

SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

01793 615393

www.swindon-business.net

info@swindon-business.net



**Global cycle:
Packaging firm
helps out
triathlete**

Page 3

In a class of their own

Special 4-page guide to the
independent school sector

Pages 7-10

**Business life cycle:
Indispensable advice
in association with
Withy King**



Page 6

News Brief

Job scheme reaches target

Plan 500, the innovative Swindon scheme set up to create 500 work-related opportunities for local young people, has reached its target ahead of schedule.

The project, launched last year by Forward Swindon and Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership in response to the sharp rise in youth unemployment in the town, has helped 503 young people. It is now being replicated in other cities across the UK.

• **Mentoring help for young people.**
See P5.

The end for 'Women's fiction'

Swindon-based retailer WH Smith is to stop using the term 'women's fiction' on bookshelf signs in all its 1,000-plus stores after two female customers complained to its chief executive. Appealing by letter to Kate Swann as a "successful woman", the pair said they were "deeply offended by the unnecessary practice" which made them feel they were living in the 1940s.

Interest in Patheon plant

Contract drugs firm Patheon's Swindon manufacturing plant could be taken over after the Canadian group's third-quarter losses widened to \$3.2m (£2m) mainly due to rising costs. The firm said it is fielding indications of interest for the Covingham plant, which makes sterile and high-potency products. For full story visit www.swindon-business.net

Coming next month...

Swindon Business News continues its series of features on exporting next month with a look at the nuts and bolts of trading overseas. We also kick off the Christmas season with a comprehensive round up of corporate events and commercial opportunities, analyse the latest trends in office interiors and name the movers and shakers in the local legal sector with our authoritative law review of 2011. For more information contact 01793 615393.

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

alder king

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

**1911-2011 Property excellence
for the last 100 years**

All change at Swindon station and iconic building



Work has begun on Swindon station's £1.85m forecourt revamp. Meanwhile healthcare supplies company Vygon has moved into the landmark former Motorola building. See stories, pages 13 and 14



Answers sought over Digital City

Swindon Borough Council is facing tough questions over the failure of Digital City, the company it helped set up to provide wi-fi for the town in an ambitious project headed by local businessman Rikki Hunt.

The council lent the fledgling business more than £400,000 – money critics say it will never recover.

The Digital City scheme had the lofty ambition of providing accessible wi-fi for every resident and business in the town. It then expected to sell its business model to other local authorities, recouping funding to repay the council loan.

However, a trial in Highworth failed to gain enough customers to

make it viable. Critics claim the plug should have then been pulled on the project – and the council funding returned. But the scheme continued, despite signs that it was running out of cash.

Mr Hunt's involvement also raised concerns in some quarters. The former boss of Swindon-based Burmah Castrol's fuels business and one-time chairman of Swindon Town Football Club was seen as an unlikely partner for the council-backed project given his lack



Rikki Hunt

of experience in the IT and communications sector. Mr Hunt was voluntarily made bankrupt in March with debts of more than £1m which are unconnected with Digital City.

He has since left the company and also stood down from his role as chairman of the Swindon Strategic

Economic Partnership.

Swindon Council leader Rod Bluh believes some parts of Digital City can be salvaged. However opposition councillors have called for his resignation, along with that of councillor Gary Perkins, a council-appointed director of Digital City.

Honda engineers are quietly confident for low-noise Civic

Honda is promising much-improved dynamics and a higher-quality interior for the new, Swindon-built ninth-generation Civic – thanks to engineers at its plant in the town.

The car made its debut at the Frankfurt Motor Show earlier this month and will go on sale in the UK on October 1.

More than 20,000 miles of testing has been carried out on British roads to try to improve ride comfort.

Honda's Swindon engineers concentrated a huge amount of time and effort improving ride quality and handling of the Civic.

The development team sharpened

every detail of the design, build and aerodynamics and tested the car in Europe to tune it to suit the varying road conditions. They used Honda's anechoic (echo-free) chamber in its research and development facility in Swindon to fine-tune the cabin insulation.

One of the results of the work in the anechoic chamber was to modify the design and construction of the roof lining, and how it interacts with the bodywork.

The result, says Honda, is the most aerodynamic car in its class, with a claimed drag coefficient of 0.27.

See In Gear, page 15



The new Honda Civic, unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show

We've never wanted to be the biggest;
we only want to be the best

Clark Holt
COMMERCIAL SOLICITORS

HARDWICK HOUSE, PROSPECT PLACE, SWINDON SN1 3LJ

TELEPHONE: 01793-617444

WWW.CLARKHOLT.COM

SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

26 Wood Street, Swindon
Wiltshire SN1 4AB

Telephone: 01793 615393

Fax: 01793 610553

Email: info@swindon-business.net

Web: www.swindon-business.net

Editor: Robert Buckland

Production Editor: Owen Fishwick

Administrator: Jackie Hall

Sales Executive: Claudia Carr

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

© Copyright 2011

Published by County Business Publishing Ltd.
Printed by Acorn Press

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

SWINDON **BUSINESS** NEWS
BRISTOL **BUSINESS** NEWS
BATH **BUSINESS** NEWS
COUNTY **BUSINESS** PUBLISHING

People

• Jackie Waller has been made an associate at Swindon law firm, Charles Lucas & Marshall. Jackie has worked in residential conveyancing for more than 20 years, dealing with all aspects of residential property law. She has a strong IT background and has worked extensively on the development of case management systems for various legal teams, including residential property and remortgaging systems for one of the UK's biggest lenders.



Jackie Waller

• Monahans' recent growth has continued with a key appointment. Elsa Littlewood has joined as a senior manager within their thriving private client tax division. Elsa has relocated from Deloitte in Edinburgh, where she worked as a tax senior manager, advising a wide portfolio of private clients. She has also worked in Jersey and London for an independent trusts and tax advisory firm.



Elsa Littlewood

• www.interviewcoordinator.com the Swindon-based recruitment management website, has appointed Stuart Collins as PR manager to expand the promotion of its online interview

management software. The product is purpose-designed and tested for HR managers and recruitment agencies. Interview Coordinator saves time and costs by streamlining the recruitment and applicant tracking process and is used on a pay-as-you-go basis. With an extensive commercial and communications background, Stuart, a chartered marketer, will be responsible for building brand awareness of this new product, which is available on a 60-day free-trial basis.

• Simon Moore, one of the region's leading bankers, has joined accountants and business advisers Grant Thornton as a senior consultant, one of two top-level appointments made by the firm as it embarks on a new phase of growth in the South West. Simon joins from Barclays Corporate where he was chairman and managing director in Wales and the South West. Meanwhile James Morter, a director in the audit team, becomes a partner in Grant Thornton's Bristol office. Grant Thornton senior practice leader in the South West, Nigel Morrison, said: "These appointments mark a watershed for our practice as we enter a period for which we have set ourselves some ambitious growth targets. We are an ambitious firm and will be creative in terms of generating opportunities in a market which will remain challenging for the foreseeable future."



Simon Moore



Anita Lowe and her team

• Anita Lowe, chief executive of Venues Event Management, which was acquired by Expotel in November 2010, will now be heading Expotel's venue-finding and event management services division. Anita will bridge the gap between Expotel's four sites in the North of England and Scotland and Venues Event Management, based in Swindon. Expotel and Venues Event Management placed a combined number of more than 40,000 meetings and conferences worldwide in 2010. Anita said: "This move is part of the integration of Venues Event Management and Expotel and is intended to bring together the group's events teams to more effectively function as one team. "The events side of Expotel's business has grown significantly since the acquisition and it makes sense for there to be a single point of responsibility for this. I am looking forward enormously to working with the 20-strong team, together with Venues Event Management's 94 staff, to help continue to grow Expotel's strong client relationships and reputation as a leading provider of venue finding and events management."

Events

Event: Domestic Violence and Abuse – What employers need to know
When: November 21 from 10am
Where: Steam Museum, Churchward
Contact: David Latham at david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Event: GW Business Breakfast
When: September 21, 7:30am-9am
Where: Steam Museum, Churchward
Contact: Lisa Badger at lisa.badger@aldermore.co.uk

Event: Growth Club
When: Friday September 30, 9am-4:30pm
Where: Alexandra House, Wroughton
Contact: Nigel Scott on 07917 602848 or email: nigel.scott@actioncoach.com

Event: Employment Law Question Time
When: Thursday 13 October 6.00pm
Where: Swindon Marriott
Contact: 01793 433571 or email: david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Event: Becoming a Director
When: September 23
Where: Farnsby St, Swindon
Contact: www.businesslink.co.uk/events

• **Event: Managing Discipline and Grievance**
When: 6 September, 9:30am-1pm
Where: Acas, Bristol
Contact: events@acas.org.uk

• Send your events to Swindon Business News @ info@swindon-business.net

Contacts

Forward Swindon
01793 429250

Bristol Airport
0871 334 4344

GWE Business West
08458 505066

Swindon Council
01793 445500

Business Link
0845 600 9966

Wiltshire Council
0300 456 0100

SSEP
01793 429259

Chamber of Commerce
01753 870500

Fast Forward
0808 178 3657

Train2Gain
0845 600 9006

First Great Western
08457 000 125

Visit Wiltshire
0845 602 7323

We've got it covered

We know the media well. Do you?

Your story + our know-how = column inches

Tel. 01793 511990
www.voxonline.co.uk

VOX

The Public Relations and Marketing specialists

3 Little London Court | Old Town | Swindon | Wiltshire | SN1 3HY

Themed party nights to be held at Liquid

Swindon-based Chordiem is now presenting Swindon's newest corporate Christmas party experience. The firm which has been organising innovative corporate events for more than 10 years, is promoting Downtown Chicago - themed party nights at Liquid club in Swindon this December.

Director Jon Hewlett says these parties will be very different from Liquid's normal club nights.

"We are targeting the corporate market and changing the venue with a Downtown Chicago theme and fully-themed catering, cocktails and live entertainment, including a superb chill-out lounge with free play gaming tables and dancing till 3am."

For more information call Chordiem on 01793 887 632. www.chordiem.com/services/chordiem-corporate-christmas-party-nights-2011

EMNICO
Enterprises

Swindon's Leading IT Services Company
Supporting Swindon's Business IT Needs

- Contact us for your no obligation IT Hardware and Software Audit now!
- Flexible range of IT Support packages
- Dedicated IT Service Desk to support your business
- On site and remote support provided
- Range of IT Security Solutions
- Disaster Recovery Solutions to protect your business

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

Microsoft
Small Business
Specialist

T: 01793 614700 | E: info@emnico.com | W: www.emnico.com

Pro Active

Scalable

Affordable

Alliance Pharma on takeover trail as profits edge up

Alliance Pharma, the Chippenham-based speciality pharmaceutical group, has expanded its portfolio by paying £2.4m to acquire the UK marketing rights to six products from Beacon Pharmaceuticals.

In the year to April 30 the products had total sales of approximately £2m and gross margin of £900,000, mainly from severe acne treatment Rizuderm (isotretinoin) which fits in well with Alliance's dermatology business.

Alliance chief executive John Dawson said: "This acquisition is immediately earnings enhancing and is a valuable addition to our dermatology portfolio. We continue to evaluate further acquisition opportunities to complement our organic growth."

Alliance is funding the cash acquisition by drawing a loan from the £20m revolving credit facility put in

place last November 2010 to fund acquisitions.

The takeover was announced at the same time as Alliance's results for the six months to June 30, which showed pre-tax profits up by £1m to £7m on the equivalent period last year on sales also up by £1m at £24.4m.

Stripping out slowing sales of its Deltacortril gastro-resistant tablets, underlying sales growth was 29 per cent.

Mr Dawson added: "Alliance's results for the first half of 2011 have inevitably been impacted by the slowdown in Deltacortril sales. But more importantly, they also confirm that the Deltacortril profits that we have enjoyed during the past two years have been put to good use."

Shareholders will receive an interim dividend up 47 per cent to 0.25p a share.

E-ticket to ride for bus passengers

Swindon bus passengers have given Thamesdown Transport's electronic fares system the thumbs up, with 20,000 smartcards issued since they was introduced in 2006 – half of those since the beginning of this year when the old magnetic cards were withdrawn.

The smartcard system allows passengers to pay as they go electronically using SmartFare, avoiding the need to find the correct change. The smartcard can be topped up with credit and can also be used to hold a TravelPass, making it more convenient and more secure than the magnetic cards.

Thamesdown managing director Paul Jenkins said: "To have reached this milestone is great news, particularly as the number of people holding our smartcards has doubled in just eight months."

Vacuum pioneer sets up in Devizes

Oped, the German medical equipment firm behind the revolutionary vacuum splint, has set up its UK base in Devizes.

The office, on the town's Hopton Park, joins the firm's overseas operations in Switzerland, Australia and the US. It will market the firm's revolutionary orthopaedic rehabilitation products in the UK.

The company's founders, professor Peter Habermeyer and Andreas Hassler, invented the vacuum split – now its flagship product – to replace the traditional plaster cast in treating a range of injuries. Oped, based in Bavaria, sells its pioneering products to more than 1,000 hospitals, clinics and medical retailers. Each year some 60,000 patients are treated with its VACOPed vacuum splint for bone fractures or torn ligaments.

GWP packages up the ideal solution

When triathlete Dan Brunton was selected to represent Great Britain at the ITU Triathlon World Championships, his first concern was how to get his top-of-the-range time trial bike to the event, which is being held in Beijing.

Unlike standard road race bicycles, time trial bikes are more complicated in their design and can not simply be broken down and transported in a standard bike case.

What was needed was a specially-designed case that would protect the bike and also withstand traveling across the globe. Dan approached Cricklade-based packaging specialists GWP Group to see if it could help – and the answer was yes.

As well as specialist corrugated, coatings and conductive arms, GWP also has a specialist protective packaging business, which can design and manufacture flight and aluminum cases for specific objects.

Dan worked with GWP Protective to design and create a bespoke box suitable for a time trial bike. GWP delivered a well-engineered, sturdy case that was strong enough to protect the bike, yet light enough to fit the flying criteria of leading airlines.

GWP Group managing director David Pedley, said: "We are used to designing and manufacturing flight cases for a range of goods from bespoke items to surgical equipment and oil rig drill bits to engine components."

"Dan's request was certainly a first for us but we are delighted with the outcome and hope that this will allow us to break into a new market."

Pictured: Dan Brunton and bike



Wiltshire golfer on the road to success

Mercedes-Benz of Swindon has swung into action to put a local golfer on the road to a successful sporting career.

The retailer is supporting Bowood Golf & Country Club's Sam Matton, who has just completed his first season on the PGA Europro Tour.

After flourishing at amateur level, where he represented England as a member of the under 21 and 'A' squads and won one national title, six county titles and six open titles, the 23-year-old moved up to the professional circuit at the start of the year for his debut campaign – the highlight to date being a fifth place finish at Wensum Valley in Norfolk.

"I'm really enjoying the chance to make a career from the sport I've played since the age of 12 and I'm happy with my first season's progress," said Sam. Now my focus is to qualify to play on the main European Tour and to do this I must undertake the Qualifying School in October.

"To have the backing of such a prestigious company as Mercedes-Benz of Swindon is fantastic and I'm grateful for the support that they are giving me, especially with the economic climate as it is."

In Gear, page 15

Professional Images

Experienced Press, Editorial & PR Photographers
Fast Digital Location Service – Swindon, Bristol, London & UK



www.professional-images.com

Specialist Beverage Solutions Tailored To Your Needs

- ▶ A personalised analysis of your needs
- ▶ Full range of top **quality** beverage systems
- ▶ Internationally renowned products and brands
- ▶ High **quality** ingredients from soluble, roast & ground and coffee beans which include Fairtrade and responsibly grown ranges
- ▶ Our after sales service is tailored to your business, with 7 day cover available
- ▶ A local company with a focus on **quality**

tel: **01793 813721**
fax: **01793 474600**
www.bespokecoffeecompany.co.uk

To find out more about the Bespoke Coffee Company, first download your free QR Scanner app to your smart phone and visit our website by scanning here...

carterjonas.co.uk

**Commercial | Survey & Valuation
Building Consultancy | Infrastructures**

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

CARTER JONAS

The Property People

Inspiring thinking for fast-growing businesses



Ambitious local firms with strong potential for growth are invited to join a series of programmes being run by Business Link to further boost their performance.

Business Link spokesperson Andy Reeve explains: "Intelligent and well-structured, these workshops help businesses achieve a step change in their development. They provide the fuel that high growth businesses need to really take off."

The Strategic Leadership Programme is designed for senior executives of small and medium-sized businesses facing change, looking at new opportunities or wanting to review their leadership approach and discover the skills needed to improve their performance. There are three half-day modules covering leading change, leading as an individual and employee engagement.

- 14, 21, 28 September at the Park House Conference Centre in Swindon

- 6, 13, 20 October at Stanton Manor Hotel, near Chippenham

A second programme called Right People, Right Results, will help business owners identify the right people to achieve their business objectives. Delivered over a day and a half, this programme covers two modules: Recruitment and Progression – which helps identify and develop the right people to enable the business to meet its objectives and grow, and Performance Management, which will help business owners establish best practice in appraising, reviewing and developing their people.

- 14 and 15 September at the Brook Madison Hotel in Swindon

Mr Reeve added: "Bringing together small groups of entrepreneurs, these courses are compelling to attend – and are also useful in building your networks of like-minded local business leaders."

Contact Business Link on 0845 600 9966 for further information.



New business for IT recruiter

Vector Resourcing's South West office, based in Malmesbury, has expanded its resource team to manage and grow its extensive database of South West-based candidates – exclusive to Vector – covering a wide range of skills.

The firm, which specialises in providing a high-quality, targeted and professional IT recruitment service to companies, opened the South West office in 2008 and has since gone from strength to strength.

New business this year has been gained in a wide range of sectors including public, finance and engineering, with recent successes including working with a wealth management organisation in Gloucestershire to supplement its core permanent team with infrastructure contractors, offering

specialist skills around senior support and for technology implementation projects.

Vector also recently helped a Bristol-based FTSE-250 company which had been looking for a permanent Oracle Business Suite consultant for four years. Vector placed one within two weeks.

Vector's growing reputation in the South West for providing a professional and efficient service is mirrored by established practices from its head office in East Sussex, which has been serving other parts of the UK and Europe since 1997.



High growth for high street shopfitting firm

Swindon-based shopfitting and hardware specialist EPOS Partners has defied the current economic climate and achieved a new high with 50 per cent year-on-year growth as sales for its products soar.

EPOS, which released a guide to setting up a shop for start-up retailers earlier this year, has increased its product range to further help new retailers.

EPOS e-commerce manager Jennie Knight said: "It's clear that the recession has changed the face of retail dramatically, with household names such as Woolworths disappearing from the high street after surviving for almost 100 years. It has shown us that nothing can be taken for granted when it comes to trading and that even the strongest brand names and cult followings won't protect a retailer from the reality of closure."

"We know how critical the early stages can be in the success of a new store and why choosing the right



equipment is important. With the retail industry as it is, retailers need to ensure they are fully prepared to take on the tough problems that may arise and need to have the right measures in place. With our full range of offerings we are enabling retailers to choose hardware at a price that suits them in the quantity they need. I fully believe that our success and growth is down to the fact that we understand our customers and know the kind of products that they need to survive."

To celebrate its recent successes, EPOS is revamping its website to improve customer service.

Crucial time for employers seminar

Three top employment lawyers will give expert advice to an audience of managers and business people at a free event at the Swindon Marriott on Thursday October 13, between 6pm – 7.30pm.

Organised by Swindon Mindful Employer Network and supported by Swindon Business News, Swindon Chamber of Commerce and other business groups, the Question Time will feature panellists Kerrie Hunt of Things (pictured), Malcolm Gregory of Withy King and Paul Archer of Lemon&Co.



Rural expertise takes root at Old Mill Accountants

With their office in Melksham 18 months old, accountants and financial planners Old Mill are now well established as part of the Wiltshire business community.

Old Mill has almost 1,000 local clients and partner Andrew Moore attributes this success to the firm's unique approach to business. "We do not fit the traditional image of stiff-collared accountants only interested in helping the government to collect its tax. We want to actively help our clients to be as tax efficient as possible and help them to grow their businesses."

One key area that Old Mill specialises in is rural business.

"It is difficult to define what a rural business is," says Andrew. "Yes, we are well known for looking after many local farmers and agricultural supply businesses. Some of our biggest clients are the food producers who utilise the local produce. We look after farm shops, food service businesses and retailers who sell their produce on."

"More than this we look after numerous small businesses in the market towns and villages of the county – and we have a strong input into many tourist businesses."

"In Wiltshire the rural economy is standing the strains of the recession well and Old Mill is delighted to be part of that rural business scene."

Threadneedle sews up investment deal

Threadneedle, the Swindon-based investment business, has secured a deal to manage the £8.5bn investment portfolio of LV=, the former Liverpool Victoria insurance group.

Adding these assets to Threadneedle's existing business will push up its assets under management from £69bn to £77bn. Financial terms have not been disclosed but all of Bournemouth-based LV= Asset Management's 79 staff will transfer to Threadneedle. The fund management group said it will now review the business but would not be drawn on possible redundancies.

LV= said it had struggled to build scale in asset management. Following a review it had "concluded that member interests are best served by focusing on the fast growing general insurance and life businesses".

Are you making the most of your tax allowances?

Looking after farmers and contractors

Dorchester	01305 268168	Shepton Mallet	01749 343366
Exeter	01392 214635	Yeovil	01935 426181
Melksham	01225 701210	www.oldmillgroup.co.uk	

Focus on the Rural Economy

An in-depth analysis of the strengths, challenges and opportunities of doing business in rural locations, including the drive towards sustainable business models and the importance of powerful broadband.

Call 01793 615393 for more information, email info@swindon-business.net or go to www.swindon-business.net

Avon Rubber wins major US defence contract

• Wiltshire-based Avon Rubber's protection division has landed a multi-million dollar contract with the US government to supply filters for use in gas masks it has already sold to Washington.

Under the three-year contract, which is worth around \$38m (£23.4m), Avon will deliver an unspecified number of its M61 filters to the US Department of Defense. These will be fitted to Avon-made M50 respirators used by US combat troops.

Melksham-based Avon expects to complete an initial order worth \$11m (£6.8m) in this financial year.

The filters will be made at Avon's plant in Cadillac, Michigan, and so-called IDIQ (indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity) contract. Avon invested in additional capacity at the plant last year.

Chief executive Peter Slabbert said: "We are seeing growing demand for consumable filters as increasing numbers of Avon mask systems are supplied and issued to the troops in the field. As the sole source supplier of this unique conformal filter, we believe this growth will continue."

Government must do more to support UK firms, says Dyson

• Pioneering household appliance firm Dyson has called on the Government to do more to help the UK's innovative businesses as it reported rising annual sales and profits.

Chief executive Martin McCourt said the Malmesbury-based business's success could be repeated by other UK firms if the Government was more supportive.

"We are consistently doing whatever we can to pressure the Government and offer more incentives to encourage businesses like ours to invest in ideas," he said. "When you invest in ideas it is a risky business. We just need to offer some relief, better tax credits, and give companies some kind of incentive. That's the key to keeping manufacturing businesses successful on the world stage."

Dyson's operating profits rose by 8 per cent last year to £206m on sales up 15 per cent to £770m.

Sales up for Latchways

• Latchways, the Devizes-based safety equipment firm has continued to grow in European markets making up for lower sales in the weak UK construction industry.

Trading had been robust between April 1 and August 9 with revenues ahead of the same period last year, the firm said in a stock market update.

New innovative products will be launched later this year, which the firm expects to generate significant revenues.

"We continue to invest in our sales and operational infrastructure, to support the increasing penetration of our existing product range, the launch of new products, and our growth in export markets," the firm said.

Mentoring help for young people provided by Plan 500

Swindon's Plan 500 scheme, which helps young people into the workplace, is promoting its mentoring service.

This time of year can be tough for school and college leavers having to make big career decisions if they either have not been successful in securing a university place, or don't know where to start to enter the job market.

Lisa Smart, Forward Swindon's Plan 500 Project Manager said: "We have local businessmen and women who are fully-trained mentors ready to offer support and advice to young people, and we are looking forward to hearing from them. Plan 500 mentors give highly focused, bespoke support to individuals, which is provided completely free."

Lisa can be contacted at Forward Swindon on 01793 612276, or visit the Plan 500 website at www.forwardswindon.co.uk/plan500 for more information.

Candidates for the mentoring scheme have to be 18-24 years of age, and looking for work.

They usually have between one and five sessions with their mentor, who they meet at least once a month. The kind of support a mentor will offer depends on the specific needs of the individual, but for example, activity might include:

- Developing different CVs aimed at specific sectors, such as retail and administration; writing cover letters, coaching prior to interviews, and de-briefing afterwards.

- Work experience within a particular sector, with support from the mentor to see if it matches the expectations of the young person.

- Signposting to other organisations who may offer further skills development

The business mentoring scheme includes a raft of activities which can lead young people into a career path they can develop and enjoy. It helps them make informed choices about the sectors they wish to approach for work, building confidence and professionalism with the support of a local business expert.

Charity on the menu at GW business breakfast

An Army Major awarded the George Cross for Bravery and a solicitor who had to be dramatically rescued from Mount Kilimanjaro will be talking about a charity close to their hearts at a forthcoming event in Swindon.

Major Peter Norton GC, one of only 23 servicemen or women to be awarded the George Cross since the Second World War, and Chris Kane, a partner in the corporate dispute resolution team at Withy King Solicitors in Swindon, will discuss their experiences and the importance of Help for Heroes at the next Great Western Business Breakfast.

The event is at STEAM on September 21 from 7.30am to 9am. To book visit www.gwbb.co.uk. Or contact Lisa Badger at lisa.badger@aldermore.co.uk.

Wincanton shifts focus back to UK as it pulls out of Europe with £64m disposal



Wincanton, the Chippenham-based distribution group, has offloaded all its mainland European interests to German rival Rhenus in a €74m (£64.2m) cash deal, allowing it to concentrate on developing its UK business.

Wincanton had built up the European operation to include 38 distribution depots across Germany and 30 in France. The German operation included a major intermodal (road, rail and river) base in the North-Rhine area of Germany. In total the business employs around 3,000 people.

The business made an operating profit of approximately €4.1m on revenues of around €558m in the 12 months to March 31. Gross assets were approximately €181m.

Rhenus is paying €44m with an additional €30m to pay off the

pension deficit. The disposal is subject to anti-trust clearance and the approval of Wincanton shareholders. Proceeds of the sale will be used to reduce group debt.

Wincanton chief executive Eric Born said: "The sale of our remaining businesses in Mainland Europe to Rhenus will enable us to focus on developing our leading position in the UK market, where we have greater scale and see significant potential for profitable growth."

"Rhenus has a strong reputation in the European market and the addition of these businesses to its portfolio will build on its leading position in intermodal services and contract logistics."

Rhenus is one of Europe's leading logistics groups employing 18,000 people at more than 290 locations worldwide.

Healthy growth for SW manufacturers

South West manufacturers have achieved healthy growth figures despite the increasingly fragile nature of the wider economic recovery.

The upbeat picture emerges from a major survey by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, and accountants BDO. It shows 45 per cent of the region's manufacturing firms taking part in the survey reporting higher output and 41 per cent saying they achieved higher total new orders over the past three months.

However, as the economic outlook has become more uncertain, some

parts of the region's manufacturing sector are forecasting tougher times ahead, particularly with the global economic slowdown hitting export markets.

Some manufacturers, including metals and electronics businesses, received weaker orders over the past three months with concerns about the corresponding impact on output over the next three months.

The balance between caution and optimism also appears to have shifted for small companies, with less visibility around future orders keeping

confidence in check for the next quarter.

EEF regional director Paul Knight, said: "Manufacturers have bucked other recent negative indicators, holding out hope that the recovery has not yet run out of steam."

"However, conditions have moved on from the broad-based recovery of the past 18 months to a more mixed picture – for example, the percentage of south west companies reporting growing order books in the past three months fell from 61 per cent to 41 per cent."

Join us for this years best Corporate Christmas Party Nights at Liquid Club Swindon.

Chordiem
We do events

Liquid

Downtown Chicago • Swindon's New Corporate Christmas Party Experience

Chicago themed menu, live entertainment, chill out room with gaming tables, dancing till 3.00am, discounted bar prices and much more.... No minimum numbers.

<http://www.chordiem.com/services/chordiem-corporate-christmas-party-nights-2011/>
Tel - 01793 887 632
E-mail - jon@chordiem.com

CONTACT

BATH - 01225 447870
12 Mile's Buildings, George Street, Bath BA1 2QS

BRISTOL - 0117 920 9393
2 St Augustines Court, St Augustines Place, Bristol BS1 4XP

CHELTENHAM - 01242 210410
123 The Promenade, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1NW

SWINDON - 01793 238323
26 Commercial Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 5NS

Simply Refreshing Recruitment in Swindon

John Taylerson, founder of Malmesbury Syrups, offers the following advice to new businesses, based on his own early experiences:

CASH: This is our biggest challenge. We've learnt to manage it by understanding the gross margin for every product and every customer. This is the key to profitability.

FINANCE: Our bank has been very supportive because we've always put forward a sensible business plan. Even if we tear it up and rewrite it every quarter, at least we can show them sensible forecasts and contingency plans.

PREMISES: Finding the right premises on affordable, flexible terms was difficult. Perseverance paid off and we eventually found a landlord willing to be sensible.

CONTRACTS: These must be able to flex in line with sales; volume is key to our profitability.

MENTORS: Experienced business practitioners who act as mentors have a lot to offer.

TECHNOLOGY: I believe it is important to re-invest in the business. We recently replaced our old equipment with new kit which uses pulsed white light technology rather than heat, which is far more energy efficient and even improves on the flavour of our syrups. We're now getting invitations to talk to retailers who like what we do.

INNOVATION: Never stop inventing.

Sink or swim - getting the basics right

Getting started in business is one thing. Growing a profitable, sustainable business is quite another – particularly during these challenging times.

Swindon Business News and Withy King, one of the region's leading commercial law firms, have teamed up to develop a series of Business Life Cycle features and seminars to help owner-managers weigh up their options and make the right decisions at vital stages in their company's development.

In the first of the series, Withy King advises owner-managers who have recently started a business or are in the early years of trading.

Customer and supplier relationships

Building strong relationships with customers and suppliers is at the heart of every business, but not at any cost, warns Withy King corporate partner Alex Pyatt.

"If customers or suppliers default on payments or deliveries, disregard your payment terms or simply don't provide the quality or service you were expecting, your business can very quickly run into difficulties.

"It is essential that you invest time in developing robust terms and conditions which set the parameters for your customer and supplier relationships. Having

contracts in place provides peace of mind for all parties, demonstrates your professionalism and inspires confidence. It's better to get the fundamentals in place up front than deal with disputes and other issues which could have a devastating impact on your business further down the line."

Business premises

Your premises are an essential asset of your business. Peter Foscett, a partner in Withy King's commercial property team, has the following advice:

- Before you negotiate the lease, understand the options open to you. The Leasing Code (www.leasingbusinesspremises.co.uk) is a useful starting point.

- When negotiating the lease, calculate the cost of complying with your obligations. How does the landlord expect the premises to be returned at the end of the lease and do you have to take down any changes you have made? You can find a simple costings sheet at:

http://www.withyking.co.uk/cms/document/Cost_of_occupation.pdf.

- Before you sign the lease, understand the liabilities you are taking on. It may be helpful to take advice from someone who deals with leases all the time.

- Ensure some flexibility in the lease should you plan to downsize or expand.

People

Most businesses need additional staff as they grow. Malcolm Gregory, head of the employment team at Withy King, urges employers to think long-term.

"Issuing terms and conditions of employment within eight weeks of taking on an employee is a legal obligation. There are no exceptions to this, even for the most fledgling of businesses," explained Malcolm.

"You may feel you cannot afford the time and expense of drawing up contracts and a staff handbook early on but our experience shows you will benefit from having clearly defined contractual terms. Formalising established working practices into documents can be time consuming and employees can be resistant to changes introduced some way into their employment. But get the basics right from the start and your business will benefit in the long run."

Withy King has a wealth of experience working with companies at all stages in the corporate life cycle. For further information, contact Malcolm Gregory, Alex Pyatt or Peter Foscett on 01793 536526 or visit www.withyking.co.uk

From left:

Alex Pyatt,
Malcolm

Gregory and
Peter Foscett



STARTING IN BUSINESS SEMINAR: SINK OR SWIM – GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Property, Employment and Corporate partners from Withy King will provide practical advice and guidance to owner-managers in their first years of trading. There will be an opportunity to network after the presentations

The free seminar is at the National Self Build Centre, Lydiard Fields, Great Western Way, Swindon on Wednesday, October 19, from 4-6pm.

To book a place, email events@withyking.co.uk or phone Anna Arakcheeva on 01225 352833

Business Life Cycle case study: Malmesbury Syrups

The UK's only artisan manufacturer of flavoured syrups for coffees and cooking was established in 2007 by John Taylerson, a former marketing director at Milk Link. Based in Oaksey, Malmesbury Syrups produces an extensive range of flavours, including amaretto, fine vanilla and even a Christmas pudding flavour.

"I've been involved with food and drink all my life, from milking cows on the farm where I grew up to working in processing, packaging, marketing and everything in between," said John. "I always wanted to run my own business but the world doesn't need any more cheese-makers, so I knew I'd have to work hard to come up with something different. I learned that demand for flavoured coffees was rising but all the syrups packaged and sold in the UK are manufactured abroad. I wanted to be the first to produce them here – with natural ingredients and to a very high standard."

Within the first 12 months, Malmesbury Syrups could be found in

Selfridges, Waitrose and John Lewis. But it wasn't all plain sailing. "The recession hit us hard and there were moments when my blood ran cold," said John. "In 2008 one of our largest customers went into administration and retailers no longer wanted to carry too many lines or too much stock. Our product turned out to be very recession-sensitive and we were forced to find new channels fast."

John realised the internet offered a relatively low-risk opportunity to build the brand and generate income. "By offering our products online, we were able to learn very quickly what our customers wanted. And positive customer reviews drive sales. Online has helped generate cash at a time when retailers weren't spending. But it's by no means a panacea. Distribution is a huge challenge. It's expensive and we found it difficult to find a reliable distributor."

John is constantly reinventing his products and his business model to give his customers reasons to come



John Taylerson,
founder of
Malmesbury Syrups



Swindon
01793 536526

Bath
01225 425731

Marlborough
01672 514781



Independent Schools

Special 4 page feature



Education remains priority despite economic downturn

With household budgets being squeezed, many families are finding the investment they had planned in their child's education is coming under pressure.

School fees, excluding nurseries, increased by an average of 4.5 per cent in 2011, according to latest figures from the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

However, this was the second-lowest fee increase since 1994, and compares with a rise of 5.3 per cent in the CPI education component in the year to January 2011.

Some two thirds of a school's costs are comprised of staff salaries with teaching staff costs as a percentage of net fees equal to 53 per cent in 2009.

But while independent schools have had to adapt to this new environment in a number of ways, the demand for education outside the state sector continues.

The UK independent sector as a whole educates around 628,000 children in approximately 2,600 schools.

There is more than seven per cent of the total number of schoolchildren in England, with the figure rising to more than 18 per cent of pupils over the age of 16.

The average fee per term at an ISC school for 2010/2011 was £4,290, with costs ranging from an average of £3,655 for a day school to an average of £8,384 for

boarders. However, 164,105 pupils at ISC schools - 33.2 per cent of the total - receive help with their fees. The majority of these pupils - 138,975 - receive scholarships or bursaries from their school, the combined value of which amounts to more than £660m a year. More than 80 per cent of total fee assistance comes directly from the schools themselves.

While independent schools continue to invest in new capital projects - during 2009/10, schools spent £640.9m, or £1,265 per pupil, - they have cut back on expenditure by an average of 11.1 per cent year-on-year.

Boarding schools spent £78.1m on new or refurbished boarding accommodation (£1,147 per boarder). The remainder of the money was split between £285.8m on new buildings, £153.2m on improvements to buildings, £56m on equipment and £54.2m on information technology.

Of course, it is academic achievement that is paramount to most parents and ISC schools maintain low pupil-teacher ratios to ensure that they cover a very broad curriculum.

Overall ISC A-Level examination results showed that in 2010, some 51.5 per cent of entries were awarded at least an A grade, with 17.2 per cent of entries awarded the A* grade. At GCSE, 60.2 per cent of entries were awarded either an A* or an A.

King Edward's School: investing in quality learning

King Edward's School is one of the top academic independent day schools in the UK for girls and boys aged three to 18 years. This success has been achieved through the highest standards in teaching, the quality and dedication of the school's staff and the individual guidance given to its pupils to realise their full potential.

The school provides a stimulating learning environment where children are encouraged to strive for excellence and to acquire a lifelong passion for knowledge, discovery and adventure. There is a broad and dynamic curriculum and a large range of extra-curricular activities to interest and enrich the lives of all pupils. This is underpinned by 'outstanding' pastoral care.

Pupils achieve success in many areas. The strength of music in the school is reflected in the excellent levels of public performances, the considerable success in examinations and the regularity with which pupils gather honours at regional music festivals. The school has an outstanding dramatic tradition, with two or more major productions a year, an art and photography department which is a centre of excellence and a tradition of sporting success, with

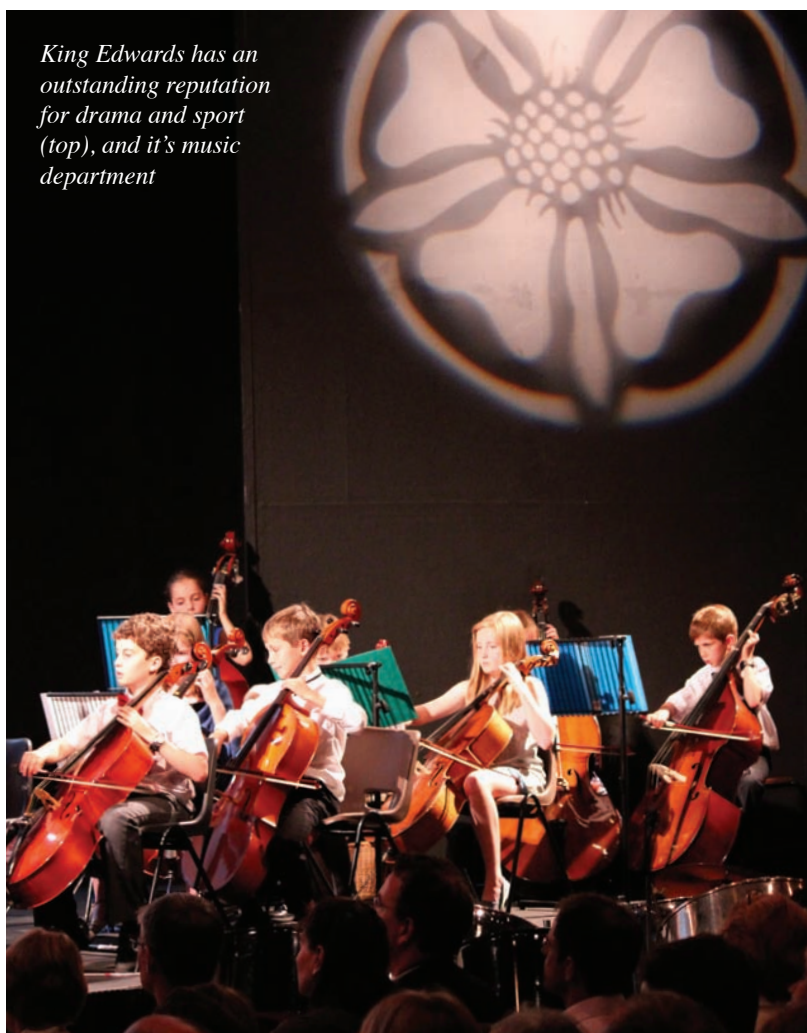
many pupils competing at both regional and national levels.

The school is also renowned for its excellent facilities in science and technology, sport, music, drama and the arts. King Edward's School continues to invest in a quality learning environment; new garden level reception rooms, a new ICT suite and library have been completed at the Pre-Prep, a new design and technology suite, ICT room, two new classrooms and drama and performance space were added at the Junior School and at the Senior School, a state-of-the-art academic centre for science, geography, modern foreign languages and IT and a stylish sixth form learning and social centre.

"We look forward to welcoming you to our open events which will provide an opportunity to meet our welcoming teachers and talk to pupils, see our excellent facilities and find out how we can give your child the best start in life. Quite a number of pupils attend King Edward's School who come from the Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Swindon area travelling to school by bus and train."

Contact St Edward's School registrar on 01225 464313 or visit: www.kesbath.com

King Edwards has an outstanding reputation for drama and sport (top), and it's music department



KING
EDWARD'S
SCHOOL
BATH



SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Friday 30 September
6 - 8pm

SENIOR, JUNIOR & PRE-PREP OPEN DAY

Saturday 1 October
9 - 12 noon

Bus and train service available to King Edward's School, Bath
Open day details available on
www.kesbath.com or Email: openday@kesbath.com

Independent Schools



SCHOOL FACTS

What is the percentage of sixth-form leavers from ISC schools continue to higher education?

91.5%

How many of the A-level entries from independent schools in 2010 received the top A grade?

Over half

How much does the Independent Schools Council contribute towards pupils' fees?

**Over
£550m**

ISI gives St Margaret's, Calne an excellent Report

"Pupils' achievement is outstanding across a wide range of activities," according to the interim inspection report of St Margaret's Preparatory School in Calne, recently carried out by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI).

The report acknowledged that "attainment is judged to be high in relation to age-related expectations". It also remarked on how "the pupils' successes are due, in large measure, to the strong teaching, their positive attitudes, and the excellent relationships" and that "meticulous attention is paid to detail with nothing left to chance".

The inspection recognised that "pupils' progress is supported by an excellent and wide-ranging curriculum" and that "the well-structured programme of personal, social and health education benefits their personal development". When referring to teachers, the inspectors commented that "teachers' planning is detailed" and that "teaching stimulates the pupils' interest and takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect".

The Early Years Foundation Stage was also inspected and the report concluded that "the overall effectiveness and quality of the provision is outstanding".

Karen Cordon, headmistress of St Margaret's, said: "I am very pleased with the outcome of the report – what becomes



Pupils at St Margaret's Preparatory with a copy of the ISI Report

very apparent from reading the report is the excellent relationship between the children and their teachers, as well as the mutual respect that permeates throughout school. All these aspects of the children's education are of paramount importance if they are to maximize their potential."

For families working or living in the Marlborough area, St

Margaret's has now introduced a mini-bus service. To find out more about this service or the school, visit the school's Open Morning at 9.30am on Thursday October 13. Call 01249 857379 to register or visit www.stmargaretsprep.org.uk. St Margaret's Preparatory School, Calne is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years.



ST MARGARET'S
PREPARATORY SCHOOL CALNE

Open Morning

Thursday 13th October 2011

To register, please contact the school.

'Pupils' achievement is outstanding across a wide range of activities... attainment is high'
'Teachers know their pupils well... they use methods well suited to their pupils'

Quotes from ISI Inspection Report 2011

Co-educational day school for boys and girls aged 3-11

T: 01249 857220 E: office@stmargaretsprep.org.uk
W: www.stmargaretsprep.org.uk

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

Hatherop Castle School



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

2011 achievements
British Council International Schools Award
Every Child Matters Standards Award
Bronze Eco Schools Award

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

Open Mornings
Wednesday 5th October 2011 9.00 - 12pm
Saturday 21st January 2012 9.00 - 12pm

Scholarship & Assessment Day
Saturday 4th February 2012 9.00 - 12pm

Please contact the Admissions Registrar on 01285 750206 for further details

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



Focus on

A comprehensive online guide to the independent and state sectors and colleges in the West of England, Bath, Bristol and Gloucestershire. This indispensable guide offers education executives, entrepreneurs and business themselves to the area's business executives, entrepreneurs and business.

Launch date: January 2012

Available through:

Swindon Business News

Bristol Business News

Bath Business News

Contact Claudia Carr on 01793



Girls at Westonbirt School cheer their exam results success

Westonbirt celebrates outstanding results

Westonbirt School is celebrating this summer following outstanding GCSE and A Level results.

Local girls were among the top achievers, including former head girl Ashley White of Old Sodbury, Bristol, who received an excellent four A*s in chemistry, history, maths and further maths at A Level to secure her place to read politics, philosophy and economics at St. John's College, Oxford.

Emily Clare of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, gained three As to read geography at Birmingham University and Katharine Curry of Norton, near Malmesbury, was awarded A*, A and a B and goes on to read biology at Exeter University. Superb results were also achieved by Yvonne Chen who was

awarded three As and an A* to read aeronautical engineering at Imperial College London and Angela Yeung who gained two As and a B to read law at Warwick University.

It was a similar story with the excellent GCSE results, with 100 per cent A* and A grades in chemistry, physics, music and Spanish and 100 per cent A* - B grades awarded in biology, Latin, PE and textiles.

The outstanding results come shortly after Westonbirt School received a superb inspection report from the Independent Schools' Inspectorate, confirming that "girls' overall achievement at Westonbirt School is excellent, academically, in their community service and in their outstanding personal development".



Headmaster
Neil Shaw
with two of
his pupils

Rose Hill Westonbirt School welcomes excellent SATs results

Rose Hill Westonbirt School is delighted following excellent SATs results this year, which included:

- 92 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 Reading
- 100 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 English
- 58 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 English

Headmaster Neil Shaw was justifiably proud of the former Year 6 pupils, commenting: "I am delighted for the pupils who have worked tremendously hard to achieve these excellent SATs results. The results demonstrate both the pupils' dedication and the high quality of teaching at Rose Hill Westonbirt. I

wish all the pupils the very best of luck for the next stage of their education at senior school."

After an emotional yet celebratory Speech and Prize Giving day on July 8, which welcomed the Reverend Philip Dixon, former Chaplain of Westonbirt School as guest speaker, the Year 6 pupils travelled in style on a vintage open-deck bus for their final lunch together as a class.

All former Year 6 pupils gained entry into senior schools of their choice, including Westonbirt School, Bath Royal High, Wycliffe, Warminster, Tudor Hall and top grammar schools Stroud High and Pates.

Inspiring young minds

Westonbirt School
Independent Boarding & Day School for Girls (11-18)

Open Morning
Saturday 15th October
09:30am - 12:30pm
T: 01666 881301
E: registrar@westonbirt.org
www.westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk

Education

the leading schools, academies

and, including Wiltshire, Swindon,

educational establishments in both

is a unique opportunity to promote

audience including senior

business owners.

Grittleton House School

An Independent Day School for boys & girls aged 2-16

Open Mornings
Senior School **Tues 27th September**
Whole School **Sat 8th October**
Nursery, Infant, Junior **Wed 12th October**

Open Door Days
Thurs 10th November
& Tues 6th December

For times and more information
call **01249 782434**
or www.grittletonhouseschool.org

Inspiring young minds

Rose Hill Westonbirt School
Preparatory Day School & Nursery for Boys & Girls (5-11)

Open Morning
Saturday 15th October
09:30am - 12:30pm
T: 01666 881375
E: rosehill@rhwestonbirt.co.uk
www.rhwestonbirt.co.uk

615393 for further information

Independent Schools



The Royal High School, Bath

All-round, all-girls education at Royal High

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

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

Dougall. "This is anchored not only in the outstanding examination results that our girls routinely achieve but also in the places they take up with confidence at leading UK and overseas universities.

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

Scholarships and bursaries are available at Years seven and 12. To find out more contact our registrar on 01225 313877.



GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS

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

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



The Royal High School, Bath

Nursery • Junior School • Senior School • Sixth Form College



Girls' Day School Trust

Lansdown Road, Bath BA1 5SZ t: 01225 313877
e: royalhigh@bat.gdst.net www.royalhighbath.gdst.net

Business Education

Retail Skills Academy opens its 50th outlet in Swindon

Swindon is the location for the National Skills Academy for Retail's 50th skills shops.

The venue, in McArthurGlen's Swindon Designer Outlet, will provide training for the retail sector and offer a range of programmes to suit individual and employer needs.

Skills shops are located across the UK offering information and advice on training opportunities to retailers of all sizes, their employees or those seeking to get into the sector, including pre-employment courses, apprenticeships, management

training and bespoke programmes.

Since launching in 2009, the network has gone from strength to strength with skills shops in all four nations and in many major towns and cities. As well as Swindon, skills shops will open this month in Cambridge, Canterbury and Hastings.

National Skills Academy for Retail head Jane Rexworthy said: "This is a huge achievement for the organisation. Each of our skills shops provides a valuable service to their area's residents and businesses, where often retail is key to the local economy."

Leading the way on training

In a tough and uncertain environment, leadership is more important than ever in giving your company the competitive edge

Developed for senior managers and accredited by the UK's largest management awarding body CMI Business First are now able to offer:

- Level 7 Award in strategic management and leadership: designed for directors and senior managers, this qualification will build on the managerial skills and knowledge that you already have and give you a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved in strategic management. This qualification can be tailored to suit your professional needs

For more information on this qualification and other areas of executive education contact the Business First team on 01793 498404 or via email at: businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk

XpressTrain Ltd
direct routes to success

..to speak and write with power!

Tel / Fax: 01793 484140

Mobile: 0780 300 1679

Email: godfrey@xpresstrain.org.uk

Website: www.xpresstrain.org.uk

• Speech training • Presentation skills • Public speaking • Interviews & Auditions

Business
...first for all your training needs!

CMI

Swindon College

Executive Education

In a tough and uncertain environment, leadership is more important than ever in giving your company the competitive edge!

Developed for senior managers and accredited by the UK's largest Management Awarding Body CMI Business First are now able to offer:

Level 7 Award in Strategic Management and Leadership:

Designed for directors and senior managers, this qualification will build on the managerial skills and knowledge that you already have and give you a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved in strategic management.

This qualification can be tailored to suit your professional needs.

For more information on this qualification and other areas of Executive Education, please contact the Business First Team on (01793) 498404 or e-mail businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk or visit www.swindon-college.ac.uk

Swindon College North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1DY

Click here.

SBN

Check out the latest updates
www.swindon-business.net

Stand by for more buyouts in the South West, says Grant Thornton

Times may be hard but the vast majority of private equity houses expect the number of new buyouts to hold up in the coming months, according to Grant Thornton's latest Private Equity Barometer. The chartered accountants say, however, that although there has been little difficulty in funding new deals only a small proportion have been refinanced recently.

The quarterly survey of UK private equity executives shows that half still expect the volume of year-on-year new investments to rise while

only three per cent foresee a fall in the number of new investments. The remaining 47 per cent anticipate no change.

"Private equity funds with a good track record have no problems raising fresh equity for investments in the UK. Moreover, debt is readily available for quality private equity deals," said Mark Naughton, corporate finance director at Grant Thornton in the South West.

"So far UK private equity has coped well with the economic uncertainty and is buoyed by the

resilience of privately held businesses. In total our respondents are planning to invest at least £3.2bn in the UK in the coming 12 months with nearly three-quarters expecting to invest between £5m and £100m and about one in five investing more than £100m."

Only 27 per cent of respondents to the survey expect their ability to do deals in the coming 12 months to be stymied by difficulties in finding debt to support new investments while 73 per cent do not. **For the full story visit www.swindon-business.net**

The difficulties of financing mergers and acquisitions in the current climate

Rob Harman, corporate finance partner at Morris Owen Chartered Accountants, has been advising the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises on the financing of acquisitions and mergers for many years. He acknowledges that it has always raised some interesting challenges but perhaps never more so than now...

Just prior to the 2008 banking crisis many transactions were substantially financed by loan capital. Although every deal is different, in those 'heady' days, leveraged funding of two or three times loan to equity capital was certainly not unusual. Since then banks and other third-party lending sources have become far more reticent to extend to that level of leverage with a ratio of one to one, or less, now being far more the norm.

While generally accepted that raising funds in the current climate is more difficult, what is often missed is the deflationary impact this reduction in leverage ratios has on the current value of businesses.

By way of example; an investor seeking to achieve a five times multiple return on an equity investment over five years would be prepared to pay around 20 per cent more for the target business if he is able to leverage £2 of loan finance for every £1 of equity investment than he would if he can only leverage on a £1 for £1 basis – proof of the numbers are available on request!

Of course the current business owner already has a fairly clear view of the value of the target business, irrespective of how the purchaser is intending to fund the acquisition, so the potential acquirer's valuation reducing



Rob Harman

by 20 per cent, just because because loan finance ratios have dropped, can often create a valuation gap that cannot be bridged; resulting in fewer completions and a slowdown in the market generally.

The current financing realities bring into ever sharper focus the absolute requirement to gain a good early stage understanding of the other side's position. If this can be achieved, and the transaction approached with realism, successful outcomes are still very achievable notwithstanding lending levels.

If you're looking to expand your business through acquisition or exit by disposal and feel a better understanding of these issues would help you then contact Rob on 01793 603900 or at: rob.harman@morrisowen.com



More is:
"Being fundamental
in your business"

Get more@morrisowen.com
Call for more: 01793 603900

MorrisOwen

chartered accountants, business advisers and more...

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

Exporting is becoming more of a viable option

Reaching out to the international trade market as a means of fuelling economic growth is becoming seen as more of a viable option by South West firms.

This message emerges from the latest Manufacturing Barometer Survey by the Manufacturing Advisory Service in the South West (MAS-SW), which is designed to provide a snapshot of regional manufacturing trends and an overview of the current economic climate and sector issues, suggests that 79 per cent of respondents said that they have considered selling overseas, reinforcing key indicators from the latest DHL/BCC Trade Confidence Index, which have shown that UK export activity is continuing to grow and recover beyond recession and point towards expansion.

However, it is not clear how many businesses are export-ready as results from the Barometer Survey indicate that financial support and marketing know-how remain two of the biggest stumbling blocks to manufacturers.

Commenting on the significance of the findings, Simon Howes, managing director, MAS-SW, said: "Export is one of many options available to manufacturers and despite

the challenges, is worth careful and thorough exploration.

"An important consideration for manufacturers is to assess if their products are suitable for overseas markets or if they will need to be adapted in any way, for example, in terms of brand names, packaging, regulations and compliance issues or in response to different consumer behaviour, demand and competitors. It is also important to evaluate what changes will need to be made to the UK operation to service any overseas business."

Most of the support delivered by MAS-SW is free or heavily subsidised and Simon added: "One of the ways in which our Manufacturing Specialists are able to make a difference is by enabling directors to develop a clear strategy for their business. Where export forms part of that strategy, we will ensure a business has the right capacity and capabilities, processes and products to consider international markets. At this stage, our partners such as UK Trade and Investment, Enterprise Europe Network in the South West and the sector-specific innovation networks (iNets) in the South West, will be able to support your next steps."

Free export seminar later in September

Wiltshire businesses considering exporting or already trading internationally but wishing to do more have an opportunity to attend a free seminar later this month.

Entitled How to Set Up New Markets Overseas, the event takes place on September 26 at Salisbury Racecourse in association with accountants Francis Clark, NatWest and UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the Government's export support organisations.

Representatives from each will provide an insights into the fundamentals of overseas trade.

Nick Field and Nicky Busst from UKTI will cover market selection and key routes to market, Craig Cotton and Lynda Russell from NatWest will discuss how to finance overseas trade and Stuart Rogers from Francis Clark will advise on international tax issues.

Nick Field, International Trade Adviser at UKTI South West, said: "This seminar is a great opportunity for local businesses that are either considering their first steps into international trade or already have an export strategy in place that they wish to develop further."

"Attendees will hear from specialists from across banking, accountancy and international trade, as well as learn from a local company's insight and experiences in overseas markets. The seminar, which takes place between 4pm and 6pm, is free so I'd encourage anyone considering international trade to get in touch now as places are limited."

Call 0845 6060 969 or email events@uktisouthwest.org for more information.

Swindon Business News continues its series of features on exporting next month with an overview of the nuts and bolts of international trade, including arranging export adviser documentation, letters of credit etc and the tax implications of trading overseas. Call 01793 615393 for more information.





Historic transformation at Weighbridge Brewhouse

Diners enjoying their meals at the Weighbridge Brewhouse, Swindon's newest premier restaurant, would be hard pressed to imagine what the historic building looked like just six months ago.

That was when building contractor John Saunders was called in by owners Anthony and Allyson Windle to help with their dream of converting the derelict 19th century GWR weigh house into a contemporary bar, restaurant and brewery.

The couple, who own the award-winning Three Crowns at Brinkworth, had a clear vision of how they wanted their new venture to look. But first John, whose business J Saunders was appointed as main contractor, had to overcome a few problems.

"The project had quite a few challenges, to put it mildly," he said. "For a start, the building had been left derelict for a long time and had been broken into and vandalised."

"We had to do a lot of work on it before we could even start to think about the interior fittings to turn it into a new restaurant and bar."

John's Brinkworth-based business, which he started

more than 20 years ago, usually builds new houses and home extensions, so tackling a major renovation of an historic building and fitting a polished stainless steel bar, kitchen, toilets and everything else needed for the £2m project was a new experience.

"The building was really just an empty shell when we first got in there," he said. Some original features were retained, including a spiral staircase, while new ones were added, including a wooden porch from a church in Yorkshire.

The Windles wanted to engage as many local businesses as possible for the conversion work and, as well as John they brought in electrical contractors C J Electricals to fit the complex electrical system, which included CCTV, a state-of-the-art music system and fully-integrated ordering and payment systems.

At one time John had eight employees working with him on the project and another 10 from other contractors fitting out the interior. Among the other Swindon area businesses was Elite Steel Fabrications, which designed and installed the Weighbridge Brewhouse's microbrewery, which will produce three standard beers as well as seasonal ales.

Utax gains a competitive advantage with innovative 'solutions' strategy

All companies need to change and adapt if they are to succeed in tough times.

But Utax UK has taken that a stage further by radically repositioning itself in its market to gain competitive advantage over its rivals.

The fact that Utax, based at the Shrivenham 100 business park near Swindon, is in the fairly traditional office photocopier and printer market has made its transformation all the more effective.

The German-owned firm, like its rivals, built its business model around selling or leasing equipment, maintaining them under service contracts and supplying toner cartridges.

This model worked until the recession hit and the office equipment market took a dive.

Utax UK managing director Shaun Wilkinson, who joined the business in 2006, saw for himself the impact the economic slowdown had on the market – and realised that something radical was needed.

"Sales weren't good anyway and we had been losing out to our rivals," he said.

"So we decided to reposition ourselves as a solutions business rather than a photocopier business."

"The industry has always been run along the lines of buy or lease. Nobody had looked at it from the point of view of working with the clients to minimise their costs and move towards the paperless office by looking at how they work."

Utax introduced software to help its clients minimise their costs, including giving them the choice of printing out or making electronic versions of documents – a counter-intuitive measure for a firm that supplies photocopiers.

"The previous model had been to get people to print as much as possible," said Shaun.

The radical move has paid off and Utax bounced back. Revenues grew by 34 per cent last year and so far this year are running 57 per cent ahead of this time last year.

"I think the recession was a bit of a wake up call for our industry," said Shaun. "It's forced people to look at their costs. Businesses still need to print but it's a case doing it cost-



efficiently. We've saved some of our customers 20 per cent off their printing costs. Some businesses spend £10,000 a year just on toner cartridges so that's a serious amount of money to save."

Part of Utax's solution is to ban recycling bins next to photocopiers.

"They just encourage people to print or photocopy stuff they don't need. They throw it away in the recycling bin and think they are saving money."

Shaun sees further growth for Utax.

"Our products are basically the same as what everyone else is selling but we now offer something different," he said. "And we are constantly looking at how we can do things better."

"Three years ago we had no IT technical people working for us. Now we've got four who work with customers on site. It puts us ahead of our rivals."

"We have also just invested £30,000 in new software. We are looking at ways we can keep costs down on servicing our machines. It's important that we continue to invest."

"It's also down to the people. We have got a great team spirit here. We spend a lot of time and money looking after our people. We take everybody out once a quarter as a company and we have good incentives. We also invest in training – we have really ramped up our training budget over last 18 months."

"It's a false economy not to do it. Our customers tell me that we're better than our competitors so it appears to be paying off."

Vox packages up the PR solution for GWP Group

Cricklade-based packaging experts GWP Group has awarded public relations and marketing communications consultancy Vox a contract to deliver public relations activity to help raise the profile of the company.

The GWP Group specialises in creating innovative packaging. Comprising four divisions – packaging, protective, conductive and coatings – the company can design and manufacture all types of packaging ranging from cardboard boxes and electrostatic cartons to protective flight cases and cases for delicate medical equipment.

GWP recently created a bespoke protective bike carrier for triathlete Dan Brunton to transport his time trial bike to the world championships in China. Working closely with Dan, GWP

designed and built a case that would support and protect his bike, which cannot be dismantled like a road bike, on his journey across the globe.

Vox director Julie Margerum said: "We're very pleased to represent GWP, which is truly an exciting and innovative company."

To find out how Vox can help raise your business's profile call 01793 511990 or email: enquiries@voxonline.co.uk.






 Malmesbury 01666 510462
 Marlborough 01672 516268

www.candjelectrical.com

J. SAUNDERS BUILDERS LTD



JOHN SAUNDERS

Office/Fax: 01666 510140

Oakenhall, Barnes Green, Brinkworth

Wiltshire SN15 5AQ

Mobile: (07973) 452323

E-mail: johnsaunders1810@aol.com



Local hotels gain strength in June

The hotel sector in Swindon continued its recovery in June with all three main occupancy measures up in comparison to the same month last year, latest figures from accountants and business advisers PKF show.

The occupancy rate was up by 5.4 per cent to 74.5 per cent and average room rates were up marginally from £54.85 to £55.03, taking the overall room yield an up by 5.8 per cent to £41. Neil Dimes, partner in charge of PKF'S South West office, said: "This is good news for the Swindon hotel sector and is heartening to see another month of growth."

Click here.

SBN

Check out the latest updates
www.swindon-business.net

• Ambulance trust appoints GVA to handle property review

Great Western Ambulance NHS Trust (GWAS) has appointed property advisors GVA to help it modernise its property estate.

Chippenham-based GWAS's 30 sites are spread across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and the West of England and range from state-of-the-art facilities to buildings nearing the end of their economic life.

The trust wants to develop a modern, flexible estate more aligned to its clinical strategy for accident and emergency and patient transport services. The Bristol office of GVA is supporting it on three key projects over a three-year period.

GVA director Gordon Isgrove said: "Our multi-discipline approach will look at all aspects of the trust's existing property portfolio to help us advise the trust on establishing an estate more suited to its current and future needs."

GVA will be providing specialist advice in lease negotiation, agency acquisition and disposal, planning, valuation, dilapidations and condition surveys.

GVA was recently ranked the number one supplier of services to the public sector nationally with a 44% market share, according to figures for 2010/11 from the Government Procurement Service.

• Industrial sale at Corsham

Whitmarsh Lockhart has sold Unit One Leaffield Industrial Estate, Corsham to a private company. The 32,500 sq ft building on a 1.76 acre site had previously been used for warehousing and manufacturing. The guide price was £900,000 and the property was sold for an undisclosed sum.

Paul Whitmarsh, partner in charge of the agency department, said: "It is always a pleasure to dispose of an industrial/warehouse facility of this nature and see the building come back into life generating new jobs and revitalising the area."

"Unit One had been empty for approximately 18 months and had undergone an extensive refurbishment." Whitmarsh Lockhart acted on behalf of the Barnes Group.

• Unit sold at Ash and Birch Estate

Acting on behalf of Rockspring Funds, Caisson Investment Management has sold Unit 23 Ash at the Ash and Birch Industrial Estate, Kembrey Park, to MMG Magdev, a specialist supplier of permanent magnets.

Unit 23 Ash is a detached warehouse facility of 11,601 sq ft at the entrance to the estate. It was available at a quoting price of £755,000.

Alastair Andrews of joint agents Loveday and Loveday said: "The units at the Ash and Birch Industrial Estate provide unrivalled accommodation in the Swindon market. "The landscaped environment coupled with a very approachable on-site management team makes this the ideal location to expand a business. With various other units ranging from 1,000 sq ft up to 14,000 sq ft still available, any companies seeking to relocate should get in touch either with myself or joint agents Jones Lang LaSalle and Alder King."



Alastair Andrews

We've been expecting you...

Healthcare and medical device supplier Vygon has completed its move to Swindon's iconic former Motorola factory, with the French-owned company saying it will grow and develop in its new base.

Vygon, which celebrates its 50th anniversary next year, spent £15m buying the 46-acre site at Groundwell and transforming the landmark building into its UK headquarters, with bespoke warehousing, state-of-the-art offices and an international training centre. The building starred in the Bond movie *The World is not Enough* as a Turkish oil platform.

Parts of the 250,000 sq ft building, which had stood empty since Motorola ceased production in 2006, have been demolished, including three of its four warehouses, and Vygon has built a new 60,000 sq ft warehouse which at 12.5m high is more suited to its needs.

It has also completely refurbished the existing office pod and converted some rooms into training suites which will be used by Vygon staff from across the world – saving on

the cost of hiring external training facilities.

The massive operation to find a suitable site for Vygon to expand its UK operations started three years ago and has been managed by Bristol firm Adapt Properties. Initially the firm looked for a greenfield site to relocate its Cirencester head office and two satellite warehouses at South Cerney. The company had grown so quickly in the UK that some staff were based in portable buildings.

When Adapt's search hit on the Motorola site the company thought it ideal, given the huge potential for expansion. As Vygon UK managing director Les Davies says: "We have room to grow here for the next 20 to 30 years."

"We'd built a great team in Cirencester so we didn't want to move far but we were operating on three sites and it just wasn't practical."

Some 15 acres of land surplus to requirements will be sold but the remainder of the site is earmarked to meet Vygon's expansion.

The building, which has been renamed

after Vygon founder Pierre Simonet, has effectively been turned by 90 degrees to meet Vygon's needs. The firm supplies 4,500 different product lines to 7,000 hospitals, clinics, distributors and patients in their own homes every month across the UK and Northern Ireland. Its products, which are manufactured in mainland Europe, include feeding equipment for patients and custom procedure packs for use in operating theatres.

Vygon began moving into the building in the middle of June in a month-long exercise that involving shifting 4,000 pallets of equipment, furniture and stock plus 100 staff.

The team behind the relocation and refurbishment included Bristol architects Angus Meek, which adapted and remodelled the original building design by London firm Sheppard Robson, building work was carried out by Barnwood Construction of Gloucester with 5 Consulting of Herefordshire as quantity surveyors and construction coordinator. 3Sphere of Cirencester redesigned the office interior.

What's the tube for?

Motorola needed a large open, efficient and modern manufacturing space in the building so original architects Sheppard Robson came up with the innovative idea of putting all the services such as power cables in a 300m-long steel tube on roof. When Vygon bought the building they sought permission to demolish the tube as the company is not manufacturing on the site. But Swindon Council planners insisted the tube stay as it has become landmark.

Some 74 metres has been lopped off as Vygon has taken down part of the building. But the rest of the tube remains – even though now it is completely empty.



Surveying firm launched by experienced agent

Chartered surveyor Andrew Kilpatrick has launched Kilpatrick & Co, a Swindon-based surveying firm specialising in commercial property consultancy.

Mr Kilpatrick has more than 25 years' experience of Swindon and surrounding property markets and is a practicing arbitrator and independent expert, regularly

receiving appointments from the president of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

He is also a RICS-registered valuer and expert witness, joint author of *The Businessman's Guide to Rating* and a member of the Compulsory Purchase Association.

He is joined in Kilpatrick & Co by Stephen Brickell, who specialises in commercial agency and has more than five years' experience of sales lettings and acquisitions in Swindon's commercial property market, and Conor McVie, who specialises in property management, having responsibility for a wide range of properties.

New Windmill Hill office for financial services firm

Caerus Wealth, the advice firm set up by financial services veteran Keith Carby, has moved into showpiece offices on Swindon's flagship Windmill Hill business park.

The firm has taken a five-year lease agreement on Building 120 – formerly known as Sigma and one of the iconic smoke-glassed offices on the park.

Mr Carby has shaped some of the UK's most successful financial advice firms including Swindon-based giant Allied Dunbar which he

left to launch St James's Place Capital in Cirencester. He returned to Swindon with Openwork but quit two years ago.

Fast-growing Caerus has ambitions to be a major player in the wealth management advice industry and has been recruiting agents from rivals since its launch last year.

The 2,260 sq ft office, which has a quoting rent is £16 per sq ft, was let by joint agents Whitmarsh Lockhart and Hartnell Taylor Cook on behalf of Windmill Hill owners St Martins Property Corporation.

To Let



New Office Accommodation

Pinetrees Community Centre, Pinehurst, Swindon
2 Office Suites Available
Approx 40 sqm / (430.6 sqft) Each
Competitive Rates Available
Opening Late Autumn 2011

For further information contact:

Property Services, Swindon Borough Council,
Tel: 01793 463518
Email: PServices2@swindon.gov.uk



Ash&Birch

Quality units on flexible terms

Ethal was aghast at the speed of these units being let – so she got straight on the blower!

TO LET

Units available from 1,000 - 15,000 sq.ft.



Kembrey Park



£1.85m train station forecourt upgrade on track to start

Work is about to start on the long-awaited £1.85m upgrade of Swindon railway station's forecourt – a project seen as essential to lifting the town's image and an important part of the wider town centre redevelopment.

The nine-month programme of major improvements will give priority to pedestrians, safely separating them from traffic.

There will be new passenger drop-off areas, a clearly-defined taxi rank with 15 spaces and a new bus lane and shelter.

The whole area will be made more attractive with granite paving, trees, improved signs, lighting and seating.

The scheme also aims to overcome one of the key issues faced by visitors to Swindon arriving by train – how to reach the town centre by foot.

As well as better signs, the design will clearly indicate the route by continuing the forecourt's granite paving over the Station Road pedestrian crossing and along to Wellington Street.

Ian Piper, of Forward Swindon, the Council's regeneration company which is leading the project, said the existing station area did not yet reflect the town's important strategic location between London and Bristol.

"We are delighted to be driving this

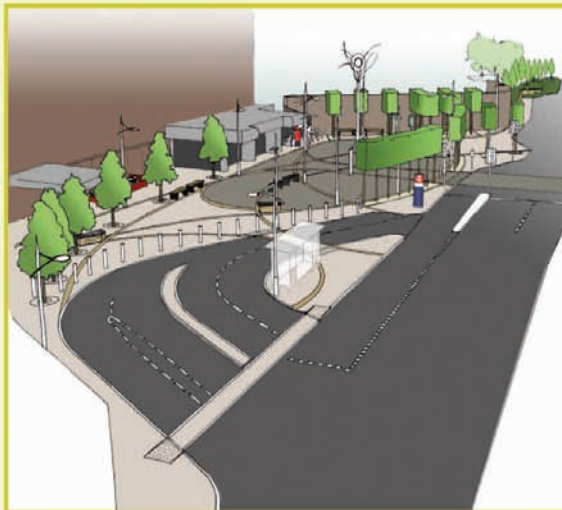
project for the benefit of Swindon," he said. "The result will be an impressive entry point into Swindon for business visitors and residents."

Forward Swindon has negotiated finance for the scheme and will be overseeing the project. More than half the funding has come from central Government with the remainder from Swindon Borough Council and Network Rail.

Damian Poulter of main contractors Britannia Construction said: "Being involved in this key regeneration project for Swindon is exciting for us. Over the next nine months we will be working to ensure minimum disruption and to keep station users, local businesses and stakeholders well informed of progress and access routes in and around the station."

Patrick Hallgate, route managing director for Network Rail, added: "The recent upgrade in the station by Network Rail and the plans ahead for the station forecourt will make a big difference for the community and businesses that rely on the railway for thousands of journeys every day."

The forecourt work comes ahead of Swindon town centre's planned 17-acre, flagship Union Square mixed-use development.



The taxi rank and bus stop in normal configuration



Three lanes of taxis feed the rank on the edge of the forecourt



The taxi rank in Rail Replacement Service configuration, with telescopic bollards adjusted to allow and prevent access



The taxi rank is restricted to a single lane allowing coach access onto the forecourt

Westerngate welcomes two new tenants

Two new tenants have taken space at Westerngate, developer Durngate's 11-unit industrial/warehouse scheme on the Hillmead Enterprise Park.

High-end kitchen provider Kitstone has acquired Unit 3 for its distribution and showroom facility after searching across Swindon for a suitable location.

Westerngate was the only modern facility that fitted its brief which means it now has excellent access to M4 Junction 16.

The other new tenant specialist providers of vending machines and vending Autobar, which has moved into Unit 4.

Autobar was also seeking a well-located modern facility close to Junction 16 and Unit 4 Westerngate provided the best solution.

Ralph Wells at Whitmarsh Lockhart said: "It is good news to let two units in quick succession at Westerngate."

"The recent market in this size sector has proved quite tough. However, we are able to offer a flexible deal structure and impressive deals that are very appealing to tenants."

"With this mixture of competitive deals and high-quality accommodation, Westerngate continues to be one of the preferred locations for tenants looking for units between 10-25,000 sq ft on the west side of Swindon."

Whitmarsh Lockhart is joint agent for Westerngate with Cushman & Wakefield.

KINGSTON HOUSE

SWINDON, J16 M4
LYDIARDS FIELD
SN5 8UZ

3 open plan floors from 5,360 sq ft



the best space in the best place and fully flexible



DORCAN
COMPLEX

TO LET

Refurbished Office/
Business Accommodation

970-8,838 sq ft (90-821 sq m)
Flexible Lease Options Available



New Honda Civic launched at Frankfurt Motor Show

The new Honda Civic, launched at the Frankfurt Motor Show features a distinctive new dynamic, flowing exterior design which is complemented by a high quality interior finish.

The designers of the new Civic wanted to keep the sporty and advanced elements of the car's character but tailor them to express the new model's more dynamic feel.

Nearly all of the body components on the new Civic have been redesigned with particular focus on ride and handling, reduced CO2 emissions, design and interior quality, while retaining the class-leading cabin, boot space and practicality.

Designed and developed specifically for the European market, the new Civic will be offered as a five-door hatchback and will reach UK showrooms in early 2012.



E-campaign gets new Hyundai on the road

Pebble Beach, the Swindon Hyundai dealer, is harnessing the power of social media to back the launch of the all-new Hyundai i40 Tourer to the fleet market.

The car, which has just gone on sale, boasts a wealth of state-of-the-art technology and other benefits of a premium model but without the premium price tag – making it an ideal company vehicle.

To launch the i40 Tourer to the corporate market, Pebble Beach director Dominic Threlfall is teaming up with Swindon Business News and using social media, including LinkedIn.

Swindon Business News is to promote the car through a unique email campaign – ensuring that its marketing material is seen by senior company executives, entrepreneurs and business owners in the area.

The campaign will tie in with eye-catching online advertising on Swindon Business News' website – www.swindon-business.net – and in the monthly publication. Dominic is also using LinkedIn to gain the attention of

potential company car buyers, arrange test drives for them and gain useful feedback.

All comments will be fed back to Hyundai with special rewards for those taking part such as a free valet, MOT voucher or labour on a service.

And those who are quick off the mark in arranging their test drive, there is also a chance of winning Euro 2012 tickets.

Go to:

<http://events.linkedin.com/Hyundai/pub/763989> to register.

Call Pebble Beach on 01793 816800 to arrange a drive, fill out the feedback form, choose the free gift from above and be entered for the tickets.

Every i40 Tourer incorporates high levels of equipment designed to help keep fleet drivers safe - ESP, 7 airbags, ABS, Brake Assist and Vehicle Stability Management (VSM), Bluetooth with voice recognition - and reassured - with Hyundai's Five Year Triple Care package, the i40 Tourer boasts an unlimited mileage warranty (not available for taxi or private hire usage)

and five years' roadside assistance.

Dominic said: "We are a forward-looking business and we are constantly looking for new ways to engage with our customers and potential customers."

"Social media is becoming more important and we plan to be ahead of the game with our campaign for the new i40 Tourer. It's a very exciting car so we want to engage with businesses in an exciting way through this leading-edge campaign."

"We can offer discerning fleet managers - and their drivers - a complete package with the i40 Tourer. Whatever the size of their fleet, they can enjoy the benefits."

"From driving down the cost of ownership and lowering the tax efficiency of our vehicles to improving the on-the-road experience - our aim is that both companies and drivers benefit."

BMW wins sustainability award

German car group BMW has been named as the world's most sustainable automobile manufacturer for the seventh consecutive year.

The group, which has its MINI pressing plant in Swindon, achieved top slot in the ranking published by the SAM Group for the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes.

BMW is also the only automotive manufacturer to be listed in this family of indexes every year since it was established in 1999.

BMW chairman Dr Norbert Reithofer said: "The success of the BMW Group is built on a long-term approach and responsible action. Being ranked sector leader for the past seven years underscores our corporate strategy and approach. I would like to thank all of our company's 95,000 employees whose day-to-day work makes this progress possible."

Sustainability is an integral part of the BMW's corporate strategy - it appointed the automotive industry's first environmental officer in 1973. Since then it has systematically refined its concept of sustainability and two years ago it firmly established corporate sustainability at group level.



Swindon car dealership expands

Swindon-based car dealer group Cambria Automobiles has added a Vauxhall franchise to its portfolio following the acquisition of a dealership in Southampton.

The deal takes Cambria's locations to 27 while the addition of Vauxhall brings the total number of new car franchises to 39, including Citroen, Seat and Jaguar dealerships in Swindon.

The news follows the group's pre-close trading statement which showed the group achieved another year of growth "broadly in line with market expectations" despite a difficult market.

Cambria said it was on the lookout for further acquisitions and intends to pursue more opportunities with Vauxhall.

The acquired business in Southampton has been loss making in recent years, and it is anticipated will dilute earnings in the short term while Cambria's systems and processes are brought in. The business was acquired on a net asset basis and no goodwill was paid.

Cambria chief executive Mark Lavery said he was confident the Vauxhall dealership will return to profitability in the medium term.



HYUNDAI

NEW THINKING.
NEW POSSIBILITIES.



EURO 2012
POLAND-UKRAINE

WHY CAN'T EFFICIENCY BE EXCITING?



THE ALL NEW HYUNDAI i40 TOURER

AVAILABLE 8TH SEPTEMBER FROM £18,395* OTR

For those who appreciate sophisticated style, efficiency, space and comfort as well as clever technology, the new Hyundai i40 Tourer has it all.

The stylish aerodynamic shape isn't just for show. It has been specifically designed to maximise efficiency. Coupled with Blue Drive technologies the i40 can deliver up to 65.7mpg.**

Inside the comfortable and spacious interior, we've worked hard to include a variety of features to help you relax. And you'll find a wealth of driver technology that will make your journey as effortless as possible.

To book a test drive contact us on 01793 816800



PEBBLE BEACH

5 YEAR TRIPLE CARE

UNLIMITED MILEAGE WARRANTY

Pebble Beach Hyundai 01793 816800

West Swindon Motor Park, SWINDON, SN5 7SB www.pebblebeachhyundai.co.uk

*Model shown: Hyundai i40 Premium 2.0 at £24,240 OTR in Titanium Silver metallic paint at £445 included. Price shown includes VAT, delivery, vehicle first registration fee, number plates and 12 months' road fund licence. **65.7 combined mpg applies to i40 Tourer Active 1.7 CRDi 115PS manual Blue Drive model. Warranty terms and exclusions apply. See www.hyundai.co.uk/owners/5YearWarranty or ask your local dealer.

Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai i40 Tourer range: Urban 30.1 (9.4) - 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 47.9 (5.9) - 76.3 (3.7), Combined 39.2 (7.2) - 65.7 (4.3), CO₂ Emissions 169 - 113 g/km.

Business consortium hosts top Chinese delegation



The Chinese delegation with Mayor of Swindon Cllr Ray Balman, Jeremy Holt (rear), and Gavin Jones chief exec of the Council

High ranking Chinese officials visiting Britain to learn about heritage conservation were the guests of the UK China Business Consortium at a lunch in one of Swindon's most iconic industrial buildings.

Consortium chairman Jeremy Holt welcomed members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's equivalent of the Senate, to Swindon with a meal at the newly converted Weighbridge Brewhouse. The Chinese

delegation, led by the former Governor of Henan Province, visited Heelis, the National Trust headquarters at Churchward, before moving on to the restaurant in the former GWR works weighhouse, which later became Archers brewery.

The lunch was the second major event arranged by the UK China Business Consortium since it was founded earlier this summer. In June, the cultural attaché to the Chinese Embassy in London, Mr Li Zhang, opened an exhibition of privately-

owned Chinese art not previously seen by the public at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, which was sponsored by the consortium.

Mr Zhang returned to Swindon with the Consultative Conference delegation and said he was delighted to be back in the town so soon, and once again meet members of the business community. Swindon's Mayor Councillor Ray Ballman, her consort and senior representatives of Swindon Borough Council.

Unique event will alert Swindon firms to impact of domestic violence

Businesses are being urged to consider the impact that domestic violence and abuse is having on the wellbeing, mental health and, consequently, productivity of their staff.

Expert advice on ways of handling this difficult subject for employers will be available at a free, one-off awareness session staged in Swindon in November.

The event, called Domestic Violence and Abuse – What employers need to know, is the result of a link up between Swindon Community Safety Partnership and the charity Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) along with the Swindon Mindful Employer Network which is managed locally by Richmond Fellowship Wiltshire.

Speakers will include Neil Blacklock, a leading expert on domestic violence with the national charity Respect.

The event, free to attend for employers and business people and which is supported by Swindon Business News, takes place at the Steam museum, Churchward, on November 21 from 10am.

To book a place contact David Latham at david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk

China trade event to be held

Firms seeking business opportunities in China can gain first-hand advice from experts in international trade at a conference later this month.

Speakers from UKTI, China-Britain Business Council, Institute of Exports, Bristol China Partnership and UWE will look at ways to expand into the world's second-largest economy.

The China Trade Conference, which takes place on September 29 at HSBC's offices in Temple Quay, Bristol, is being staged by the Bristol branch of the Institute of Directors (IOD).

Heathrow high-speed direct rail link could get back on track

Swindon could get a direct high-speed rail link to Heathrow Airport under a scheme being considered by the Government.

Transport Secretary Philip Hammond, is understood to have drafted fresh plans to build a spur line from the Great Western main line at Reading Station into the airport, possibly straight to Terminal 5.

The £500m project, which has been considered in the past but never given the green light, would allow trains operating on the main Cardiff-London line through Swindon to stop at Heathrow – achieving long-hoped ambitions for business leaders in the West for a direct connection to one of the world's busiest airports.

The plan could cut journey times to Heathrow by at least 30 minutes, according to reports. At present rail passengers must either travel to London Paddington then change and take the Heathrow Express back to the airport, or get off at Reading and catch a bus.

The station at Heathrow, which could be built by 2021, would also link to the planned HS2 London-Birmingham line – although its route is fiercely opposed by campaigners, which could delay the project.

Reports of the Heathrow link follow the recently announced £1bn electrification of the Great Western line between Bristol and London. Councils in Bristol, Swindon and Cardiff – backed by the business community – lobbied hard for that plan to be brought forward after the Government put it on hold.

Some railway experts today said the Heathrow spur plan would more likely involve shuttle trains operating from Reading Station to Heathrow rather than direct services from Swindon stopping there.

However, the plan – in whatever form it takes – will be welcomed by business leaders across the region.

Philip Morton, director at property firm DTZ in Bristol, said it would provide a welcome boost to the regional economy.

SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

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

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

Your Local Office Solutions Provider



**Affordable, smart hardware
from entry level desktop printers to
high output office devices.**

**Call now for your free print
expenditure appraisal**

IF IT WORX, IT'S

UTAX

www.utax.co.uk Tel No. 01793 786000 caroline.waldron@utax.co.uk