- Consider offering temporary sales incentives or discounts for cash payment to overcome a short term cashflow crisis
- Be prepared to trade off profitability and other longer-term business objectives when your cashflow position is or may become critical

Manage these areas and your business has every chance of thriving. Contact Peter at [peter.lugg@monahans.co.uk](mailto:peter.lugg@monahans.co.uk) for more information on improving your cashflow.



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## Beware non-compliance penalty changes

In recent times, the penalty regime for non compliance with your tax liabilities has undergone significant changes. Of particular note is the change, from April this year, to the late filing and late payment of Income Tax.

You will have recently received your 2010/11 Self Assessment Tax Return (or paper notification) which is due for filing by January 2012. You may have noticed that included is information on the new penalty framework which significantly increases penalties for those who file or pay late. A tax return filed six months late will attract a penalty of at least £1,300 and in many cases considerably more!

It is important that your attention is drawn to the changing penalty regime, from that which has been with us for a number of years, so that you don't leave your tax return to the last minute this year. In the past if you had no tax to pay, even though you may have filed your return late you would not have suffered any penalty. If you file your 2010/11 return late even if it only by one day you will be charged a penalty of £100 even if you have no tax to pay or have paid all the tax you owe on time.

If your return is three months late there is an automatic daily penalty of £10 per day up to a maximum of £900. For returns that are six months late there will be further penalties of the greater of 5 per cent of the tax due and £300 and if your return is 12 months late you will be charged yet more penalties which could be up to 100 per cent of the tax due.

Even if you have filed your return on time, unless you have also paid



Sharon Omer-Kaye

your tax liability on time you will face further penalties for late payment. Penalties for late payment are;

- 30 days late – you will be charged an initial penalty of 5 per cent of the tax unpaid at that date
- six months late – you will be charged a further penalty of 5 per cent of the tax unpaid at that date
- 12 months late – you will be charged a further penalty of 5 per cent of the tax that is still unpaid at that date

These penalties are on top of the interest that HMRC will charge on all outstanding amounts, including interest on unpaid penalties, until payment is received. You have been warned – don't be late with your return or payment unless you want contribute more to the government coffers.

If you would like further information on this or any other tax matter please contact Sharon Omer-Kaye on 01793 603286 or [sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com](mailto:sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com)

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To find out more please contact: **Sharon Omer-Kaye**, Director

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Email: [sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com](mailto:sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com)

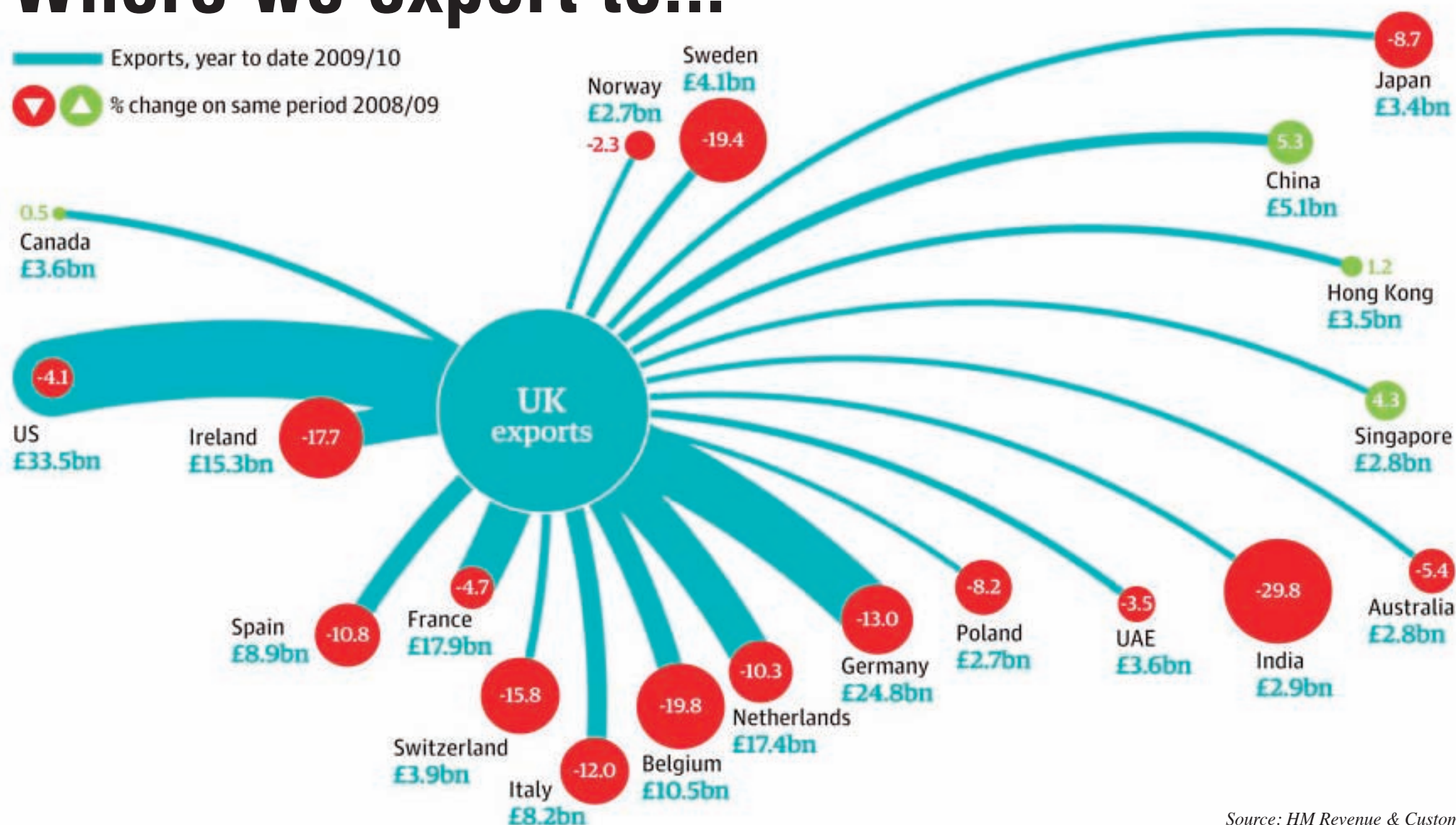
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# Where we export to...



Source: HM Revenue &amp; Customs



## Doing Business with China

• a unique event for Swindon •

Are you a local Swindon-based business looking to start trading with businesses based in China? Want to find out more about exporting your products overseas?

Then come along to a special event to be held on Wednesday 6th July from 5.30-7.00pm.

Hear about:

- The exporting opportunities to China from Chen Wu of the China Britain Business Council
  - The help available for companies from UKTI, Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Sector to help you do it
  - Local businessman Jeremy Holt's experiences of doing business in China
  - The UKTI Trade mission in October
- A networking session with drinks and canapés will be on offer after the event, where you can also enjoy the Chinese art exhibition.

**Swindon Museum and Art Gallery,  
Old Town, Swindon**

A Forward Swindon event, sponsored by HSBC

To find out more details and book a place please contact Suzanne Swann on 01793 429 250, or email [suzanneswann@forwardswindon.co.uk](mailto:suzanneswann@forwardswindon.co.uk)



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## International trade event to be held later this month

First-time exporters or firms looking to improve their overseas business can hear about the latest opportunities at the region's major annual international trade event later this month.

ExploreExport, which takes place on Tuesday June 28 at the University of the West of England (UWE) Exhibition and Conference Centre in Bristol, is designed to guide companies through a period of rapid world economic change as well as provide them with a chance to meet and network with a broad selection of companies and organisations that can help develop overseas ambitions.

Staged by UK Trade & Investment South West, the event is expected to attract more than 500 delegates.

UK Minister for Trade and Investment Lord Green will lead discussions on the day alongside Nick Hower, business mentor on the BBC's The Apprentice, and Lara Morgan, entrepreneur and founder of CompanyShortcuts.com.

They will be joined on stage by a number of regional businesses who will all share the secrets of their export success.

During the day there will be:

- A plenary session with keynote speakers and case studies
- 100 exhibition stands, including market desks and commercial exhibitors,
- 24 market or sector-focused seminars
- One-to-one appointments with more than 80 commercial officers - including staff from British embassies, High Commissions and Consulates - from 60 international markets.

Businesses attending will have the opportunity to meet representatives from across the globe including officials from China, Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa, Dubai, Australia, South East Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, North and South America and many European countries.

UKTI South West international trade director, Russell Jones said: "If you are considering exporting for the first time, or wish to improve your export performance, ExploreExport is your best opportunity this year to grasp the opportunity to give your business an international dimension."

"You'll be able to hear what leading business advisers have to say about opportunities arising through a changed economy as well as learn from local businesses how they have continued to grow through export during this difficult time."

"In one intensive day you will build the network of contacts that you need, find out the sources of support available, and have face-to-face access to more than 80 specialists from markets across the world, learning about all the opportunities and the potential pitfalls."

Attending the event costs £100 (+VAT) per delegate and includes lunch. For more information or to register visit <http://bristol.ukti-exploretour.com>



# Trading places for beginners

The government sees exporting as a key way of boosting the economy. But how do businesses take their first steps into international markets? And which countries should they target? In the second of our series on exporting we look at overseas trade for beginners

**C**ompanies that export are more productive, achieve stronger financial performances and are more likely to stay in business than non exporters, according to academic research.

So getting into international markets makes sense. But there are some considerable hurdles to overcome for first-time exporters.

For instance, different markets have different requirements. What suits customers in France may leave Americans cold. Packaging styles, advertising methods and business etiquette differ widely across the globe. Doing business in the Middle East is completely different to doing it in the American Mid-West. Unless a new exporter tailors what they offer to suit each individual market, they may fail to offer what customers really want.

Business Link advises first-time exporters to focus on selling to one or two individual markets at first rather than aiming for a wider exporting strategy.

In large countries like the US, firms might even concentrate on a particular region, and roll out gradually across the country as they build their market presence.

The European Union is an obvious place for new exporters to start for a number of reasons.

The practicalities of dispatching goods to countries within the 27 countries making up the EU are relatively straightforward. Many trading practices, regulations and standards apply throughout the EU, and key tasks such as accounting for VAT have been simplified.

A number of bodies and initiatives have been set up to help exporters to the EU, including Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), which offers support and advice to businesses across Europe and helps them make the most of the opportunities in the European Union. EEN covers Swindon and North Wiltshire from its Bristol office.

Action Single Market is a government initiative run through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, to help UK businesses make the most of the single market across the EU.

Or, because of the much vaunted 'special relationship' and common language, the US is often viewed as a good first market.



The US remains the largest economy in the world and the UK's largest trading partner. While the US market can be vast and highly competitive, the similarities of language and culture can give UK exporters the edge. Americans often see the words Made in the UK as a sign of quality and British goods can often be sold at the top end of the market. Some UK exporters have found that, by playing up their Britishness - for example, putting a Union flag on their packaging - they can boost sales.

While the fast-growing, BRIC markets (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are undoubtedly fertile ground for UK firms, they are much harder to enter for first-time exporters. Regulations, intellectual property protection, bureaucracy and getting paid tend to be far more problematic than doing business in the EU or US.

Tim Burden, Lloyds Bank's international manager in Swindon, believes businesses need to think carefully about their first export markets and do as much spadework as possible before taking their first steps.

"A lot of businesses seem to drift into exporting rather than

planning for it. They may get a one-off order from overseas then decide that they want to export to that market," he said.

"But to be effective you really must put together a proper plan, looking at things like letters of credit and appointing an agent or distributor."

UKTI, the government's export-promoting service, has a network of regional offices with dedicated sector specialists who can provide support tailored to a business's particular needs and growth stage.

For firms new to selling abroad, UKTI's Passport to Export programme offers free capability assessments, support in visiting markets, mentoring from a local professional, action plans, customised and subsidised training, and ongoing support once the business has started to export.

Other help offered by UKTI includes an overseas market introduction service and an export markets research scheme which pave the way for new exporters through local knowledge and advice while the UKTI website carries vital information and updates on individual countries and strategic information on business security-related issues.

The language and cultural aspects of doing business abroad can sometimes cause problems - even in English-speaking countries. UKTI runs export communications reviews offering a variety of options and advice, including cultural awareness reviews and communications planning.

Of course, the best way of gauging the viability of an overseas market is to visit it and UKTI helps businesses take part in overseas events, trade fairs and missions which allow them to test markets, attract customers, appoint agents or distributors and make sales. Local knowledge is also essential and UKTI's Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) uses the expertise of the UK's global trade teams to in embassies, high commissions and consulates across the world, to benefit UK firms. OMIS can provide help at any stage - from initial research, to arranging a market visit, to using contacts and impressive facilities to help close a major deal.

## Overseas success for aviation artist

**S**windon artist David Bent's specialist aviation artwork is adorning wallspace in all four corners of the world following a fantastic international expansion over the last decade.

David's work is now held in private collections around the world, including in the Middle East, America & Australia - with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) providing a great help along the way.

Over the past few years David has undertaken a number of high profile exhibitions in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, including invitations to exhibit in the Royal tent at the Al Ain Airshow & at the Dubai International Airshow.

It is a far cry from David's first venture into air shows when he bought himself a small tent and set up a temporary gallery on the cheapest pitch on the outskirts of the Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in 2001. David had an amazing and immediate response and sold a number of pieces of his work. Because many of the people who bought the artworks were international pilots it meant that David's work was seen almost instantly overseas.

The following year David repeated the exercise - with a slightly bigger tent - and once again, had an extraordinary response to his groundbreaking work. His work also caught the eye of the Director General of the Society of British Aerospace Companies, who asked David to provide all of the artwork for the organisation's new premises in the South Bank.

"Having my work on display at Fairford has been very good & led to some high profile enquiries," said

David. "In fact it was during my exhibition at Fairford that I met a representative of the Abu Dhabi Tourist Authority who saw my work and invited me to hold a solo exhibition in the Royal tent at the Al Ain Airshow."

During the nerve-racking exhibition at which David was rubbing shoulders with high profile sheikhs and members of the royal family, David and his partner Carole were able to make important contacts, such as the President of the UAE Aviation Association, who would become a long term supporter of David's work and help to build further relationships in the Emirates.

At this point David and Carole realised that business could really take off in the region and they felt they needed a helping hand to maximise the opportunities there. They arranged a meeting with UKTI's Stuart Thomas to find out about how they could develop a more focussed strategy.

Stuart recommended that David and Carole signed up to UKTI's Passport to Export programme, which is specifically designed to help new and fledgling exporters and since then they have both undergone training in overseas trade, from a general introduction to specific help with developing relationships with agents, marketing and market research. Through Passport to Export the couple have also had match funding to attend further major air shows in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

In fact they have just returned from a visit to Al Ain and Dubai where they have received a further two invitations to exhibit David's work in 2011.



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